

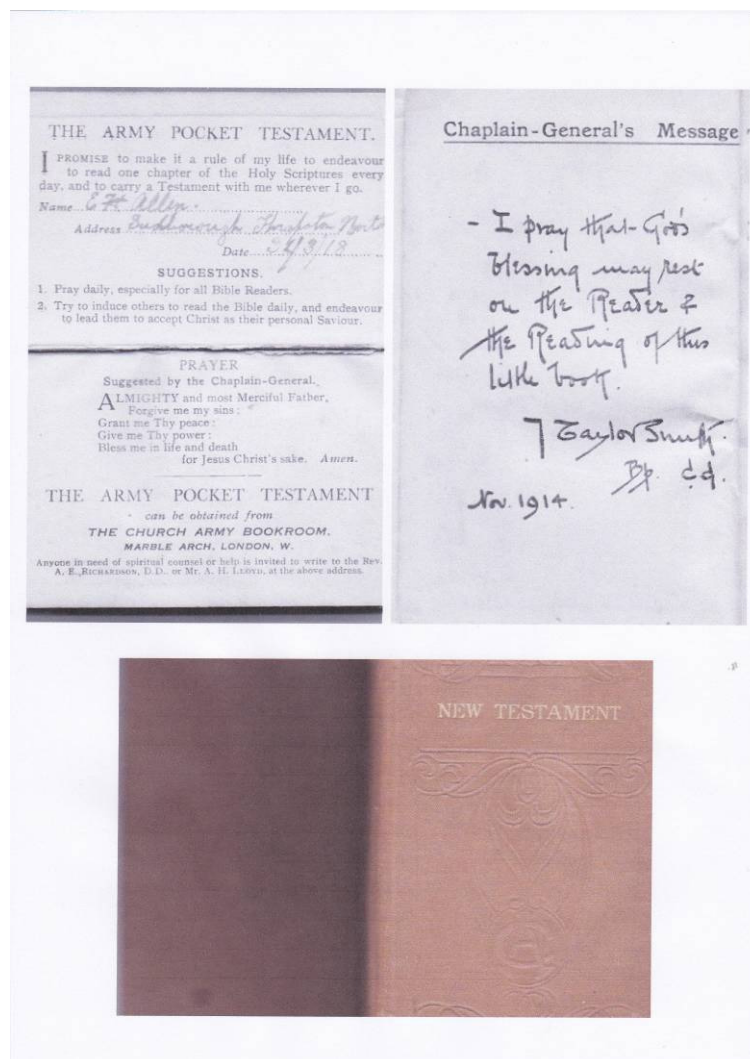
## MILITARY SERVICE

### Early volunteers

By early September 1914 thirty-four Ettington men had volunteered for service by adding their names to the Rolls of Honour attached to the door of the church. On Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September the Stratford-on-Avon Herald described their send-off from the village:

*“Early on Thursday morning the villagers assembled to wish the recruits goodbye. The Vicar congratulated Ettington on having produced so many recruits and felt sure they would do their duty. He presented a “Soldier’s New Testament” \* to each one, and the Rev. H. F. Knightley sent a number of pocket Hymn Books and Prayer Books. Some of the ladies who were present handed them a quantity of cigarettes, and all gave three hearty cheers as they departed in motor-cars after many a warm handshake.”*

This is an example of the Soldiers’ New Testament that was being presented to the volunteers:



# Great War in the Villages Project

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October the Herald listed the volunteers named on the Rolls of Honour. The number had gone up to thirty-nine and six others had been rejected on medical grounds:

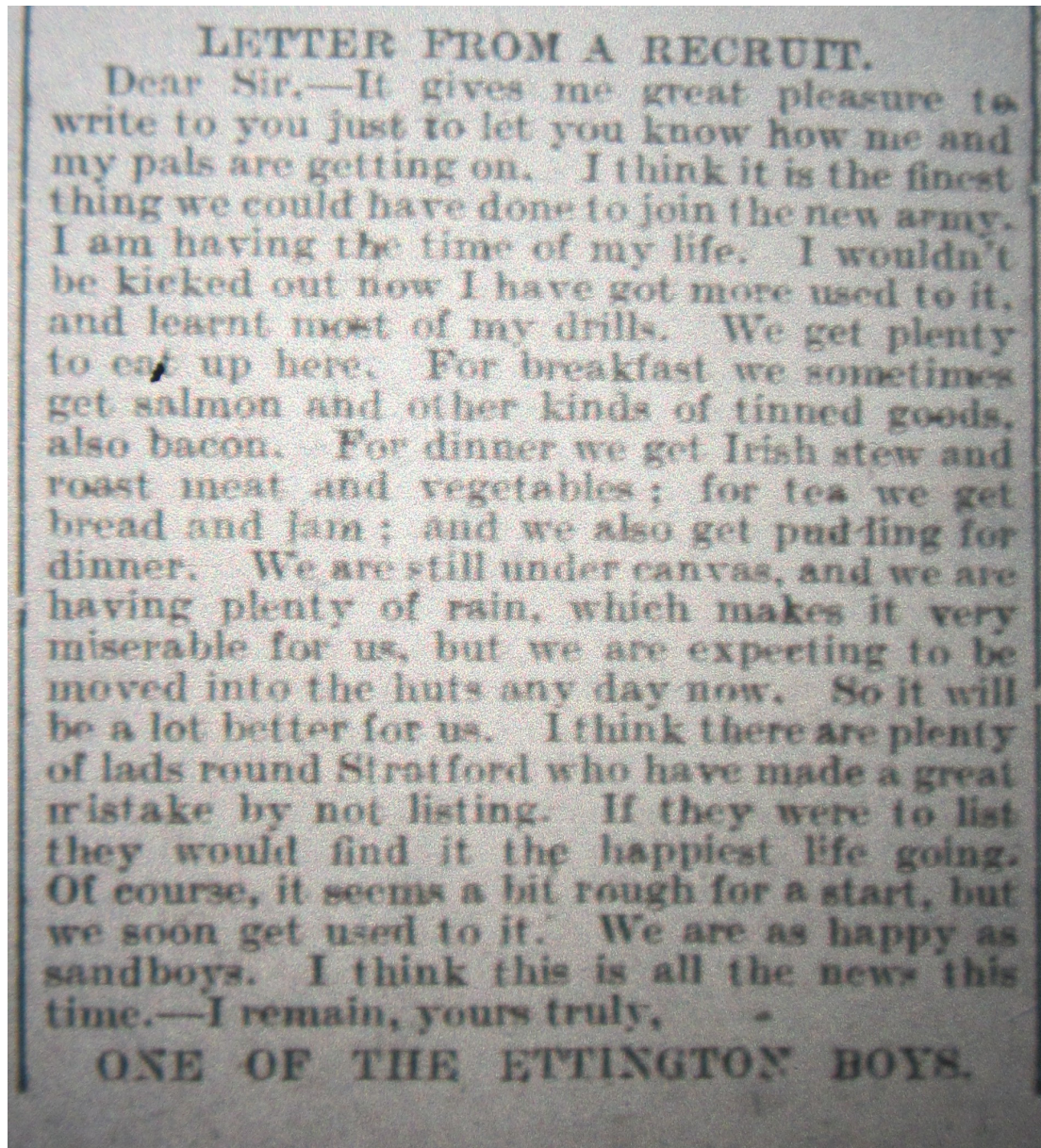
Lt. Evelyn Shirley	Harry Eales R.N.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. Noel William Leaf	William Lydiatt
Ernest Windsor	James Henry Brandish
William Morris	Albert Percy Brandish
Leonard Clements	Frederick Brandish
Charles Waters	Frederick Coldicott
Arthur Lawrence	Walter Grantham
Thomas Wallen	Thomas Taylor
Tom Carroll	Harry Heritage
Josiah Edkins	Alfred William Horne
George Hemmings	Albert Edward Batchford
Edward Gardner	William Gardner
Wilfred Gardner	Thomas Randall Nason
John Edgington	Ernest Squires
John Plum	Harry Widdows
George Plum	James Kings
Albert Nason	John Hancox*
Wallace Hobbins	Percy Kent*
James Hemmings	Fred Heritage*
Sidney Henson	John Brandish*
Dick Kings	W. Heritage*
Frank Kings	Harry Mills
Ernest Petty	

## Notes:

- Those in bold type are among the men who lost their lives during the war
- Lts. Evelyn Shirley and Noel William Leaf, whose names headed the list, were serving officers obviously leading by example to encourage recruitment
- Those marked \* were the men who had been rejected on medical grounds. This was no bar to them being conscripted later, as we know for certain was the case for Harry Mills. John Brandish was called up in 1916 and, when Mr J. W. Lowe appealed for him and others to be exempted, he was granted only a short-term exemption.
- James Kings did not actually serve in the war, not because he did not want to but he was rejected at the medical examination centre (Budbrooke) on no fewer than three occasions. (This was reported in the Herald on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1916 in connection with a local tribunal hearing where he appealed on behalf of one of his brothers)

## Having a good time - why not join us?

It was a popular view that the war would be over by Christmas. The young men appeared to be very upbeat as can be seen in the following letter in the Stratford Herald of 4<sup>th</sup> December 1914:



We wonder which of “the Ettington boys” wrote this. Or was it a recruitment officer?



## Recruitment from 1915 onwards

There are no more Rolls of Honour to enable us to positively identify all the men from the village who joined the colours during the war. In April 1916 the government introduced conscription. This replaced the unsuccessful Derby Scheme which urged men to enlist voluntarily before conscription started. As the time approached posters were used add further encouragement. Two examples are reproduced on the “Life in South Warwickshire Villages” page of the website by courtesy of [Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum \(Warwick District Council\)](#).

### Conscription:

#### Applied to

- Unmarried men aged from 18 to 40 inclusive on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1915
- Widowers with no dependant children in the same age range

#### Exemptions:

- Men already serving in the Armed Forces or Territorials
- Men previously discharged from the services because of illness or disability
- Clergymen, Priests and Ministers of Religion

Application for exemption could be made to local tribunals by:

- Men whose services in their current employment were thought more useful to the Nation
- Those for whom military service would cause extreme hardship
- Men who were ill or disabled
- Conscientious objectors

### Reserved occupations:

- There was no defined list. Farmers were generally granted exemption, as were many self-employed traders.

### Revisions

Within two months conscription was extended to include married men and early in 1918 the upper age limit was raised to 50.

## Other men who served

In addition to the early volunteers we have positive confirmation of the following. As before, those in bold type lost their lives in the war.

**Fred Batchelor**  
**William Henry Bearley**  
**Albert James Birch**  
**Walter James Clingo**  
**John Henry Coldicott**  
**David Arthur Denton**  
**Oliver Dyer**  
 Thomas Haylock  
**Ernest Heritage**  
 Edgar Thomas Hobday  
**Joseph Edward Hughes**  
**Algernon Keck**  
 Harry Cecil Kings  
 Jeffrey Janson Lowe

**John Marshall**  
 Thomas Marshall  
 Frank Mills  
**Frederick George Nason**  
**Christopher Plumb**  
**Edgar Rust**  
**Joseph Edward Simms**  
 Harold Southam  
 Harry Taylor  
**Jack Taylor**  
 Ernest Widdows  
 A Wilkins  
**William Victor Wyldes**

In addition we have identified the following men

- a) granted short-term exemption by the local tribunals
- b) being members of the British Legion after the war (marked\*)

It is reasonable to assume that most of these did military service.

George Ashfield\*  
 Mark Bishop  
 Charles Brandish\*  
 Charles Clarke  
 Arthur Victor Coldicott  
 Thomas Edgington\*  
 John Gardner\*

Charles Henry Grantham  
 William Marshall\*  
 Walter George Mason,  
 Frederick Petty\*  
 Edward Rostron  
 Charles Taylor  
 Thomas William Taylor

So overall including the early recruits we know of between 80 and 85 men who served in the war. We feel sure there were many more who we haven't identified. We should mention that some of the men commemorated on the war memorial were not born or brought up in Ettington, and some had left the village before the war. Nevertheless they all had Ettington links as described in their individual biographies

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