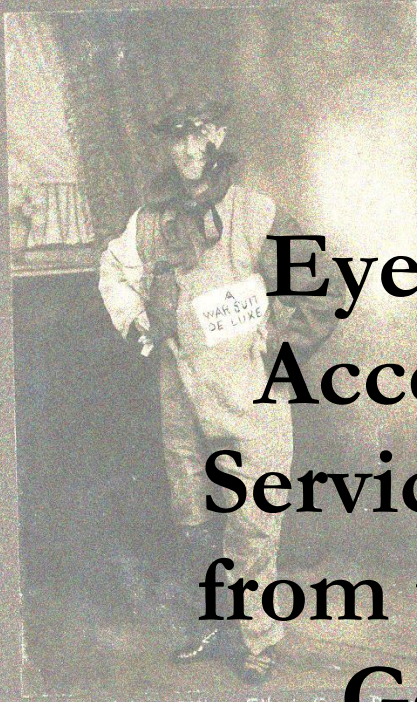
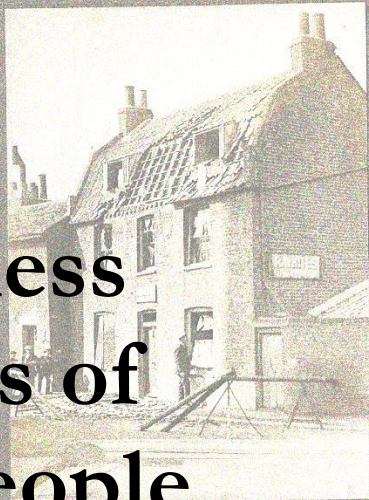


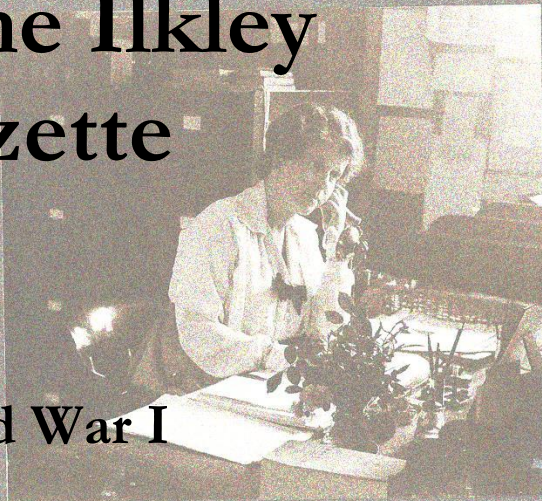
Eyewitness Accounts of Service People from the Ilkley Gazette



Chief Petty Officer Elite in Fox

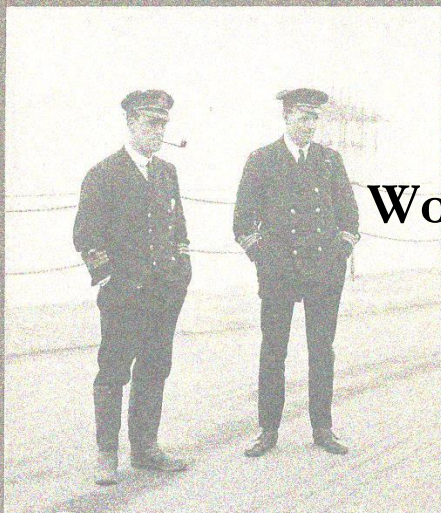


After The Explosion - Sep 20th 1917



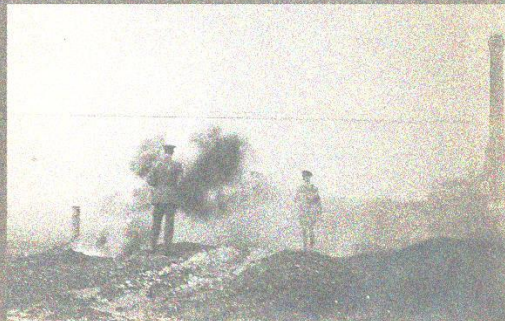
Miss Rowe - Secretary

World War I



At Dover

Wing-Commander Brock RN Eng^r Lt-Commander Curre RN
Killed at Zeebrugge 22/4/18



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FOREWORD

By 1914 the Ilkley Gazette had been in print for over 60 years – commencing in May 1861, although archival records only date from January 1868. The paper in peacetime not only covered local news but aspects of national and international news.

During the First World War a few more photographs began to appear and there were accounts of the achievements of the living and dead on the battlefields of Europe, and the Middle East; at sea globally; and increasingly the activities of Ilkley personnel in the Royal Flying Corps (later the RAF).

Adverts were rather sparse, but there were regular messages from government sources. Sport and items of interest to women and children were included along with increasing acknowledgement of women's role in the War. The stories of refugees from war-torn Belgium in Ilkley were covered regularly.

Ilkley even in Wartime was seen as a place to holiday, convalesce, walk the Moors, to take the waters and breathe in unpolluted air. People in the pre-radio era relied on the local papers for a great deal of varied information; and the picture houses also played their part.

I wish to thank Newsquest (Yorkshire and North East) Ltd., various editors and all the staff at the offices of the Ilkley Gazette for their support over the three years of my archival research from the original papers. To Craven Stationery very many thanks for all their hard work on my behalf and Jonathan White, Addingham for proof reading the draft copies. I also wish to thank Tim Howson from Ben Rhydding who has in a very effective and painstaking way word processed all my work on this lengthy project about Ilkley in Wartime. Thanks are also

due to Ilkley and Skipton public libraries (for utilising past copies of the Craven Herald).

Richard Thackrah has been a resident of Ilkley for two spells over the last six decades. He gained his degrees in History, Geography and Education and has taught in primary, secondary and adult education. He has written textbooks reference books and general interest books, including a “Guide to Ilkley” and “Victorian Yorkshire” both published by the “Dalesman” and articles and short pieces for the “Ilkley Gazette”.

Tim Howson worked in the Information Technology sector for a prolonged spell after a Masters in Computing from Bradford University. Since then he has gained a Masters in Conservation and Land Management, from Bangor University, and works part-time in moorland restoration but still keeps up to date with technology and put together the database these booklets have been based on. He is currently a committee member and the webmaster for the Wharfedale Naturalists’ Society.

Richard Thackrah (www.ainola.co.uk)

Anonymous

Regiment:

Royal Engineers - Signalling Service

Experience:

IG 3/9/15.

This local man was strongly opposed to having his name in print so there are not many personal details.

All communication between the trenches and HQ were either by telephone or telegraph and wires over the parapets in very exposed positions. The Turks were not like the Germans (devoid of every bit of humanity) & Turks always fought clean. In some instances they rendered "first aid" to British wounded and then back to GB lines.

A note thrown from the Turkish trenches written by a German with good English said "You English are a beaten foe. If you surrender you will be well treated and when the war is over you will be returned to your wives etc". The allied reply was a big handful of bombs.

What the men most wanted were letters from home, cigarettes and local papers.

Barnes, F

Rank:

Sgt.

Regiment:

Hussars

War Regions:

Belgium (Mons)

Experience:

IG 11/6/15 & 23/10/14.

In a letter home:

"To get from the front we travelled all day and the following night the motor bus rejoined the regimental HQ and we were into the trenches the same night. We walked six miles there: Germans kept using bright lights to check where we were.

Suddenly at dawn we heard a hissing noise from the German trenches 200 yards away and a yellowish-green smoke . We put on protection but there was coughing and sneezing and some groaned aloud. We retreated to the third line trenches.

We crawled around dazed and the Germans shot at us. We eventually found a ditch and a broken tree where we lay three days drinking only water until the Royal Engineers found us. Oxygen, brandy and soda water saved my life!!"

Another account by the same man IG 23/10/14:

"Mons retreat hard but recently suffered hard whacks. The 2nd Cavalry Brigade did useful work. There was continuous German artillery fire rather than infantry usage. They dropped 2 shells into the middle of the Sixth Lancers at a 6 mile range and killed one officer and 26 rank and file. We were only 200 yards away.

German planes were on the move directing artillery fire - one was shot down and the blokes shot. Many spies were around and when found they were soon shot!"

Barr, N.R.

Rank:

Trooper (Pte)

Regiment:

Yorkshire Hussars Yeomanry

Experience:

IG 6/8/15.

"Curious thing about travelling shells on leaving the gun there is a loud report and bright flash of yellow light. You can't see the shell, but you can hear it. The smaller ones whistle. When big howitzers are fired, the noise of the shell travelling can be heard for miles - a curious rumbling sound comes in gusts and sounds for all the world like a great runaway train careering down a steep bank."

Beaumont, A.E.

Rank:

Rifleman

Regiment:

London Irish

Experience:

IG 23/10/14.

2 brothers in Belgium. Cecil in Navy and Bert an interpreter in the Belgium army who had escaped from Antwerp through German lines. Lost our own party & joined in Marines defending Antwerp. Lost 100 in our trenches in 1 hour dead / wounded.

Wounded taken to a farm house which the Germans then struck and blew up. Retreated down the road with and trees and houses on either side falling. Slight wound in right hand. Mentioned for bravery. Lost everything & no clothes off for 10 days. Wounded "off their heads" after their terrible experiences.

In a letter to his father:

"Was an interpreter in Ghent, but now in the fighting line. Right in the thick of it as the Germans are only 200 yards away. Total desolation - villages wrecked & absolutely deserted while between the trenches lie the dead. Apart from dead ones seen no Germans. Lots of ammunition fired without obvious result. Just missed bayonet charge. Germans sapped trench near to us but short by 30 yards & therefore Germans did not come.

When we are in trenches we sleep the best we can & at dawn stand ready to attack. Rows of graves by the roadside & in gardens."

Bedford, Charles, Edward AB

Rank:

Able Seaman

Experience:

IG 23/6/16.

On HMS "Warrior" & sighted enemy 5:55 pm 30/5. Three German light cruisers (1 sunk & two set on fire). Then ran in German battle squadron with "Defence" (blown up & sunk in 3 minutes all dead but "Warrior" engagement lasted 20 minutes. Great fire onboard and of 700 crew (66 killed and 43 injured). "Warspite" arrived and took a shell destined for the "Warrior" & saved latter, but engine rooms were waterlogged and no steering. The crew were taken off and in a short time the "Warrior" sank. Bedford was in the after turret of the "Warrior".

Bentley, S.

Regiment:
West Ridings

Experience:
IG 4/2/16.

Trained at Clipstone camp Nottinghamshire.

He had two brothers:

Henry - Sherwood Forresters Mediterranean

Francis - RFA France, and their father William was an old volunteer with the Dukes.

Blencowe, L.C.

Regiment:

Kings Liverpool Regt

Pre-war Occupations:

Scarborough

Experience:

IG 20/7/17.

Married in 1915.

School removed from Scarborough to Oaklands in Ilkley after ports bombardment in Dec 1914. Since joined army and transferred back to Scarborough.

Britton, J.

Rank:

Driver Major

Regiment:

61st Battery, 8th Brigade Royal Field Artillery

Experience:

IG 28/8/14.

Sent on a postcard in printed form just signature and date & crossing out statements not applicable:

"I'm quite well. I have been admitted to hospital wounded and home to be discharged soon."

Letter to aunt / uncle IG 7/5/15:

"In place that ruined by Germans. Houses & churches a mass of bricks & mortar. Only 1,500 yards from German trenches & popping away at it now."

Brown, W.

Rank:

Battery Sgt Major

Experience:

IG 23/4/15.

Letter to his wife, who lives on Leeds Road in Ilkley:

"A fine journey across the Channel moved us from place where landed very quickly & now very near firing line. We can hear guns going off very plain. Done very well indeed in terms of grub.

Billeted at different farms & sleep in barns or anywhere else - very comfortable hard to believe so near the firing line. Just had a farmhouse dinner bread and fresh eggs."

Burkhill, T.

Rank:

Stretcher bearer Sgt

Regiment:

WR Regiment; W. Yorkshire Regiment

Pre-war Occupations:

Assistant to Mr S. de Lacey a hairdresser, Leeds Road.

War Regions:

Dardanelles (Turkey)

Experience:

IG 8/10/15.

Letter to Mr. S. de Lacey hairdresser:

"In Dardanelles had a very busy time over the last few weeks. Terribly hilly place and hard to walk up and down. Bad for stretcher bearers like me. As acting Sergeant (Serving Sergeant hit in groin) so instead of 8 I have 16 stretcher bearers to look after plus drugs & pills for sick. Yorks & Lancs doctor wounded on scalp but stays with us. No clothes off for 3 weeks - can't get water to drink let alone wash.

Have to fight our way & at present in fire trenches 400 yards from the Turks. In some cases our men carry wounded men over 2 miles on stretchers over hilly & rocky ground to field ambulance. A bullet just missed me and went through a shovel. My joints ache due to wet blankets."

IG 10/12/15.

Member of British Expeditionary Force to Dardanelles.
Recommended French Cross Militaire - for general good service
in the field. Digging & sapping only yards from Turks.
Stretcher bearers close to advanced trenches each night several
killed & wounded.

IG 29/9/16.

In a letter to a friend:

"Just been in action and our boys done well capturing some
strong positions and heaps of prisoners. Germans glad to
surrender - little wonder as under our artillery made us very
nervous. RAMC did fine work from our station carrying
wounded on top of parapets."

Burns, I.F.

Regiment:

B.E.F.

Experience:

IG 6/8/15.

A rough Channel crossing but not sea sick. A week ago a Taube (German plane) dropped a bomb over a town near us. It fell into a field with a bang, but just uprooted potatoes. The Triumph is a splendid bike. After an hours rain some artillery turn hard dry road into slough of slime. In one trench we stayed 36 hours at the price of three sensations 1) Excitement; 2) Indifference; 3) Boredom. Zip of a bullet - respect indifference, zip, ping, whirr of bullets. The man next to me got a snipers bullet in the face (Warwickshire). Six shells came over & one Warwickshire decapitated.

Calvert, Alfred Halstead

Pre-war Occupations:

Rep in Germany for Edward Green & sons engineers.

Experience:

IG 18/1/18.

In Ruhleben prison civilian prison camp in Germany.

Lived near Dreden in 1914 - travelled in Saxony & Siberia.
Arrested & then liberated & re-arrested on 8 Nov 1914 & 3 weeks solitary and then to Ruhleben & released on 2/1/18.
4000 men interned in camp. Potatoes / turnips / soups rations & liberally supplemented with food from England. Plenty of educational and leisure activities. Very thin on arrival in Ilkley to see his wife and children.

Chapman, H.H.

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

RAMC

Experience:

IG 23/3/17.

"Men suffering from terrible heat of the summer and diseases which are so prevalent - All here in Mesopotamia (Iraq) is desert or if, near a river, date palms! Play football & initially only an armed Arab Guard who stared & wondered as spectators. Now many spectators as have a lot of convalescent patients here. Just now cheering is heard because America has declared war on Germany (1917). Read out by the Adjutant from a Reuters message. Well, good luck and hope Germany is smashed to smithereens."

Clarkson, Ernest I.

Rank:

Lance Corporal

Regiment:

Army Service Corps

War Regions:

E. Africa

Experience:

IG 18/8/16.

Arrived in British E. Africa in March & some trekking. Now in German E. Africa near Mt. Kilimanjaro. More than bullets and shells have to contend with sickness, fever, dysentery and the bush which reaches head height and is very prickly and there are wild animals (lions) and snakes.

Work at Advanced Depot for Ammunition & sometimes away on convoy takes 3 or 4 days to reach firing line owing to bad roads. Use oxen as transport; shoot game as rations. In hospital once with fever (malaria) - bad owing to mosquitoes. Use native boys for all our work.

Clarkson, J.

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

Duke of Wellington Regiment

Experience:

IG 20/11/14.

Wounded at Ypres 8/11/14 bullet below left eye through tongue and jodging in jaw. "When Germans saw a bit of steel they cried out "Mercy! Mercy! Goodily English!" & screamed like pigs." Hundreds of dead lying around & in making a bayonet charge had to rush over these.

Cooke, C.A.G

Age:

15

Rank:

Cadet

Experience:

IG 25/9/14.

Cadet but promoted to midshipman in early September.

Naval cadet on "Aboukir" one of three British Armoured Cruisers sunk by German submarines in the North Sea sank in 5 minutes, picked up with others & landed in Harwich.

Dawson, W.

Regiment:

Wharfedale Howitzers

Experience:

IG 30/4/15.

Met Alf Richardson from BR. In 4th West Riding Ammunition Column - billeted 2 miles from Howitzers. Mainly exercising horses and cleaning harness. Comfortable billets in a barn and 3 feet straw to sleep on. Rations are good - bully beef. Hard biscuits & greengage jam. Can see flashes of big guns. My French improving fast and able to make myself understood quite well.

7/5/15 Guns in position and firing at Germans. Our planes in air had no hits on them. Shells flying about all day and a few shells whizz into building. Only a mile away from the German trenches.

Much trouble with telephones as shells cut the wires.

Letter 1/5/15:

Weather glorious. Attack in night - for half an hour a terrific noise - quietened down and went to sleep. To observation station - a few hundred yards from the German trenches. Plenty of bullets whizzing about but no shells. Nearby remains of factory which shelled. Place is in an awful ruin.

Durrance, R.

Rank:

Yeoman Signalman

Regiment:

Royal Navy

Pre-war Occupations:

Chauffeur to Mr. J.B. Knowles Easby Drive, Ilkley.

Experience:

IG 13/11/14.

Yeoman Signalman RN HMS "Mersey".

He served 15 years in the navy and being on reserve called up 1914. HMS "Mersey" monitor class and engaged for a month shelling German positions near the Belgian coast. Landed marines & others from vessel for work at Antwerp & 2 missing while 3 wounded on the Mersey.

Continous heavy firing necessitated a renewal of the "Mersey's" guns & the vessel was temporarily laid up in port.

Earnshaw, Edgar

Rank:

Cpl

Experience:

IG 13/9/18.

Wounded 1/9/18 in some brisk scrapping as eventually occupied an old German trench. Jerry artillery opened up & we were in part of trench being enfiladed. The position was such that the direction of fire was in at the end rather than from the parapet so you see we got rather a drubbing. At 7.30pm a big gas shell burst 3 yards away. I threw myself to the ground & fearful concussion & slight shrapnel wound on the temple. Now in 3rd Australian General Base Hospital.

Ellum, James, Richard & William

Regiment:

WR Howitzer

Experience:

IG 2/7/15.

James in France 4 WR Howitzer Brigade.

Richard and William 2nd WR Howitzer Brigade All training at West Park, Welbeck Abbey, Nottinghamshire.

Freeman, Frank

Regiment:

RFA

Experience:

IG 2/4/15.

Frank written to his aunt at 'Ashen Croft' The Grove, Ilkley.

Germans massed 150 guns & attack to commence 2 days later at 7.30am a two hour artillery barrage. Pushed Germans forward & hand to hand combat until took a large village from Germans. Entered wood saturated with machine guns & had to dig in. Infantry marched to trenches in cheerful manner & then soon see returnees in military ambulances each with four men in them. Then they were taken to a field hospital - ticket tied to them mentions state of wounds; immediate attention or otherwise. German's wanton destruction of church spire to avoid being used by snipers and observers.

Gibson, Dr. E.P.

Regiment:

RAMC

Experience:

IG 5/2/15.

Attached to RAMC 7th Casualty Clearing Station along with other Ilkley men. Dr. H.T. Bates, Sgt A. Hirst, Sgt. G. Wilson, Corp J.W. Wilson, Pte. F. Robinson, Col. R. Prestman, Pte F.Hardaker, Pte. W. Cooper, Pte. J.C. Clayton, Pte. E.H. Coleman. Many members of Ilkley Voluntary aid detachment of St. John Ambulance Assoc. Form part of West Riding Division Clearing Hospital Unit commanded by Col. Wear.

HQ was in rail carriages & then into Belgium to open Casualty Clearing Station. Heavy fighting near Ypres & men had clothes cut off to get to wounds - whilst being treated. They never uttered a sound and just smoked. After 2 days at clearing station down by ambulance train to the base. Given fresh uniforms - if seriously wounded to hospital or convalescent depot.

Weather terrible - mud feet deep; and fighting area a sea of water. Rained for 5 weeks & up to 13 degrees of frost. Bomb dropped near hospital. Motor convoys to field hospitals under fire. British troops well fed and cared for. Troops well supplied with clothing.

One German wounded soldier served bully beef & bread & refused to eat. When thought nobody was looking he changed his ration for that belonging to GB soldier next to him.

Giles, Ernest

Rank:

Sgt.

Regiment:

W. Yorks Regiment

Experience:

IG 1/10/15.

Letter to Mr. Schofield from Ernest Giles:

We have had a lovely break - in green tents in a wood. Seen further atrocities by 'heathenish' opponents - use knobkerries - short staff with a lead end and steel spikes inserted etc. etc.

See Zeppelins coming over fairly frequently. New line is absolutely in thick of fighting & we joined hands with the French. Just been to see a poor lad I know, who is now dumb from the shock.

Gledhill, A.D.

Rank:

2nd Lt.

Regiment:

RFC

Experience:

IG 25/5/17

One of survivors "Arcadian" torpedoed & sunk Eastern Med 15/4/17. A G.B. transport ship sailing between Salonica & Egypt - 19 officers & 260 other crew drowned. Vessel sank in 5 minutes and Gledhill over side on a rope into the water, swam away from ship & when tired floated. Picked up by a boat landed on Greek Island & sent from here in French minesweeper to Alexandria (Egypt) where in hospital with badly peeled skin on hands.

Greenwood, P.

Rank:

Sgt.

Regiment:

Duke of Wellington Regiment

Pre-war Occupations:

Postman in Ben Rhydding.

Experience:

IG 16/7/15.

Letter to wife in Sunset Terrace. Awful job trying to relieve West Kents on Hill 60 and terrible to see piles of dead and wounded from both sides. Yorkshire Light Infantry were in reserve.

6 am Capt Taylor got us in a line altogether with fixed bayonets. When he blew his whistle we attacked. Yorkshire Light Infantry came up in time to save a dangerous situation. Been attacking 20 minutes when a bomb came over killing my chum and wounded me in the arm and chest. Captain Taylor was then killed. Myself to dressing station then ambulance to hospital, wounds dressed again, then in ambulance to Boulogne hospital where I lay for 10 weeks. Doctor's said I would not live the night and received Holy Communion twice. Now safely back in England in Edmonton in North London.

A nurse who wrote a letter said Sgt Greenwood very seriously injured and minus use of both arms. Though not likely to be permanently disabled, but certainly unfit for further military service.

Hampshire, Harry

Rank:

Trooper (Pte)

Regiment:

Yorkshire Hussars Yeomanry

War Regions:

Belgium (Ypres)

Experience:

IG 1/10/15.

Letter:

Yorkshire Hussars France in April (including 12 to 13 men from Ilkley). 1st experience of Trench warfare during 2nd battle of Ypres on Whit Sunday 1915 (in same battle death of Trooper Ellis, Addingham Moorside). Experienced some fighting attached to the Durham Light Infantry with Corporal Herbert Swales. 1st shell after a period of calm burst 5 yards from Trooper Hampshire killing 4 men and 5 horses & wounding 2 more men. They had to make off leaving everything behind, returning later to bury the dead. Several doses of gas shells & then Trooper Hampshire ill with gas and to hospital. On return been digging wiring lines, patrolling roads, directing traffic and escorting transport.

Some interesting battlefield souvenirs included a number of sleigh bells attached by the Germans to their wire entanglements for alarm purposes.

Hardaker, Fred

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

RAMC

Experience:

IG 16/7/15.

Doing Clearing Hospital work in Belgium. Mens wounds dressed & otherwise attended to & then sent down to base for indeterminate stay. The more wounded arrive, the greater the transfers. Works with Dr. Gibson, Dr. Bates and other Ilkley men. Clearing Hospital up to 12 miles back from the line - guns heard distinctly & seem very near at times. Much depends on the direction of the wind. At the time of Neuve-Chapelle over 2,000 casualties in their hospital. "Personally in the best of health but had enough of war. Got hardened to sickening sites".

Hargreaves, Charles

Rank:

Driver

Regiment:

Australian Expeditionary Force

Experience:

IG 30/7/15.

Letter home of life in Gallipoli Peninsula. Live in 'dug outs' - hollowed out of hillside. Built of buses Kerosene tins and bags - protection against shrapnel and shellfire.

From little messes of 4 of us mess together - a fireplace built with a few stones and a pole slung above it. Stocks of 'tucker', bully beef, bacon, onions, jam, tea, sugar, biscuits and fresh meat about three times a week. A field bakery started. Flies are more vicious type than English & get everywhere. Daily dose shrapnel & score of fellows bathing while shrapnel bursting & taking no notice unless too close.

When Turks shorten their fuses shells begin to have a personal interest. Great view of the Mediterranean Sea & beautiful sunsets.

Harrison, Austin

Rank:

Ambulance Driver

Regiment:

Army Service Corps

War Regions:

Belgium (Ypres)

Experience:

IG 1/1/15.

Narrow escapes - 12 to 13 wounded men to hospital in one journey in 24 / 30 horsepower Wolseley. Attached car with 4 other cars to 1st Army Air Corps. Narrow escape enemy gun concealed in house nearby in town where stationed (probably Ypres as mentions cloth hall).

Often moving wounded away from houses near front line nicknamed Jack Johnson shells - found one small shell base unbroken - 15" across 2" wide weighing 90 pounds. One landed on cloth hall where 80 lads sheltering from trenches - wounded 27 and killed 4. Another hit a stable where 15 Army Service Corps lads were killed and four wounded. Seven stranded near the front for 4 days until a lorry spare part was obtained.

Holmes, Arthur

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

Royal Irish Fusiliers

Pre-war Occupations:

Ilkley rail station.

Experience:

IG 20/11/14 - 18/12/14.

Also a reservist.

Letter to Mr. T Newton, Nelson Road, Ilkley:

Started shelling all round here today and 16 days face to face fighting. A champion cave in trench to sit in comfort and safe from shrapnel. A small loop-holed square for cooking purposes.

German lines 300 / 400 yards away. Their attacks unsuccessful. Village nearly half GB, half German & changes sides regularly - houses like brickworks due to shelling.

Letter to Ilkley lady friend:

Been on dangerous work - between our trenches and theirs looking for snipers. Either capture or shoot them (if try to get

away). Try to way lay any fellow carrying rations. German soldiers brave and well trained. Were surprised by German battery one evening and had to lie low in sludge (6 inches) for 4 to 6 hours not moving a muscle! Praised his Captain (G.V.W. Hill) for his work.

Hudson, M.

Rank:

Sgt. Major

Regiment:

Yorks Light Infantry

Experience:

IG 16/10/14.

Letter to his sister Mrs J. Jones 12 Lister Street, Ilkley:

Still in Jamaica but for how long? Might go to German Cameroons in Africa where fighting occurred. Although no fighting in Jamaica about 1000 German POW's who having a good time.

Good captive 2 weeks ago. German auxiliary cruiser "Bethania" caught by our cruiser "Essex". Yorkshire Light Infantry had a bad time losing nearly all our officers - very strenuous for us in Jamaica worse than the actual fighting.

Ideson, Joseph Henry

Rank:

2nd Lt.

Regiment:

Sherwood Foresters

War Regions:

France

Experience:

IG 16/4/14.

First night March 1915 in trenches acted as ration carrier and then carnage at Neuve-Chapelle. Sherwood evacuated trench and returned to rear. Later in the day retook the trenches with German prisoners, their rifles and equipment. At Neuve-Chapelle in reserve trenches & shell noise deafening - between 400 and 500 guns being employed in preliminary canter. No German cruelty - two opposing parties fraternised with each other across trenches. Some Germans good English and once asked Black Watch when they were going to give up. Our men tired of cigarettes and wished for English chocolate.

Ingham, Jack E.

Rank:

Lt.

Regiment:

Australian Imperial Force

War Regions:

Gallipoli

Experience:

IG 25/6/15 + IG 27/8/15.

Kept very busy with shot and shell casualties heavy Navy helping us and doing really good work. Shells singing over head, little damage. Some sights are awful as a result of the shrapnel. Later wounded in leg and arms & to a Cairo hospital where recovering. Early landing with Queenslanders in Gallipoli.

Witnessed torpedoing of the "Triumph" - great cloud of smoke and water & when "Triumph" seen had hole in funnel & immediately began to list over. She tried valiantly to get the submarine; firing away until too big a list to work her guns effectively. Sank in 10 minutes yet but out of 700 sailors all but 50 were rescued (lucky).

Jardine, Isabel B.

Rank:

Miss

Regiment:

Womens Army Auxiliary Corps

Pre-war Occupations:

Otley engineering firm.

War Regions:

France

Experience:

IG 23/11/17.

Miss Jardine was attached to Corps for 6 months. Enrolled in Leeds (worked in Otley engineering firm) physical training & medical examination in London before going to France.

Hours 9am to 9pm - not strenuous. Camp where the soldiers arrive from the front & where arrivals from the UK get first experience of foreign service. Men live in tents - women in huts sleeping 20 women in each hut. Khaki uniform & under military discipline.

Hostile planes often seen but no bombs on camp & can hear the guns at the front when the wind is in a certain direction. Receive an army number and roll call every day. 14 days leave a year.

Jubb, H.

Rank:

Bombardier

Regiment:

RFA

Pre-war Occupations:

Police Constable in Ilkley prior to war for 6 years.

War Regions:

France

Experience:

15/10/15.

In France Sept 1914 & not in England again until Oct 1915.
Initially in a quiet place for 8 months namely Armentieres.
From June 1915 at Ypres - terrible. Been within 20 yards of an
11" shell as a brigade linesman.

The taking a mile of wire (eventually not needed) to brigade HQ
- a shell dropped over hedge 10 yards away - miraculously got on
my bike after the explosion and "flew". If wire gets cut, brigade
linesman have to repair it immediately. Not unusual for 5 or 6
German batteries to shell theirs. Only under rifle fire when they
were laying out to the forward.

Kellett, Sidney

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

Duke of Wellington Regiment

Pre-war Occupations:

A barber for Walter Iveson in Brook Street, Ilkley.

War Regions:

Belgium (Ypres)

Experience:

IG 19/3/15.

Wounded in fighting at Ypres & interned at Gardelegen. A recently repatriated 'Tommy', wrote to Kellet's father - food insufficient & only fit for pigs; sleep on bags of straw on the floor with no soap. Sidney would like tinned eatables - if send tobacco or cigarettes put them in a tin and cover with sugar or sweets.

Kingswell, E.F.

Rank:

Driver

Regiment:

West Riding Ammunition Column

Experience:

IG 21/5/15.

He wrote home:-

Very busy. Yesterday (Sunday) took ammunition every bit of day in total 1,500 shells up to battery ammunition column for howitzer guns to fire. Weather very hot - none of us wear a waistcoat never mind a coat.

Lambert, Alf

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

East Yorkshire Regiment

Pre-war Occupations:

Ilkley brewery wine and spirit store, Church street.

Experience:

IG 1/12/16.

In letter to brother:

"Sorry to say lost left foot (off by heel) & probably off by ankle yet. Possible gas poisoning in heel. Told to take 3 lines of trenches. Over the top 11:30 pm to with 100 yards of German front line then lay in shell holes & assembly trenches till 6 am - following day. Our guns started & showered shrapnel on them. They lifted barrage to next trench for 4 minutes & rushed into 1st trench. Fritz started artillery & machine guns - hit on left foot (shrapnel taking boot and half my foot and hitting me in the right shoulder). Took me a whole day to get back to the dressing station. Gods will that I made it."

Lawrence, Frank

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

WR Regiment

Experience:

IG 20/11/15.

Survivor of British Hospital ship "Anglia" which struck a mine bringing sick soldiers home from France. 300 of 375 saved. Had been in hospital in Boulogne with kidney inflammation and now in Epsom in County of London War Hospital. Survived "Anglia" sinking but in trying to board "Lusitania" a collier of London the latter also sunk & eventually on motor launch. Given mug of whisky and hot water bottles & then on train to Epsom. In bed on "Anglia" in ward at the bottom of the boat - jumped out of bed and made for deck.

Lee, Thomas Russell

Rank:

Sapper

Regiment:

Seaforth Highlanders

Pre-war Occupations:

Clerk at Ilkley GPO.

War Regions:

Belgium (Ypres); France (Aisnes)

Experience:

IG 3/12/15.

To France September 1914. Took part in Aisnes battle. Experienced gas May 1915. End July moved Ypres to Arras area. Conditions better in winter 1915 than 1914 - often up to knees in icy cold water & baling out was only a temporary relief. In February 1915 issued rubber boots & fur coats. Hats off to infantry. Work of French 75 gun at Ypres could fire 28 shots a minute and moved about quickly. Spoke highly of friendship of French people.

Lee, W.

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

2nd KOYLI

Experience:

IG 23/10/14.

Seriously wounded on 26th August at Mons and taken prisoner. Now in Dusseldorf from where writes to aunt to say improving nicely.

Lewis, Albert E.

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

WR Regiment, 2nd Batt.

Pre-war Occupations:

Stone Mason for Messrs Dean and Mennell.

War Regions:

France; Belgium (Ypres)

Experience:

IG 21/5/12.

10 days in hospital after gassing by Germans and back to the front.

IG 22/10/15.

Gassed & wounded at Hill 60 retreat & shrapnel in back and in left leg. In Ypres before the Germans bombarded the place. Then a cyclist despatch rider for the Royal Engineers at Rouen. Owing to after effects of gas was in hospital in Scotland & Eastbourne.

Longfield, Norman

Rank:

Armourer Sgt.

Experience:

IG 20/8/15.

Interview with Gazette:

Times have been "rough to same tune" but reported himself as "never feeling better" and pretty soon "run off" with some "devilish rough time to go through." At the end of the day "will power" makes a man do almost the impossible. Been in the front line since mid January and in fighting at La Basse (Canal), Givenchy, Quinchy and Neuve-Chapelle. Wounded at Quinchy when leading his gun team up to the trenches when high explosive shell burst 15 yards away. Splinters hit side head and on right leg. What followed was a blank.

"What men complain about the most is the utter indifference of so many fellows at home. They are disgusted beyond measure to think that so many calling themselves Englishmen have apparently not a spark of patriotism in their whole carcass."

The chaps are sick of the "slackers". Very healthy out at the Front and is the healthiest life a man can live. Very little actual sickness to be come across. I have seen very little & food supply is marvellous. We have far better food than we had in camp in England."

Maufe, T.H.B.

Age:

19

Rank:

2nd Lt.

Regiment:

Royal Artillery

Experience:

IG 3/8/17 & again 29/8/17.

Another brother in Royal Field Artillery & back at front after being wounded. Elder brother Major Brian Statham Maufe died of wounds July 1916.

Citation: "Under intense artillery fire officer on his own initiative repaired, unaided, the telephone line between forward and rear positions, thereby enabling battery to open immediate fire on enemy. He further saved disastrous occurrence by extinguishing a fire in advanced ammunition dump caused by heavy explosion and regardless of risk he ran from the effects of gas shells which he knew were in the dump. By great promptitude resource and entire disregard of his own personal safety he was a magnificent example to all ranks."

Mawson, J.H.

Rank:

Lt.

Regiment:

Royal Marines

War Regions:

Turkey

Experience:

IG 25/6/15.

"Our homes are dugouts. Dardanelles (Turkey) looks like Wharfedale. Climate very fine - hot by day very cold by night. There is ceaseless booming of the guns and a constant whistle of the shells. You can tell when shrapnel is going to burst. Stray bullets a bugbear as you can hear them but cannot tell where they are from. Started new road 10 ft wide to top 400ft hill and got two 18 pounder guns up. Food limited in variety excellent in quality. Water boiled first so we can use it in tea. Lime juice and rum, tobacco and cigars are in prodigious quantities and helps take away the stench of the Turkish dead.

The Turks are big chaps, determined and uniform. Their munitions are German & their officers are mainly German. Thousands and thousands of explosive Turkish shells lying around.

Road making consists of disinterring or reburying Turks a gruesome business. My section has lost rather heavily. Am myself a bearded and unwashed savage & cave dweller."

Mixture of work, food, fun, excitement, road making, trench digging and barbed wire erecting.

Middlebrook, Joseph

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

Army Service Corps

Pre-war Occupations:

Pre war as a fitter in Guiseley (Messrs Clabour).

Experience:

IG 9/10/14.

In a letter home he says:

"Seen some fighting & hopes to bring home a bayonet from first German he shot. His company includes 130 motor waggons, 280 drivers, 80 fitters and 84 Royal Field Artillery man. Waggons used to carry ammo from base to troops at the front - 2 drivers on each lorry & 80 fitters distributed. 3 motor waggons fitted up as engineering shops. Daily job repairing any damaged waggons. RFA men and fitters armed escort when company on the move. Sleep on our waggons which are fitted with covers. It makes one mad to see how Germans treat poor people here."

Mortimore, B.

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

Devon Labour Company

War Regions:

France

Experience:

IG 1/6/17.

Initially on arrival in France in rest camp 4 days: then in full kits to station. Travel overnight on train. Camped in mud & then marched all day - could here guns like thunder. In tented camp while worked on roads. Repairing also wrecked the rail lines. Have to walk miles for water as Germans poisoned wells. Seen scores of caterpillars and 5 tanks!

Newton, T.H.

Rank:

Sgt.

Regiment:

Army Service Corps

War Regions:

Turkey

Experience:

IG 25/6/15.

Seen more shells fired in Dardanelles than in all 3 years I was in the Boer war and more killed and wounded. ANZAC's getting enemy on move now & I've helped get Australians & Canadians on to Hospital ship. Saw a pile of rifles (over 800) all broken up and blood stained - taken from killed and wounded.

Parker, Nurse Marian

Rank:

Nurse

Regiment:

British Red Cross Society

Experience:

IG 9/10/14.

In letter a home she says she is:

"Assisting French Red Cross Society. Unit nurses to France desperately needed. No money assistance except expenses. Old blankets, rugs of anything to keep wounded men warm. At Compiègne 500 wounded and just two nurses. Men in trenches up to waist in water. Clothes stuck to wounds and skin had to be cut off. No other clothes available & sacks used to cover them. Nurse Parker collecting parcels of blankets and other useful clothing to send out. Need linen for dressings. Took charge of a little Belgian baby 5 months old - not expected to live yet child going on well. Her parents are destitute Belgian refugees."

Peacock, J.H.

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

Army Service Corps

Pre-war Occupations:

Chauffeur to Mr. F.B. Maufe, Warlbeck (Kings Road), Ilkley.

War Regions:

France; Belgium (Ypres)

Experience:

IG 26/2/15.

Met Ilkley constable H. Jubb in St Nazaire (Gunner 38th Brigade RFA) prior to moving to the front. At Braine met Austen Harrison another Ilkley Chauffeur. At front drove wounded into Bethune from Neuve-Chapelle. Also horse ambulances on Ypres front used to convoy wounded from trenches to hospital during the day and motor ambulance used at night. Witnessed German treachery - showed white flag and when the Brits showed themselves they were cut down by machine guns and nearly 200 killed. Men with gangrene quickly to hospital and life saved. Men stand in water filled trenches two to a barrel to stop standing in water. Germans transform bullets to dumdums by turning the bullet around.

His trophies include aeroplane charts.

Peel, Arthur

Rank:

Lance Corporal

Regiment:

Army Vet Corps

War Regions:

France

Experience:

IG 20/11/14.

Writes from 2 base Expedition Force Rouen. No peace for poor Belgians. 3 trains at Rouen - packed like sardines in cattle trucks & 50 & over in each truck. All hungry and in a pitiable site. Walk through lines upon lines of wounded horses in our camp (& we have 1200) clearly shows the effect of shrapnel fire. Nearby is a huge base hospital for English wounded soldiers; where tales told and battles refought. Intense hatred of the German & sheer determination. Eminently greatest war that ever shocked the foundations of the universe.

Rayner, William

Rank:

Trooper (Pte)

Regiment:

Yorkshire Hussars Machine Gun Section

Experience:

IG 7/5/15

William's letters:

10 miles from firing line. Huge noise from guns; and flashing guns & flares at night. Aeroplanes over daily. I am fit and well & getting good food.

Sleep in barn on straw & hear rats scampering about. Terribly hot by day & cold at night. Passed through a shelled town - like city of the dead. No lights. Noise of horses on cobbles and deserted streets quite eerie.

Redshaw, Sydney

Experience:

IG 24/9/15

Still going strong - close squeaks but without a scratch. Progressing favourably and all in our favour. For every 1 of our casualties Turks must have 4.

Don't know how long war will last but a difficult task to unravel. Turks well entrenched and are very good fighters in trench warfare & fight very fair. Not yet fired gas at us but every bit of ground must be taken yard by yard.

He has two brothers Ronald in a Malta hospital and Harold in the Flanders trenches.

Richardson, A.G.

Rank:

Bombardier

Regiment:

RFA

Experience:

IG 7/5/15.

Letter to father:

50 Wagon train and chat at every station. Good opportunities to show off knowledge of French. The railway is by this road and amusing to see how children ran after trains for souvenirs and biscuits. Mules stampeded & train forwards quickly. It could have killed two men. Brakes applied by steep incline and then train ran backwards & fortunately engine at the rear stopped downward speed. Supply of ammo taken to Howitzers but I did not see my brother A.J. Richardson who is serving with the Howitzers.

Scott, Claude

Regiment:

Army Service Corps

Experience:

IG - 27/11/14.

A letter to Mr Bradley at the Star Hotel:

Very cold sleeping on lorries. Plane bombs worst - shrapnel from guns 'minty' and knocks earth / grit into the face. Man without head seen still clutching beef in one hand and biscuit in another - he was stretchered out.

Some trenches 50 yards from enemy. Germans hate Gurkhas from India with knives (they fight at close quarters and do very well). Caught 4 Germans as POWs & one had severed woman's hand with 4 diamond rings on it. He should be put in Ilkley Town Hall Annex and blown up.

To his father:

Plenty of warm clothing, bully beef and biscuits. Sometimes can sleep in empty houses vacated by people. Firing all night but sleeps well. Picked up one morning 1240 casualties in half a mile of the trenches.

IG 7/5/15.

Letter to his father:

Our planes fly over German lines & nobody can stop them in German side. Bully beef is "top hole" - same diet monotonous. Rum allowance good - mix with coffee. French beer vile. Good French wine 1 franc 20 centimes. New dug war graves even for Germans - well cared for (buried by Brits or French). No hatred of Germans only quiet optimism and pity. Regarding churches often find them & graveyards destroyed but crucifixes are untouched. I'm now a censor & have to read 400 letters a day.

Selby, Sylvester

Rank:

Cpl

Experience:

IG 26/11/15.

Born in Ilkley but an Addingham man. Letter to Mr C. Flint
Humorous - 2 Irishman dropped iron pan full of stew for men
in the trenches, they tripped on ridge between cookhouse and
trenches. They were cursing the Kaiser and weather and slipped
in mud.

Shackleton, Harold

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

Duke of Wellington Regiment

Experience:

IG 4/6/15.

Letter to his parents in Halifax:

"Accompanying an ammunition cart was a midnight experience. I went with 9 men & a sergeant with the carts 13 miles at night through ploughed fields and ditches nearly thrown out once. Shells dropping on all sides eventually reached and destroyed village. One house had only 1 wall standing and a clock which we heard strike 12. Another house showed evidence of baking - with dough in a cake tin ready for the ovens. On way back German blue light came right over us and shell fire started but we were safe.

In their battalion 2 companies usually in firing line & 2 in support trenches having to do fatigue work. Then after a spell in the firing line they had bit of a rest some miles behind & had luxury of a bath and clean clothes. Many civilians dead in Ypres some were females & killed fleeing the city.

Visited graves of Pte N.Dobson (Ilkley) and L Cpl. Emmott (Addingham) - both kept nice. At head of each a white cross with name and regiment number of the deceased."

Sheard, W.

Rank:

Wheeler Corp

Regiment:

9th (Siege) Battery RGA

Experience:

IG 20/11/14; 4/12/14; 25/12/14; 27/11/14.

20/11/14, Letter to Mother:

Excellent firing on Germans & extra good work done. German guns plenty of warning and big fuse flew over the top (Keeping it as a souvenir). A few waggons damaged and we patch them up. Wounded on the finger. I don't think war last much longer as Germans can't make ammo fast enough. Never thought war was as bad as it is but must put up with it."

4/12/14:

Got burned out of house and home. German shell hit top of farm and set the roof on fire. Hit on knee by a piece of shell. Shells still falling in snow and frost. Very cold & grateful for parcel of underclothing.

25/12/14, Letter to Mother:

Blowing both German trenches to hell especially if full of reinforcements men and guns. Dummy trenches built by our infantry regiments and Germans fired 170 shells & never hurt anyone!!

27/11/17

Narrow escape in fighting - knocked down by bursting German shell but only injury was a damaged finger & later Sheard was hit on knee with a bit of a shell, which had hit the top of the farmhouse where he was staying and set fire to the roof.

Smith, Alfred

Rank:

Driver

Regiment:

11th (Ilkley) Battery, Wharfedale Howitzers

Experience:

IG 23/10/14.

With Bombadier G.M. Smith. Only briefly in locality near the Front. Pick up souvenirs - shell cases, shoulder straps, buttons, cartridges (some in clips unfired) - remnants of German uniform - some got exchange for cigarettes.

Saw graveyard full of little Belgian children (poisoned by Germans) also led to deaths of British Officers and men who drank water. Horses unloaded and taken across shell swept country to regulars who came down firing line to receive them. French people very generous and friendly despite their villages in ruins.

Finally a fast passage to Newhaven in Sussex to avoid submarines. On returning to Le Havre passed over rail bridge just before Zeppelin blew it up. 5 train loads of Belgian refugees wounded.

Smith, G.M.

Rank:

Bombardier

Regiment:

9th Duke Wellington's, WR Regiment

Experience:

IG 23/10/14.

Took horses to France (Le Havre) and there up to front. Had to sort out 2000 sent forward by train in batches of 100, the 30 men from the West Ridings having 92 in charge packed 8 in a truck. Met Austen Harrison of "Marshfield" Ilkley (now with the Army Service Corps). Slept in horse trucks or tried to as within range of German artillery fire.

In France 13 days driving to within 2 miles of fighting line.

Smith, R.H.

Rank:

Sgt.

Regiment:

WR Regiment

Experience:

IG 3/12/15

Caught at night by German patrol coming towards us (me, Tom Raithby and Totty Wood). I looked at Tom and he looked at me and then we threw a bomb - legs and arms & all sorts flying around. The purpose of night patrolling is to know how close one can get to the enemy lines.

Found a farm labourer acting as a spy - caught fastening a note under a dogs collar. Looking for this dog for some time. Spy was shot. He worked in a farm by day and dressed as a French officer by night and did necessary wire tapping. No more though!!

Squibb, Frederick Charles

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

East Surrey Regt

Pre-war Occupations:

Wells house hydro.

War Regions:

Flanders / France

Experience:

IG 11/9/14.

Pte East Surrey Regt 3 years colours & 7 years reserve.

Injured in Mons 23/8/14 poisoned foot in London. Just left a cleared farmhouse which then destroyed & over bridge before it was blown only 4 yards between the combatants. Attacked by Germans dressed in khaki & cut off from food transport long marching, starving & at Noyon injured foot necessitated withdrawal from fighting time & invalided home. Reported to depot at Kingston on Thames on 20/10/1914 after leave in Ilkley.

IG 11/9/14:

Left for depot at Kingston in Thames 19/10/14. Fully recovered and soon at the Front. Wounded and in a London Hospital (a poisoned foot). At Mons hard marching cut off

from food supply. Their baggage waggons used by Belgian refugees German bullets just missed him and killed companion.

French girl gave Squibb her apron to wipe his face kept as a momento. Another momento 2 British cartridges pierced by German bullet and locked together.

German rifle fire indifferent. Wounded effects German shellfire. German brutality - stripped British bodies & put on British (Khaki) to deceive Allies. Wounded receiving great kindness and attention.

Suggitt, J.

Rank:

Cpl

Pre-war Occupations:

Clerk at Ilkley Brewery.

Experience:

IG 20/11/14.

Letter to lady friend in Ilkley:

Tight places and terrible fights. Under heavy shell fire, rifle fire and machine gun fire. 10 in a house 400 yards from the Germans and had to flee when they opened up with machine guns & heavy rifle fire. We fled and no one was hurt. After another attack we mauled them in reply.

Swales, G.H.

Rank:

Cpl

Regiment:

Yorkshire Hussars Yeomanry

Experience:

IG 7/5/15.

Letter home to member of Light Infantry. Camped outside bombarded town all on fire and passed through it to get to the Front. 20 men with transports and 8 Hussars. Come back through town in evening. Gasses from shells and smell of the dead and horse nearly choke you. Mess tin bulged by piece of shrapnel. A six day battle and Germans losing.

Swales moved out with 3 other men including Harry Hampshire. Harry in hospital with shock. On Sunday shelled out leaving 4 men killed and 5 horses and 4 men wounded. Men killed only 5 yards from me.

Tennant, N.

Rank:

Gunner

Regiment:

4th WR Howitzer Brigade.

Experience:

IG 14/5/15, Letter home:

"Quite exciting and wounded by a shell - a glancing blow and a bit off the top of my head. Artillery opened up at 4am to clear a way through for infantry. Shells bursting in German trenches left and just like a ploughed field. Our infantry advanced through shrapnel - poor devils dropped in dozens. Glad to get back to battery after 14 hours in a dug out with a biscuit now and then.

Big shell landed in the road - blew me back into house - same shell killed a Cameron Highlander and took 4 fingers off the hand of another chap. Glad our wires not cut by shells or bullets. AA guns "Archibalds" send up white puffs of smoke which hang together and drift in wind long after the shells burst and planes course marred by smoke clouds."

Thistlethwaite, A.J.

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

London Scottish Rifles; 2nd Lt. Tanks Officer.

War Regions:

France

Experience:

IG 22/9/16; 25/10/18.

Severly wounded by gunshot in neck 11/9/16 between jawbone and ear at Base Camp at Le Havre. Later in the war dangerously ill with septic pneumonia and tonsilitis, while acting as visual training officer at Wareham Camp Dorset.

IG 29/9/16

Letter home recently wounded and at base camp in Le Havre. Camp on hill by the sea - bracing air. Red tiled houses and fishing smacks out at sea. Wounded German prisoner said practically no food and many wanted to give up.

IG 18/5/17

Wounded a third time but not seriously. Second time was on 28/3 (his 21st birthday) but not seriously. Caught on the cheek bone - shell 2 feet away into trench - blew tin hat off and deluged with earth. 2 killed and 3 wounded. I was very lucky. I was near sheet of iron 1/8" thick which, with rifle, was propped up on trench edge; six inches from me. Iron sheet had 6 or 7

cuts clean through about an inch in length. My rifle a wreck. Taken to Casualty Clearing station where spent five hours and while having tea and cocoa met Pte George Elliot (an Ilkley man serving in RAMC).

Twigg, Frank

Rank:

Private

Experience:

IG 20/4/17

Private A.S.C. - motor transport driver in Macedonia. Letter to Mr. Eckersley (Secretary of Ilkley & BR Soldiers / Sailors Gifts Committee):

Intensely cold and wet. Roads ankle deep in mud. Difference in cleanliness and tidy dress of natives over past 3 months, though many have an untidy appearance. Trousers they wear are like a loose sack between the legs. Employed on roads and in quarries large number of women breaking stones and wear trousers and wrap feet in sacking. Use bullocks for ploughing.

The country makes a typical battle around and many evidences of battles having taken place in it. Some of them quite recently. Living in lively anticipation that the war will soon be over.

Vallender, Albert

Rank:

Cpl

Regiment:

11th Battery, 4th West Riding Howitzer Brigade.

Experience:

IG 24/5/18.

2nd of 4 sons Mrs Vallender, Nelson Road, Ilkley. To France in April 1915. Wounded in hospital in France. Earlier in May 1915 he had been struck on the knee and leg with a splinter of shrapnel when fetching water - 'a mere scratch' in his words. Shell burst in ditch near Vallender.

IG 21/5/15

Struck by shrapnel splinter engaged with others in fetching water when shell burst amongst them, but luckily just a mere scratch with one of the shell splinters in leg. Bombarded for an hour and shells bursting in all directions: one striking trench near where Vallender was situated.

Wall, William

Rank:

Gunner

Regiment:

RFA

Experience:

IG 12/11/15

Had experience in both territorials and volunteers. Home for three days at the weekend after 8 months at front. Howitzers hanging on to the fringe of the fighting line and been in the thick of things. Ammunition Column located behind Howitzers proper. Never been out of range of German guns. Been in Ypres four times. Impression that the enemy on its last legs.

Wintle, Edward Collingwood

Age:

21

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

W. Yorks Regiment

Pre-war Occupations:

Liverpool, London & Globe insurance company. Bradford Office.

War Regions:

Egypt

Cause of Death:

Accident

Experience:

IG 18/2/16.

Accidentally killed in Egypt near Kantara on 9/2/16 only a month after leaving the UK as a result of accidental discharge from another mans rifle, bullet passing through his body.

IG 14/1/16

Left for overseas by sea - an adventure as collided at night with a French Steamer which sank in an hour and a chase by three submarines which chased us the whole afternoon and night and one fired a torpedo which went wide (missed us by anything from 10 feet to 300 yards) - quite near enough to be unpleasant.

Woodhead, T.

Rank:

Private

Regiment:

RAMC

War Regions:

Iraq

Experience:

IG 27/10/16:

Letter to friend regarding journey to Mesopotamia. Good voyage, 28 days Port Said (coal) Bombay (dock), 2 days in Bombay - profusely growing plants in gardens, 50ft high palms, marvellous bazaars.

Buying power of an Egyptian 'Anna' = 1 penny!! Now in Mesopotamia in large canvas rest camp and hospital - in date growing district cultivated by Arabs. Hot arid waste - rendered fertile by irrigation. Temp 110 degrees in shade - was 120 & now cooling down. Very hot by day - very cold by night.

Wharfedale Howitzers

Experience:

IG 7/5/15 - Wharfedale Howitzers first spell of fighting - 4th West Riding Howitzer Brigade, RFA. Writers views:

Lost belongings on way to Front, but comfort and consolodation from place where there is a fish and chip shop. Howitzers opened fire on Germans but no response. Only few hundred yards from the German trenches. Writing in dug out and getting guns in position. One German bullet landed in trench dug out and kept as momento for occasion.

Church shelled including graveyard and awful to see it. Coffins, skulls, bones and everything torn up.

To observation station 200 yards from German trenches - shelled all the way with German 6 inches. Houses knocked down, one shell burst 5 yards away and none at greater distance of 70 yards.

Concert took place one evening to sound of German shells and bullets - only 1000 yards from German trenches shells dropping, rattle of bullets, star shells bursting illuminating scene weirdly.

Wool Camp

Experience:

IG 9/10/14, 20/11/14, 16/10/14 - Wool Camp Dorset,
General news about life in camp by unnamed service personnel:

Beautiful summer like weather outdoor life pleasant. Rifles drill purposes + handling and position of gun when firing. Frequent route marches. Rumours re winter in Bournemouth but camp moved 500 yards and timber down for erection of huts.

8 hours drill and scouting by night. Sleeping 16 to a tent - no room to turn over - tired enough to feel no discomfort. Pleasant feature camp life: service and concerts in YMCA tent which everybody appreciates immensely.

Changed camp 500 yards to east old camping ground. 4 regimental huts here. Moors cleared for huts to be built. New top coats but no army coats. Living on stewed meat and cheese and jam. Food change yesterday marmalade this morning and boiled bacon.

Some now housed in council schools 16 miles from Wimbourne and people provide recreation and amusements.

IG 13/11/14 - Wool Camp Institute

Scheme to erect a large building for recreation and instructional purposes at Bovington Camp, Wool, where over 200 men from Ilkley and district are amongst those in training.

IG 20/11/14

Men complain about cooking - get no butter or sweet cake,
Sleep 15 to 16 to a tent. Reveille 06:30 and fall in 19:30. Total
4,500 men in camp from WR Regiment Manchester, Lancashire
Fusiliers and Northumberland Fusiliers.

Wounded Belgian Refugees

Experience:

IG 16/10/14; 30/10/14; 11/12/14.

Taken to town - request by Allies relief fund. 62 arrive at Ilkley. Sad spectacle of stretcher cases. Brave allies heartily welcomed. Bare many scars of fighting & many in rags. Many were smoking and received more from bystanders. Taken to Ilkley hospital and convalescent home. 2 large wards 18 beds each & 5 smaller ones for the more serious cases.

Basin of hot soup and straight to bed. Bystanders outside grounds gave sweets, money souvenirs secured for such gifts. Those confined to bed with shrapnel wounds in legs. One tells story of Prussian soldier thrusting bayonet into people.

IG 30/10/14 Half of 62 Belgium wounded now fit to return to fighting. Loved Irish stew & sago pudding (the later a dish not know in their country). War office now given permission for Red Cross Flag to be flown in Ilkley hospital (now used as a military hospital for Belgians).

A Belgian soldier wrote of his gratitude for Ilkley people looking after his wife and children & sisters while he is at the front.