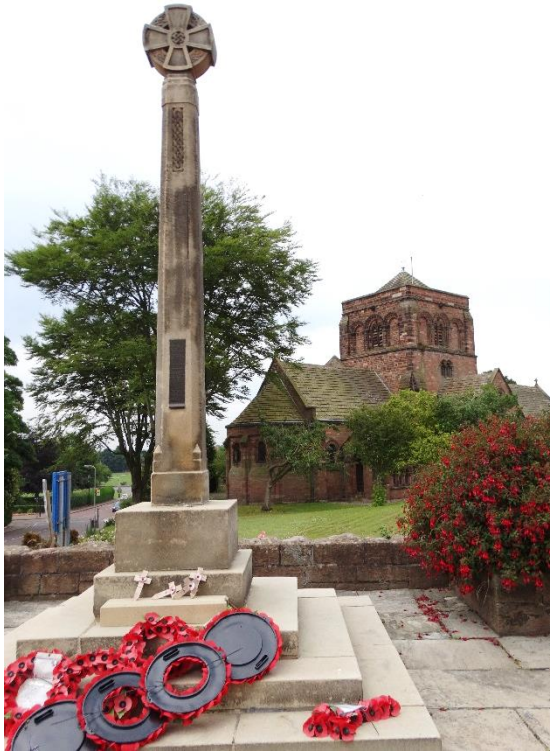
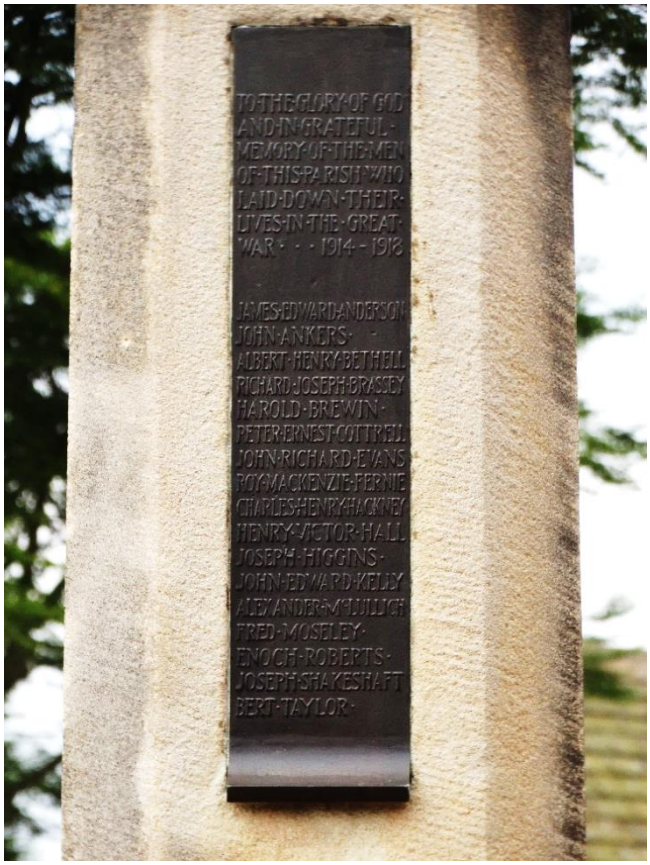
D: Thornton Hough



The slender Celtic-form war memorial cross stands adjacent to St George's URC Churchyard at the junction of St Georges Way and Thornton Common Road.
Three steps lead up to two plinths supporting the memorial.
The small, elongated, bronze plaque is embossed

> *To the Glory of God and in Grateful Memory of the Men of this Parish who laid down their lives in the Great War 1914-1918*

The names of seventeen men are then embossed, the first being James Edward Anderson who is commemorated also on the plaque at the Neston & Parkgate URC.
[See : **93: James Edward Anderson**]



The full list of names is:

James Edward ANDERSON
John ANKERS
Albert Henry BETHELL
Richard Joseph BRASSEY
Harold BREWIN
Peter Ernest COTTRELL
John Richard EVANS
Roy Mackenzie FERNIE
Charles Henry HACKNEY
Henry Victor HALL
Joseph HIGGINS
John Edward KELLY
Alexander McLULLICH
Fred MOSELEY
Enoch ROBERTS
Joseph SHAKESHAFT
Bert TAYLOR

The memorial appears to be a fine-grained sandstone, possibly from Darley Dale in Derbyshire. It is believed that the memorial was unveiled on 23 April 1921 at a ceremony attended by Lord Leverhulme.
In 2002, an approach was made to the War Memorials Trust for assistance with a conservation project as the memorial had become unstable and was in need of some renovation and cleaning. The memorial had to be removed and a new foundation of reinforced concrete was laid. A Small Grants Scheme award of £250 supported this project.

E: Hoylake & West Kirby War Memorial, Grange Hill, West Kirby

This prominent pale Cornish granite obelisk, on the summit of Grange Hill, is set amongst gorse scrubland and dominates the skyline inland of West Kirby.
The 13.6m memorial commemorates several groups, particularly

First World War dead (1914-1918) [334 names]
Second World War dead (1939-1945) [251 names]
Korean War dead (1950-1953) [1 name]
Cyprus Emergency dead (1955-1959) [1 name]
Iraq War (2003-2011) [1 name]
Afghanistan dead (2001-2014) [1 name]

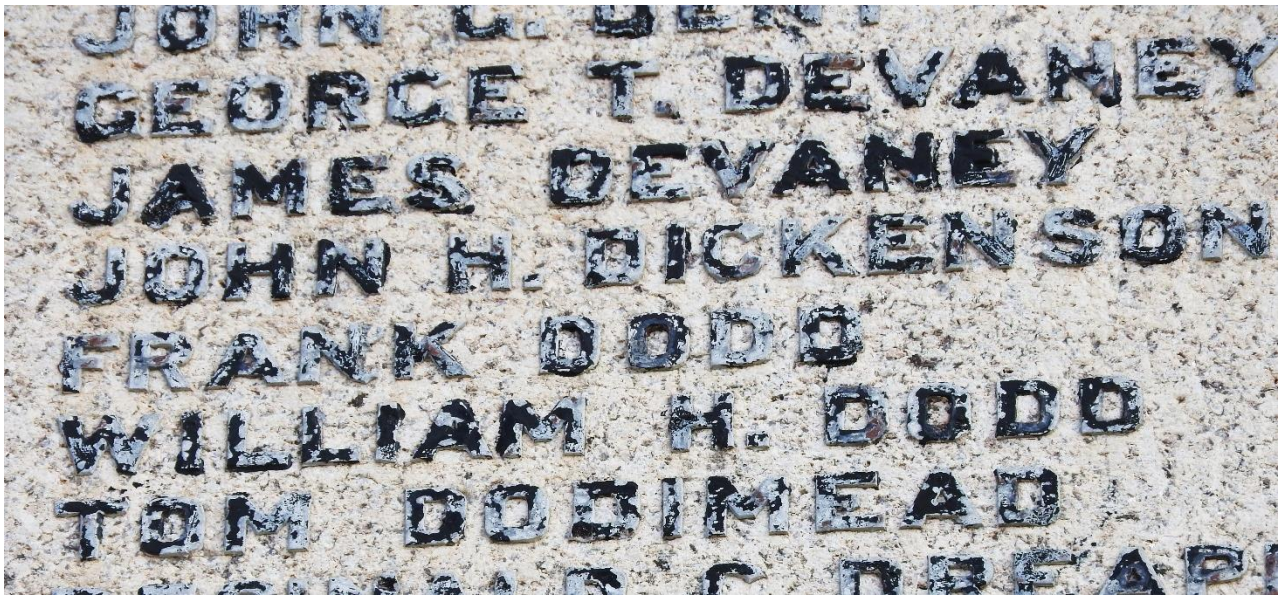
On two sides of the obelisk are standing bronze figures symbolising war and peace. On the west face is a figure of a hooded and robed woman with broken manacles [15]. On the east face stands a British infantry soldier dressed for winter and standing guard with standard issue .303 rifle, bayonet fixed, a gas mask, water bottle, putties and his helmet pushed off the back of his head, and a German helmet at his feet. Below this figure is the inscription: *In gratitude to God and to the men and women from these parts who laid down/ their lives in the Great War/ 1914 - 1919 --- 1939 - 1945. They were a wall unto us both by night and day.*

Around the obelisk, above the figures, is carved *Who stands if freedom falls, who dies if England lives* and there are further inscriptions on other sides.

Four men detailed in this work are commemorated on this memorial:

111: Arthur Tryweryn Apsimon
125: George Thomas Devaney
126: James Devaney
128: Tom Dodimead

[15] For a full description of the monument and sculptures see http://www.pmsa.org.uk/pmsa-database/5131/



As these extracts indicate, the letters appear to be metal inset into the granite.

The memorial is to the designs of the architects, Hall & Glover and the sculptor, Charles Sargeant Jagger (1885–1934), who also designed the Royal Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner in London. Jagger began the work at home whilst recovering from war wounds in 1917.

The memorial was unveiled on 16 Dec 1922 at a ceremony attended by the Earl of Birkenhead [16] with 5,000 people in attendance.

Following WW2, and the restructuring of the monument to include the names of those lost in that war, it was unveiled on 22 October 1949 at a ceremony attended by The Right Honourable Viscount Leverhulme (as Lord Lieutenant of the County of Chester) and Dr. D.H. Crick, the Bishop of Chester.

[16] Earl of Birkenhead was a title created in 1922 for the noted lawyer and Conservative politician Frederick Edwin Smith, 1st Viscount Birkenhead. He was Solicitor-General in 1915, Attorney-General from 1915 to 1919 and Lord High Chancellor from 1919 to 1922. Smith had already been created Baron Birkenhead in 1919, Viscount Birkenhead of Birkenhead in 1921, and was made Viscount Furneaux, of Charlton in the County of Northampton, at the same time as he was given the earldom.

F: The Port Sunlight War Memorial

This imposing granite and bronze memorial - one of the largest and finest in Britain - is located by the roundabout between The Causeway, Queen Mary's Drive and King George's Drive in Port Sunlight village.
As early as 1916 William Lever commissioned the Welsh sculptor Sir William Goscombe John RA to design a war memorial, consisting of a granite runic cross with bronze statues and reliefs. It was completed and unveiled on 3 December 1921 by two of his employees who had served in the war, Sergeant Eames (blinded on The Somme) and Private Robert Cruickshank (who had been awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions in Palestine).

The figures were cast at the foundry of A. B. Burton at Thames Ditton, and the memorial was built by William Kirkpatrick Limited of Manchester. Over 4,000 of Lever's employees had served in the war and, of these, 503 had been killed. Initially it had been planned that the names of all those who had served would be incorporated in the memorial, but this was impractical, and only the names of those killed were included.

The Imperial War Museum describes the memorial as

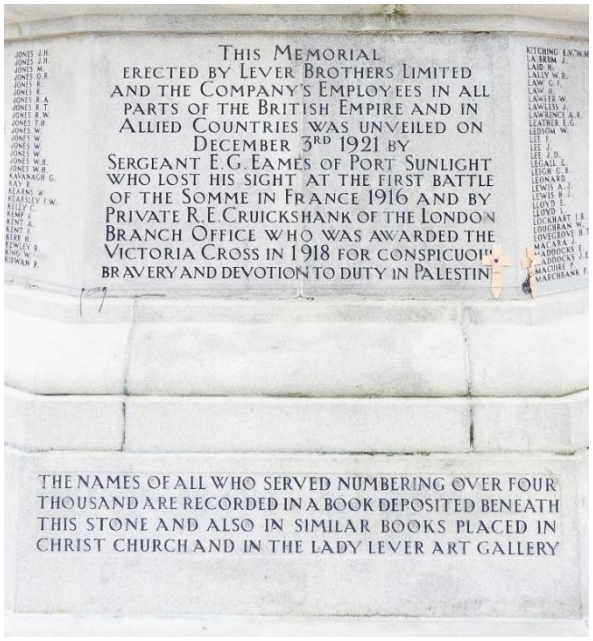
> *Cross on octagonal podium with eleven surrounding figures and twelve relief panels. Steps to north, south, east and west. Sculpture depicts the defence of the home. Freestanding figures comprise three soldiers, two women and six children. Surrounding the base there are four round-headed, high-relief panels depicting different forces in action- Red Cross (ambulance men with wounded soldiers), Land (gunners), Sea (sailors) and Air Forces. At the end of each set of steps, there are two high-relief panels with four children (two boys and two girls) offering wreath to the soldier as a sign of gratitude.*

with the inscriptions

THEIR NAMES SHALL LIVE / FOR EVER AND / THEIR GLORY / SHALL NOT BE/ BLOTTED OUT

South panel:

North panel:



On the Wall surrounding the central platform: *DULCE ET DECORUM EST PRO PATRIA MORI / THEIR NAME SHALL REMAIN FOR EVER AND/THEIR GLORY SHALL NOT BE BLOTTED OUT*
Reverse of wall: *TO OUR GLORIOUS DEAD*

The monument carries 511 names from WW1 and a further 117 from WW2 [17].

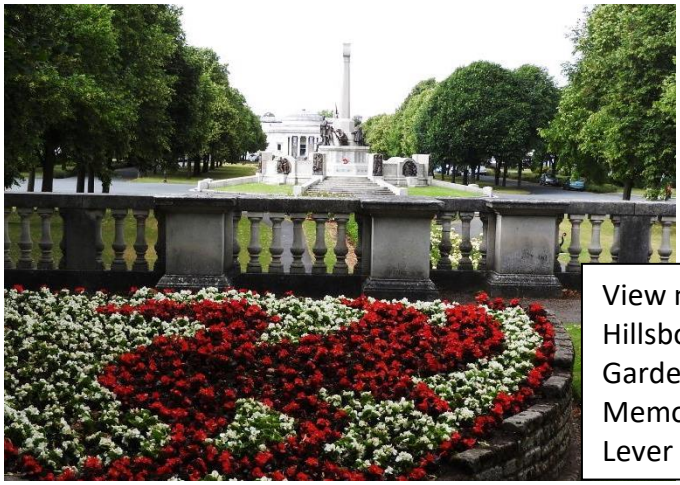
At least two men from Neston, detailed in this work and listed on the Neston Parish Church memorial tablets), are commemorated on the Port Sunlight memorial:

28: Samuel Mark Duddridge MM
60: Edward Lloyd

Following the inclusion of the names of those who died in WW2, the monument was again unveiled on 3 December 1921 at a ceremony attended by Private Robert Edward Cruickshank VC.

The memorial received a grant for its restoration in 2005 by the War Memorial Trust and is now designated a Grade 1 Listed Building.

The War Memorial from the north (above), the east (left) and the north west (below)



View north from the Hillsborough Memorial Garden over the War Memorial to the Lady Lever Art Gallery

[17] A fuller description of the memorial, with photographs, can be read at
(a) http://www.victorianweb.org/sculpture/john/14.html
(b) https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1343491
(c) https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/121234
(d) http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Cheshire/PortSunlight.html
A complete list of names on the memorial can be found at http://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/1278

G: The Gamon and Logan Windows, Chester Cathedral

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chester_Cathedral,_Cloister_window_Gamon_Family.JPG

The East Cloister of Chester Cathedral contains a stained glass window dedicated to the Gamon family of Chester.

The Imperial War Museum gives the following description

> FOUR-LIGHT STAINED GLASS WINDOW WITH FIGURES IN EACH LIGHT FIGURES OF ST MATTHIAS, ST DAVID, ST CHAD AND ST PERPETUA DEPICTED IN THE LIGHTS. BADGE OF THE 5TH BATTALION CHESHIRE REGIMENT IN THE SECOND LIGHT AND ROYAL FLYING CORPS MOTTO IN THE 3RD LIGHT

with the inscription

> 2ND AND 3RD LIGHTS: THIS WINDOW IS DEDICATED IN LOVING MEMORY OF SYDNEY PERCIVAL GAMON, CAPTAIN / 5TH BATTN CHESHIRE REGIMENT, PILOT ROYAL FLYING CORPS WHO WAS KILLED WHILST / ENGAGED IN THE AERIAL DEFENCE OF LONDON MARCH 23RD 1918, AGED 23. 4TH LIGHT: ALSO / TO REMEMBER / GEOFFREY A. P. GAMON / BORN JANUARY 5TH 1901 / ACCIDENTALLY KILLED / IN CAIRO OCT 24TH / 1934

Buried at Neston Cemetery, this inscription commemorates Sydney Percival Gamon who is detailed in this work (**32: Sydney Percival Gamon**).

The window, designed and executed by Gilbert Percival Gamon, was dedicated on 25 May 1922 at a ceremony attended by the Dean of Chester.

In the West Cloister of Chester Cathedral a window commemorates **149: Edward Townshend Logan**. The inscription reads:

EDWARD TOWNSHEND LOGAN D.S.O. LT. COLONEL / THE CHESHIRE REGIMENT WHO FELL GLORIOUSLY AT / LOOS SEPTEMBER 26 1915 IN COMMAND OF A / BATTALION OF THE DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY / IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE FOR HIS EXAMPLE

https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/245932/

Ⓔ Why aren't all war fatalities recorded on memorial plaques?

Of the 173 men detailed in this work [January 2021] only 109 (63%) are commemorated on the plaques in Neston and Burton, although another three are commemorated at Willaston. Whilst many of those who are not commemorated locally had little, or no, connection to Neston or Burton at the time of their death, others had a significant connection. Six examples are:

116: James Bell – whilst born in Gayton James lived in Neston for most of his life with his parents James, a blacksmith, and Martha.

123: William La Touche Congreve – born at Burton Hall, Billy was killed near Longueval on 20 July 1916, an action for which he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. Indeed, Billy Congreve was the first officer in the Great War to earn all three medals, the VC, DSO and MC and was mentioned in despatches on 5 occasions. Although, after a long residency, the Congreve family had moved from Burton in 1903 [18] it is somewhat surprising that Billy was not commemorated in the Parish Church.

143: William Kemp – born in Leighton to general labourer William and Margaret Kemp, William was serving on HMS *Eaglet* when he died on 1 October 1918 [19] shortly before the end of the war. Although William's parents had moved to Birkenhead by the time of his death, William is buried at St Winefride's.

144: Arthur Leighton – recognised by the CWGC and buried at Neston Cemetery, Arthur (who was born in Flintshire) lived in Neston and was severely wounded at Gallipoli in August 1915. Discharged as being no longer physically fit for war service in May 1916 Arthur died in Neston on 1 November 1918 just ten days before the Armistice.

149: Samuel Milner – a house painter, the son of Parkgate fisherman William and Charlotte Milner, Samuel lived at Colliery Cottages in Little Neston. In April 1918 Samuel was taken as a prisoner of war by the Germans having suffered a severe gunshot wound. Repatriated, he returned to Neston - his wounds and health probably prevented him from returning to work - and he died on 8 January 1920. He is buried in Neston churchyard.

159: Joseph Smith – is not recognised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission although he died in Neston in June 1918 from medical conditions exacerbated by his active army service. Born in Bromborough, the son of stonecutter/labourer William and Jane Smith of Neston, Joseph was recorded in 1911 (aged 14) as an agricultural labourer living with his father at New Houses in Ness [20]. Joseph was discharged from the army as being medically unfit in January 1916, when he was aged 19 years 8 months.

Why an individual is not locally commemorated is often impossible to determine but is a matter within most communities in the UK [21]

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[18] Walter Norris Congreve, Billy's father, sold the Burton estate for around £80 000 on 2 February 1903. This ended the Congreve domination of the village which had begun in 1753 when the Reverend Richard Congreve obtained the lease of the estate. In 1903 the village passed to Henry Neville Gladstone and in September 1904 Walter Norris Congreve, who was living in Ireland as the aide-de-camp to the Duke of Connaught, bought Chartley Castle in Staffordshire as the new family home.

[19] The circumstances of his death, possibly as a result of illness, are not known.

[20] New Houses, a now-demolished terrace constructed and owned by the colliery, sat alongside the track (New Houses Lane) leading from Well Lane in Ness to the colliery workings on the flanks of the Dee. In 1911 William Smith, Joseph's widowed father, was recorded as a labourer in the building trade; this suggests that he may have been employed by the colliery.

[21] See http://ukwarmemorials.org/faqs/ and https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/faq/ for details of UK War Memorials.

Some of the main reasons for omission [22] may be considered to be:

- an error, lack of knowledge or poor communication. Most memorials and plaques were constructed and erected within three years following the Armistice of November 1918 and accurate information on casualties was not always available - there was no centralised, officially-approved, list of casualties available. The names of local casualties were known only through local knowledge, word of mouth, newspaper reports (commonly inaccurate), published obituaries, family announcements in the press, church publications and a disparate array of other (commonly unverifiable) resources. The processes used in gathering the information and agreeing the names to be honoured is now commonly lost. Additionally, it is known that names were sometimes known but then omitted in error; for example (concerning the residents of Hoylake and West Kirby), 37 names which were listed as casualties in *The Hoylake and West Kirby News and Advertiser* of 22 December 1922 do not appear on the Grange Hill Memorial at West Kirby [23].

- families may not have wished for a name to be shown on a memorial or plaque [24].

- many memorial tablets and plaques were funded by subscription from the bereaved families - names were included only if the family had paid for this service.

- memorials frequently covered a specified date-range, and there was no consistency in this. Many UK memorials are dated 1914 - 1918, suggesting that they cover the period from the declaration of war (4 August 1914) to the Armistice of 11 November 1918. The Thornton Hough memorial has this date range.

Although others often have a commencement date of 4 August 1914 the end-date can be

- 28 June 1919, the date of signing of the peace treaty (the Treaty of Versailles) drawn up by the nations attending the Paris Peace Conference which officially ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied Powers. The Neston War Memorial, the memorial window in Neston Parish Church, the memorial tablets at the URC and in Burton church, the Willaston War Memorial and the Port Sunlight Memorial all bear the dates 1914 – 1919. Locally, therefore, a combatant who died after 28 June 1919 will not be recognised on a memorial and this will include

  120: John Cameron (died 8 June 1921)
  121: John W. Cartmel (died 20 September 1920)
  124: Robert Singlehurst Cross (died 2 January 1920)
  149: Samuel Milner (died 8 January 1920)

- 31 August 1921 - whilst the Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918 the formal end of the war with Germany was determined to be 10 January 1920 and the date of 31 August 1921 was accepted for other purposes and by some other authorities

[22] The information given here is, in part, generalized and may not apply to the memorials and plaques in Neston, Burton and adjacent areas.
[23] Ironically, of these 37 'omitted' names, at least four have been shown to be errors! Of these four, one man's surname has been shown to be incorrect and the other three survived the war, one surviving until 1962 and another until 1983.
[24] Conversely, a name may be commemorated on a war memorial in a place where that individual had no personal connection but where a close surviving family member lived.

(including the Commonwealth War Graves Commission) [25]. Since this work follows the CWGC criteria several combatants are included who died well after the 1918 Armistice and the Treaty of Versailles.

- at the time when some memorials were being commissioned, some combatants were still categorised officially as *missing in action* rather than known to have died.

- memorials may commemorate only those whom, it was determined, lost their lives on the battlefield. Only those men who died in action, or as a direct and immediate result of war-inflicted wounds, would then be recognised and those who died as a consequence of accident, illness or medical complications which developed later would not be honoured. Such memorials also disregarded men who died in training, particularly if they never saw active service overseas.

- public-funded memorials were often established by an organising committee and it was a responsibility of this committee to determine who they wished to commemorate. The criteria for inclusion on such memorials was established locally but may include identifying geographical boundaries for birth and habitation, the religious persuasion of the combatant (and regular church-goers were more likely to be included on parish memorials) and the known or presumed wishes of the next-of-kin. Some committees omitted men who, although they may have been born locally and still had family in the area, were serving with overseas units (such as Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Indian, South African or non-Commonwealth forces) when they died. Men serving with the Merchant Navy (Mercantile Marines) may, or may not, have been included; some memorials honoured civilian casualties, British Red Cross workers, Army Cadet Force recruits, Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses and staff, Church Army personnel and similar organisations. Even with publicly-funded memorials, a financial donation from the family was sometimes required.

Ⓕ Why, sometimes, are there anomalies in the data?

Anomalies and inconsistencies in the information relating to an individual combatant can be found at all levels, from the records maintained by the military to the inscriptions on memorials and gravestones. The military kept detailed records on each individual and these were updated as necessary, documents often being duplicated (sometimes with transcription errors), overwritten and sometimes with sections deleted or amended. Not all relevant information made its way onto these documents and omissions of upgrading or change of rank could lead to individuals being incorrectly paid or widows being assigned the wrong pension.

Information provided by an individual on joining the military included his name, age, place of birth, occupation on enlistment and marital status and this was written by an official from the verbal statement of the serviceman. Clearly, even at this initial stage, there was the opportunity for error - the official completing the form may have misheard or

[25] Under the Termination of the Present War (Definition) Act 1918, a number of different dates were agreed for the end of hostilities. For example, the war with Turkey did not formally end until 6 August 1924.

misunderstood a surname, or written an incorrect phonetic version of this, or misinterpreted a place of birth or occupation [26]. It is also apparent that inaccurate information could be given by the recruit, either in error or by design. Both age and place of birth were quite commonly at odds with the same information given on other records (such as census returns and birth and baptism records) and is well known that recruits would sometimes falsify their age in order to be accepted.

An interesting local case - he survived the war - is that of Harry Hitchmough, alias Henry Cameron, whose story is worth outlining briefly:

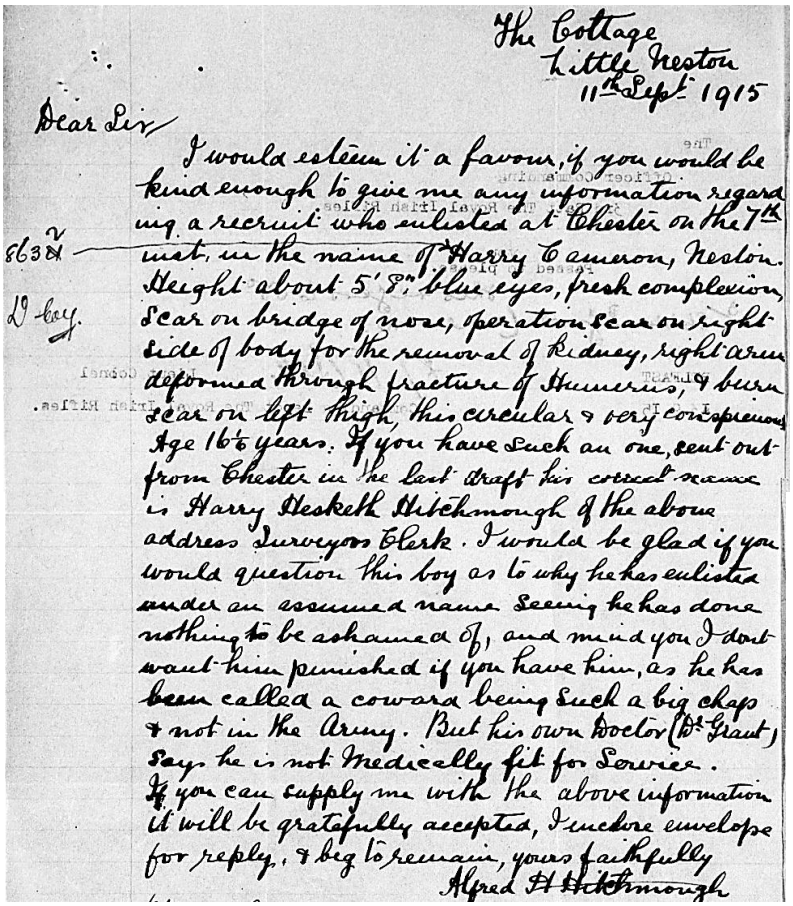
Harry Hesketh Hitchmough attested in Liverpool on 19 April 1915 giving his age as 19 and his address as Little Neston. Harry, a surveyor's clerk, was a son of Bessie and Alfred Hesketh Hitchmough, a house painter and decorator of Town Lane and an active member of the local Red Cross working at the military hospital in Parkgate. Harry's birth was registered in the July/September quarter of 1899 so that, in April 1915, he would have been aged 15¾ at most. Accepted by the army (and declared 'fit subject to dental treatment'), Harry was enlisted for the Royal Garrison Artillery unit based at Lytham but was discharged on 24 April (after just 6 days' service) under King's Regulations 392 (vi) - *Having made a mis-statement as to age on enlistment (a) Soldier under 17 years of age at date of application for discharge.*

Undeterred, Harry - still underage - again attested (now for the Royal Irish Rifles) on 7 August 1915 in Chester, this time under the assumed name of Henry Cameron. On this occasion he said his age was 19 years 7 days and, whilst still stating that he lived in Little Neston, changed his father's name to John Cameron and his occupation to groom.
A month later, on 7 September, Harry (alias Henry Cameron) was formally enlisted with the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles in Belfast. However, within a few days Harry's father became aware of what was happening and wrote twice to the Royal Irish Rifles stating the position and enclosing Harry's birth certificate and an undated letter from his GP, Dr Lewis Grant [27], to prove that not only was Harry underage but was also considered to be unfit for army service as he had previously had an operation to remove a ruptured kidney.

Alfred Hitchmough had been a Battery Sergeant Major in the 4th Battalion Horse Artillery and, being aware of the army's procedures, was not prepared to allow his son to serve with the military until he reached the approved age.

[26] For example, there are at least 43 places in Britain which are, or contain, the name *Burton* – and the small settlement of Burton near Duddon, west of Tarporley, just adds to the local confusion. And then there's *Buerton*, about 7 miles south of Nantwich! Fortunately, the only other Neston in the UK is the small village some 2 miles south of Corsham, Wiltshire; there does not seem to be any confusion between these two places in the records although instances are known where *Neston* has been confused with *Preston*! Several cases where Parkgate has been confused with the suburb of Rotherham, Yorkshire, with the same name are known. [See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_Kingdom_locations:]

[27] Lewis Grant was one of several Scottish doctors who moved into practice in Neston and during WW1 he was active in training the ambulance corps which assisted the Parkgate military hospital. He was the medical officer to Mostyn House School and the Parkgate Convalescent Home, the deputy medical officer and public vaccinator for the Neston district, and became the Deputy Medical Officer for Clatterbridge Workhouse. Dr Grant died in Cerrig-y-drudion on 24 March 1950 aged 80.



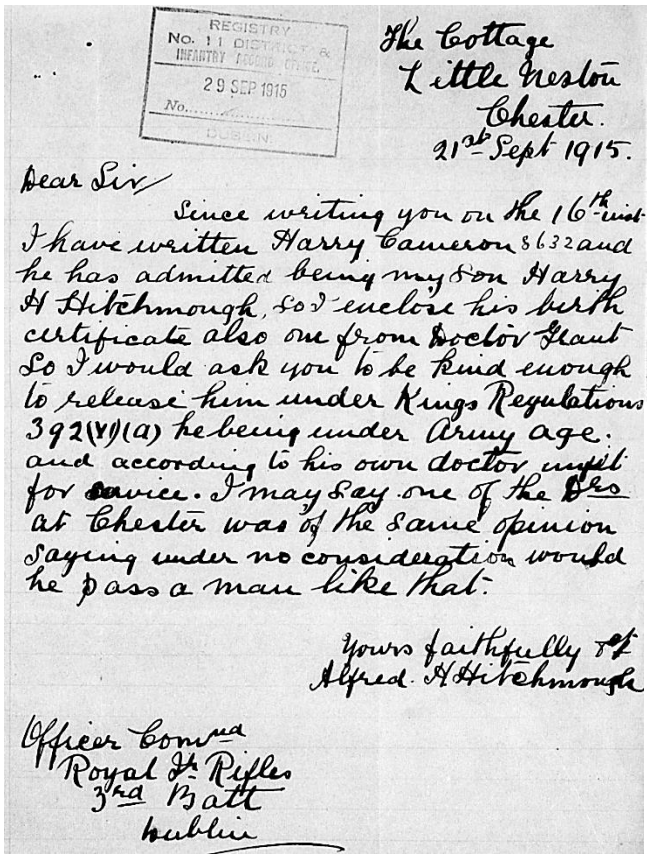
The Cottage
Little Neston
11th Sept 1915

Dear Sir

I would esteem it a favour, if you would be kind enough to give me any information regarding a recruit who enlisted at Chester on the 7th inst. in the name of Harry Cameron, Neston. Height about 5' 8", blue eyes, fresh complexion, scar on bridge of nose, operation scar on right side of body for the removal of Kidney, right arm deformed through fracture of Humerus, & burn scar on left thigh, this circular & very conspicuous Age 16½ years. If you have such an one, sent out from Chester in the last draft his correct name is Harry Hesketh Hitchmough of the above address Surveyors Clerk. I would be glad if you would question this boy as to why he has enlisted under an assumed name seeing he has done nothing to be ashamed of, and mind you I dont want him punished if you have him, as he has been called a coward being such a big chap & not in the Army. But his own Doctor (Dr Grant) says he is not Medically fit for Service. If you can supply me with the above information it will be gratefully accepted, I enclose envelope for reply, & beg to remain, yours faithfully

Alfred H Hitchmough

8638 V
19 boy.



REGISTRY
No. 11 DISTRICT
INFANTRY RECORD OFFICE
29 SEP 1915
No.
DUBLIN

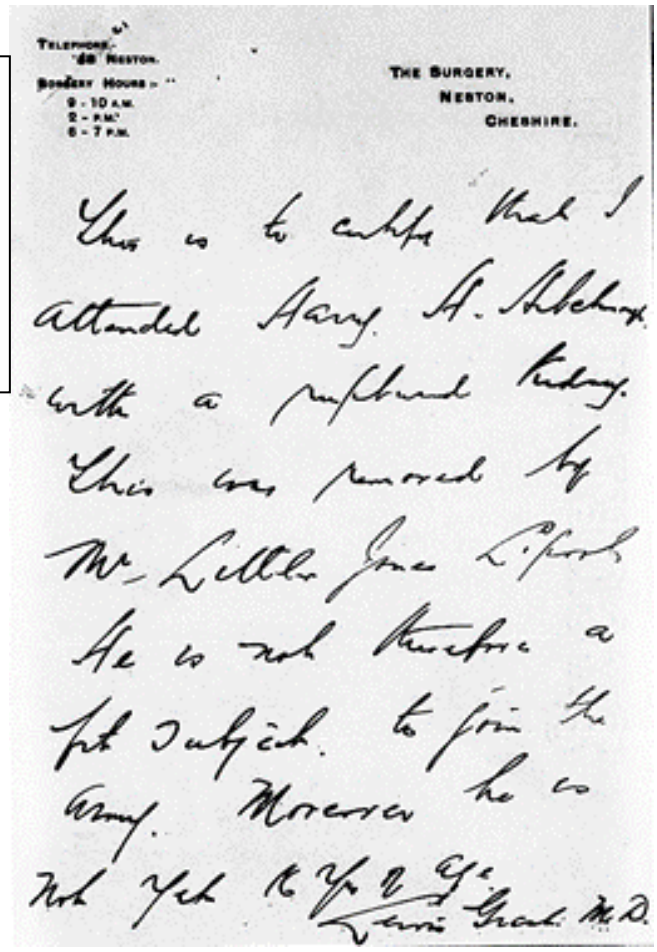
The Cottage
Little Neston
Chester.
21st Sept 1915.

Dear Sir

Since writing you on the 16th inst. I have written Harry Cameron 8632 and he has admitted being my son Harry H Hitchmough, so I enclose his birth certificate also one from Doctor Grant So I would ask you to be kind enough to release him under Kings Regulations 392(V)(a) he being under Army age. and according to his own doctor unfit for service. I may say one of the Drs at Chester was of the same opinion saying under no consideration would he pass a man like that.

Yours faithfully &c
Alfred H Hitchmough

Officer Comdg
Royal Irish Rifles
3rd Batt
Dublin



TELEPHONE: "28" NESTON.
SURGERY HOURS:
9 - 10 A.M.
2 - P.M.
6 - 7 P.M.

THE SURGERY,
NESTON,
CHESHIRE.

This is to certify that I attended Harry H. Hitchmough with a ruptured kidney. This was removed by Mr Littler Jones Liverpool He is not therefore a fit subject to join the Army. Moreover he is not yet 16 yrs of age.

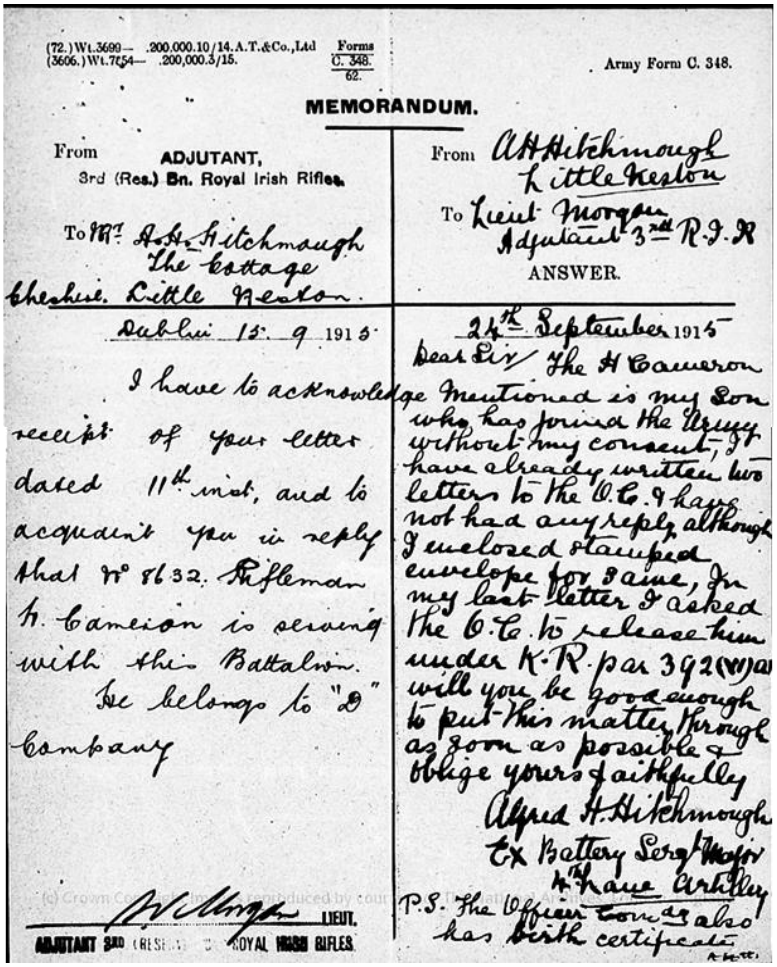
Lewis Grant M.D.

This is to certify that I attended Harry H. Hitchmough with a ruptured kidney. This was removed by Mr Littler Jones, L'pool.
He is not therefore a fit subject to join the army. Moreover, he is not yet 16 years of age. Lewis Grant M.D.
[Note: In 1920 Major T.C. Littler Jones was recorded as the Senior Surgeon at the Liverpool Merchants'

Following his father's intervention, and after signing a formal Declaration, Harry was discharged from the Royal Irish Rifles in Dublin on 4 October 1915 after 59 days service.

His father believed that, as he was considered to be a well-built boy who looked older than his age, Harry had joined the military as a reaction to having being called a coward and questioned repeatedly as to why he wasn't in the army.

It is uncertain whether he actually saw active service in WW1 but Alfred Hitchmough died on 9 February 1932, aged 63, and was buried at Neston churchyard.
No record of Harry having married has been found but he died in the Birmingham area in early 1952 aged 52.



(72.)Wt.3690— .200.000.10/14.A.T.&Co.,Ltd Forms
(3606.)Wt.7254— .200,000.3/15. C. 348.
62.

Army Form C. 348.

MEMORANDUM.

From ADJUTANT,
3rd (Res.) Bn. Royal Irish Rifles.

To Mr. Alf. Hitchmough
The Cottage
Cheshire. Little Neston.

Dublin 15. 9 1915

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 11th inst, and to acquaint you in reply that No 8632. Rifleman H. Cameron is serving with this Battalion. He belongs to "D" Company

LIEUT.
ADJUTANT 3RD (RES.) ROYAL IRISH RIFLES.

From Alf Hitchmough
Little Neston

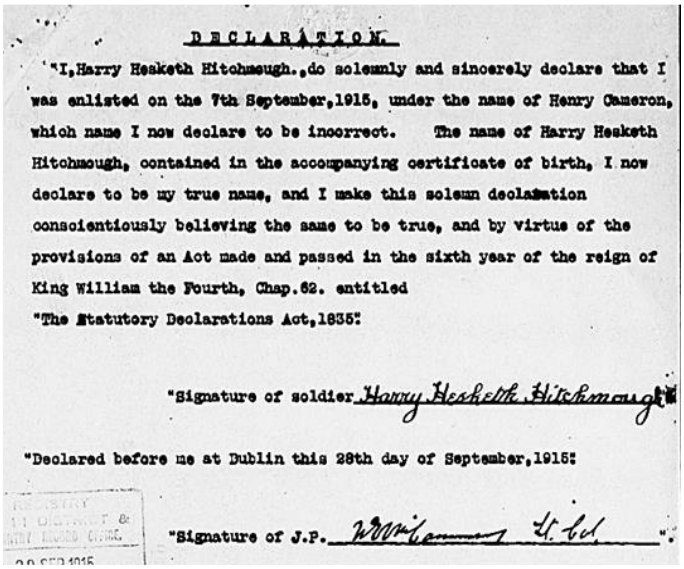
To Lieut Morgan
Adjutant 3rd R.I.R

ANSWER.

24th September 1915

Dear Sir/ The H Cameron Mentioned is my Son who has joined the Army without my consent, I have already written two letters to the O.C. & have not had any reply although I enclosed stamped envelope for same, In my last letter I asked the O.C. to release him under K.R. par 392(xvi) will you be good enough to put this matter through as soon as possible & oblige yours faithfully
Alfred H. Hitchmough
Ex Battery Sergt Major
4th Lancs Artillery

P.S. The Officer forgot to say also has birth certificate



DECLARATION.

"I, Harry Hesketh Hitchmough, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I was enlisted on the 7th September, 1915, under the name of Henry Cameron, which name I now declare to be incorrect. The name of Harry Hesketh Hitchmough, contained in the accompanying certificate of birth, I now declare to be my true name, and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of an Act made and passed in the sixth year of the reign of King William the Fourth, Chap.62. entitled
"The Statutory Declarations Act, 1835:

"Signature of soldier Harry Hesketh Hitchmough

"Declared before me at Dublin this 28th day of September, 1915:

"Signature of J.P. W. Morgan Lt. Col.

It was not unusual for servicemen in the army to be moved between battalions, or even between regiments, and for Service Numbers and rank to change. Whilst these changes were normally documented within the Service Record, this information was commonly slow in being communicated to their families or next-of-kin particularly when the serviceman died abroad and in battle. When memorials indicate rank and/or regiment, it is not uncommon for this information to be out-of-date; a few such anomalies from Neston and Burton will suffice:

4: George William Ashworth - shown as a Sergeant with the Gordon Highlanders on the Burton memorial. This was the regiment with which he served previously and before he became the Assistant Director of Medical Service H.Q. 3rd Div., Army Service Corps.

40: Benjamin Hughes - on the Neston memorial he is recorded as a Lance Corporal although other documents and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records him as a Private.

45: Fred Gordon Jones - shown as Private G. Jones on the Neston memorial although believed to be a Lance Corporal.

53: William Taylor Kerns MM - shown on the Neston memorial as a Quarter Master Sergeant although believed to be a Company Sergeant Major.

100: Hugh Bell - shown as a Private on the Burton memorial but known to have been a Sergeant when he died.

102: Joseph Buckle - shown as a Private with the Pembroke Yeomanry on the Burton memorial although he was serving with the 13th Battalion East Lancashire Regiment when he died.

Less understandable are the anomalies in spelling and dates which are found sometimes on gravestones and memorials although these are probably transliteration or communication errors. Local anomalies of this form include:

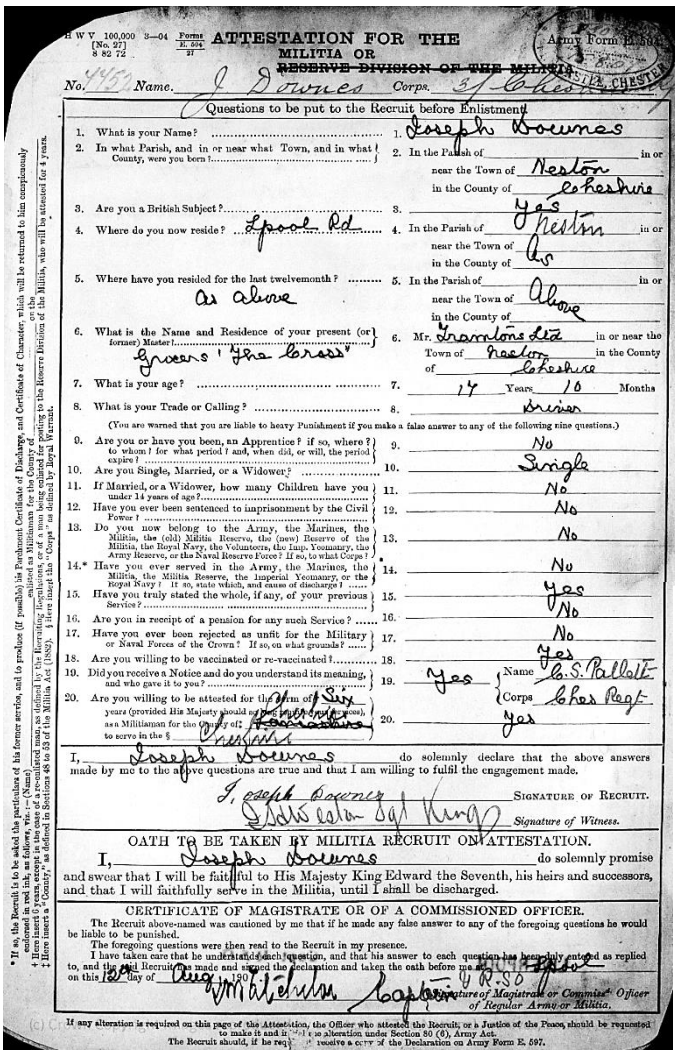
61: Samuel Mealor – his 'official' date of death (corroborated from the newspaper reports and other records) was recorded as 3 November 1917 yet his headstone in Neston churchyard records his date of death as being 3 January 1918. The entry in the Burial Register of Neston parish church records that he was buried on 7 November 1917 and that he died in the King George Hospital in Lambeth. There is no other record of a Neston man of this name dying in early 1918.

83: John William Thackery (Thackwray) – the surname is inscribed, incorrectly, on the Neston memorial as Private W. *Thackery.*

106: Frank Medlicott (Meddlicott) – the surname is inscribed, incorrectly, on the Burton memorial as *Medlicott*.

Ⓖ Attestation, enlistment, conscription, basic training and mobilisation – what do these mean?

Attestation [28] was an essential, initial, stage for anyone wishing to join the armed forces and was simply a requirement for the prospective serviceman to swear an oath of allegiance to the King in front of the officer conducting the entry interview. This oath, signed by the entrant and the officer, formed part of the Service Record, two copies of which had to be signed. Although there was some variation in the Attestation Form the overall format remained similar and Commonwealth countries used a form similar to that of Britain. The completed forms for **27: Joseph Downes** (UK) and **30: Edwin Evans DCM** (Canada) may be taken as examples. As noted previously (Footnote 29) the British army attestation form B.111 [29] had 20 questions of which only 9 had to be answered truthfully - a false statement could lead to a penalty of two years' hard labour. The first eight questions, including the recruit's name, birthplace, residence, age and occupation could be answered falsely without fear of retribution. There was no requirement for the recruit to provide any evidence to substantiate these responses and the army did not feel it necessary for the recruitment officers to verify or query any response. The questions which the army *did* feel



ATTESTATION FOR THE MILITIA OR ~~RESERVE DIVISION OF THE MILITIA~~

Army Form B. 111

No. 4459 Name. J. Downes Corps. 3rd Cheshire

Questions to be put to the Recruit before Enlistment

1. What is your Name?	1.	Joseph Downes
2. In what Parish, and in or near what Town, and in what County, were you born?	2.	In the Parish of Neston in or near the Town of in the County of Cheshire
3. Are you a British Subject?	3.	Yes
4. Where do you now reside? 4 pool Rd	4.	In the Parish of Chester in or near the Town of in the County of
5. Where have you resided for the last twelvemonth? As above	5.	In the Parish of in or near the Town of Above in the County of
6. What is the Name and Residence of your present (or former) Master? Grocers 'The Cross'	6.	Mr. Dramlons Ltd in or near the Town of Neston in the County of Cheshire
7. What is your age?	7.	17 Years 10 Months
8. What is your Trade or Calling?	8.	Grocer

(You are warned that you are liable to heavy Punishment if you make a false answer to any of the following nine questions.)

9. Are you or have you been, an Apprentice? if so, where? to whom? for what period? and, when did, or will, the period expire?	9.	No
10. Are you Single, Married, or a Widower?	10.	Single
11. If Married, or a Widower, how many Children have you under 14 years of age?	11.	No
12. Have you ever been sentenced to imprisonment by the Civil Power?	12.	No
13. Do you now belong to the Army, the Marines, the Militia, the (old) Militia Reserve, the (new) Reserve of the Militia, the Royal Navy, the Volunteers, the Imp. Yeomanry, the Army Reserve, or the Naval Reserve Force? If so, to what Corps?	13.	No
14.* Have you ever served in the Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Imperial Yeomanry, or the Royal Navy? If so, state which, and cause of discharge?	14.	No
15. Have you truly stated the whole, if any, of your previous Service?	15.	Yes
16. Are you in receipt of a pension for any such Service?	16.	No
17. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for the Military or Naval Forces of the Crown? If so, on what grounds?	17.	No
18. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated?	18.	Yes
19. Did you receive a Notice and do you understand its meaning, and who gave it to you?	19.	Yes Name L.S. Pallott Corps Ches Regt
20. Are you willing to be attested for the term of Six years (provided His Majesty should so long require your services), as a Militiaman for the County of: Cheshire to serve in the § Cheshire	20.	Yes

I, Joseph Downes do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true and that I am willing to fulfil the engagement made.

Joseph Downes — Signature of Recruit.

L.S. Pallott Sgt Witness — Signature of Witness.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MILITIA RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

I, Joseph Downes do solemnly promise and swear that I will be faithful to His Majesty King Edward the Seventh, his heirs and successors, and that I will faithfully serve in the Militia, until I shall be discharged.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR OF A COMMISSIONED OFFICER.

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the foregoing questions he would be liable to be punished.

The foregoing questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me at [illegible] on this 12 day of Aug 190[illegible]

W. H. Clutton Captain 4 R.S.O. — Signature of Magistrate or Commissioned Officer of Regular Army or Militia.

If any alteration is required on this page of the Attestation, the Officer who attested the Recruit, or a Justice of the Peace, should be requested to make it and initial it. No alteration under Section 80 (6), Army Act.

The Recruit should, if he requires it, receive a copy of the Declaration on Army Form E. 597.

* If so, the Recruit is to be asked the particulars of his former service, and to produce (if possible) his Parchment Certificate of Discharge, and Certificate of Character, which will be returned to him conspicuously on production, as well as any Certificate of Good Conduct granted to him on discharge.

† Here insert "5 years, except in the case of a pre-enlisted man, who should be attested for the term for which he is transferred to the Militia."

‡ Here insert a "County," as defined by Section 48 (3) of the Militia Act (1882).

§ Here insert the "Corps" as defined by Royal Warrant.

H W V 100,000 3—04 Forms E. 594 27 8 82 72

[28] The information given here relates to the army rather than to other military Services where the procedures may have been different in detail.

[29] Army Form B111 was introduced in December 1899 with an initial print run of 80,000 forms. It was aimed at members of the Volunteer Force and specifically for the war in South Africa. Variations of this form, and the wording, were also used.

required truthful answers (*You are warned that you are liable to heavy Punishment if you make a false answer to any of the following nine questions*) somewhat bizarrely included *Are you or have you been, an Apprentice?* Oddly, having answered these 20 questions, the recruit then had to sign the declaration that

> *I, …… do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true and that I am willing to fulfil the engagement made.*

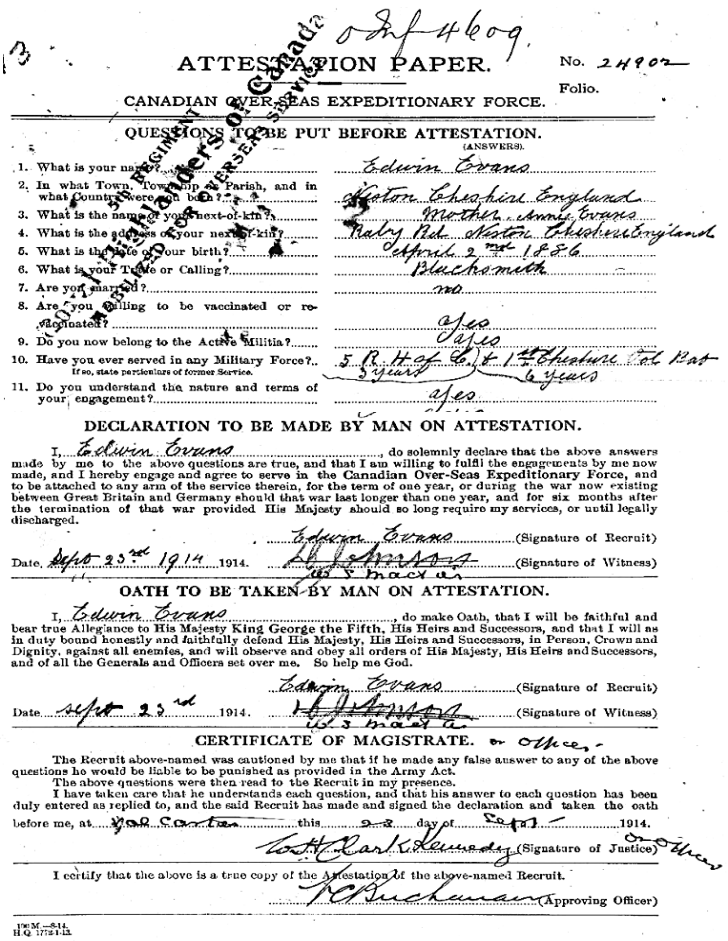
Having signed, the form was then counter-signed by a witness, commonly one of the recruiting officers.

Then came the *Oath to be taken by the Recruit on Attestation,* again signed by the recruit:

> *I,…… do solemnly promise and swear that I will be faithful to His Majesty King Edward the Seventh, his heirs and successors, and that I will faithfully serve in the Militia, until I shall be discharged.*

Finally, the Attestation was signed-off by a Magistrate (rarely) or a Commissioned Officer

> *The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the foregoing questions he would be liable to be punished.*
> *The foregoing questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.*
> *I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me at …… on this ……. day of ……. 19…….*
> *……. Signature of the Magistrate or Commiss[d.] Officer of Regular Army or Militia.*



ATTESTATION PAPER. No. 24902

Folio.

CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION. (ANSWERS).

1. What is your name? — Edwin Evans
2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what Country were you born? — Keston Cheshire England
3. What is the name of your next-of-kin? — Mother Annie Evans
4. What is the address of your next-of-kin? — Baby Rd. Keston Cheshire England
5. What is the date of your birth? — Sept. 2nd 1886
6. What is your Trade or Calling? — Blacksmith
7. Are you married? — no
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? — yes
9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia? — yes
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force? If so, state particulars of former Service. — 5 R.H. of C. & 1st Shrops. T.F. Batt 3 years 6 years
11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement? — yes

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, Edwin Evans, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements by me now made, and I hereby engage and agree to serve in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force, and to be attached to any arm of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for six months after the termination of that war provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until legally discharged.

Edwin Evans (Signature of Recruit)

Date, Sept 23rd 1914. A. Johnson (Signature of Witness)

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, Edwin Evans, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

Edwin Evans (Signature of Recruit)

Date, Sept 23rd 1914. A. Johnson (Signature of Witness)

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE. or Officer.

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me, at Bar Camp this 23 day of Sept 1914.

(Signature of Justice)

I certify that the above is a true copy of the Attestation of the above-named Recruit.

(Approving Officer)

It seems that the actual swearing of the oath of allegiance was made by the recruit, or group of recruits [30], being read the oath which he/they then repeated aloud, each man with his right hand raised.

Whilst the Attestation Form was adapted by Commonwealth countries - the Canadian form required less detail than the British counterpart - its ethos remained the same.

Enlistment Following the completion of the Attestation Form the recruit was subjected to a medical examination, often perfunctory, to ascertain that he met the basic requirements

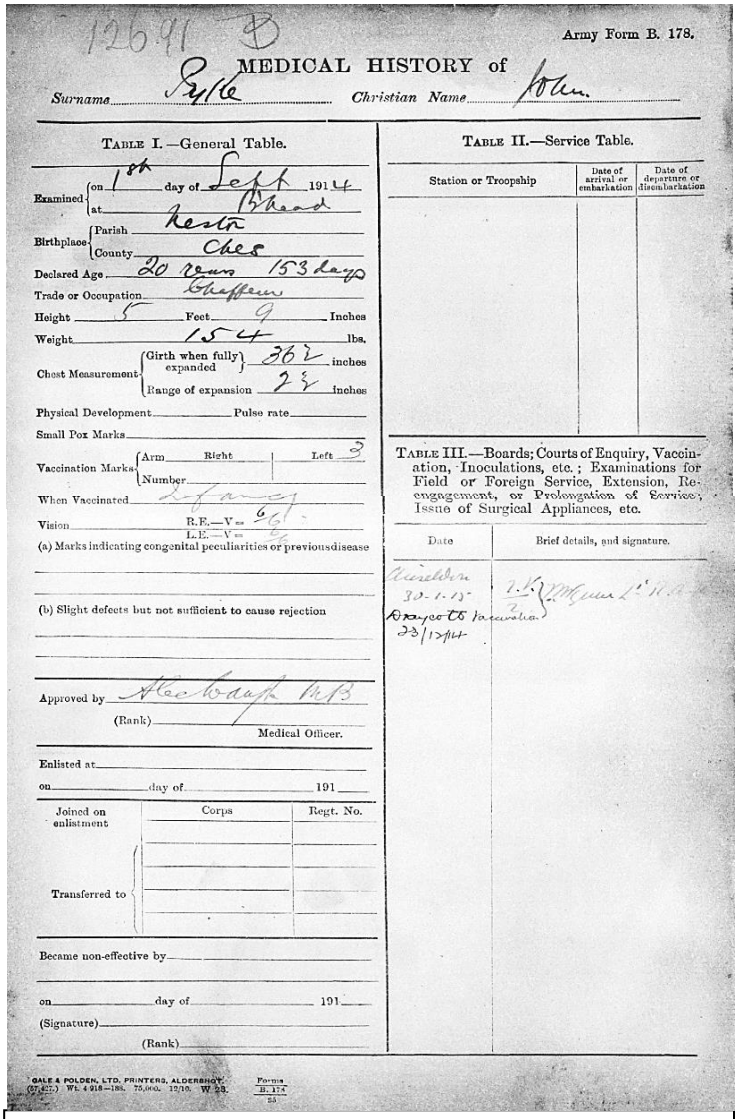
[30] Following the declaration of war, the number of recruits arriving at the recruitment offices and stations increased greatly, putting the recruitment staff under so much pressure that oath-swearing was often conducted in batches of men, sometimes up to 20 at a time. The whole process of attestation became a hurried affair and some forms were not completed fully – even signatures could be omitted. There was certainly no time for the recruitment staff to check the statements made by the recruits.

- over 5ft 3in tall [31], an expanded chest size of over 33 inches, in possession of enough teeth to chew an army biscuit and capable of sighting a rifle. If the medical examination was passed the recruit was considered as having formally enlisted and he could then be assigned to an army unit. It is clear that, on many occasions, a blind eye was often turned to official standards.

At the beginning of 1914 the British Army had a reported strength of 710,000 men including reservists, of which around 80,000 were regular troops ready for war.

On the outbreak of war, in August 1914, the British Army consisted of six infantry divisions, one cavalry division in the United Kingdom which formed on the outbreak of war and four divisions overseas. Fourteen Territorial Force divisions also existed, and 300,000 soldiers in the Reserve Army. Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War, considered the Territorial Army untrained and useless. He believed that the regular army must not be wasted in immediate battle, but instead be used to help train a new army with 70 divisions - the size of the French and German armies - that he foresaw would be needed to fight a war lasting many years.

For a century, British governmental policy and public opinion was against conscription for foreign wars; in 1914 Britain had about 5.5 million men of military age, with another 500,000 reaching 18 each year. The initial call for 100,000 volunteers was far exceeded - almost half a million men enlisted in two months - and no need was seen then for conscription [32].



12691 B

Army Form B. 178.

MEDICAL HISTORY of

Surname Pyke Christian Name John

TABLE I.—General Table.

Examined on 1st day of Sept 1914 at Birkenhead

Birthplace Parish Neston County Ches

Declared Age 20 years 153 days

Trade or Occupation Chauffeur

Height 5 Feet 9 Inches

Weight 154 lbs.

Chest Measurement Girth when fully expanded 36½ inches; Range of expansion 2½ inches

Physical Development Pulse rate

Small Pox Marks

Vaccination Marks Arm Right Left 3; Number

When Vaccinated Infancy

Vision R.E.—V= 6/6 L.E.—V=

(a) Marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease

(b) Slight defects but not sufficient to cause rejection

Approved by Alex Waugh RAMC (Rank) Medical Officer.

Enlisted at on day of 191

Joined on enlistment | Corps | Regt. No.

Transferred to

Became non-effective by on day of 191

(Signature) (Rank)

TABLE II.—Service Table.

Station or Troopship	Date of arrival or embarkation	Date of departure or disembarkation

TABLE III.—Boards; Courts of Enquiry, Vaccination, Inoculations, etc.; Examinations for Field or Foreign Service, Extension, Re-engagement, or Prolongation of Service; Issue of Surgical Appliances, etc.

Date	Brief details, and signature.
Wirral 30-1-15 Proceed to Liverpool 23/1/14	1.L. [illegible] Lt RAMC

GALE & POLDEN, LTD. PRINTERS, ALDERSHOT. (57,427.) Wt. 4,918—188. 75,000. 12/10. W 28. Form B. 178 25

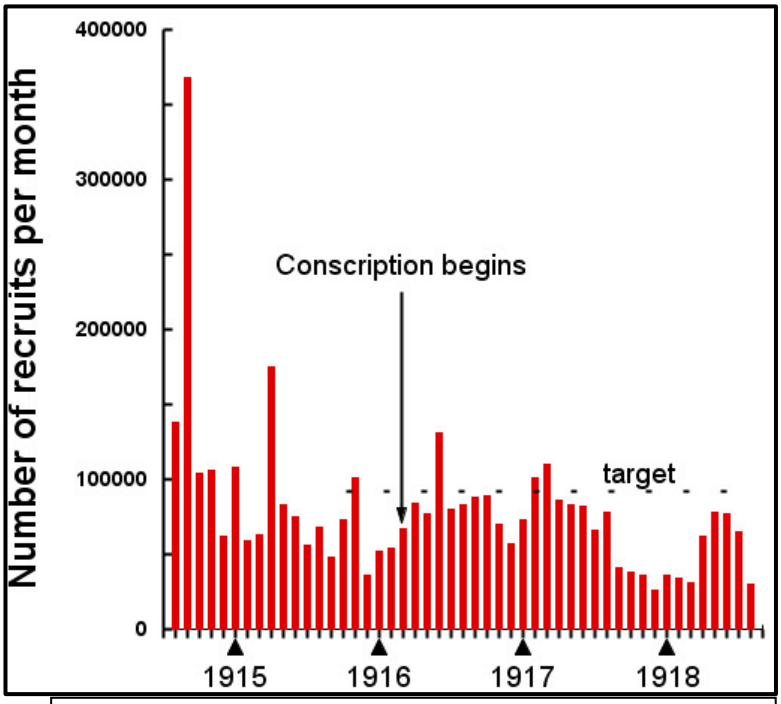
The Medical History (Army Form B.178) of **71: John Pyke** notes that he was medically examined on 1 September 1914 at Birkenhead when his declared age was 20 years 153 days and his occupation was as a chauffeur. John was recorded as being 5ft 9ins tall with a weight of 154lb, a fully-expanded chest measurement of 36½ins and 'normal' vision of 6/6. Other than brief details of childhood vaccinations, no other medical information was given. The form was signed by the Medical Officer, Alex Waugh.

It is believed that, in 1914, the average height of a British recruit was 5ft 5ins and with an average weight of 112lb (8 stone).

[31] In November 1914 the establishment of Bantam units, first raised in Birkenhead, allowed physically-fit men of smaller stature (between 5ft and 5ft 3ins) to enlist although their expanded chest size was supposed to be at least 34 inches, one inch greater than that for other soldiers. It is believed that, in fact, men as short as 4ft 10ins were sometimes accepted.

[32] [Adapted from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recruitment_to_the_British_Army_during_the_First_World_War]

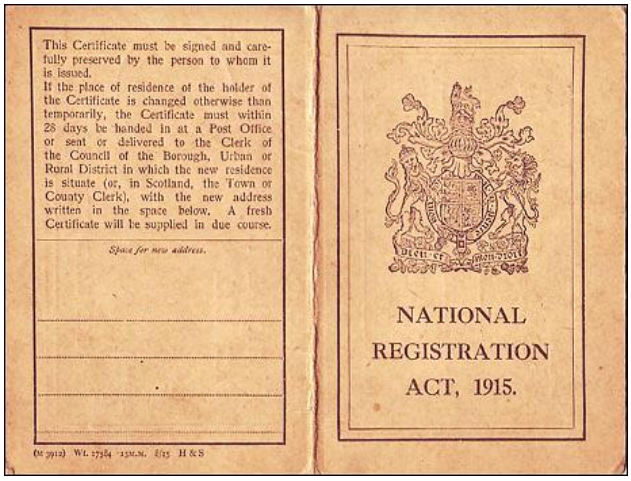
In fact, the available pool was diminished by roughly 1.5 million men who were "starred", or (such as miners) worked in the reserved or essential occupations. Additionally, almost 40% of the volunteers were rejected on medical grounds, conditions which were commonly attributable to poor and unvaried diet. Kitchener's insistence that Britain must build a massive army was echoed by the Adjutant-General who asked for 92,000 recruits per month, well above the number volunteering.



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recruitment_to_the_British_Army_during_the_First_World_War#/media/File:Recruits%2Bspecial_reserve.jpg

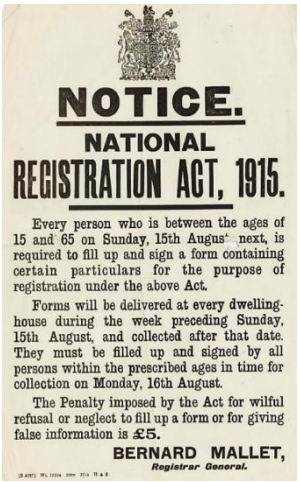
Conscription was a contentious political issue and one opposed strongly by Liberal Prime Minister Herbert Asquith. However, it was seen as the only option and in August 1915 every man in Britain aged 18 to 41 was recorded under the National Registration Act with each man's pink card listing his pertinent details [33].

The Derby Scheme was launched in autumn 1915 by the Earl of Derby, Kitchener's new Director General of Recruiting, to determine whether British manpower goals could be met by volunteers or if conscription was necessary. Each eligible man aged 18 to 41 who was not in a "starred" (essential) occupation had to make a public declaration. When the scheme was announced there was a surge in recruiting because many men volunteered without waiting to be 'fetched'. It was a huge undertaking. Each eligible man's pink card from the recently completed National Register was copied onto a blue card, which was sent to his local Parliamentary Recruiting Committee. The Committees appointed canvassers who were "tactful and influential men" not liable for service, many were experienced political agents. Discharged veterans and fathers of serving men proved most effective. A few canvassers threatened rather than cajoled.


This Certificate must be signed and carefully preserved by the person to whom it is issued.
If the place of residence of the holder of the Certificate is changed otherwise than temporarily, the Certificate must within 28 days be handed in at a Post Office or sent or delivered to the Clerk of the Council of the Borough, Urban or Rural District in which the new residence is situate (or, in Scotland, the Town or County Clerk), with the new address written in the space below. A fresh Certificate will be supplied in due course.

Space for new address.

NATIONAL REGISTRATION ACT, 1915.


NOTICE.

NATIONAL REGISTRATION ACT, 1915.

Every person who is between the ages of 15 and 65 on Sunday, 15th August next, is required to fill up and sign a form containing certain particulars for the purpose of registration under the above Act.

Forms will be delivered at every dwelling-house during the week preceding Sunday, 15th August, and collected after that date. They must be filled up and signed by all persons within the prescribed ages in time for collection on Monday, 16th August.

The Penalty imposed by the Act for wilful refusal or neglect to fill up a form or for giving false information is £5.

BERNARD MALLET,
Registrar General.

Women were not permitted to canvas but did track men who had moved. Each man was handed a letter from

[33] *The 15th August 1915 was National Registration Day, which was intended to register every adult in the country, aged between fifteen and sixty-five years of age, and establish what skills and dependents they had.*
All the men who had registered and who were considered to be eligible for military service were invited to attest their willingness to be called to serve in the army if required, or volunteer to be conscripted according to some opponents of the scheme. The attested men were placed in groups, depending on whether a man was single or married, age and usefulness to the war economy, each group to be called in turn, single men first. There was no legal compulsion to attest, and although most men were visited at home and subjected to persuasion, many did not attest and some did not even register. This was known as Lord Derby's scheme, after its originator, the doorstep canvassers were instructed to be polite at all times and to attempt to get men to attest by persuasion. [http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?/topic/44705-national-registration-act-1915/]

Derby explaining the programme, emphasizing that they were in "… a country fighting, as ours is, for its very existence ...". Face to face with the canvasser each man announced whether or not he would attest to join the forces, no one was permitted to speak for him. Those who attested promised to go to the recruiting office within 48 hours; many were accompanied there immediately. If found fit they were sworn in and paid a signing bonus of 2s 9d. The following day they were transferred to Army Reserve B. A khaki armband bearing the Royal Crown was to be provided to all who had enlisted or who had been rejected, as well as to starred and discharged men (they were no longer issued or worn after compulsion was introduced). The enlistee's data was copied onto a new white card which was used to assign him to one of 46 married or unmarried age groups. They were promised that only entire groups would be called for active service and they would have fourteen days' advance notice. Single men's groups would be called before married; any who wed after the day the Scheme began were classified as single. Married men were promised that their groups would not be called if too few single men attested, unless conscription was introduced. The survey was done in November and December 1915. It obtained 318,553 medically fit single men. However, 38% of single men and 54% of married men had publicly refused to enlist.

Since there were too few volunteers to fill the ranks, the Military Service Bill was introduced in January 1916, providing for the conscription of single men aged 18–41. Every single man and childless widower between 18 and 41 was offered three choices:

- *Enlist at once.*
- *Attest at once under Derby's system.*
- *Or on 2 March 1916 be automatically deemed to have enlisted.*

In May 1916 the bill was extended to married men and in April 1918 the upper age was raised to 50 (or to 56 if need arose). Ireland, which was part of the United Kingdom at the time, was excluded from the scheme (later proposals to introduce conscription in Ireland led to widespread support for Sinn Féin and independence).

[However] *compulsion did not go smoothly. By July 1916 93,000 (30%) of those called had failed to appear, that summer and autumn likely-looking men in public places were rounded up. It was primarily a protest, since few of the no-shows could have hoped to escape, although a few were hidden by sympathizers.*

Men called up for military service or their employers could appeal to a civilian Military Service Tribunal in their town or district on the grounds of work of national importance, business or domestic hardship, medical unfitness, or conscientious objection. By the end of June 1916, 748,587 men had appealed. The standards of the tribunals were capricious: in York a case was determined in an average of eleven minutes, two minutes was the rule at Paddington in London.
[Unabridged from:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recruitment_to_the_British_Army_during_the_First_World_War]

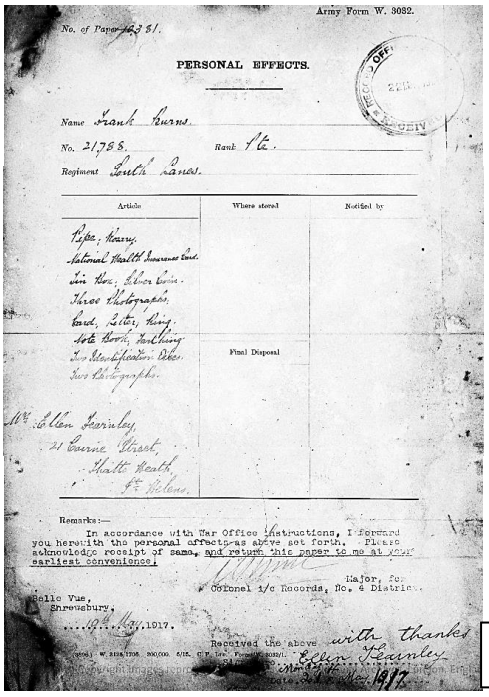
Once a soldier had enlisted he was assigned a role within a battalion of a regiment and was given **basic training** at a training camp which, in theory, consisted of at least three months spent on building up the recruit's physical fitness and confidence, instilling discipline and obedience and teaching the fundamental military skills necessary to function in the army.
Much of this training involved conditioning processes, such as drilling on the parade square and learning to march, which aimed to teach recruits how to accept orders and act as a unit.

Basic Training [Source: https://www.historyextra.com/period/first-world-war/10-golden-rules-of-fitness-for-first-world-war-soldiers/

After some weeks of this, training got more advanced as they learned the basics of movement in the field, nighttime operations and route marching. Later would come weapons' handling, marksmanship and digging trenches.
Conditions in training camps were often basic and supplies of equipment were limited. Whilst, in the early days, recruits had a full basic training, later pressure on supplying troops to fill front line positions sometimes compromised this and the training was less extensive. For some men basic training was extended to include more specialized skills such as signaling, using a machine gun or other heavy weapons and the use of mines and other explosives. However, at those times when it was necessary to get new recruits to the front line positions as quickly as possible, basic training was sometimes reduced to just four or five weeks. Inevitably, this led to great concern from those front line officers who were now in charge of men of very mixed experience; men from the regular army, often with many years of experience, found themselves fighting alongside men who had no front line experience and only the most rudimentary training.

Mobilisation was the act of assembling and readying the troops and supplies for war. This was a huge operation involving millions of men - including bringing the reservists into the operations - and consolidating the vast array of armaments, ammunition, vehicles, horses, engineering equipment, food and other essential supplies. For Britain, where the war zone lay overseas, ships had to be obtained and fitted for conveying the troops and equipment. Troops were assembled in large encampments, many in south-east and southern Britain and close to the ports where the ships would be embarked for the voyage across the English Channel or to destinations in the Mediterranean.

Ⓗ Service Records - what they are, and their limitations



Army Form W. 3032.

No. of Parcel 1423/1.

PERSONAL EFFECTS.

Name Frank Burns.

No. 21788. Rank Pte.

Regiment South Lancs.

Article	Where stored	Notified by
Pipe, Heavy, National Health Insurance Card, Identity Disc, Three Photographs, Card, Letter, Ring, Note Book, Nothing, Two Identification Discs, Two Photographs.	Final Disposal	

Mrs Ellen Yearsley
21 Laurne Street
Hatt Heath
St Helens

Remarks:—
In accordance with War Office instructions, I forward you herewith the personal effects as above set forth. Please acknowledge receipt of same, and return this paper to me at your earliest convenience.

Major, for
Colonel i/c Records, No. 4 District.

Belle Vue,
Shrewsbury,
....12.7.1917.

Received the above with thanks
Ellen Yearsley
1917

Army Form W. 3032 - Personal Effects

The *British Army World War One Service Records* are War Office records [34] which contain a variety of forms relating to each non-commissioned officer and other ranks who served in WWI. Some of these forms - the Attestation Forms (completed by the individual on enlistment) and the Medical History Form - have been mentioned previously but a full record contained also Casualty Form (Active Service), Regimental Conduct Sheets, Awards Documents, Proceedings on Discharge Forms, and numerous others. Altogether, if they are complete, they provide a comprehensive coverage of a man's service history from attestation through to death or discharge. Some of the forms existing for **119: Frank Burns** may be taken as an example.

[34] They are classified as WO/363. It is believed that over 1100 different forms were used by the British army although some of these, such as *Army Form B 2087 Monthly state of horses and mules* had limited application.

The Descriptive Report on Enlistment was a form applicable to all ranks and gave information such as

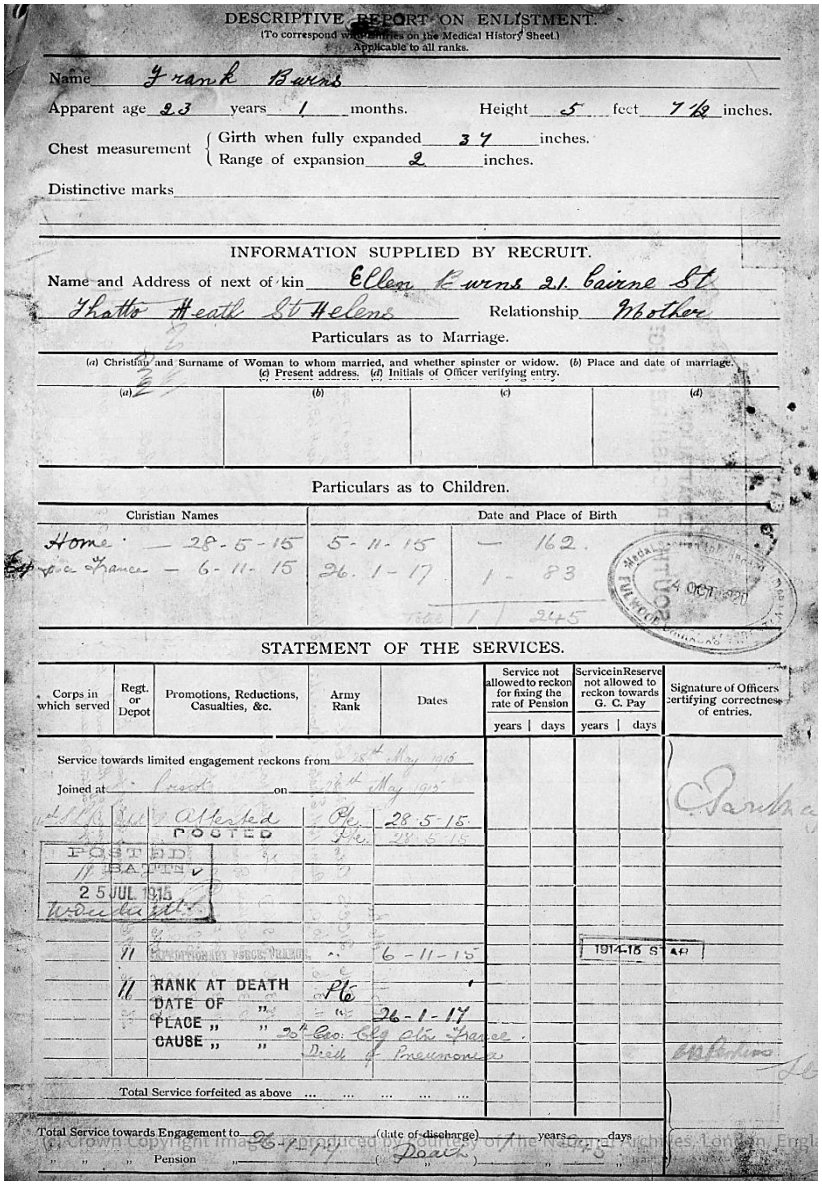
Name / age / height / chest measurement And distinctive marks

Next of kin, their address, and marriage details

Whilst this section of the form was intended to record details of the soldier's children it has here been used to record the dates of Frank's service at home and with the Expeditionary Forces in France

This section documented the progression of a soldier as he moved from one unit to another, home leave, and any change in rank. Here, it also records that Frank died on 26 January 1917 at the 20th Casualty Clearing Station in France, the cause of death being pneumonia. Information, often in pencil, may be difficult to read.

Summation of the length of service; this was the basis for an army pension. The form shows that Frank had served for 1 year 245 days before he died.



DESCRIPTIVE REPORT ON ENLISTMENT.
(To correspond with entries on the Medical History Sheet.)
Applicable to all ranks.

Name Frank Burns

Apparent age 23 years 1 months. Height 5 feet 7½ inches.

Chest measurement { Girth when fully expanded 37 inches. Range of expansion 2 inches.

Distinctive marks

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY RECRUIT.

Name and Address of next of kin Ellen Burns 21 Cairne St Thatto Heath St Helens Relationship Mother

Particulars as to Marriage.

(a) Christian and Surname of Woman to whom married, and whether spinster or widow. (b) Place and date of marriage. (c) Present address. (d) Initials of Officer verifying entry.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)

Particulars as to Children.

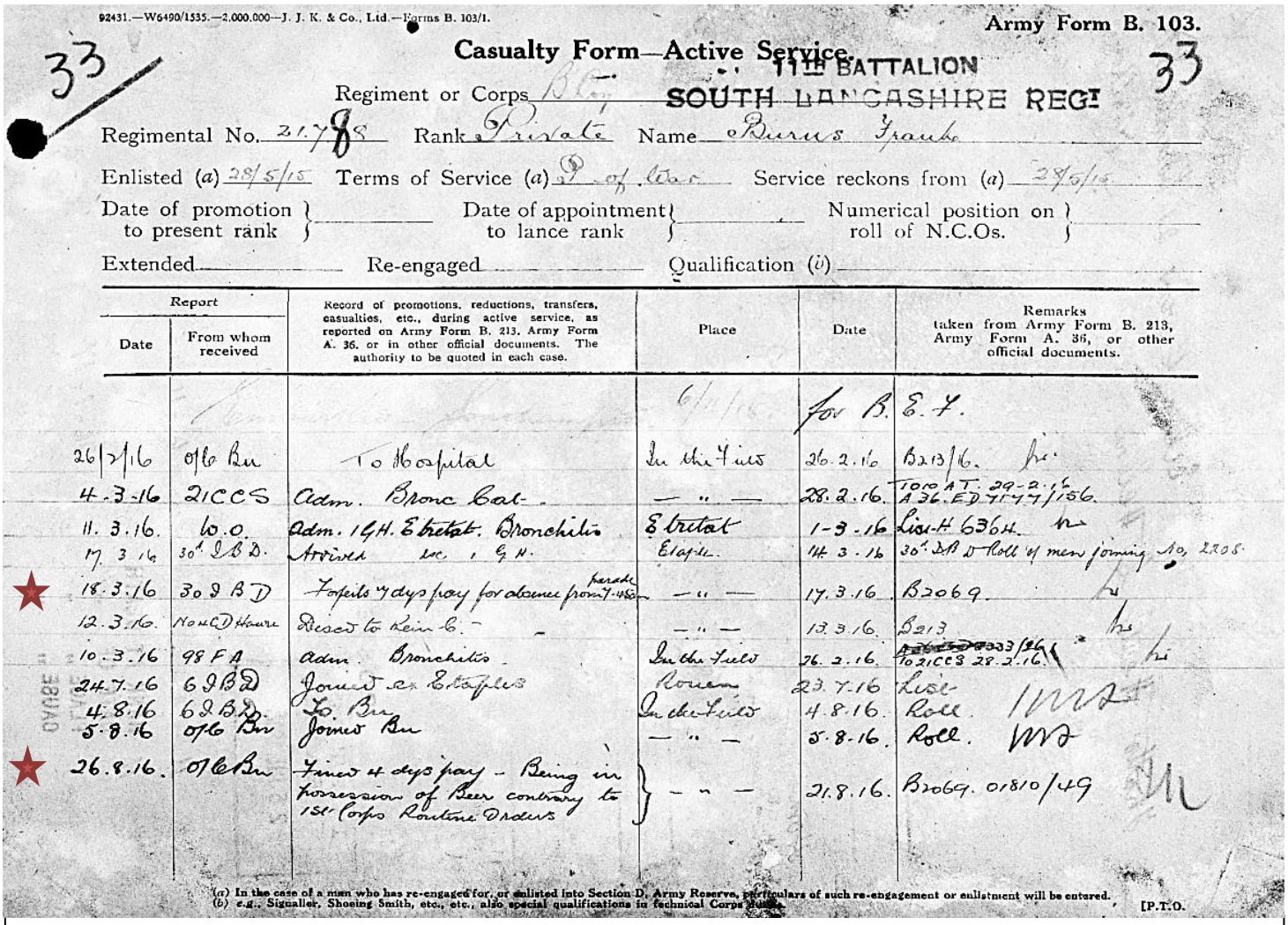
Christian Names	Date and Place of Birth		
Home — 28-5-15	5-11-15	— 162.	
Service France — 6-11-15	26.1.17	1 - 83	
		245	

STATEMENT OF THE SERVICES.

Corps in which served	Regt. or Depot	Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, &c.	Army Rank	Dates	Service not allowed to reckon for fixing the rate of Pension years	days	Service in Reserve not allowed to reckon towards G. C. Pay years	days	Signature of Officers certifying correctness of entries.
Service towards limited engagement reckons from 4th May 1915									
Joined at Prescot on 4th May 1915									
1/5 Lan		Attested POSTED	Pte	28-5-15					
		POSTED 11 BATTN 25 JUL 1915 Wrexham							
	11			6-11-15			1914-15 Star		
	11	RANK AT DEATH	Pte						
		DATE OF "		26-1-17					
		PLACE " "	20th Coy. Clg Stn France.						
		CAUSE " "	Died of Pneumonia						
Total Service forfeited as above									
Total Service towards Engagement to 26-1-17 (date of discharge)					years	days			
" " " Pension "				(" Death)	"	"			

The Casualty Form (Active Service) sometimes gives a considerable amount of detail concerning any treated medical conditions, accidents and wounds suffered by the soldier together with some detail of where this treatment took place. Sometimes, as on this form (following page), interesting, but completely unrelated information, is recorded.
In the case of soldiers who died, and whose body could be identified, a list was compiled of their personal items (see previous page) and this accompanied these items to the next of kin. The signed form was then returned to the army.

Frank was unmarried and his mother, Ellen, was his next of kin. It appears that Francis's father, Patrick, died in early 1912 and that Ellen Burns married a William Fearnley at Prescot a few months later (July/September).
In May 1917, when this form was sent to her, Ellen was living at Thatto Heath, St Helens.



92431.—W6490/1535.—2,000,000—J. J. K. & Co., Ltd.—Forms B. 103/1.

Army Form B. 103.

33

Casualty Form—Active Service.

33

Regiment or Corps 11TH BATTALION SOUTH LANCASHIRE REGT

Regimental No. 21798 Rank Private Name Burns Frank

Enlisted (a) 28/5/15 Terms of Service (a) 3 yrs or Dur. Service reckons from (a) 28/5/15

Date of promotion to present rank | Date of appointment to lance rank | Numerical position on roll of N.C.Os.

Extended Re-engaged Qualification (b)

Report Date	Report From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
			6/16	For B. E. F.	
26/2/16	O/C Bn	To Hospital	In the Field	26.2.16	B213/6.
4.3.16	21CCS	Adm. Bronc Cat.	— " —	28.2.16.	To A.T. 29-2-16 A36.ED 71-77/156.
11.3.16.	W.O.	Adm. 1 G.H. Etretat. Bronchitis	Etretat	1-3-16	List-H 636H.
17.3.16	30th I.B.D.	Arrived sic 1 G.H.	Etaples	14.3.16	30th D.B. Roll of men joining No. 2208.
★ 18.3.16	30 I B D	Forfeits 7 days pay for absence from parade 7.45am	— " —	17.3.16.	B2069.
12.3.16.	No 1 C.D. Hosp	Discharged to Base C.	— " —	13.3.16.	B213
10.3.16	98 F A	Adm. Bronchitis	In the Field	26.2.16.	To 21CCS 28.2.16.
24.7.16	6 I B D	Joined as Etaples	Rouen	23.7.16	List
4.8.16	62 B.D.	To Bn	In the Field	4.8.16.	Roll.
5.8.16	O/C Bn	Joined Bn	— " —	5.8.16.	Roll.
★ 26.8.16.	O/C Bn	Fined 4 days pay – Being in possession of Beer contrary to 1st Corps Routine Orders	— " —	21.8.16.	B2069. 01810/49

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.
(b) e.g., Signaller, Shoeing Smith, etc., etc., also special qualifications in technical Corps trades.

[P.T.O.

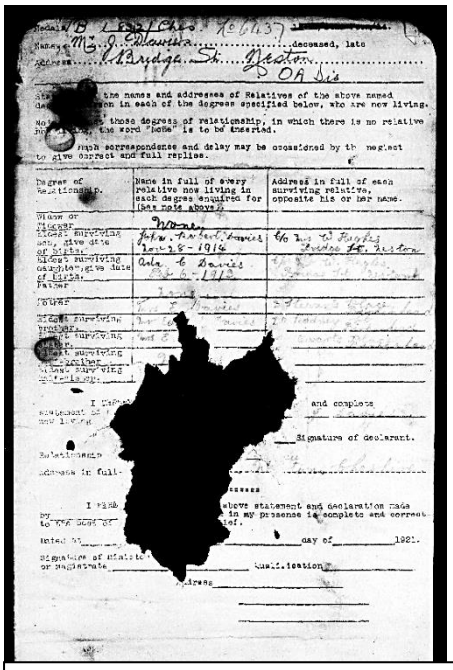
As well as noting that Frank was treated for bronchitis and bronchial catarrh on several occasions the form records that he *Forfeits 7 days' pay for absence from parade 7.45am* on 17 March 1916 (he was then in hospital in Étaples but was still expected to attend parade) and, on 21 August 1916, was *Fined 4 days' pay – being in possession of Beer contrary to 1st Corps Routine Orders*. [The red stars indicate these entries].

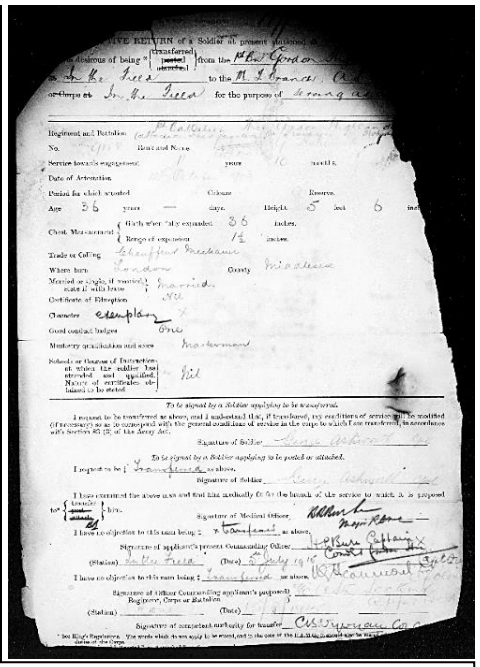
Around 5.7 million British nationals served in the British Army in WW1 and these were complemented by around 3 million servicemen from countries of the Empire and India. All of these had a Service Record and, after the war, the British documents were stored in a War Office depository on Arnside Street, off the Camberwell Road, in the Walworth district of south-east London.

Unfortunately, this area was heavily bombed during the London Blitz of WW2 in 1940 and the building was hit by a German incendiary bomb on the night of 7/8 September; it is estimated that at least 60% of the documents were destroyed completely with many of the remainder being damaged by fire or water. The damaged documents that survived, known as the *Burnt Documents*, (the WO/363 records) are mainly those of soldiers who were discharged, demobilised at the end of the war or who died between 1914 and 1920 and who were not eligible for an Army pension. Additionally, some soldiers who were in the regular army before the outbreak of war in August 1914 were included in these records [35].

[35] The WO/363 Service Records relate only to non-commissioned officers and other ranks who served in the 1914-1918 war and did not re-enlist prior to the outbreak of war in 1939. In 1996, following the granting of Lottery funding and using volunteers

Another series of Service Records (the WO/364 records), known as the *Unburnt Documents*, were recovered by the War Office from the Ministry of Pensions and several other government departments after the Second World War. These relate mainly to men who were discharged, with pensions, from the army as a result of sickness or wounds received in battle between 1914 and 1920. In addition to the usual military forms, most of the individual files in WO/364 also contain detailed medical records. One local example is Private George Cottrell, a threshing machine labourer, of the Old Post Office, Little Neston.





Pages from the damaged Service Records of (left) **20: John Robert Davies** and (right) **4: George William Ashworth**.
Despite the damage the records are still legible and contain much useful information.

George Cottrell was a son of labourer John and Esther Cottrell of Little Neston; born on 5 April 1888 he was baptised at the Parish Church on 21 September 1888.

George enlisted for the 12th Battalion Cheshire Regiment (Service Number 36021) in Neston on 22 November 1915 and served in Salonika (today called Thessalonika) for 2 years 4 months. This lesser-known campaign, in Greece, was a result of the Greek Prime Minister requesting a multinational force to assist the Serbs in their fight against Bulgarian aggression. George Cottrell, whilst he survived the war, succumbed to Malaria [36] in July 1917 (as a result of *climate and exposure*) for which he was treated locally.

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from the Genealogical Society of Utah, the surviving fragmentary and fragile documents were microfilmed to enable the data to be permanently preserved.

The records of officers did not form part of this group but these were catalogued as (*continues as footnote on following page*)

(a) WO/339 - records of officers who finished serving before 1922, including officers who were given a temporary commission in the regular army, those who were commissioned into the Special Reserve of officers and those who were regular army officers before the war.

(b) WO/374 - records of officers given a Territorial Army commission or a temporary commission.

There are over 217,000 British Army Officers' Service Records for the First World War held by The National Archives. An officer's file originally had three parts but two of these were destroyed by enemy action in September 1940. What remains was heavily weeded prior to 1940 and in many cases nothing remains for many officers.

Other Service Records are catalogued using other Index Numbers - for example, soldiers' Service Records pre-1914 are WO/97.

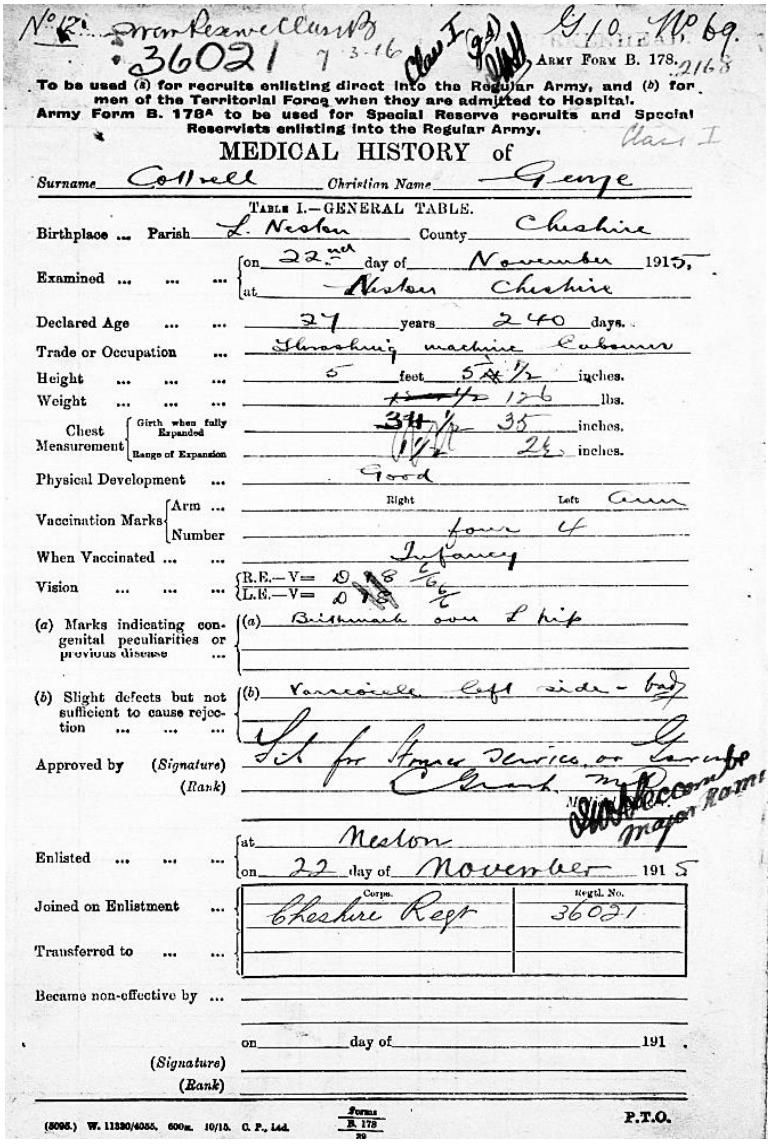
Much of this information is abstracted from the resources of the National Archives; see
http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C14567 and
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-officers-after-1913/

No Service Records are available for soldiers who continued to serve in the military after 1920; these records are not available for public access.

[36] The Salonika Campaign began on 5 October 1915 with the landing of the 10th (Irish) Division and French 156th Division, the objective being to deter Bulgaria from joining Germany and Austria-Hungary in an attack on Serbia. Living conditions for soldiers on both sides were harsh with seasonal change bringing extremes of climate and disease, particularly malaria. The British Salonika Force numbered 228, 335 men and there were 162,517 reported cases of malaria.

As well as suffering from malaria through much of his military service, George was also treated for shell wounds in November 1917 and for a gunshot wound to his thigh and left foot sustained in August 1918.

However, when George was discharged from the army on 13 April 1919 it was noted that he did not claim to be suffering from a disability due to his military service, although this section of the Disability Form remained unsigned.
Despite his war wounds and medical condition, George lived until he was 83, dying in mid-1971.



No 12 From Reserve Class B 36021 7-3-16 Class I (94) G.10 No 69.

ARMY FORM B. 178. 2163

To be used (a) for recruits enlisting direct into the Regular Army, and (b) for men of the Territorial Force when they are admitted to Hospital.
Army Form B. 178A to be used for Special Reserve recruits and Special Reservists enlisting into the Regular Army.

MEDICAL HISTORY of

Surname Cottrell Christian Name George

Class I

TABLE I.—GENERAL TABLE.

Birthplace ... Parish L. Neston County Cheshire

Examined ... ... on 22nd day of November 1915, at Neston Cheshire

Declared Age ... ... 27 years 240 days.

Trade or Occupation ... Shooting machine Labourer

Height ... ... 5 feet 5½ inches.

Weight ... ... ~~9 st 10 lbs~~ 126 lbs.

Chest Measurement { Girth when fully Expanded ~~34½~~ 35 inches. Range of Expansion ~~1½~~ 2½ inches.

Physical Development ... Good

Vaccination Marks { Arm ... Right Left Arm Number four 4

When Vaccinated ... ... Infancy

Vision ... ... R.E.—V= D 18 6/6 L.E.—V= D 18 6/6

(a) Marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease ... (a) Birthmark over L hip

(b) Slight defects but not sufficient to cause rejection ... ... (b) Varicocele Left side - bad

Approved by (Signature) Lt for Home Service only Grade

(Rank) Major RAMC

Enlisted ... ... at Neston on 22 day of November 1915

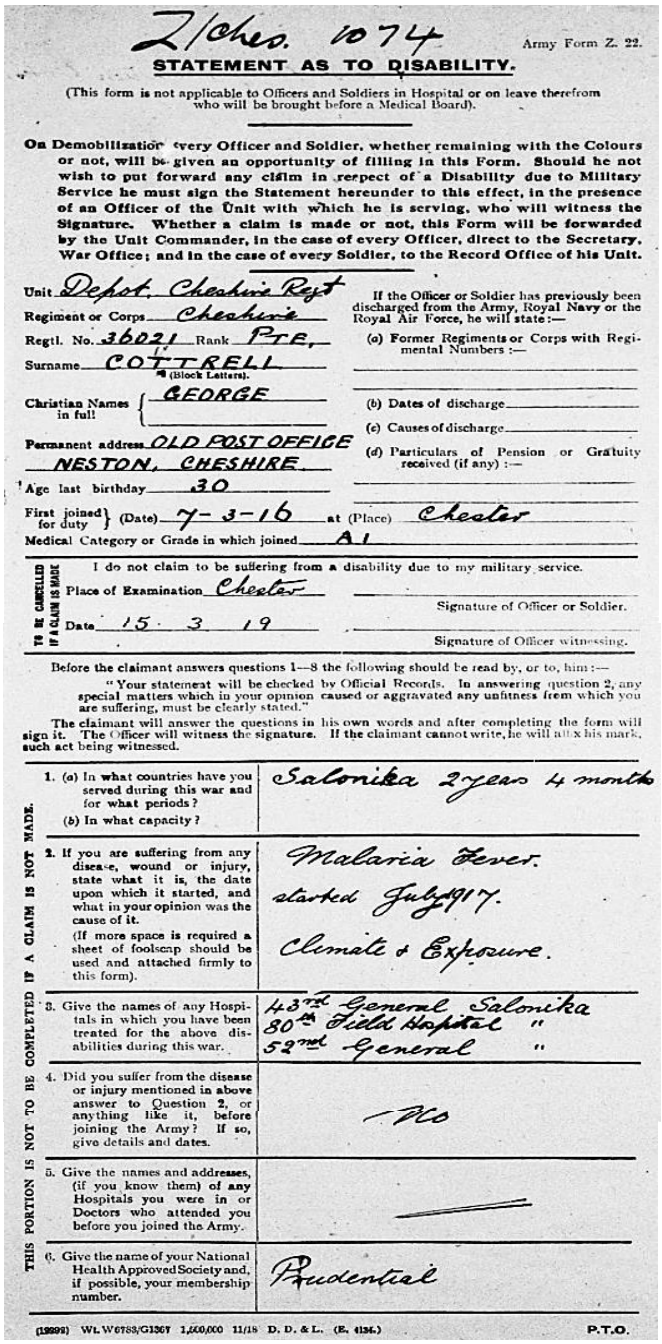
Joined on Enlistment ...	Corps. Cheshire Regt	Regtl. No. 36021
Transferred to		

Became non-effective by ... on ... day of ... 191 .

(Signature)

(Rank)

(8095.) W. 11330/4055. 600m. 10/15. C. P., Ltd. Forms B. 178 20 P.T.O.



2/Ches. 1074 Army Form Z. 22.

STATEMENT AS TO DISABILITY.

(This form is not applicable to Officers and Soldiers in Hospital or on leave therefrom who will be brought before a Medical Board).

On Demobilization every Officer and Soldier, whether remaining with the Colours or not, will be given an opportunity of filling in this Form. Should he not wish to put forward any claim in respect of a Disability due to Military Service he must sign the Statement hereunder to this effect, in the presence of an Officer of the Unit with which he is serving, who will witness the Signature. Whether a claim is made or not, this Form will be forwarded by the Unit Commander, in the case of every Officer, direct to the Secretary, War Office; and in the case of every Soldier, to the Record Office of his Unit.

Unit Depot, Cheshire Regt

Regiment or Corps Cheshire

Regtl. No. 36021 Rank Pte.

Surname COTTRELL (Block Letters).

Christian Names in full GEORGE

Permanent address OLD POST OFFICE NESTON, CHESHIRE.

Age last birthday 30

First joined for duty (Date) 7-3-16 at (Place) Chester

Medical Category or Grade in which joined A1

If the Officer or Soldier has previously been discharged from the Army, Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force, he will state:—

(a) Former Regiments or Corps with Regimental Numbers:—

(b) Dates of discharge

(c) Causes of discharge

(d) Particulars of Pension or Gratuity received (if any):—

TO BE CANCELLED IF A CLAIM IS MADE

I do not claim to be suffering from a disability due to my military service.

Place of Examination Chester

Signature of Officer or Soldier.

Date 15 3 19

Signature of Officer witnessing.

Before the claimant answers questions 1—8 the following should be read by, or to, him:—

"Your statement will be checked by Official Records. In answering question 2, any special matters which in your opinion caused or aggravated any unfitness from which you are suffering, must be clearly stated."

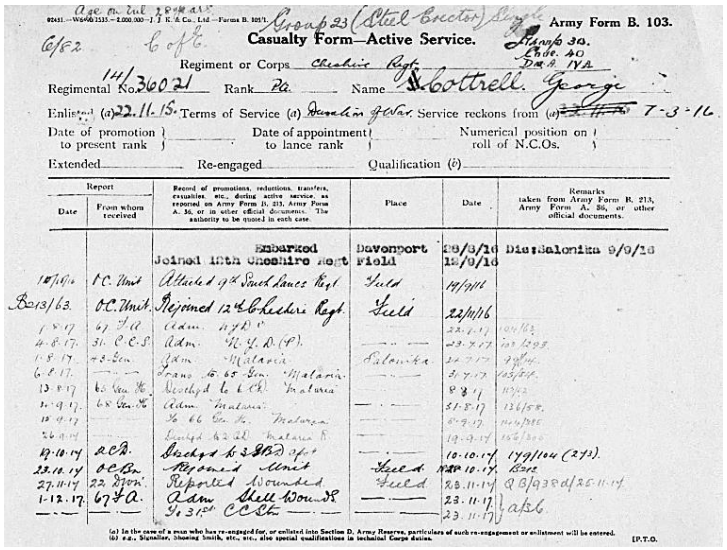
The claimant will answer the questions in his own words and after completing the form will sign it. The Officer will witness the signature. If the claimant cannot write, he will affix his mark, such act being witnessed.

THIS PORTION IS NOT TO BE COMPLETED IF A CLAIM IS NOT MADE.

1. (a) In what countries have you served during this war and for what periods? (b) In what capacity?	Salonika 2 years 4 months
2. If you are suffering from any disease, wound or injury, state what it is, the date upon which it started, and what in your opinion was the cause of it. (If more space is required a sheet of foolscap should be used and attached firmly to this form).	Malaria Fever. started July 1917. Climate & Exposure.
3. Give the names of any Hospitals in which you have been treated for the above disabilities during this war.	43rd General Salonika 80th Field Hospital " 52nd General "
4. Did you suffer from the disease or injury mentioned in above answer to Question 2, or anything like it, before joining the Army? If so, give details and dates.	No
5. Give the names and addresses, (if you know them) of any Hospitals you were in or Doctors who attended you before you joined the Army.	—
6. Give the name of your National Health Approved Society and, if possible, your membership number.	Prudential

(19999) Wt. W6783/G1367 1,500,000 11/18 D. D. & L. (E. 4134.) P.T.O.

In addition to the loss of around 60% of WW1 Service Records in the fire of September 1940, the records that have survived are sometimes hard to read and, as abbreviations and contractions were used commonly, are sometimes difficult to interpret. Whilst much detail is given, omissions are not uncommon and errors of transcription are sometimes found.



Army Form B. 103.

Casualty Form—Active Service.

Regimental No. 36021 Rank Pte. Name Cottrell. George

Regiment or Corps Cheshire Regt.

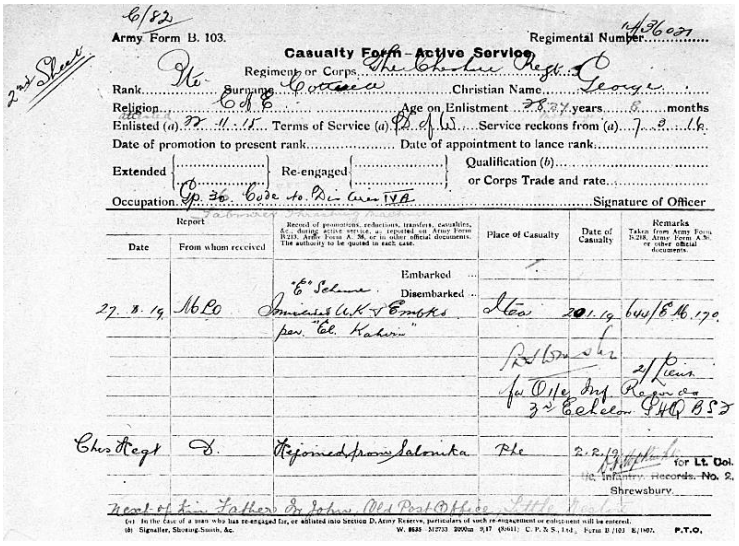
Enlisted (a) 22.11.15. Terms of Service (a) Duration of War. Service reckons from (a) 7-3-16

Extended Re-engaged Qualification (b)

Date	From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
		Embarked Joined 18th Cheshire Regt	Davenport Field	29/5/16 15/9/16	Dis: Salonika 9/9/16
10/1/16	P.C. Unit	Attached 9th Scots Lancs Regt	Field	14/9/16	
B213/63	OC. Unit	Rejoined 12th Cheshire Regt	Field	22/9/16	
1-8-17	31 C.C.S.	Adm. R.A.M.C. (F).		23.7.17	
1-8-17	28 Gen.	Adm. Malaria	Salonika	24.7.17	
6.8.17		Trans. to 65 Gen. Malaria		5.7.17	
13.8.17	65 Gen. H.	Discharged to C.D. Malaria		9.8.17	
1-9-17	65 Gen. H.	Adm. Malaria		31.8.17	
10.9.17		To 66 Gen. H. Malaria		6.9.17	
26.9.17		Invalided to 21 Malaria R.		19.9.17	
17.10.17	2 C.B.	Discharged to duty		10.10.17	179/1104 (271).
23.10.17	OC Bn.	Rejoined Unit	Field	23.10.17	Base
27.11.17	22 Div.	Reported Wounded	Field	28.11.17	B/338/25.11.17
1-12.17.	67 F.A.	Adm. Shell Wounds		23.11.17	
		To 31st C.C.S.		23.11.17	

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D. Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.
(b) e.g., Signaller, Shoeing Smith, etc., etc., also special qualifications in technical Corps duties.

I.P.T.O.



6/82

Army Form B. 103. Regimental Number 36021

Casualty Form—Active Service.

Regiment or Corps The Cheshire Regt.

Rank Pte. Surname Cottrell Christian Name George

Religion C of E. Age on Enlistment 38 years 8 months

Enlisted (a) 22.11.15. Terms of Service (a) D. of W. Service reckons from (a) 7.3.16.

Date of promotion to present rank Date of appointment to lance rank

Extended Re-engaged Qualification (b) or Corps Trade and rate

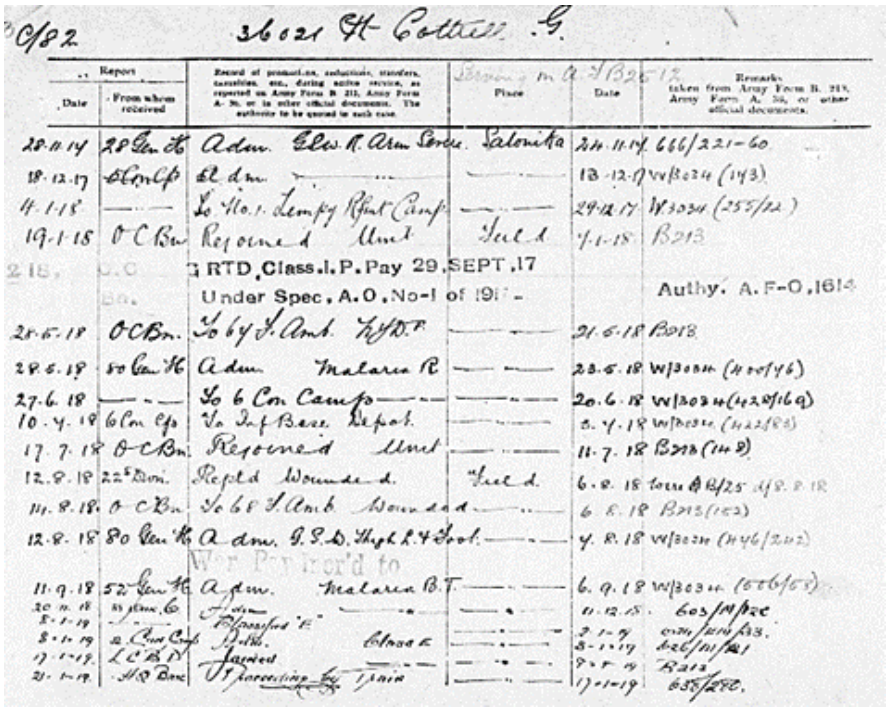
Occupation Gp. 36 Code No. Div. Area IVA Signature of Officer

Date	From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B.213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B.213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
		Embarked ... Disembarked ...			
27.8.16	16 Bn	"E" Salonika Invalided U.K. & Embks per "Tel. Kahun"	Salon	29.8.16	645/16 M. 170
Ches Regt	D.	Rejoined from Salonika	Ple	2.2.19	

Next of kin Father Mr John Old Post Office Little Neston Shrewsbury

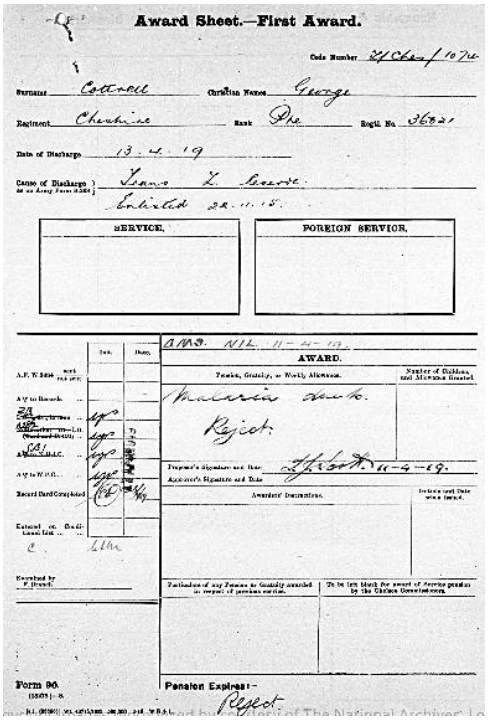
(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D. Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.
(b) Signaller, Shoeing Smith, &c.

W. 8535—312733 2000m 9/17 (8441) C. P. S., Ltd. Form B/103 8/1917. P.T.O.



C/82 36021 Pte Cottrell. G.

Date	From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
28.11.14	28 Gen H.	Adm. Elec. R. Arm Scrs.	Salonika	24.11.14	666/221-60
18.12.17	6 Con Cp	El dm.		18.12.17	W/8034 (143)
4.1.18		To No. 1 Lempy Rest Camp		29.12.17	W/3034 (255/12)
19.1.18	O C Bn	Rejoined Unit	Field	4.1.18	B213
		RTD Class. I. P. Pay 29 SEPT. 17 Under Spec. A.O. No-1 of 191 -			Authy. A.F.O. 1614
28.6.18	O C Bn.	To 6 J. Amb. Hyd.		21.6.18	B218
28.6.18	80 Gen H.	Adm. Malaria R.		23.6.18	W/3034 (1406/46)
27.6.18		To 6 Con Camp		20.6.18	W/3034 (1428/169)
10.4.18	6 Con Cp	To Inf Base Depot		3.4.18	W/3034 (1428/68)
17.7.18	O C Bn.	Rejoined Unit		11.7.18	B213 (142)
12.8.18	22nd Div.	Repld Wounded.	Field.	6.8.18	from A B/25 d/8.8.18
11.8.18.	O C Bn	To 68 F. Amb Wounded		6.8.18	B213 (152)
12.8.18	80 Gen H.	Adm. G.S.D. Hyd R.4 Sect.		4.8.18	W/3034 (1446/202)
		War Pensions Ctte			
11.9.18	52 Gen H.	Adm. Malaria B.T.		6.9.18	W/3034 (666/61)
20.11.18	55 Gen. H.	Adm.		11.12.18	603/M/826
8.1.19		Discharged "E"		2.1.19	O.M.S./M/823.
8.1.19	2 Con Cp	Pmbk.	Class A	8.1.19	826/M/841
17.1.19.	L C B D	Invalided		9.1.19	B213
21.1.19.	A.F. Base	To Discharge by Train		17.1.19	635/280.



Award Sheet.—First Award.

Only Number 27 Ches / 1074

Surname Cottrell Christian Name George

Regiment Cheshire Rank Pte Regtl. No. 36821

Date of Discharge 13.4.19

Cause of Discharge (as on Army Form B.268) Invalided 22.11.15.

SERVICE. FOREIGN SERVICE.

AWARD.

Malaria Adm. to Rejct.

Pension Expires:— Regret

Form 90.

The Officer's Records are poorly represented and are often little more than scraps of correspondence, actual service documents having been lost. [37]

ⓘ The significance of the Service Number

A Service Number (or Regimental Number) was allocated to each man on enlistment if he entered as a non-commissioned officer (NCO) or within the Other Ranks (eg as a Private, Gunner or Driver) [38]. Commissioned Officers (eg Lieutenant, Captain, Major) did not have a Service Number although officers promoted from the lower ranks would previously have been given a Service Number.

[37] The documentation described in this section refers most specifically to the British Army. Service Records of men serving with, for example, the Canadian forces, has generally survived better and are easier to read. Records are also available for other British military services, such as the Royal Flying Corps, Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy and these are retained by The National Archives.

[38] The information in this section relates primarily to the British army. NCOs are divided into two categories with Lance Corporals, Corporals, Lance Sergeants and Bombardiers being junior NCOs whilst Sergeants, Staff Sergeants and Staff Corporals are classified as senior NCOs. In the RAF Chief Technicians and Flight Sergeants are senior NCOs.

Before 1920 recruits had their Service Number issued by their regiment or service unit, each having its own scheme of allocation. Service Numbers, therefore, were not unique with different regiments and other units issuing the same number. For example, **23: Harry Edward Dayas** held the Service Number 1132 when he died of wounds on 10 June 1917, following The Battle of Messines, whilst serving with the 13th Battalion Cheshire Regiment. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) records, for WW1, fifteen other men serving with the British army who died whilst holding this same Service Number [39].

There appears to have been no consistent way in which Service Numbers were allocated although it seems that recruitment centres were often given blocks of numbers to use. In some cases it is apparent that different battalions of the same regiment could use the same numbers. However, it was a general rule that, once issued, a man carried the same number unless he transferred; a man moving between battalions of the same regiment would generally (although not always) retain the same Service Number, but his number would change if he moved to a different regiment. Once issued, the man would retain the same number irrespective of his transfers and postings within the army. If a man (who had been given one of the new numbers) left and re-enlisted, he would retain his old number.

The system of numbering varied between the Regular Army and the units of the Territorial Force (or TF) [40]. Up until the end of 1916 men in each Territorial unit (an infantry battalion, artillery brigade, etc) were numbered using a system which was unique to that unit; commonly, the first man who joined the unit (from 1908) was given the Service Number 1 and the numbering was continued from there [41]. However, in early 1917, the numbering system changed with most Territorial Force soldiers being allocated a new 6-digit number; although designed to simplify and clarify a system that had become confused and prone to error this also led to some misunderstanding.

> *The definition of who was a TF man and who was a regular for the purposes of the initial renumbering was standard for all arms. It was based purely on the type of unit in which a man happened to be serving at the time, rather than what form of attestation he had signed at enlistment and it did not alter the terms and conditions under which he served. Confusingly, subsequent changes of a man's number could be determined by his type of attestation.*
>
> [Before 1917] *When a man moved between TF units, even between battalions of the same regiment, he was renumbered. This was adequate for peacetime but not for the different circumstances of war. Renumbering resulted in inevitable errors and confusion, and an administrative burden. This became worse as the number of transfers between TF units (and between TF and non-TF units) increased after changes in regulations allowed the compulsory transfer of TF men to units other than the one in which they had enlisted.*
>
> *TF soldiers were defined as*
> *- all soldiers serving in TF units at the time of renumbering who had either:*

[39] However, no one else with this name from the British army, or from the Cheshire Regiment with this number, died in WW1. Since it has been estimated that around 11.5% of men from Britain serving with the British army died in, or as an immediate consequence of WW1, it is possible that Service Number 1132 was issued by the army on up to 140 occasions.

[40] The Territorial Force (TF) was the volunteer reserve component of the British Army envisaged initially as a home defence force for service during wartime. Formed in 1908 it was reformed in 1920, when it became the Territorial Army. Today this is the Army Reserve.

[41] The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records nine men with Service Number 1, serving with the British army, died in WW1. None of these was from Burton or Neston.

enlisted direct into such units or
had been posted directly to such units from Army Reserve Class B or
had been transferred or posted to such a unit from any other corps or unit

and

- all soldiers belonging to TF units who were temporarily attached to other units or corps.

By the date specified for his particular arm of service, every TF soldier was renumbered, receiving a six-digit number (five-digit in the case of some Yeomanry units) from the block of numbers allocated to his unit. The block of numbers allocated to a unit was used for all parts of the unit - 1st, 2nd and 3rd lines, the depot, men on TF Reserve, men temporarily disembodied and men temporarily attached to other units and corps. The distribution of numbers to the different elements of a unit followed no set pattern.

A TF soldier now retained this number as long as he continued to serve in a particular corps, even if he was posted to another TF or regular unit in that corps. He would only be renumbered if he transferred to another corps.

[The Long, Long Trail : http://www.1914-1918.net/renumbering.htm]

All other soldiers who were considered as regulars were not affected by the renumbering.

In 1920, following WW1, a new system of numbering [42] was introduced in the army, Service Numbers now being issued from one continuous series to: all men then serving in regular or Territorial units, all men on Army Reserve, all recruits into the regular army, men serving with the Territorial Force, Special Reserve and Militia, all men who re-enlisted if they had not had one of the new numbers before, all men transferred to the army from the Royal Marines, and to all deserters who subsequently rejoined, if they had not had one of the new numbers before.

In WW1 most Service Numbers were simple numerals (eg 466, 7755, 16698) but some regiments used a letter prefix for some battalions or other units eg:

W [eg W/1244] – 13th (Service) Battalion Cheshire Regiment [43]
TR [eg TR/4/174] – Training Reserve
M [eg M/38609] – Army Service Corps (Mechanical Transport)

A comprehensive, although possibly incomplete list, of letter prefixes is given at The Long, Long Trail (http://www.1914-1918.net/soldiers/letterprefixes.html).

Ⓙ The structure of the British Army in WW1

[See diagram on page 60]

The British Armies

Many terms were used relating to the structure and command-line of the British Army. This can be confusing, especially as there was not one single structure and variations were common. However, the basic structure, shown diagrammatically on page 60 and described in this account, was the one which applied to most of the army hierarchy.

[42] Army Order 338 of August 1920. This did not include men serving with the Labour Corps.
[43] The 13th Battalion's war diary refers to this as the Wirral Battalion, although this was not an official title.

In France and Flanders the size of the British army was eventually such that it was subdivided into five separate Armies. Armies were also formed at home and the force in Salonika also went by the title, although those in Gallipoli, Italy and Palestine did not.

The five British Armies employed in Europe on the Western Front were:

- The First Army - formed in France on 26 December 1914, initially under the command of General Sir Douglas Haig. It remained on the Western Front throughout the rest of the war.

- The Second Army - formed in France on 26 December 1914, initially under the command of Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien. Later, under the command of Sir Herbert Plumer, the Army HQ moved to Italy between 13 November 1917 and 17 March 1918. Other than for this period, the Second Army was always associated with the Ypres Salient.

- The Third Army - formed in France on 13 July 1915, initially under the command of General Sir Charles Monro. The Third Army remained on the Western Front throughout the war.

- The Fourth Army - formed in France on 5 February 1916, after the introduction of conscription in January 1916, under the command of Sir Henry Rawlinson. It was renamed as the Second Army when Plumer moved to Italy, and reverted to being the Fourth Army when he returned. It remained on the Western Front throughout the rest of the war.

- The Fifth Army - created on 22 May 1916, after the introduction of conscription in January 1916 when the Reserve Corps HQ under Sir Hubert Gough, became the Reserve Army which was then renamed Fifth Army. Seriously damaged by the great German assault in March 1918, it was renamed the Fourth Army on 2 April, and its HQ became HQ Reserve Army once again. Gough was sacked from his post and it was restored as HQ Fifth Army on 23 May 1918 under the command of Sir William Birdwood.

The other British armies that were created were:

- The British Salonika Army was formed in Salonika from October 1915; the Army HQ became a GHQ in January 1917.
- The First (Home Forces) Army was formed in the UK on the outbreak of war and disbanded on 12 March 1916.
- The Second (Home Forces) Army was formed in the UK on the outbreak of war and disbanded on 12 March 1916.
- The Third (Home Forces) Army was formed in the UK on 6 September 1914 and disbanded on 11 December 1915.
- The Northern (Home Forces) Army was formed in the UK on 11 April 1916 and disbanded on 16 February 1918.
- The Southern (Home Forces) Army was formed in the UK on 11 April 1916 and disbanded on 16 February 1918.

At the outbreak of the war in August 1914, the British regular army was a very small professional force consisting of 247,432 regular troops organised in to four Guards and 68 line infantry regiments, 31 cavalry regiments, artillery and other support arms. Each infantry regiment had two regular battalions, one of which served at home and provided

drafts and reinforcements to the other which was stationed overseas, whilst also being prepared to be part of the Expeditionary Force.
Almost half of the regular army (74 of the 157 infantry battalions and 12 of the 31 cavalry regiments), was stationed overseas in garrisons throughout the British Empire. The Royal Flying Corps was part of the Army until 1918; at the outbreak of the war, it consisted of 84 aircraft.

The regular Army was supported by the Territorial Force, and by reservists. In August 1914, there were three forms of reserves:

- The Army Reserve of retired soldiers was 145 350 strong. They were paid 3s 6d a week and had to attend 12 training days per year.
- The Special Reserve had another 64 000 men and was a form of part-time soldiering, similar to the Territorial Force. A Special Reservist had an initial six months full-time training and was paid the same as a regular soldier during this period; they had three or four weeks training per year thereafter.
- The National Reserve had some 215,000 men, who were on a register which was maintained by Territorial Force County Associations; these men had military experience, but no other reserve obligation.

The regulars and reserves - at least on paper - totalled a mobilised force of almost 700, 000 men although, of these, only 150, 000 men were immediately available to be formed into the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) that was sent to the continent. This consisted of six infantry divisions and one of cavalry. By contrast, the French Army in 1914 mobilised 1.65 million troops and 62 infantry divisions, whilst the German Army mobilised 1.85 million troops and 87 infantry divisions.

Britain, therefore, began the war with six regular and 14 reserve divisions. During the war, a further six regular, 14 Territorial, 36 Kitchener's Army and six other divisions, including the Naval Division from the Royal Navy, were formed.

[Much of the above has been adapted from:
The Long, Long Trail : The British Army in the Great War of 1914-1918 [http://www.1914-1918.net/armies.htm]
The British Army during WW1 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Army_during_World_War_I]

Changes in the structure at the Division level

As the war progressed, tactical requirements on the battlefield meant that the composition of a Division changed regularly. In the Infantry Brigades from early 1916 onwards there was a Machine Gun Company of the Machine Gun Corps, and a Trench Mortar Battery equipped with 2-inch Stokes mortars. The Heavy Artillery units were removed in early 1915 and Heavy Trench Mortar Batteries, manned by Royal Garrison Artillery personnel, were added by the time of the Somme in 1916. Labour units were added from 1916, including a Divisional Pioneer Battalion (a former infantry Battalion converted to pioneer status). A fourth Machine Gun Company was attached to every Division from April 1917. A Divisional Employment Company was formed in every Division in May 1917.

In February 1918 the four Machine Gun companies were amalgamated to form a Divisional Machine Gun Battalion, which took the number of the Division (eg 5th Division had a 5th Battalion MGC).
These changes meant that by 1918, although a Division on paper was now smaller in terms of manpower (16,000 men instead of 18,000 in 1914), it had more co-ordinated artillery support from field guns and mortars, and more than 400 machine guns (Vickers and Lewis) instead of the 24 in August 1914.
By the close of the War there were 75 Divisions in the British Army although many had never seen service outside England. Of this total, 12 were Regular Army, 30 were Territorial Force, 30 New Army (war time raised Divisions), 1 Royal Naval Division and 2 Home Service Divisions.

Army Rank

British Army personnel are ranked according to level, from the lowest (Privates, and their equivalent) to the highest (Generals). Above Private soldiers there are three types of officer: non-commissioned officers, warrant officers, and commissioned officers.

Commissioned Officers are graduates of military academies or of officer training schools. They hold a Commission from the Head of State.
Warrant Officers rank between Commissioned and Non-Commissioned officers. They hold a Royal Warrant from the Head of State and can include appointments.
Non-Commissioned Officers include corporals, sergeants and staff sergeants and can include appointments.

Field Marshal is the most senior rank in the British Army. The modern military title of Field Marshal was introduced into the British army in 1736 by King George II, who imported it from Germany. In Britain the rank came to be bestowed only upon a few senior army officers, notably the chief of Britain's Imperial General Staff. It is worth noting that:

'The interesting thing is, that Field Marshal as a rank has never been a condition, or benefit, or serving in a particular appointment. There were points in both the First and Second World Wars when the Chief of the Imperial General Staff - the head of the British Army - was a General, while theatre commanders - technically subordinates - were Field Marshals. The rank can often be awarded by Royal approval, as it was to Haig in 1916 and Montgomery in 1944. It has also been awarded on an honorary level to 22 British and Foreign Monarchs, Royal Consorts of officers of commonwealth or Allied Armies - one of them being Marshal Foch, and also a certain Emperor Hirohito'.

[Historian James Daly reviewing *The British Field Marshals 1736-1997* by T.A. Heathcote]

Three of the most significant British Field Marshals in WW1 were:

- **Field Marshal Douglas Haig**, 1st Earl Haig, KT, GCB, OM, GCVO, KCIE, ADC (19 June 1861 - 29 January 1928) was a British senior officer during the First World War. He commanded the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) from 1915 to the end of the war and was commander during The Battle of the Somme (the battle with one of the highest casualties in British military history), the Third Battle of Ypres and The Hundred Days Offensive, which led to the Armistice in 1918.

Although he had a high reputation during the immediate post-war years (his funeral in 1928 was a day of national mourning) Haig later was deeply criticised for his leadership and gained the nickname of "Butcher Haig" for the two million British casualties suffered under his command. The Canadian War Museum comments *His epic but costly offensives atThe Somme (1916) and Passchendaele (1917) have become nearly synonymous with the carnage and futility of First World War battles*.

❖ **Field Marshal Horatio Herbert Kitchener**, 1st Earl Kitchener KG, KP, GCB, OM, GCSI GCMG, GCIE, ADC, PC (24 June 1850 - 5 June 1916) was a senior British Army officer and colonial administrator who won fame for his imperial campaigns and later played a central role in the early part of World War I, although he drowned on 5 June 1916 when *HMS Hampshire* sank west of the Orkney Islands, after striking a German mine, as he was making his way to Russia in order to attend negotiations. In 1914, at the start of the First World War, Lord Kitchener became Secretary of State for War, a Cabinet Minister. One of the few to foresee a long war, he organised the largest volunteer army that both Britain and the world had seen, and oversaw a significant expansion of materials' production to fight Germany on the Western Front. Despite having warned of the difficulty of provisioning Britain for a long war, he was blamed for the shortage of shells in the spring of 1915 - one of the events leading to the formation of a coalition government - and stripped of his control over munitions and strategy.

❖ **Field Marshal Sir John Denton Pinkstone French**, Earl of Ypres KP, GCB, OM, GCVO, KCMG, ADC, PC, was born in 1852 in Ripple Vale, Kent. After joining the navy in 1866, French transferred to the army in 1874 and was promoted to Field Marshal in 1913 following a distinguished career which included the Sudan Campaign of 1884-85 and notable service as a cavalry officer in the Boer War.
He served from 1912-13 as Chief of the Imperial General Staff.
After being appointed Chief of Staff of the British Army French was given command of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) which was deployed to Europe in the opening days of the war, August 1914. However, French was temperamentally unsuited to command of the BEF, becoming so depressed at the prospects of success following the Mons campaign that his chief concern came to be the safe welfare of his troops, to the cost of his French allies. It required an emergency visit from Kitchener, the Secretary of War, in September 1914 to stiffen French's resolve.
Once the war of manoeuvre ended French's mood switched to one of over-optimism, until by Autumn 1915 he was once again reluctant to co-operate with the French and had to be urged into action. In the campaigning which followed, his incapability again became evident, coupled with poor judgement, which compelled his replacement in December 1915 by his then deputy, Douglas Haig.

Relieved of his command French served as Commander of the British Home Forces from 1915-18 (including responsibility for dealing with the Easter Rising in Ireland in 1916), and was subsequently awarded the title of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1921. Upon his retirement French was awarded a grant of £50, 000 by the British government. Sir John French died in 1925.

[Photograph sources:
Haig - https://ww1ieper1917.wordpress.com/2013/12/19/sir-douglas-haig-replaces-sir-john-french-as-commander-in-chief-of-all-british-forces-on-the-western-front/
Kitchener - http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2644128/The-secret-poster-sent-millions-war-Recruitment-poster-featuring-WWI-minister-Lord-Kitchener-drawn-hours-man-never-met-ignored-pronounced-SQUINT.html
French - http://www.britishempire.co.uk/forces/armyunits/britishinfantry/rirfrench.htm]

General Although the King would be the commander of the armed forces he appointed a Captain General to command in his name - the first being George Monck appointed by Charles II in 1660. Later, when the title of Colonel became popular some kings called their commanders Colonel General. The British Army stopped using the Captain part of the title by the Eighteenth Century leaving just General as the top commander.

Lieutenant General The King or his Captain General would often be away from the army since they had interests elsewhere so the job of actually running the army fell to the Captain General's assistant, the Lieutenant General. This was not a permanent rank until the Seventeenth Century, before which one of the Colonels might be appointed Lieutenant General for a particular campaign or war but he would still command his own regiment.

Major General The army's chief administrative officer was the Sergeant Major General. He would be an experienced soldier, possibly a commoner, who served as chief of staff. For much of his administrative work he dealt with the regimental Sergeant Majors, thus his title meant "overall" or "chief" Sergeant Major. His duties included such things as supply, organisation, and forming the army for battle. As the General ranks became fixed during the Seventeenth Century the Sergeant portion fell away leaving the title as Major General. This happened in England in 1655 when its Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell organized the country into eleven military districts each commanded by a Major General.

Brigadier The Commander of a Brigade, in some armies later known as a Brigadier General. The Lieutenant General and Sergeant Major General dealt directly with the Colonels who lead the regiments making up the army. When there got to be too many regiments for the two generals to handle effectively they organized Brigades, usually composed of three or more Regiments. During the nineteenth century and before the "rank" of Brigadier was actually established, a local or temporary appointment granted (typically) to a full Colonel when commanding a Brigade. The Brigadier General was the lowest-ranking general officer but was abolished when the Brigade was abolished after World War I, being replaced by Colonels Commandant. The rank of Brigadier appeared in 1928.

Colonel The Spanish Army was organised into twenty units called *colunelas* or columns. These comprised 1000 to 1250 men further organised into companies. The commander was

the *cabo de colunela*, head of the column, or Colonel. Since the *colunelas* were royal or "crown" units they were also called *coronelias* and their commanders *coronels*. The French developed Regiments from the *colunela*, keeping the title of Colonel and the British copied the French.

Lieutenant Colonel The Colonel's assistant - the Lieutenant - took over at any time the Colonel was absent and soon adopted the title of Lieutenant Colonel.

Major A Major was originally the Sergeant Major, third in command to a Colonel in a traditional Regiment. Later, like a Lieutenant Colonel, a Major might command his own Battalion.

Captain Originally Captain-Lieutenant, becoming Captain in 1772. As armies evolved his post came to be at the head of a company, which by the Sixteenth Century was usually 100 to 200 men, the most that one man was considered able to manage in battle.

Lieutenant From the French *lieu* (place) and *tenant* (holder). The Lieutenant normally commands a small tactical unit such as a platoon. A Lieutenant often takes the place of a superior officer when that officer is absent.

Second Lieutenant The lowest rank of commissioned officer. The title Subaltern is a term applied generally to any officer below the rank of captain, especially a second lieutenant (derived from the Latin for *alternate*.

Warrant Officer Introduced into the British Army in 1879, the military grade of Warrant Officer dates back to the early years of the Royal Navy. These experienced soldiers, often have specialist appointments. They hold a Royal Warrant from the Head of State.

Staff Sergeant A rank senior to sergeant.

Sergeant From ‘servant to a knight’ in medieval times. The English borrowed the word sergeant (sometimes *Serjeant*) from the French in about the Thirteenth Century.

Corporal Originally referred to a reliable veteran called the *capo de'squadra* or head of the square. The title changed to *caporale* by the Sixteenth Century and meant the leader of a small body of soldiers. The French picked up the term in about the Sixteenth Century and the British adopted Corporal in the Seventeenth or Eighteenth Century and it has been a part of the army ever since. The British gave the Corporal his two stripes when they started using chevrons in 1803.

Lance Corporal This is an appointment and not a rank and is the officer of lowest rank. The title is from the Old Italian *lancia spezzata*, superior soldier, literally "broken lance". Originally referred to as a "chosen man" he is the soldier who would take control of the section if the Corporal was to be killed or wounded.

Private From the Latin *privus* or *privo* the Private was, originally, "an individual person and later an individual without (deprived of) an office" i.e. a private gentleman. The term as a military rank seems to come from the Sixteenth Century when individuals had the privilege of enlisting or making private contracts to serve as private soldiers in military units.

[The above information is much adapted from: “British Regiments in WW1 : The British Army and the First World War, 1914 – 1918” (http://battlefields1418.50megs.com/division)]

WAR OFFICE

The War Office, under the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and the Army Council, chaired by the Secretary of State for War, held the overall responsibility for operations. The War Cabinet took over the wartime role of the permanent Cabinet between December 1916 and October 1919.

GHQ

A General Headquarters was formed for each theatre of war, often when the build-up of British forces became too large or complex for the local forces there to retain adequate command. If, however, the General Officer Commanding reported to another British General, then the headquarters was known as an HQ. A GHQ/HQ would carry a complement of guard, transport and signals troops.

ARMY

In France and Flanders, the size of the British army was eventually such that it was subdivided into five armies. Once defined, the army was composed of an Army HQ which commanded at least two Corps, with various units attached as Army Troops. Army HQ reported up to GHQ. The Army HQ consisted of 31 officers and 106 other ranks and generally remained geographically fixed in place. An army, commanded by a General, could contain around 300, 000 men.

CORPS

An intermediate level which was flexible and not permanently attached to an army. The number of Corps under the command of an army remained nominally at two, but could be increased if fighting conditions required – for example, when an army was ordered to an offensive. The Corps HQ generally remained fixed in one place. Confusingly, Corps was a term used in other ways - one infantry regiment was called the King's Royal Rifle Corps, for example. A Corps could number from 50, 000 up to 125 ,000 men and was commanded by a Lieutenant-General .

DIVISION

The Division was the main fighting formation on the battlefield, a permanent formation which moved and fought together and controlling 3 (or 4) Brigades. Divisions were not attached permanently to an Army but were moved around and passed from control of one Army to another. Three or four divisions would be grouped as needed to create a Corps. In early 1918 there were about 60 British divisions on the Western Front. A Division could be from 12, 000 up to 18, 000 men and was commanded by a Major-General.

BRIGADE

The Brigade was the basic tactical unit of the field artillery of the British army in the Great War. It was composed of a Brigade Headquarters and a number of batteries of guns or howitzers. A brigade would commonly be composed of 4 or 5 battalions. At full establishment, an artillery brigade of 18-lb field guns consisted of 795 men of whom 23 were officers. For a 4.5-inch howitzer brigade, this was 755 men and 22 officers. A brigade was commanded by a Brigadier-General, sometimes a Colonel.

REGIMENT

The largest "permanent" organisational unit (around 2000 men) and, because of their permanent nature, many regiments have long histories, often going back for centuries. The majority of the infantry was made up of regiments with county or other regional affiliations. Most had two battalions of the regular army in 1914: one was usually overseas and the other trained recruits in the United Kingdom. Regiments never fought as individual units, but as battalions. Some soldiers moved between battalions but commonly remained in the same regiment. Many regiments were commanded by a Colonel. Between 1914 and 1928 the Cheshire Regiment was commanded by Maj-Gen. Sir Edward Ritchie Coryton Graham, KCB, KCMG.

BATTALION

The battalion, usually commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel with a Major as Second-in-Command, was the basic tactical unit of the infantry of the British Army in WW1. At full establishment it consisted of 1,007 men of whom 30 were officers. It comprised a Battalion Headquarters and four Companies. Once they had been overseas for a while it was rare for a battalion to be at full establishment and it was not unknown at times for battalions to go into fighting with perhaps only 200. For most soldiers it was the Battalion, rather than the Regiment, that was their 'home'. Whilst an infantry regiment had a number of battalions (often 12 – 15), these did not usually serve together, but were split among several brigades.

COMPANY

Usually lettered A to D - or in the case of the Guards and certain other regiments numbered 1 to 4 - each of the four companies comprising a battalion numbered 227 heads when they were at full establishment. The company was commanded by a Major or Captain, with a Captain as Second-in-Command.

PLATOON

A Company was normally divided into 4 Platoons, each with 40 – 70 men. A Company was commanded by a subaltern (a Lieutenant or Second Lieutenant) with a Sergeant as Second-in-Command. A Company would commonly contain 2 Sergeants and 2 or 3 Corporals.

SECTION

A Section had a specific role; a Machine Gun Section, for example, consisted typically of a Lieutenant (acting as Battalion Machine Gun Officer), a Sergeant, a Corporal, 2 drivers, a batman and 12 Privates trained in the maintenance, transport, loading and firing of the Vickers heavy machine gun. These men made up two six-man gun teams. By 1918 each platoon had a Lewis gun section and a section that specialised in throwing hand-grenades (known as *bombs*) and each section was compelled to provide two scouts to carry out reconnaissance duties.

PRIVATE, GUNNER etc

The individual soldier, serving at the lowest level.

The basic structure of the British Army in WW1

Ⓚ What was a Corps?

Confusingly, the term Corps was used in two different ways.

In general terms the Corps was an intermediate level in the command chain - see the diagram on the facing page. As the primary component of an Army, it reported up to this Army, and it commanded the Divisions which comprised it. For example, at the commencement of war in August 1914, when the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) sailed for France, there were three Corps under the command of Field Marshal John French:

I Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Douglas Haig with Brigadier-General J. E. Gough (Chief of Staff), Brigadier-General H. S. Horne (Royal Artillery) and Brigadier-General S. R. Rice (Royal Engineers). The I Army Corps comprised (only the composition of the 1st Division is shown here to demonstrate the structure of a Division):

1st Division - commanded by Major-General S. H. Lomax

- 1st (Guards) Brigade under Brigadier-General F. I. Maxse
  - 1st Coldstream Guards
  - 1st Scots Guards
  - 1st The Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)
  - 2nd The Royal Munster Fusiliers
- 2nd Infantry Brigade under Brigadier-General E. S. Bulfin
  - 2nd The Royal Sussex Regiment
  - 1st The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment
  - 1st The Northamptonshire Regiment
  - 2nd The King's Royal Rifle Corps
- 3rd Infantry Brigade under Brigadier-General H. J. S. Landon
  - 1st The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)
  - 1st The South Wales Borderers
  - 1st The Gloucestershire Regiment
  - 2nd The Welch Regiment
- Divisional Troops
  - Mounted Troops
    - A Squadron, 15th (The King's) Hussars
    - 1st Cyclist Company
  - Artillery
    - XXV Brigade RFA
      - 113th Battery RFA
      - 114th Battery RFA
      - 115th Battery RFA
    - XXVI Brigade RFA
      - 116th Battery RFA
      - 117th Battery RFA
      - 118th Battery RFA
    - XXXIX Brigade RFA
      - 46th Battery RFA

51st Battery RFA
54th Battery RFA
XLIII (Howitzer) Brigade RFA
30th (Howitzer) Battery RFA
40th (Howitzer) Battery RFA
57th (Howitzer) Battery RFA
26th Heavy Battery RGA

- Engineers

23rd Field Company RE
26th Field Company RE

2nd Division - commanded by Major-General C. C. Monro (the composition of the 2nd Division is not shown here).

II Army Corps [44]- commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir James Grierson [45] with Brigadier-General George Forestier-Walker (Chief of Staff), Brigadier-General A. H. Short (Royal Artillery) and Brigadier-General A. E. Sandbach (Royal Engineers).

3rd Division - commanded by Major-General Hubert I. W. Hamilton.

5th Division - commanded by Major-General Sir C. Fergusson.

III Army Corps - formed in France on 31 August 1914, commanded by Major-General William P. Pulteney with Brigadier-General J. P. Du Cane (Chief of Staff), Brigadier-General E. J. Phipps-Hornby (Royal Artillery) and Brigadier-General F. M. Glubb (Royal Engineers).

4th Division - landed in France on the night of 22/23 August and 23, commanded by Major-General T. D'O. Snow.

6th Division - embarked for France on 8 and 9 September, commanded by Major-General J. L. Keir.

By November 1918, at the end of WW1, the number of Corps had expanded significantly with five Armies made up of 19 Corps (no details of the compositions are given) under the command of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig [46]:

First Army – under the command of General Henry Sinclair Horne, 1st Baron Horne GCB, KCMG (19 February 1861 – 14 August 1929) [47].

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[44] The compositions of the II & III Corps and their Divisions are not shown here.

[45] Lieutenant-General James Grierson, who was much overweight, died of an aneurism of the heart on a train between Rouen and Amiens on 17 August. His replacement, General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, took over command at Bavai, on 21 August 1914.

[46] In addition to the Corps listed here, these Armies contained other Divisions of Cavalry and other forces who formed the varied lines of communication.

[47] Horne was the only British artillery officer to command an army in the war. His military career was unremarkable until 1912 when he was promoted to brigadier and appointed Inspector of Artillery. Horne fought with distinction in the British Expeditionary Force's (BEF) actions throughout 1914; in October of that year, he was promoted to major general and created a Companion of the Order of the Bath. A few months later, he was given command of the 2nd Division. In May 1915, Horne's division participated in the first British night attack of the war, distinguishing itself at the Battle of Festubert; the attack faltered, partly because the artillery ran out of ammunition. The media launched vicious attacks on the Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener; the blame was eventually laid on General French who was sacked at the year's end. Significantly, the artillery was reorganised after this fiasco at Horne's suggestion. [Wikipedia]

VII Army Corps - commanded by Major-General Sir Robert Dundas Whigham, GCB, KCMG, DSO (5 August 1865 - 23 June 1950).

VIII Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Aylmer Gould Hunter-Weston KCB, DSO, GStJ (23 September 1864 - 18 March 1940) [48].

XXII Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Alexander John Godley, GCB, KCMG (4 February 1867 - 6 March 1957).

Canadian Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur William Currie, GCMG, KCB (5 December 1875 - 30 November 1933) [49].

Second Army – under the command of General Sir Herbert Charles Onslow Plumer, 1st Viscount Plumer, GCB, GCMG, GCVO, GBE (13 March 1857 - 16 July 1932).

II Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Claud Jacob, GCB, GCSI, KCMG (21 November 1863 - 2 June 1948).

X Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Reginald Byng Stephens, KCB, CMG, DL (10 October 1869 - 6 April 1955).

XV Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Henry de Beauvoir De Lisle, KCB, KCMG, DSO (27 July 1864 - 16 July 1955).

XIX Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Edward Watts, KCB, KCMG (14 February 1858 - 15 October 1934).

Third Army – under the command of General Hon. Sir Julian Hedworth George Byng, 1st Viscount Byng of Vimy, GCB, GCMG, MVO (11 September 1862 - 6 June 1935).

IV Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir George Montague Harper, KCB, DSO (11 January 1865 - 15 December 1922).

V Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Cameron Deane Shute, KCB, KCMG (1866–1936).

VI Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir James Aylmer Lowthorpe Haldane, GCMG, KCB, DSO (17 November 1862 - 19 April 1950).

XVII Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Fergusson, 7th Baronet, GCB, GCMG, DSO, MVO (17 January 1865 - 20 February 1951).

Fourth Army – under the command of General Sir Henry Seymour Rawlinson, 1st Baron Rawlinson, GCB, GCSI, GCVO, KCMG (20 February 1864 - 28 March 1925) [50].

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[48] Aylmer Gould Hunter-Weston served in Gallipoli and in the very early stages of the Somme Offensive. In an October 1916 by-election, he was elected to the House of Commons as the Unionist member for North Ayrshire and so became the first Member of Parliament to simultaneously command an Army Corps in the field. Whilst he continued to command VIII Corps he was not involved in another offensive. He was described by his superior, Sir Douglas Haig, as a "rank amateur", and has been referred to by author Les Carlyon as "one of the Great War's spectacular incompetents".

[49] Currie was unique in starting his military career on the very bottom rung as a pre-war militia gunner before rising through the ranks to become the first Canadian commander of the Canadian Corps.

[50] He was known as Sir Henry Rawlinson, 2nd Baronet, between 1895 and 1919. In 1920 Rawlinson was made Commander-in-Chief, India, a post he held until his death. He died in Delhi on 28 March 1925 when he was taken ill after playing polo and cricket.

IX Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Walter Pipon Braithwaite, GCB (11 November 1865 - 7 September 1945) [51].

XIII Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Lethbridge Napier Morland, KCB, KCMG, DSO (9 August 1865 – 21 May 1925) [52].

Australian Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash, GCMG, KCB, VD (27 June 1865 - 8 October 1931) [53]

Fifth Army – under the command of General Sir William Riddell Birdwood, 1st Baron Birdwood, GCB, GCSI, GCMG, GCVO, CIE, DSO (13 September 1865 - 17 May 1951) [54].

I Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Edward Aveling Holland, KCB, KCMG, DSO, MVO (13 April 1862 - 7 December 1927).

III Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Butler
Sir Richard Harte Keatinge Butler KCB KCMG (28 August 1870 - 22 April 1935).

XI Army Corps - commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Cyril Byrne Haking, GBE, KCB, KCMG (24 January 1862 - 9 June 1945) [55].

Portuguese Corps – General Tomás António Garcia Rosado, KCMG (4 March 1854 - 30 August 1937).

In contrast to the above definition and explanation of the term *Corps*, the same term was applied also to units, comparable to regiments, who supported infantry units. In this sense the term Corps was applied to:

The King's Royal Rifle Corps - a regiment, formed during 1755-56 in North America initially as the 62nd and then as the 60th Royal American Regiment, it was renamed as The Duke of York's Own Rifle Corps following the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. This was changed to the King's Royal Rifle Corps (KRRC) in 1830 when King George IV ascended to the throne

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[51] *Not* William Garnett Braithwaite [as stated in *The Great War Handbook* by Geoff Bridger]. In 1915 Walter Pipon Braithwaite was appointed Chief of Staff for the Mediterranean Expedition, commanded by Ian Hamilton. He was regarded by many of the Australians involved in that effort as "arrogant and incompetent" and after the failure of the Mediterranean expedition he was recalled to London. However, following his success in repelling the German advances at Bullecourt and Cambrai he was given command of IX Corps on 13 September 1918 and later XII Corps.

[52] Born in Montreal, Morland commanded X Corps through to April 1918. At the end of the war he took command of XIII Corps, a position he held until 1920, when he was promoted and made commander-in-chief of the British Army of the Rhine.

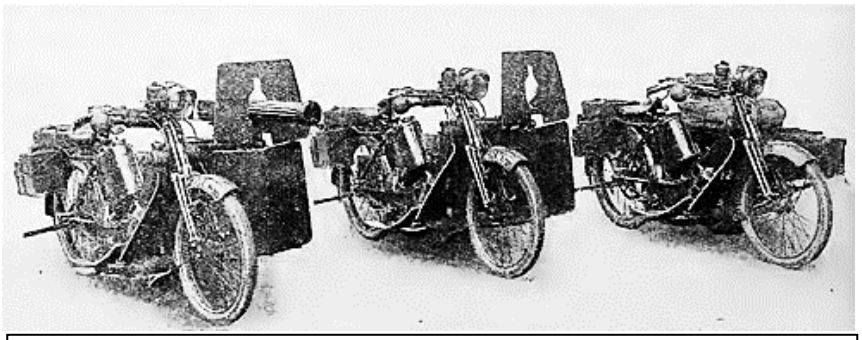
[53] Monash, a civil engineer, took charge of the newly raised 3rd Division in northwestern France in July 1916 and in May 1918 he became commander of the Australian Corps, at the time the largest corps on the Western Front. Monash is considered one of the best Allied generals of WW1 and the most famous commander in Australian history.

[54] William Birdwood assumed command on 23 May 1918 and the Fifth Army then saw little further action in WW1.

[55] Haking commanded XI Corps when it was formed in France on 29 August 1915. Then part of Sir Charles Monro's First Army, Xl Corps was first engaged at the Battle of Fromelles (19 July 1916), a diversion to the Somme offensive in which two untried divisions were involved in an ill-planned subsidiary attack in Flanders. This conflict, involving Australian forces, achieved little but cost thousands of casualties, causing great resentment in Australia.
The future Air Vice Marshal Philip Game, then serving as GSO1 to 46th Division, wrote frequently in letters to his wife (late 1915) of how Haking interfered frequently with his planning. Game described Haking as "a vindictive bully" and "really impossible, untruthful, a bully and not to be trusted" (December 1915 and April 1916). In May 1916 Haking complained that a unit had "dirt on their clothes" – they had in fact just come out of the trenches. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Haking]

and his brother His Royal Highness Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge became colonel. The KRRC no longer exists - in 1948 the Regiment was merged with The Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own) to form The Green Jackets Brigade and further amalgamations followed with the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry in 1958. In 1966 these three Regiments became the three battalions of the Royal Green Jackets and in 2007 were further merged with the Devonshire and Dorset Light Infantry, The Light Infantry and The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Light Infantry to become The Rifles.

The Machine Gun Corps (MGC) - In 1914 all infantry battalions had a Maxim machine gun section of two guns, which was increased to four sections in February 1915. Each section was staffed by a junior officer and 12 men. The sections were equipped with .303 Maxim guns, served by a subaltern and 12 men, together with two carts for transportation.



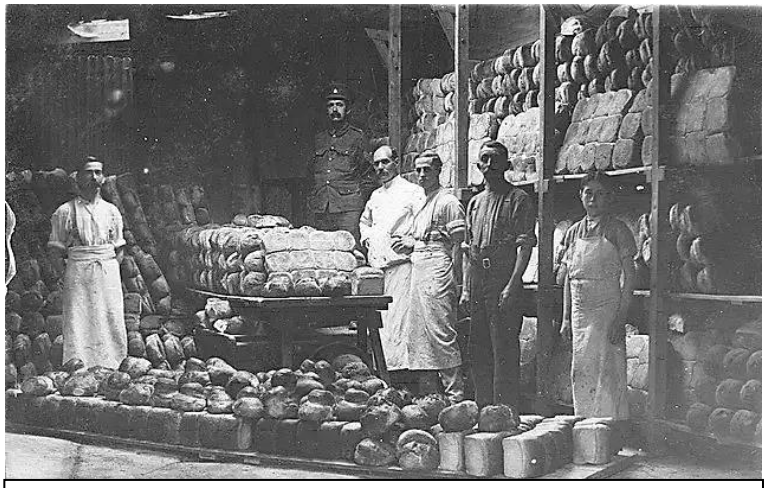
A Mobile Machine Gun Unit: one machine gun, one ammunition carrier, one spare. The motorcycles are Scotts although Royal Enfield, Triumphs and Clynos were also used. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motor_Machine_Gun_Service]

In late 1914 the British Expeditionary Force established a Machine Gun School at Wisques in France to train new regimental officers and machine gunners, and a Machine Gun Training Centre was established at Grantham in Lincolnshire.

In September 1915 a proposal was made to the War Office for the formation of a single specialist Machine Gun Company for each infantry brigade, this to be created by withdrawing the guns and gun teams from the battalions. They would be replaced at battalion level by the light .303 Lewis machine guns, as these became available, so the firepower of each brigade would be substantially increased. The Machine Gun Corps was created by Royal Warrant on October 14 followed by an Army Order on 22 October 1915. The companies formed in each brigade would transfer to the new Corps. The MGC would eventually consist of infantry Machine Gun Companies, cavalry Machine Gun Squadrons and Motor Machine Gun Batteries. The pace of reorganisation depended largely on the rate of supply of the Lewis guns but it was completed before the Battle of the Somme in 1916. A Base Depot for the Corps was established at Camiers on the French coast, north of Le Touquet.

By mid-1918 each Division had four Machine Gun Companies and these were then amalgamated into a single machine gun battalion under the command of a Lieutenant-Colonel. By this time the MGC comprised 70 battalions, each with 64 machine guns, and a total strength of over 124, 000 officers and men.

A Mobile Machine Gun Branch (or Motor Machine Gun Service, MMGS) was established in 1914, Vickers guns being mounted on motorcycle sidecars or small armoured carriers. This was incorporated into the Machine Gun Corps in October 1915 as the Machine Gun Corps (Motors). By the end of the war the MGC had over 52, 300 guns but had lost nearly 14, 000 men from enemy action.



The inside of a Field Bakery in France in 1914/15. An NCO from the ASC is in the background overseeing the work with men in work aprons sorting and stacking the loaves to be sent to the front. [Source & text: https://greatwarphotos.com/tag/army-service-corps/]

Army Service Corps (ASC) - This vast organisation - over 315, 000 men and around 10, 500 officers - provided the supply lines for food, vehicles, horses, ammunition and equipment, most being supplied from Britain. The ASC commonly supplied other battlefield services, such as baking bread and butchering meat, and men could be moved from the ASC into fighting battalions of the Infantry.

The ASC was organised into units known as Companies, each with a specific role, although many men of the ASC were not with ASC Companies, being attached to other types of unit in the army (eg as drivers). There were over 1200 ASC Companies, some of the larger and most important being:

An ASC Horse Transport limber in France

Horse Transport Companies - most HTCs were under the orders of Divisions, with four normally being grouped into a Divisional Train. Others formed part of the Lines of Communication where they were variously known by subtitles as Auxiliary Supply Companies or Reserve Parks. Horses were of major significance in transport and communications and many inter-related units were established such as ASC Horse Transport Army Auxiliary Companies, ASC Horse Transport Army Train Companies, ASC Horse Transport Depot Companies, ASC Horse Transport Divisional Train Companies (of which there were many) and three ASC Donkey Companies.

The sheer scale of animals used is incredible. The British Official History shows that in August 1914 the army had 165,000 horses on the establishment; doing everything from pulling wagons and ambulances, to serving in mounted regiments or serving as Sir John French's charger. The same establishment four years later numbered more than 828,000 horses and in those four years millions of animals had been brought into use by the British alone. For the British effort horses were brought from a wide area; 428,00 from North America, 6,000 from South America and some were even sourced in Spain and Portugal. At war's ending many were sold locally but nearly 95,000 were brought back to Britain for sale, sometimes to their original owners. The cost to the horses was great; more than 225,000 of them died in British service on the Western Front and more than 376,000 died in service with the French Army.

[Text & photo: https://greatwarphotos.com/tag/army-service-corps/]

Mechanical Transport Companies - all MTCs were part of the Lines of Communication and were not under the orders of a Division, although some (unusually known as Divisional Supply Columns and Divisional Ammunition Parks) were in effect attached to a given Division and worked closely with it. Those in the Lines of Communication operated in a wide variety of roles, such as being attached to the heavy artillery as Ammunition Columns or Parks, Omnibus Companies, Motor Ambulance Convoys, or Bridging and Pontoon units.

Each Division of the army had some motorised transport allocated to it and the Divisional Supply Column Companies were responsible for the supply of goods, equipment and ammunition from the Divisional railhead to the Divisional Refilling Point.

Labour Companies [56] – by the end of 1914 five Labour Companies had been established to provide general labouring duties, each Company consisting of 6 officers and 530 other ranks. During 1914 and 1915 many more Labour Companies were formed with men, some skilled, used in operations from disembarking stores and equipment at ports to working close to the front line. It was decided that the Labour Companies would be better operated from a Labour Corps, and this was established between February and June 1917.

Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) - The RAMC operated the army's medical units and provided medical detachments for the units of infantry, artillery and other arms. The Corps was assisted in its work by voluntary help from the British Red Cross, St John Ambulance, the Friends Ambulance Unit, the Voluntary Aid Detachments, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service and hundreds of private and charitable ventures.


WAR OFFICE. MEDICAL DIVISION.

FIRST FIELD DRESSING.

TO OPEN { Outer Cover: Pull Tapes apart. Inner Waterproof Cover: Tear apart the uncemented corners as indicated by the arrows.

CONTENTS.—Two Dressings in waterproof covers each consisting of a gauze pad stitched to a bandage and a safety pin.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE.—Take the folded ends of the bandage in each hand, and keeping the bandage taut, apply the gauze pad to the wound and fix the bandage. One dressing to be used for each wound.

DO NOT HANDLE THE GAUZE OR WOUND.

THE BARTON GIBBS CO., OLDBURY.

British Army First Field Dressing Pack
[Source: Imperial War Museum http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30025941]

The chance of survival for a man wounded at the front depended on the nature of the wound, its severity and how quickly the wound could be treated. The nature of warfare on the WW1 front lines meant that huge numbers of men commonly required immediate treatment, for a complexity of problems, at the same time. During Basic Training little attention was given to First Aid and men in the field were provided with just a rudimentary dressing pack – two gauze pads on small bandages and two safety pins!
A complex evacuation chain for wounded and sick soldiers was quickly established which covered the assessment and treatment of men from front line positions through to men being taken to centres well behind the front line and, in some cases, being returned to Britain for treatment. This network was known as the Medical Chain of Evacuation or evacuation chain; a schematic diagram of this chain is shown on the following page.

Ambulance men with a wounded soldier. In the background stretcher bearers are moving wounded men to a motorised ambulance (left).

This is a bronze plaque on the Port Sunlight War Memorial.

[56] Labour Battalions were also established, separate from the ASC, within the Royal Engineers.

FRONT LINE

REGIMENTAL AID POST [RAP]

At, or close behind, front line fighting positions, where a Medical Officer and staff could provide basic initial treatment and initial assessment.

ADVANCED DRESSING STATION [ADS]

Operated by the Field Ambulance as close to the front line as possible (around 400 yards behind the RAPs and often in large house, schools etc.), these small stations could provide limited medical treatment. Up to 4 RAPs would be served and each Division normally had 2 ADSs. Field Medical Cards were

STRETCHER BEARER RELAY POST

Small mobile units, around 600 yards behind the Aid Posts, staffed by the Field Ambulance, providing bearer services from the front line.

COMMAND DEPOT

Convalescence & rehabilitation camps in UK.

FIELD AMBULANCE

A complete mobile medical unit - not a vehicle - a short distance behind the front line but still within the conflict zone. Each Division had 3 Field Ambulances, each with a theoretical capacity of 150 patients, and staffed by 224 men and 10 officers.

WALKING WOUNDED COLLECTION POST [WWCP]

Established only during a major offensive, the WWCP relieved the pressure on the ADS. Sited between the ADS and MDS, often in a building or tents on an easy route from the front line and close to a road leading to a CCS. Each Division would have one WWCP staffed in a similar way to an MDS, capable of dealing with up to 300 patients.

COLLECTING POST

Away from the front line, generally where two or more evacuation routes met, these centres provided only basic medical services but acted as holding areas for wounded men to be picked up and taken to other centres.

MAIN DRESSING STATION [MDS]

Normally, each Division had one MDS, ideally sited in a large building around a mile to the rear of the ADS. An MDS could be converted to a Casualty Clearing Station if required. An MDS commonly had a Commanding Officer, 2 Medical Officers, a Dental Officer, a Quartermaster and 59 other RAMC ranks, along with 1 RAMC officer, and 44 other ranks ASC attached.

BASE HOSPITAL

Often located on the coast and English Channel, close to a port and rail links, these were large facilities commonly based in big buildings such as hotels. Of two types, known as Stationary and General Hospitals (Stationary Hospitals, two per Division, could hold 400 casualties each, General Hospitals could hold 1040 patients) they often arranged for patients (up to 50%) to be taken back to hospitals in Britain for treatment and recuperation. A General Hospital could have 32 Medical Officers, 3 Chaplains, 73 female Nurses and 206 RAMC troops acting as orderlies, etc. The hospitals were enlarged in 1917, up to 2,500 beds.

CASUALTY CLEARING STATION [CCS]

Large and well-equipped static medical facilities, many miles behind the front line and generally on a railway line or, sometimes, by a canal.
Often a complex of tents or huts, with several CCSs in close proximity, its function was to hold all serious cases who were unfit for further travel, to treat and return minor cases to their unit and to evacuate all others to Base Hospitals. A typical CCS could hold 1,000 casualties at any time, and each would admit 15 - 300 cases, in rotation. Usually there was one CCS for each Division, basic staffing being 8 Medical Officers, 1 Quartermaster, 7 nurses and 77 other ranks as clerks, cooks, nursing orderlies, theatre orderlies, ambulance drivers, stretcher-bearers, chaplains etc.

Key to Medical Chain of Evacuation on facing page

From the front line a wounded soldier could receive assessment and treatment at several locations at and behind the front line. At any stage, following treatment, a soldier could be returned to his fighting unit. This diagram shows the network applicable to infantry units.

A wounded soldier would not, necessarily, be moved through all the units shown by the red arrows on this diagram.
The RAMC network of units was complex (and several had sub-sections, not shown on this diagram) and these changed over time. As an example, the Main Dressing Station [MDS] of the Field Ambulance consisted of 6 sub-sections:

- **Receiving Section** provided hot drinks, sandwiches, and cigarettes.
- **Recording Section** where clerks took patient information and examined Field Medical cards
- **Resuscitation Section** for warming and reviving those suffering from shock or the effects of haemorrhage.
- **Dressing Station** where dressings were applied, and any urgent surgical treatment, administration of A.T.S. # or morphia, if not carried out already.
- **Gas Section** to keep gas victims away from other patients.
- **Evacuation Section** where the patient's treatment was classified with whatever they were suffering from and how they were treated, and they awaited evacuation.

Other space was allocated for a mortuary, a cookhouse, stores, and living accommodation for officers and others ranks *.

The Field Ambulance unit consisted of a number of interlinked sections shown on this diagram as the salmon-coloured boxes and linked to the Field Ambulance box by blue arrows. The Field Ambulance also contained a Transport section (with horses and motorized ambulances) not shown on the diagram.

Presumed to be Amphetamine-type stimulants
* Source: http://www.1914-1918.net/fieldambulances.htm

The role of the Regimental Medical Officer [RMO] [57]

> *I should not advise anyone with any desire to practice their surgical or medical skill to take on the job of medical officer to a battalion, but from the point of view of seeing the war, understanding military methods and the spirit of the men it is the best post open to a medical man..... The only diseases the M.O. is called upon to treat are slight sprains, myalgia, and last, but not least, diarrhoea.... Sanitation is, perhaps, the most important work that the M.O. is called upon to perform.* [Lt A Noel Garrod R.A.M.C. 'Notes on the Existence of a Regimental M.O. - At the Front']

Duties of the RMO: During the war every fighting unit (infantry battalion, artillery brigade or cavalry regiment) had its own doctor [or RMO]. He was RAMC but came under the commanding officer of the fighting unit he was attached to. The doctor's role was not only to attend to medical matters but also matters of hygiene, which meant water supply, the preparation of food, and the supervision of sanitary areas. The doctor's daily routine usually began with him doing an inspection of the sick. He then inspected the camp or billets, and the cook houses. The rest of the day would be taken up with the training and supervision of water cart orderlies and stretcher-bearers. To assist him in his duties he

[57] Taken from *RAMC in The Great War: The Chain of Evacuation of The Royal Army Medical Corps* [https://www.ramc-ww1.com/chain_of_evacuation.php]

would have had an RAMC Sergeant or Corporal attached to him and perhaps 1 or 2 RAMC Privates. When away from the Front Line, the doctor's post was known as the Camp Reception Station [CRS] or Medical Inspection Room [MI Room] and contained 2 - 6 beds for short-term holding for those needing rest but not sick enough to be evacuated back.

A good M.O. to a battalion was a privileged and important officer. He was usually on intimate terms with his colonel, a friend to all his brother officers, and friend and confidant as well as doctor to the rank and file. Often and often I noticed that a battalion with a first-class M.O. was always a first-class battalion, had the smallest sick parade, fewer men falling out on a long march and the lowest quota of casualties from trench foot. [Capt. Philip Gosse R.A.M.C. 'Memoirs of a Camp-Follower]

Army Veterinary Corps - responsible for the medical care of animals used by the army, predominantly horses, mules and pigeons. A number of Base Veterinary Hospitals were established in the various theatres of war.

Tank Corps – the concept of the military tank, an all-terrain tracked fighting vehicle, originated in 1903 but it was not until October 1914 that the need for what he described as a "machine-gun destroyer" was conceived by Lieutenant-Colonel Ernest Swinton, a British Royal Engineer officer.
Following development, and many unsuccessful trials with early prototypes, an experimental machine was completed in late 1915 and proved successful. An initial order was placed by the War Office in February 1916 for 100 units to be used on the Western front in France and a second order for 50 additional units was placed in April 1916.
Initially the tanks were under the orders of the Heavy Section Machine Gun Corps and six Companies were established at Bisley. In mid-August 1916 four of the Companies began the move to France although the HQ and commander remained in Britain.

A British Mark I "male" tank (with a 6-pounder [57 mm]) cannon and a Hotchkiss machine gun at each side) near Thiepval on 25 September 1916, fitted with wire mesh to deflect grenades and the initial steering tail, shown raised.
Source:
http://www.wikiwand.com/en/British_heavy_tanks_of_World_War_I

Tanks were used for the first time in action on the battlefield of The Somme on 15 September 1916. 36 Mark 1 tanks of C and D Companies being used at The Battle of Flers-Courcelette.

In November 1916 the Companies were expanded to Battalions, a battalion consisting of 3 Companies. The Tank Corps was formed from the Heavy Branch MGC on 27 July 1917 with each Tank Battalion having a complement of 32 officers and 374 men. Men were usually seconded from the Motor Machine Gun units, with drivers taken from the Army Service Corps.

Army Cyclist Corps - the formation of the Army Cyclist Corps took place on 7 November 1914 when existing units and Companies were amalgamated.
The main roles of the cyclists were delivering messages and reconnaissance and, being armed as infantry, could be involved in front line action.

Labour Corps – on the outbreak of war in August 1914 there was no section of the British Army whose role was to provide the huge body of labour for building and/or maintaining the railways, roads and canals or for constructing new camps and buildings and creating an intricate network of telephone communications. Much general labour was necessary also for moving considerable volumes of materials.
In the early months of the war much of this work was detailed to the Pioneer Battalions which were added to each Division and some infantry regiments formed labour companies and works battalions for work on the lines of communication and at home. However, until the formation of the Labour Corps in January 1917 there was little coordination.

Through the course of the war the size of the Labour Corps increased significantly growing to nearly 390,000 men (more than 10% of the total size of the Army) by the Armistice in November 1918. Of these men, around 175,000 worked in Britain and the rest in the various war zones.
The Corps was manned by officers and other ranks who had been medically rated below the A1 condition needed for front line service and men who had seen active service but were later wounded, suffered illness or were considered unfit for further active service. Nevertheless, units of the Labour Corps often served close to front line positions.

In April 1917 a number of Infantry Battalions transferred to the Labour Corps and the 28 Army Service Corps Labour Companies, created to provide the manpower to unload British ships and operate the docks in France, transferred to the Labour Corps between February and June 1917.

In order to free British troops for front line duties a deal between the Chinese government and the allies resulted in the enlistment of thousands of Chinese who formed the Chinese Labour Corps (CLC). These were mainly poor Chinese men from the north of the country who were told they would be in non-combatant roles. Around 100, 000 Chinese workers served with the British Labour Corps and a further 40, 000 served with the French troops. Additionally, labourers were recruited from India (there was an Indian Labour and Porter Corps) and Egypt.

Chinese Labour Corps workers loading small rail trucks with rocks for road construction on the Western Front.
[Source: http://apjjf.org/-Alex-Calvo/4411]

[For further details on Corps see:
The Long, Long Trail : Regiments & Corps
http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/
RAMC in The Great War: The Chain of Evacuation of The Royal Army Medical Corps
https://www.ramc-ww1.com/chain_of_evacuation.php
Unit History: Machine Gun Corps
https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/units/4982/machine-gun-corps/
Corps of Royal Engineers - WW1
https://www.geni.com/projects/Corps-of-Royal-Engineers-WW1/34526]