



REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

The Great War Fallen
of
Hampstead St John
Burial Ground

Compiled by
David Humberston



The following pages are dedicated to the memory of

*The fallen of the Great War
who rest in this burial ground,*

*Their comrades who lie in foreign fields
but are commemorated here*

and

*the Veterans of that conflict
who now lie alongside them.*



INTRODUCTION

According to the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the organisation who work tirelessly to maintain the graves of our fallen service personnel, over 90,000 fallen men or women of the Great War rest in 9,375 cemeteries or churchyards across the United Kingdom or are commemorated on specific memorials to those who have no known grave. Of this number, 5,637 are buried in 36 sites across London, their graves being marked by either a standard Commission headstone or one erected by those who mourned them.

All of these men and women served and died in the greatest conflict their country had ever seen, a War that changed for ever the world they left behind, a world still dealing with the consequences of those five tumultuous years over a century later.

Hampstead St John's Burial Ground contains eight of these graves, six for men who died in the Great War and its aftermath and a further two for men who perished in the Second World War two decades later. This work is designed to enhance and expand existing research into the stories of the Great War Fallen, all of whom rest beneath headstones erected by their family in the Burial Ground. Whilst further work may be undertaken once primary sources of information are again accessible in post-pandemic Britain, I have attempted to build upon the foundations laid by my predecessors to compile this work and create a fitting tribute to these men, whose individual experiences deserve to be recorded and then remembered.

I hope I have succeeded . . .

David Humberston

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November 2020

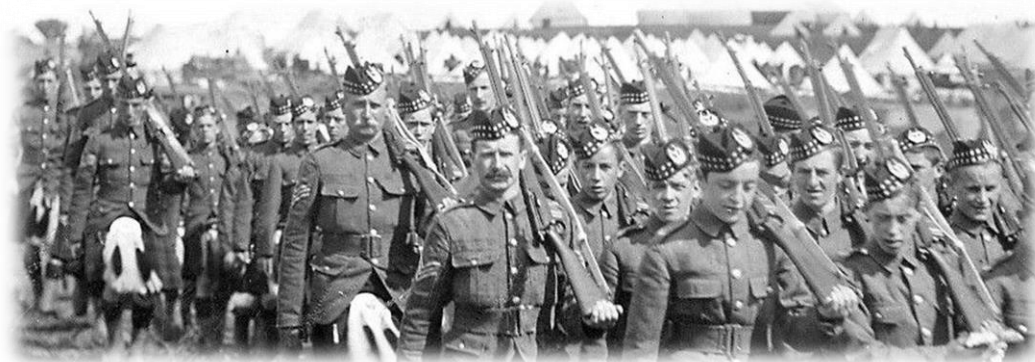
REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

2ND LIEUTENANT GEOFFREY CRAIG ROSE

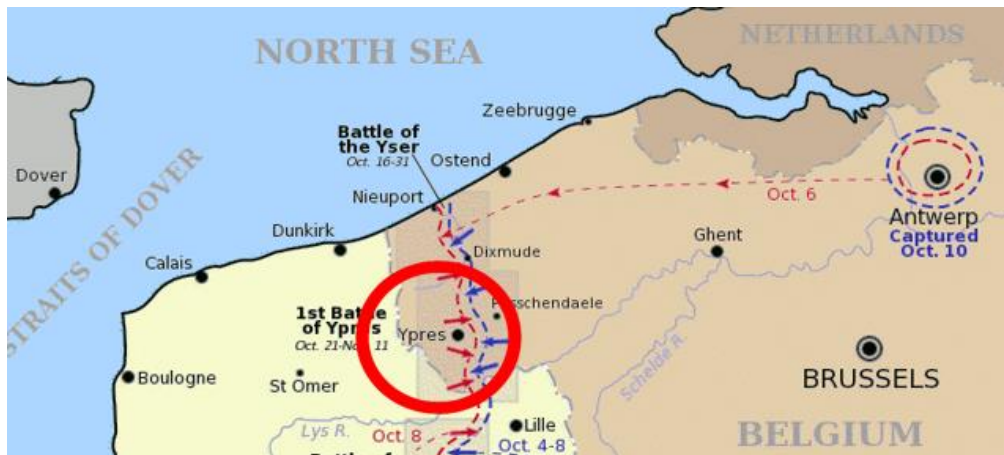


**3rd Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders,
attached 1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders
Died 13th February 1915
Aged 18 years
Grave No. G 96**

The elder son of Charles Edward Rose of Townsend House, Regents Park, by his wife Mary Greer, daughter of James Connell of Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Geoffrey Rose was born at Hampstead on 2nd November 1896. Educated under the Reverend D. H. Marshall at Ovingdean Hall, Brighton and later at Aldenham School in Hertfordshire, Geoffrey was recognised as a talented writer and debater, having had an article accepted for publication by a magazine when aged only 16. Residing at 23 Daleham Gardens in Hampstead when War was declared in August 1914, Geoffrey was a member of the Inns of Courts Officers Training Camp, which provided basic Army training for potential Officers at Berkhamsted. Commissioned as early as 14th August into the 3rd Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders, Geoffrey was later attached to the 1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders, who had already taken heavy casualties in the early months of the War. He departed for the front lines in November 1914.



*1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders, 1914
The Battalion incurred heavy casualties in the early months of the War*



MAP 1: The frontline on the Western Front in November 1914
The Belgian town of Ypres is ringed in red.

Between 21st October and 11th November 1914, the British and French Armies, although vastly outnumbered, held their front lines around the Belgian town of Ypres against German forces determined to advance westwards to the Channel Ports. The British Army, known as the British Expeditionary Force, sustained casualties of some 60,000 during this battle, later officially named “The First Battle of Ypres”. These men were either killed, wounded or reported “missing in action”.



MAP 2: The frontlines of the Ypres Salient, November 1914.
The village of Wytschaete, standing on the Messines Ridge, is ringed in red.

The German Armies had been halted at villages east of the town of Ypres itself and this “bulge” in the front lines, a position that could be attacked from three different sides (in this case north, south and east) is known in military parlance as a “Salient”. The Ypres Salient would achieve almost mythical status throughout the Great War and, despite four separate Battles being fought in its vicinity, the town itself would never fall into German hands.

To the south of Ypres, however, as illustrated by Map 2, the villages of Wytschaete (swiftly “anglicised” to “Whitesheets”) and Messines, both standing on the high ground of the Messines Ridge, were in German hands by late 1914. Wytschaete will play a prominent part in the story of Geoffrey Rose and is thus ringed in red.

On 30th November 1914, the depleted 1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders relieved the survivors of the 4th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers in trenches near the village of Kemmel, on the Kemmel to Wytschaete road. Early December saw the Battalion further behind the lines, with the Battalion *Official War Diary* noting that the recently received draft of reinforcements contained *some very old soldiers*, one of whom had fought with the 1st Battalion at Tel-el-Kabir in 1882. Some of the men were considered to be unsuitable for a winter campaign, whilst the younger soldiers appeared to have received hardly any training, with service varying between three and ten weeks!

In early December, orders were issued for a joint French & British assault against the German lines, planned for 14th December, with the British attacking in strength along their lines between the villages of Warneton and Messines. 1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders were to advance against Maedelstede Farm, a German held position on the outskirts of Wytschaete Wood as part of the proposed capture of Wytschaete village beyond.



MAP 3: A frontline trench map from 1916 showing the area around Wytschaete village. Maedelstede Farm is ringed in red, with the German frontline trenches (unchanged from 1914) shown by the thin red lines running north to south

On the morning of the assault, the Battalion *War Diary* would subsequently note that whilst the British artillery bombardment began at 7.00 a.m. many of the shells fell short of the enemy lines, an error that could not be rectified due to *inadequate means of communication*. The Infantry advance, at 7.45 a.m., was met with heavy rifle and machine gun fire and the two attacking Companies soon disappeared from view, it then being *impossible to tell how they were progressing* although one report revealed men were seen entering the German trenches around 8.00 a.m.

It was not until 4.15 p.m. that a further report was received, revealing some 40 men were isolated approximately 50 yards from the German front line trench and their Officer had sent five messengers to the rear throughout the day, none of whom had reached Battalion Headquarters.

Later in the day, the Battalion was ordered to withdraw to its original starting line, where they were relieved by 4th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, before moving back to the village of Kemmel. The Highlanders had incurred casualties of 3 Officers and 51 Other Ranks killed, 4 Officers and 139 Other Ranks wounded and 63 Other Ranks "Missing". 2nd Lieutenant Geoffrey Rose was amongst the wounded, having "gallantly led his men into action".

Unfortunately, Geoffrey's injuries were so severe that he was invalided back to London, where he died on 13th February 1915, one day short of two calendar months from the day he led his men into action against Maedelstede Farm. He was buried in Hampstead St John Burial Ground in Grave G 96.



*In ever loving memory of
Geoffrey Craig Rose
Second Lieutenant, 3rd. Battalion
Seaforth Highlanders
Attached 1st. Gordons
Wounded in Flanders Decr. 14th. 1914
Died in London Feb. 13th. 1915
Aged 18 years & 3 months
Elder son of
Charles Edward and Mary Greer Rose*



*The headstone and memorial inscription of Geoffrey Craig Rose at
Hampstead St John Burial Ground.
His father Charles and sister Winifred were subsequently laid to rest in the same grave.*

Geoffrey Rose was later commemorated in Volume One of *de Ruvigny's Roll of Honour*, published throughout the conflict by the 9th Marquess of de Ruvigny. As an interesting footnote, Geoffrey's entry informs the reader that, by the date of publication, his father, Charles Edward Rose, was now involved with St Dunstan's Hostel for Blind Soldiers and Sailors, established by Sir Arthur Pearson (founder of the Daily Express newspaper) in 1914. In 1915, St Dunstan's moved to a property in Regent's Park, where Charles Rose was Honorary Superintendent. Charles died at the age of 79 in February 1940 and was buried in the same grave as his son.



REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

70380 CORPORAL FRANCIS GABRIEL ELLERTON



Royal Engineers
Died 22nd April 1915
Aged 19 years
Grave No. H 32

Born in 1895, Francis Gabriel Ellington was the youngest son and eleventh of thirteen children of Alfred Ellington and his wife Rosaline Blanche, née Dunphy. Their youngest daughter, Agnes Ruth, died in infancy, but the remaining seven sons and five daughters would all reach adulthood. When War was declared in August 1914, Francis was living at 28, Parliament Hill, Hampstead and was employed as an accountant by Messrs Robson & Ross.

One month short of his 19th birthday, and therefore at that time ineligible for overseas service, Francis enlisted two days after War was declared in the Territorial Army, joining the London Air Line Signal Company of the Royal Engineers. This was one of three Signalling Companies based in London that served the Territorials, the other two being the London Wireless and London Cable Signal Companies respectively. Posted to Houghton Regis in Bedfordshire, the surviving fragments of his Army Service Record confirms that he passed his medical on 31st December 1914. His height is recorded at one half inch over six feet and his weight was 11st 4lb. Francis was soon to be promoted to the rank of Corporal and transferred to Third Army Headquarters Signal Company, where he became a Company Motor Cyclist.



Troops marching through Houghton Regis

In early 1915, the family suffered two losses. On 10th January, Bernard Hugh, the fourth of the seven Ellerton brothers died at the age of 23. He is buried in Margate Cemetery, where a headstone was erected in his memory. On 3rd February, Alfred Ellerton, a widower since 1912, died at the age of 63. More tragedy was to strike the family in the April as the following report from an unidentified newspaper recounts:

COLLISION OF MOTOR CYCLISTS

SHOCKING INJURIES TO SOLDIERS

A serious accident occurred at Eggington, Beds on Thursday evening, April 22, two soldiers on motor cycles colliding with fatal results. Both were terribly injured, Corporal Francis Gabriel Ellerton, of the Third Army Headquarters Signal Company, British Expeditionary Force, dying as a result of his injuries ten minutes after his arrival at the Council School Military Hospital at Aylesbury. Corporal Copas, also of the Signal Section of the Royal Engineers, was conveyed to the Royal Bucks Hospital, his injuries also being of a serious nature.

An inquest was held on Ellerton at the Council School Hospital on Saturday evening . . . Mr Raymond Ellerton, 28 Parliament Hill, Hampstead, said the deceased was his brother. The witness last saw him alive on Sunday evening, April 18, at Hampstead. He was then in excellent health. Deceased had his own motor cycle, which he had had for a year and was a capable rider.

Corporal Edward Allen Bowyer, of Cottage Grove, Clapham, clerk, stated that he was at present cycle corporal in the Signal Section of the Royal Engineers, stationed at Eggington. On Thursday, April 22, he left Eggington Hall in company with Corporal Sydney Copas, to go to Stanbridge. They left at 8 o'clock, both being on motor cycles. They rode one in front of the other, Copas taking the rear. When about half-a-mile along the road they met deceased on a motor cycle. He was coming towards them. Previous to meeting deceased witness had gone round a bend of the road. He was on the left side of the road and deceased was riding in the centre. Two or three seconds after deceased past him he heard a report as of the bursting of a tyre, followed by a crash. He did not hear anyone call out. He at once stopped his machine and went back about 25 to 30 yards. He then found deceased and Copas lying in the road, with their machines locked together. Ellerton was under the two motor cycles and Copas by the side of the machines. At the spot where the men were lying, Ellerton had just got round the bend and Copas had not quite reached it. Copas was lying on the right -hand side of the road with his head facing the direction in which they were going, and about a foot from the edge of the grass. Ellerton was on his right side, about 2ft. from Copas. The deceased was still gripping the handle-bars of his machine. Both men were unconscious.

Witness at once ran back for his machine and met Corporals Brace and Lansdowne. He called to them that there had been an accident, and Lansdowne went to the village for a doctor, whilst he and Brace pulled the machines to the side of the road. Corporal Lewis next arrived and attended to deceased and Copas, witness running back to Stanbridge for some water. On returning he found that other assistance had arrived.

Corporal Brace also gave evidence, the report confirming:

From what he (Brace) could remember Ellerton was lying about six inches from the edge of the grass, with the machine on his legs. Copas was lying on Ellerton and was doubled up over the handle-bars of his own machine. Witness corroborated Corporal Bowyer's evidence as to the damage to the machines and stated that he assisted in moving Copas, but Ellerton was injured too seriously to be moved. He went for a stretcher and deceased and Copas were taken to Stanbridge Vicarage, a distance of about 200 yards. Deceased had passed him on a motor cycle and shortly after he heard a crash and hastened to see what had happened. When deceased passed him he was travelling at about 35 or 40 miles an hour. He appeared to have control over his machine, though he passed 'in a flash'.



***Stanbridge Vicarage (in 1875)
Ellerton & Copas were taken here in the aftermath of the accident***

Corporal Ernest Lansdowne, of New Malden, Surrey, Signal Company, Royal Engineers, gave corroborative evidence and also stated that he went to Houghton Regis for medical assistance. About an hour after, he went to Stanbridge in a motor ambulance and both men were placed in it and conveyed to the hospital. The width of the metalled road was about 20ft.

Sr Anthony Astley Cooper, a Lieutenant of the R.A.M.C. stationed at the Council School Hospital, Aylesbury, stated that deceased was admitted to the hospital about 11.45 p.m. on Thursday, April 22. He was unconscious and was suffering from a depressed fracture of the frontal bone. All the bones in the nose were fractured; also the lower jaw. There were superficial abrasions on the back of both hands and the left knee. Deceased die 10 or 15 minutes after admission, compression and laceration of the brain being the cause of death.

The Coroner said unfortunately Corporal Copas was still unconscious, lying in the Royal Bucks hospital and if the jury were of opinion that his evidence was material, the enquiry would be adjourned.

The Foreman intimated that the jury were prepared to consider their verdict and the Coroner having briefly reviewed the evidence, a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned. The Foreman added the jury wished to express sincere sympathy with the relatives of deceased. They regarded it as a sad case for a young man to be cut off so suddenly after enlisting for his King and country.

The body of Francis Gabriel Ellerton was buried at Hampstead St John Burial Ground (Grave H 32) and a headstone was erected over his grave. The inscription records his accidental death, although today the grave is sadly in need of repair.



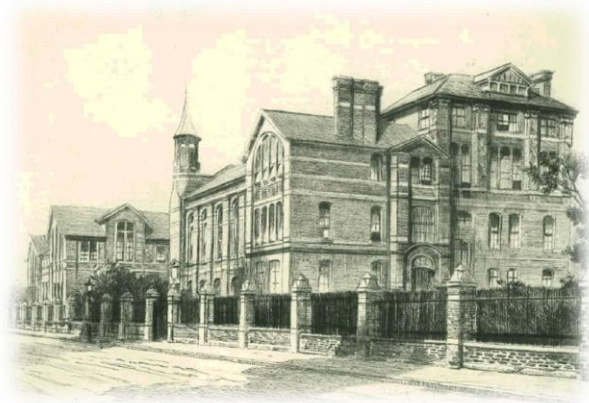
*In loving memory of
Francis Gabriel Ellerton
(Tinker)
Royal Engineers
Accidentally killed 22nd April 1915
Aged 19 years
Whilst serving his King and Country
during the Great War*

***The headstone and memorial inscription of Francis Gabriel Ellerton at
Hampstead St John Burial Ground.***



***Haberdashers' Aske School
War Memorial***

Francis is also remembered on the War Memorial at the Haberdashers' Aske School, now located in Elstree, but formerly of Westbere Road in Hampstead from 1858 to 1961. The Memorial was dedicated in November 1922 and lists 107 former pupils who fell in the Great War. Bernard Hugh Ellerton is also remembered here, although the writer has yet to discover any information concerning his service.



***Haberdashers' Aske School
Westbere Road, Hampstead***

It can, however, be confirmed that three of the Ellerton brothers, Alfred Cyril, Alban Spencer and Arthur Stanton, all served with the Royal Flying Corps and it was the latter, a Captain in the Aeronautical Inspection Department since 1916, who received his late brother's Death Plaque and Memorial Scroll.

REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

MAJOR GEORGE HARVEST



**5th (City of London) Battalion,
London Regiment
(London Rifle Brigade)
Died 14th October 1918
Aged 53 years
Grave No. G 51**

Born on 22nd September 1865, George Harvest was the third son and seventh of ten children of Daniel Richard Harvest, a spice merchant, and his wife Matilda Agnes, née Candler. George's great grandfather, William Harvest, had died at Woking in 1741, leaving a son, William Junior, (1784-1857) who had married Mary Morgan in 1808. Daniel Richard Harvest was their second son, an elder brother William being fourteen years his senior. Both had married daughters of John Candler of Norwich, but William's marriage to Georgianna appears

to have been childless. The Harvest family resided at Burleigh House on Belsize Lane at Hampstead, but were also connected to a property on Dowgate Dock, Upper Thames Street, London, which is presumed by the writer to be the family business premises.



*12 Hampstead Hill Gardens,
the Harvest family home in 1911*

After being educated at Highgate Boarding School, George joined the family business, becoming a spice and colonial produce merchant. In 1898 he married Mabel Lucy Williams; a daughter, Nancy, was born in 1900 and a son, Richard, in 1906. In 1911 the family were living at 12 Hampstead Hill Gardens.

George had also served in the Territorial Army and by 1914 held the rank of Captain and

Honorary Major in the 5th (City of London) Battalion of the London Regiment, also known as the London Rifle Brigade. Originally known as 1st London Rifle Volunteer Corps when it was founded in 1859, in 1908, with the establishment of the Territorial Army, it then became the 5th (City of London) Battalion of the newly formed London Regiment. With the outbreak of War in August 1914, George rejoined the Regiment and an entry in the *London Gazette* for September 1914 confirms both his previous service with the London Rifle Volunteers and the announcement of his official promotion to the rank of temporary Major in the London Rifle Brigade.

5th (City of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade); Captain and Honorary Major George Harvest (late 1st City of London Volunteer Rifle Corps) to be Major (temporary). Dated 18th September, 1914.

*Extract from The London Gazette announcing George's promotion.
All appointments of Officers were listed in this manner,
the Officer then being deemed "Gazetted"*

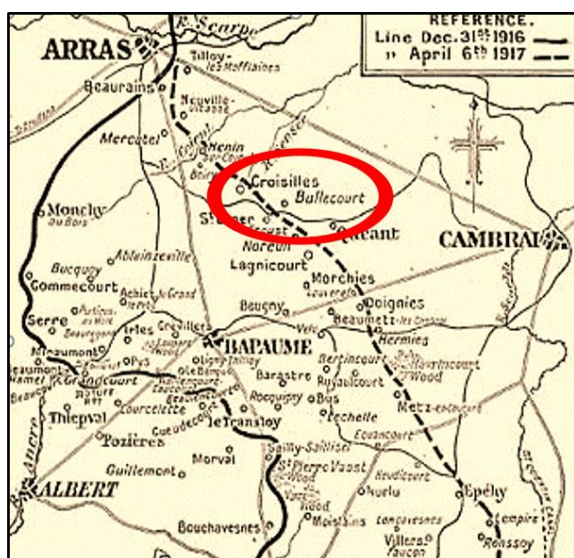
As a Battalion Historian would later write:

At the beginning of September 1914, permission was obtained to form a Second Battalion. Recruiting was commenced in Bunhill Row (Battalion Headquarters) on the 3rd and the Battalion was filled in one day. So great was the rush of recruits that, had it been possible to obtain leave to do so, another battalion could easily have been formed. Great care was taken, under these advantageous circumstances, in the selection of recruits. Those taken, combined with the draft from the 1st Battalion men who were unable at that time to undertake the foreign service obligation, (overseas service being optional in the Territorial Army) made up a fine battalion.

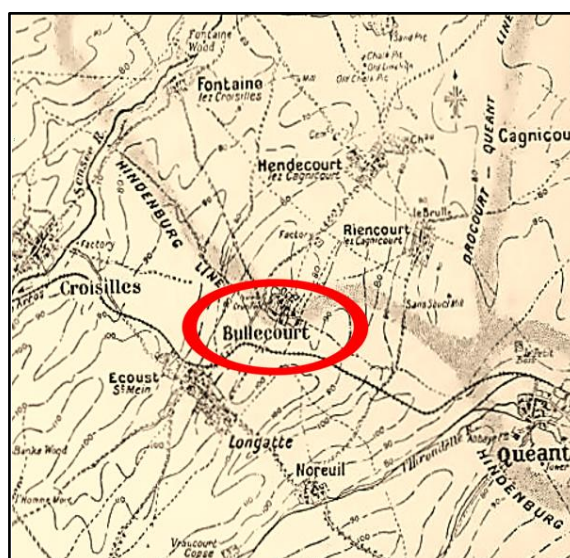
A list of Officers then follows, the second of which is Major G. Harvest.

Unlike the 1/5th Battalion, which left for the Western Front in November 1914, the 2/5th (as part of 174 Brigade, 58th Division) were sent to Haywards Heath, from where they moved to Norwich in May 1915, Ipswich the following month, Foxhall Heath (near Ipswich) in April 1916 and Sutton Veny, near Warminster in Wiltshire, three months later. Finally, on 25th January 1917, the Battalion arrived at Le Havre, en-route to the Front . . .

At the conclusion of the Battle of the Somme in November 1916, the German forces had shortened their front line in February and March 1917 by moving east to a pre-prepared heavily fortified defensive line, the *Siegfriedstellung* or *Siegfried Position*, laying waste to the countryside as they withdrew. The British forces, including 2/5th Battalion of the London Rifle Brigade tentatively followed in their footsteps and launched their offensive against what they called *The Hindenburg Line* in the Battle of Arras in April of that year. The village of Bullecourt, 10 miles south-east of Arras, was first attacked on 11th April without success, then again on 3rd May. It was in this second assault that 2/5th Battalion of the London Rifle Brigade would see its first serious action.



MAP 4: The German withdrawal from the frontline of 31st December 1916 to the Hindenburg Line by 6th April 1917. The village of Bullecourt is ringed in red.



MAP 5: A more detailed Map of the area around Bullecourt, with the Hindenburg Line clearly marked. The west side of the village was attacked on 17th May 1917 by the 2/5th Battalion, London Rifle Brigade.

A second assault on the village of Bullecourt was made on 3rd May. Lasting a fortnight, it failed to achieve its objectives, but the village itself was cleared of German troops albeit at heavy loss. Of the role played by the London Rifle Brigade, who attacked the western side of Bullecourt, military historian Graham Keech would later write:

The operation, set for 2.00 a.m. on 17th May, was a frontal assault on the Red Patch (so named because of its colour and shape on the British trench maps) by the 2/5th London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade) from a line in front of the railway. After a short bombardment, the Londoners swept forward and, meeting little resistance, captured the whole area. When signals were received confirming the success of the 2/5th, a company of the 2/8th Battalion London Regiment (Post Office Rifles) crossed from the Longatte Road to clear the rest of the village.



**Gordon Lindsey
Harvest**

On 20th June, at the neighbouring village of Croisilles (see Map 5) Lieutenant Gordon Lindsey Harvest, also of the London Rifle Brigade and son of George's brother Daniel was killed in action. He was buried at the Communal Cemetery at Achiet-le-Grand, France, his headstone confirming the posthumous award of a Military Cross for *conspicuous gallantry and ability in reconnoitring enemy trenches and later in subduing enemy snipers*. His epitaph reads:

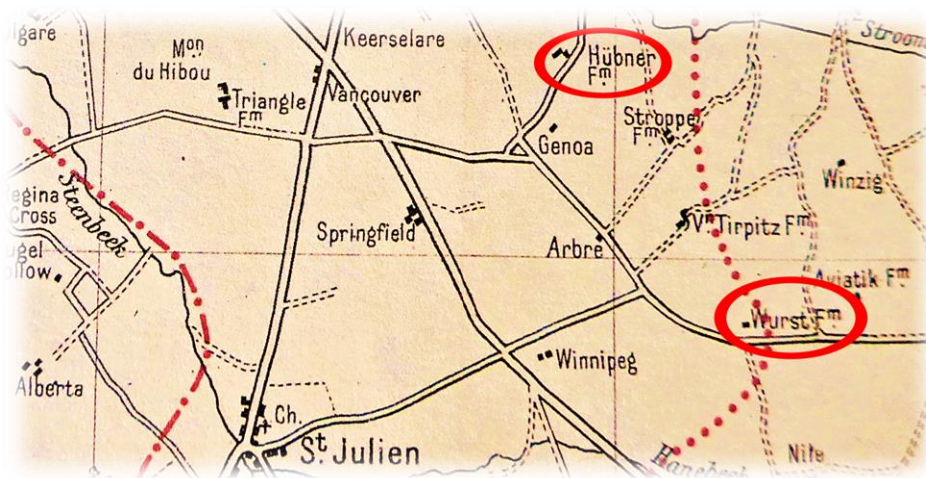
*Christ's Faithful Soldier And Servant
Unto His Life's End*



**Headstone of
Lt. G. L. Harvest**

The plans for British offensives now switched to Belgium and a series of nine battles that would later become collectively known as the Third Battle of Ypres or, more simply, “Passchendaele”. On 20th September, 174 Brigade were once more in action, with the 2/8th, 2/5th and 2/6th Battalions of the Regiment all taking part in turn.

The Brigade attacked with the three battalions following each other into battle. The 2/8th led the advance, reaching Hubner Farm, which was surrounded and subsequently captured. The 2/5th and 2/6th, up to that point in support and reserve positions respectively, then leap-frogged through the 2/8th, outflanked Hubner Farm and took a German position known as Dimple Trench. Turning half-right onto higher ground, at the summit the two battalions advanced on Wurst Farm, the attack’s final objective, keeping closely behind a creeping artillery barrage. The Farm was subsequently captured.



MAP 6: The advance of 174 Brigade on 20th September 1917.
The morning front line is shown in red on the left, the final front line in red on the right.
Hubner Farm and Wurst Farm are ringed.

At the end of January 1918, various Battalions of the London Regiment were merged together, but this did not include the 2/5th, who were disbanded at the village of Moreuil, 11 miles south-east of Amiens, on 6th February 1918, having suffered, according to one source, considerable losses. Major George Harvest would die of war wounds on 14th October that year at 2, St Aubyns Mansions, Hove in Sussex, a property on the seafront which was privately owned. George’s estate was originally calculated at £39,111 3s 10d, but was later increased to £52,970 16s, a substantial amount of money for that time.

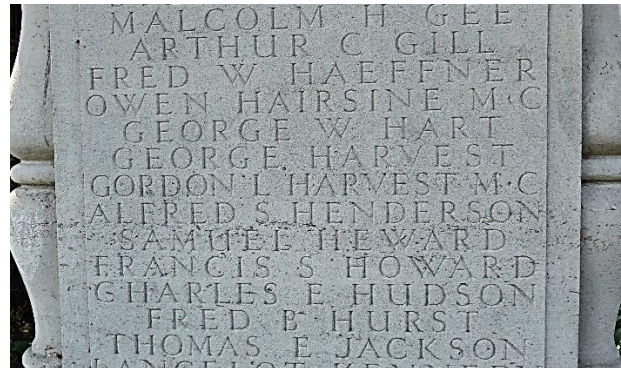


St Aubyns Mansions, Hove
George Harvest died here in October 1918



*In Loving Memory
of
Major George Harvest
London Rifle Brigade
14th October 1918
Duce et Decorum est
Pro Patria Mori*

The headstone and memorial inscription of George Harvest at Hampstead St John Burial Ground, where George's parents and two sisters are also buried in another grave



Church Row War Memorial, where both George and Gordon Harvest are remembered

Both George and his nephew Gordon are commemorated on the War Memorial at Church Row, shown above, which runs between St John's Churchyard and the Burial Ground. Erected in the early 1920's, the Memorial was designed by two local architects, Temple and Leslie Moore. The former had been articled to the famous architect George Gilbert Scott Junior before setting up his own practice in 1898. Temple Moore died in Hampstead in 1920 and lies in the Burial Ground. His son, Richard, who was serving as a Private in the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, died on 10th October 1918 when *RMS Leinster* was torpedoed in the Irish Sea and sank. Richard is commemorated on the War Memorial and also his father's headstone, one of many examples in the Burial Ground of fallen servicemen being remembered in this manner.

REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

CAPTAIN JOHN RICHARD SMYTH McCLURE



250th Tunnelling Company
Royal Engineers
Died 29th October 1918
Aged 25 years
Grave No. I 20

Born on 10th November 1892, John Richard Smyth McClure was the son of Reverend Dr John James McClure and his wife Mary, née Denham. John was born at Drumcullen, Duneane, County Antrim in Ireland. His ancestry was described as follows by his own father, who wrote in 1913: *"My father, Rev. Samuel McClure, who ministered at Crossroads, near Londonderry, and who died in 1874, came from Dernock near Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, where his forefathers had been for some generations. They came originally from some place in the southwest of Scotland."* Rev John James McClure had married Mary, the daughter of a Presbyterian Minister at Antrim in September 1884 and the marriage produced at least four sons, all of whom were born in Drumcullen. Around the turn of the century, the family emigrated to Cape Town in South Africa.

Between 1912 and 1914, John Junior received technical training at the South African College, Cape Town, and at the School of Mines and Technology, Johannesburg. In December 1914 he was granted a Diploma in mining engineering by the Johannesburg School of Mines and the following January he was granted the degree of B.Sc. and Diploma in mining engineering by the Cape University. During the period of his training he had eight months' practical work at various mines, including experience in hand and machine stoping (the excavation of steps or layers in either ground or rock) tramming (the art of adjusting the alignment of drilling machinery) sampling and surveying.

The Great War would see all four McClure brothers join the colours. The eldest, William Denham McClure (born in October 1887) would serve in the 2nd Imperial Light Horse in South Africa. Two years his junior, Samuel McClure would end the War as a Major in the R.A.F. whilst Hugh Cecil McClure (born in August 1896) served as a Lieutenant in the 146th Siege

Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery. He would fall in action on 23rd October 1918 and is buried at Le Cateau Communal Cemetery, France.

Like his brother William, John Junior also served as 585 Trooper McClure in the 2nd Imperial Light Horse, taking part in the brief campaign in German South West Africa (present day Namibia). The Light Horse played a major role in the capture of the village of Gibeon on 26th April 1915 with the campaign, fought solely by South African forces, concluding in July of the same year. John then travelled to England, where he received a commission as a temporary 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers from 17th October. He would arrive in France a fortnight later.

Earlier that year, in response to the German use of underground mines beneath British front lines in France, a somewhat maverick MP named Sir John Norton Griffiths, a mining engineer and entrepreneur known to his friends as “Empire Jack”, had persuaded the British Army to form Tunnelling Companies within the Royal Engineers to take the British war effort underground.



Sir John Norton Griffiths

The undermentioned to be temporary
Second Lieutenants —

Dated 17th October, 1915

Hugh Shellshear Pocock.

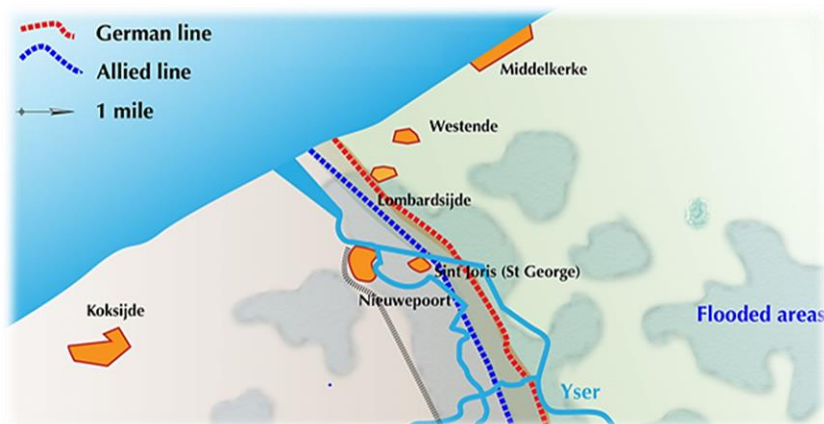
John Richard Smyth McClure.

Kenneth John Rattray Gardiner.

Second Lieutenant Harold Moir, from
Territorial Force.

*The entry in the London Gazette announcing
McClure's commission in the Royal Engineers*

John McClure is known to have served in two of these Companies, joining 257th Tunnelling Company in January 1916, two months before he was promoted to Temporary Lieutenant. Originally active in Northern France in the area around the village of Givenchy, the 257th then moved to the sector around the Belgian town of Nieuport in July 1917, where they were tasked with the construction of tunnels near the town itself, a difficult task as the digging would be into sand.



*MAP 7: The Nieuport (Nieuwepoort) Sector,
into which 257th Tunnelling Company arrived in July 1917*

SECRET

WEEKLY PROGRESS REPORT.

(SERVICES OTHER THAN MINING.)

TUNNELLING COMPANY

257th

Tunnelling Company.

Strength of Company

From 1.7.17 to 31.8.17

Others

O.R.

A.E. - - 14 234

Permanent Attached Infantry - - 153

Temporary Attached Infantry - - 166

Total - - 17 550

Designation of Working	Nature of Work or Section	Map Reference	Length of Tunnel	Days Worked	Shifts per Day	Personnel	Average Rate	Probable Date of Completion	Remarks	Notes
						R.E. P.A.I. O.R.				
PEDAN (Spon. Bam)	Ground - Dig - into Sandy loam.	M. 28 Plot 10	1	5 1/2	2	15 1/2	46	6' 7 1/2"	96' 9"	Long shallow excavation of 100 ft. back of trench of 100 ft. direction has been ascertained from the 2 1/2 ft. section.
NOSE LANE (Tunnelling)	Ground - Sandy loam.	M. 28A Plot 10	2	3	2	33 1/2	62	6' 3"	11' 9"	Average on east face. Not much advanced by direction of 100 ft. 6' 3" per shift. Work is being done in 2 1/2 ft. section. Direction has been ascertained from the 2 1/2 ft. section.
NIEUPOORT	Ground - Sandy loam.	M. 28 Plot 10	3	1 1/4	2	14 1/2	54	6' 3"	53' 6"	Average on east face. Not much advanced by direction of 100 ft. 6' 3" per shift. Work is being done in 2 1/2 ft. section. Direction has been ascertained from the 2 1/2 ft. section.
NIEUPOORT	Ground - Sandy loam.	M. 28 Plot 10	4		2	31 1/2	86			Ballast cleared of 100 ft. section. Work is being done in 2 1/2 ft. section. Direction has been ascertained from the 2 1/2 ft. section.
Total length of work										442' 6"

* AVERAGE DAILY WORKING STRENGTH. (Dig-out progress to be shown by sketch.)

257th TUNNELLING COMPANY

The weekly Progress Report of 257th Tunnelling Company for 8th August 1917, detailing work on the various tunnels or "subways".

The original purpose of these tunnels was to protect troops moving east in support of a proposed amphibious landing (codenamed Operation Hush) by British forces on the nearby Belgian Coast. This was planned to take place when, following the capture of the village of Passchendaele, the British forces continued their advance to the Belgian coast to eliminate German U-boat bases at Ostend and Zeebrugge. In the event, the British advance stalled at Passchendaele, but even before that campaign had begun, a successful German assault around Nieuport in early July caused the proposed landings to be abandoned. The Tunnellers continued their work, however, towards the new German front line . . .



MAP 8: The Mines of Messines, June 1917.
The mines are indicated by the yellow spots and heralded the beginning of the Battle for the Messines Ridge.

In November 1917, John McClure was transferred to 250th Tunnelling Company, his promotion to Acting Captain being "gazetted" in January 1918, but backdated to 14th November. 250th Company was one of the Companies responsible for laying mines beneath the Messines Ridge, near Ypres, 19 of which were detonated at 3.10 a.m. on the morning of 7th June 1917 to signal the beginning of the Battle of Messines. This devastating assault on the high ground south of Ypres paved the way for the later assault against the village of Passchendaele (3rd Battle of Ypres) and destroyed the German front line attacked by 2nd Lieutenant Geoffrey Rose, whose story was told earlier in these pages.

After the triumph at Messines, there was little mining activity and Tunnelling Companies were then engaged in construction work, creating underground subways in which the

Infantry could shelter and reach the front lines in comparative safety. During the German advances in the Spring of 1918 they were often employed as emergency infantry, before changing role again as the Allied advanced to victory, working on making safe the many captured towns and villages from explosive devices deliberately left behind.

It is known that John McClure was “Mentioned in Despatches” and wounded twice whilst on active service and, on the second occasion, was sent to a hospital in London to recover. Following his release, he subsequently died of influenza on 29th October 1918 at 23 Netherhall Gardens, Hampstead. He was buried in Hampstead St John Burial Ground. (Please note that John’s Service Record at the National Archives in Kew could not be consulted during the writing of these pages but will contain more detail of these events).



*John Richard
Smyth McClure, B.Sc.
Captain R.E.
of Cape Town S. Africa
Died on Active Service
29th October 1918*

***The headstone and memorial inscription of John Richard Smyth McClure
at Hampstead St John Burial Ground***

John and his brother Hugh are also remembered on their parent’s headstone at Maitland Cemetery, Cape Town, South Africa. John’s estate of £448 17s 8d was administered by his brother, Captain Samuel McClure, R.A.F., as attorney for their father. Reverend McClure would claim his son’s three campaign medals in June 1922.

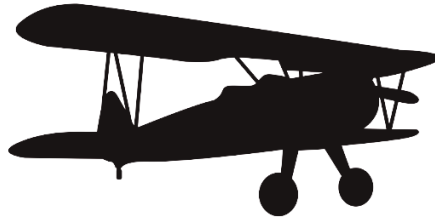
John is also remembered by the Institute of Mines and Metallurgy, which consists of a sculpted bronze figure of a Royal Engineer about to set off an explosive charge. Directly below are two metal plaques listing the fallen of both Wars. Originally erected at the Institute’s premises in Doncaster, it now resides at their current office on Euston Road, Bloomsbury, London. No photograph of this Memorial could be found in the public domain.



***The McClure family headstone
Maitland Cemetery
Cape Town, South Africa***

REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

2ND LIEUTENANT ANTHONY BLYTON BEESLEY



Royal Air Force
Died 1st December 1918
Aged 18 years
Grave No. I 21

Born on 1st January 1900 at Exmouth in Devon, Anthony Blyton Beesley was the second son of Dr. Clarence Blyton Beesley, a surgeon, and his wife Margaret Ellen, née Wood, who had married at Wakefield in 1894. Home was a 10 roomed house named “Redvers” on Exeter Road, Withycombe Raleigh, where Anthony lived with his parents, elder brother Clarence, younger siblings Ivo and Margaret and two servants.

A promising schoolboy, Anthony won a Council Exhibition to Epsom College, founded in 1855 to support less wealthy members of the medical profession. One of only four such awards made that year, a maximum of 10 per annum could be made by the College to deserving students following an examination. The annual school fees would then be consequently reduced for successful candidates. Anthony Beesley thus entered Forest House on 2nd May 1913 and, continuing to show his potential, came first in his year and was awarded the Form Prize. Absence from School (thought to be due to illness) hampered his progress in 1914, but Anthony returned to pass the London University Matriculation Exam in 1916, one of the youngest candidates to do so. His proud parents placed an announcement marking this feat in a local newspaper and Anthony continued to thrive, winning the Watts Prize for scientific achievement in 1917, also coming fifth in his year.



Epsom College
Anthony Beesley was educated here between 1913 and 1917

Anthony's abilities also extended to sports. Appointed Captain of the School Rugby XV in January 1917, *The Epsomion* of March that year described him as having *plenty of dash but inclined to hold onto the ball too long*. He also made appearances for the Cricket XI, became a prefect and attained the rank of Corporal in the Epsom College Officer Training Corps.

On 16th December 1917, Anthony joined the Royal Naval Air Service as a Probationary Flying Officer at Greenwich. The air arm of the Royal Navy, at the outbreak of War in August 1914, the Royal Naval Air Service consisted of 39 aeroplanes, 52 seaplanes, seven airships and a staff of 130 officers and around 700 petty officers and men. As the conflict progressed it would also maintain several elite squadrons of fighter planes on the Western Front and a strategic bombing force, whose operations were highly speculative. On 1st April 1918, the Royal Naval Air Service merged with the Royal Flying Corps, the air arm of the British Army, to form the Royal Air Force, the world's first independent Air Force.

On 12th April that year, Anthony obtained his "wings" and was now stationed at Cramlington, near Newcastle upon Tyne, with 120 Squadron, newly founded by the Royal Flying Corps earlier that year as an expansion of the existing daylight bombing force, but yet to become operational as they awaited the arrival of *DH9* aircraft. Anthony was injured in a flying accident on 21st May, but recovered sufficiently to undertake brief service on the Western Front from October 1918. The Squadron left Cramlington in early August to relocate to Bracebridge Heath in Lincolnshire and by the time Anthony embarked on active service he had been promoted to a Temporary 2nd Lieutenant (having been commissioned from 25th September).

The undermentioned Prob. Flt. Offs.
(late R.N.A.S.) are granted temp. commns.
as 2nd Lts. (A.):—
Camillo Vincent Ronchi. 20th Sept.
1918.
21st Sept. 1918.
Percival Lionel Thomas Lewin.
Edward George King.
Clifford Kelshaw Carter. 22nd Sept.
1918.
Albert George Marshall. 23rd Sept. 1918.
James Edwin Jackson. 24th Sept. 1918.
25th Sept. 1918.
John Donald Podmore.
Anthony Blyton Beesley.
George Hemdy Whitehead. 28th Sept.
1918.

*The London Gazette entry
announcing
Anthony Beesley's promotion*



Cramlington Airfield c. 1918



*V.A.D Hospital, Walden House, Huntingdon.
Anthony Beesley died here on 1st December 1918*

Anthony's War would last only a few weeks. Like many of his contemporaries, he would fall victim to the "Spanish Flu" pandemic sweeping the world in late 1918. He was sent to a Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospital at Walden House in Huntingdon, a 17th Century property close to All Saint's Church. The former residence of a prominent local family, Walden House was converted to a Hospital on 1st December 1914 initially with 85 beds. Throughout the War it would treat over 3,900 in-patients and further out-patients before it closed in January 1919.

With his influenza turning to septic pneumonia, Anthony died at the Hospital on 1st December 1918, just 20 days after the signing of the Armistice brought peace to the Western Front. A brief announcement of his death appeared in *The Times* on 6th December and he was buried at Hampstead St John Burial Ground in Grave I 21, in the adjoining plot to Captain John McClure.



*In Ever
Loving Memory of
Our Dear Son
Anthony Blyton Beesley
2nd Lieut. Royal Air Force
Born January 1st 1900
Died December 1st 1918*

*The headstone and memorial inscription of Anthony Blyton Beesley
at Hampstead St John Burial Ground*

Letters of Administration issued in 1920 to Anthony's father enabled the latter to deal with his son's estate, valued at £134 11s 5d, whilst Anthony's Medals, the British War Medal and Victory Medal, were also sent to the family. These were later sold at Christies in 2000.

Today, Anthony is remembered on the Exmouth War Memorial in Strand Gardens public park. Erected and dedicated in 1921, it was not until 2005 that granite slabs naming the fallen, including Anthony, were laid across the flowerbeds at the foot of the original cross and plinth. The dedication to the fallen of the Great War reads:



Exmouth War Memorial

*In memory of our brave men who gave their lives for us.
"Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by?"*



*The Forest House War Memorial
Epsom College*



*The Epsom College War Memorial,
Epsom College Chapel*

Anthony is also remembered at Epsom College, on two separate Memorials. Each of the five College Houses produced their own Memorial, with Anthony's name joining those of 28 other Old Boys who fell in that conflict. The College Memorial was originally housed in the College Old Chapel, but was moved in the 1920's to its current site in the Chapel War Memorial nave. This panel lists in five columns the names of the 145 Old Boys who died during the Great War.

Another "Old Boy", whose name appears directly beneath that of Anthony, is Roland Boys Bradford, V.C. M.C., who in November 1917 was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General at the very young age of 25. Killed in action at the end of that month, Roland was one of four brothers to serve King and Empire, only one of whom would survive. In April 1918, Roland's brother George also received the Victoria Cross for his gallantry during the Zeebrugge Raid, the Bradfords thus becoming the only brothers to be so decorated in the entire War.



*Roland Bradford,
V.C. M.C.*



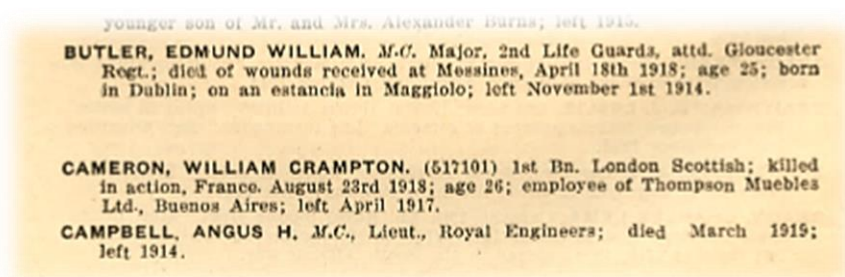
REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

LIEUTENANT ANGUS HAMILTON CAMPBELL



**Royal Engineers
Died 12th March 1919
Aged 44 years
Grave No. H 97**

The Great War was undoubtedly a global conflict, its campaigns and battles stretching across the entire world. Although the nations of South America were not amongst the early belligerents, substantial foreign communities existed in these countries whose young men were anxious to assist their mother country in her hour of need. In 1914, one third of the population of Argentina, for example, comprised of foreign citizens, including those of nations now at war. The country would remain neutral throughout the conflict, but, in the words of a contemporary writer “neither recruiting speeches, posters, nor newspaper appeals were needed to rouse Britons and their descendants, of military age, to action, or to awaken them to a sense of duty to the Motherland”. *Activities of the British Community in Argentina During the Great War 1914-1919*, published in 1920, provides further details, listing 4,852 volunteers who served their King and Empire, 528 of whom appear in a Roll of Honour for those who lost their lives. Amongst this number is Angus Hamilton Campbell.

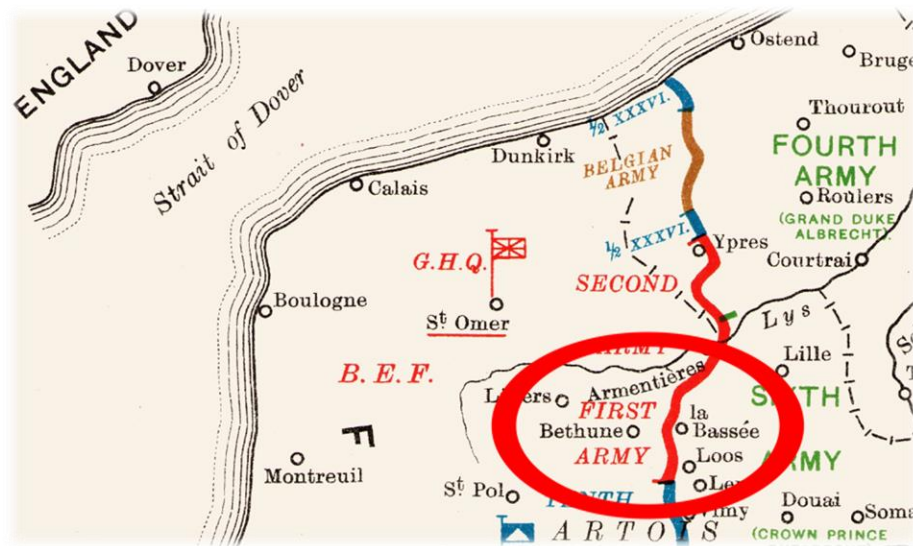


**The entry for Angus Hamilton Campbell on the *Argentina Volunteers Roll of Honour*.
Whilst frustratingly not as detailed as other entries, it confirms his departure
from Argentina in the early months of the War**

Previously believed by an earlier researcher to have been a Police Constable working in Westminster, this writer's discovery of a marriage record for the district of Belgrano in San Salvador (El Salvador) confirms that Angus Hamilton was, in fact, the son of Angus Hamilton

Campbell (whose profession is described as “military”) and working as an engineer when, aged 36, he wed Elizabeth Sybil Hoole Lumley, aged 23, on 10th May 1911. A subsequent christening record for their daughter, Sybil Inez, born on 25th February 1912 places the family in Devoto in Argentina and describes Angus as a “mining engineer” with the family continuing to grow following the births of Frank Murray Hamilton on 16th March 1914 and, following the return to England, Moira Angela on 27th October 1915. Three weeks earlier, Angus had been commissioned as a Temporary 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers.

With his experience in mining engineering, it is perhaps no surprise that Angus served in the Engineers and like Captain John McClure, whose story featured earlier in these pages, he served in a Tunnelling Company, the 170th. Formed in February 1915 as one of the original Tunnelling Companies, the nucleus of the men were either civilian sewer-workers from Manchester who had been employed by the previously mentioned John Norton Griffiths (and were specialists in a particular type of excavating known as “clay kicking”) or former miners withdrawn from a number of Welsh Infantry Battalions.



MAP 9: The Allied Front line on the Western Front in 1915.
The area in which 170th Tunnelling Company were operating is ringed in red

Immediately following its formation, 170th Tunnelling Company was sent to the village of Givenchy in Northern France to undertake operations to counter enemy mining activity in that area. This was extremely dangerous work, with British and German miners constantly tunnelling alongside each other, laying large charges to obliterate the enemy’s galleries. Often, the two sides met underground, with vicious hand-to-hand fighting taking place in darkness underground.

In June 1915, 170th Tunnelling Company moved to nearby Cuinchy, to undertake operations around a German position known as “The Brickstacks” near the La Bassée Canal. In October, at the beginning of the Battle of Loos, two mines dug by the Company were blown under the “Hohenzollern Redoubt”, a substantial German strongpoint and the Company remained in this area for a considerable time, taking part in a number of mining operations in March 1916. Two months later they were placed in Reserve, where they remained for the remainder of the War, being called upon in April 1918 to help fight a serious fire at the town of Béthune.

In January 1915, the British introduced a new award for Gallantry for Officers, the Military Cross. On 1st June 1916, it was announced in the London Gazette that Angus had received this award “for conspicuous gallantry and good work”.



Temp. 2nd Lt. Angus Hamilton Campbell,
170th Tunnel'g. Coy., R.E.

For conspicuous gallantry and good work. He entered an enemy gallery and found a charge ready tamped. At great risk, before the leads were cut, he coolly removed the tamping and extracted 2,500 lbs. of high explosive.

As the citation accompanying the announcement confirmed, Angus had entered a German mine gallery underground and found an enemy mine ready to be fired. Removing the earth packed around the mine to direct the charge towards his own gallery – the tamping – Angus removed the 2,500 lbs of high explosive material at great risk to himself, knowing that, as the electrical leads were still intact, the mine could be fired at any moment.

A Military Cross and the citation for Angus that appeared in the London Gazette

With access to the surviving Service Record held at the National Archives not available at the time of writing, full details of the circumstances behind the wounds from which Angus is believed to have died remain to be ascertained. What is certain is that he passed away at the age of 44 on 12th March 1919 at Llandyrry House, Llandyrry in Carmarthenshire four months after the signing of the Armistice that ended the War on the Western Front.

A brief announcement in The Times confirmed the funeral would take place at St John's Church, Hampstead at 2.15 p.m. on Monday, 17th March 1919 with Angus then buried in the Burial Ground opposite the Church. His widow, Elizabeth, was granted Administration of his estate, which was valued at £225 10s 6d. She never remarried and survived her husband by nearly 53 years, passing away in Streetly, Staffordshire in February 1972.

BURIALS in the Parish of <u>Hampstead</u> in the County of <u>London</u> in the Year 19 <u>19</u> .				
NAME.	Abode.	When Buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed, or by whom Certificate was given under Burial Laws Amendment Act, 1880.
Maria Edith Penny No. 73	15 Elton Villa Hampstead	March 12 th 1919	64 Years	Leslie R Beckley Assistant Curate
Mary Ann Elizabeth Cunningham No. 74	18 Griffin Street Deal.	March 13 th 1919	83 Years	Leslie R Beckley Assistant Priest
Angus Hamilton Campbell No. 75	Llandyrry House Pembrey	March 17 th 1919	44 Years	Leslie R Beckley Assistant Priest

**The Burial Register for Hampstead St John Burial Ground,
showing the internment of Angus Campbell on 17th March 1919**



*Angus H. Campbell M.C.
Lieut. Royal Engineers
who died 12th March 1919*

***The headstone and memorial inscription of Angus Hamilton Campbell
at Hampstead St John Burial Ground***

Today, the grave of Lieutenant Angus Campbell is sadly neglected and difficult to identify. The cross on the headstone, bearing an image of the Military Cross has been removed from its plinth and lies on the grave itself, whilst rampant foliage has covered the site and also obscures the grave inscription. Once his name is revealed, however, Angus Hamilton Campbell can be remembered with honour once more.



VALEDICTION



*Take these men for your example
Like them, remember that prosperity can only be for the free
and that freedom is the sure possession
of those alone that have courage to defend it.*

Pericles' Funeral Oration to the Athenian Dead

