

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 11th 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:

Chaplain-General's Message THE ARMY POCKET TESTAMENT. I The first to make it a rule of my life to endeavour to read one chapter of the Holy Scriptures every day, and to carry a Testament with me wherever 1 go. Name le The Martin Address Productors for Therafole Therafole Date of Martin SUGGESTIONS. - I pray that gois Hessing may rest on the Reaver 2 Pray daily, especially for all Bible Readers. Try to induce others to read the Bible daily, and ender to lead them to accept Christ as their personal Savior the Peasing of this Like boot. PRAYER Suggested by the Chaplain-General. A LMIGHT and most Merciful Father, Grant me thy peace: Give me Thy power: Bless me in life and death for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Toulor Shuff. Nov. 1914. Bb. dd. THE ARMY POCKET TESTAMENT can be obtained from
THE CHURCH ARMY BOOKROOM,
MARBLE ARCH, LONDON, W. ayone in need of spiritual counsel or help is invited to write to the R A. E. RICHERDSON, D. D. or Mr. A. H. LISOU, at the above address.



On 2nd 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 2nd Lt. Noel William Leaf Ernest Windsor William Morris Leonard Clements **Charles Waters** Arthur Lawrence Thomas Wallen Tom Carroll Josiah Edkins George Hemmings Edward Gardner Wilfred Gardner John Edgington John Plum George Plum Albert Nason Wallace Hobbins James Hemmings Sidney Henson Dick Kings Frank Kings **Ernest Petty**

Harry Eales R.N. William Lydiatt James Henry Brandish Albert Percy Brandish Frederick Brandish Frederick Coldicott Walter Grantham **Thomas Taylor** Harry Heritage Alfred William Horne Albert Edward Batchford William Gardner Thomas Randall Nason **Ernest Squires** Harry Widdows James Kings John Hancox* Percy Kent* Fred Heritage* John Brandish* W. Heritage* Harry Mills

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 4th 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 4th December 1914:

LETTER FROM A RECRUIT. Dear Sir .- It gives me great pleasure to write to you just to let you know how me and my pals are getting on. I think it is the finest thing we could have done to join the new army. I am having the time of my life. I wouldn't be kicked out now I have got more used to it. and learnt most of my drills. We get plenty to eat up here. For breakfast we sometimes get salmon and other kinds of tinned goods. also bacon. For dinner we get Irish stew and roast meat and vegetables ; for tea we get bread and jam ; and we also get pudding for dinner, We are still under canvas, and we are having plenty of rain, which makes it very miserable for us, but we are expecting to be moved into the huts any day now. So it will be a lot better for us. I think there are plenty of lads round Stratford who have made a great mistake by not listing. If they were to list they would find it the happiest life going, Of course, it seems a bit rough for a start, but we soon get used to it. We are as happy as sandboys. I think this is all the news this time.---I remain, yours truly, ONE OF THE ETTINGTON HOYS

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 15th 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*	Charles Henry Grantham
Mark Bishop	William Marshall*
Charles Brandish*	Walter George Mason,
Charles Clarke	Frederick Petty*
Arthur Victor Coldicott	Edward Rostron
Thomas Edgington*	Charles Taylor
John Gardner*	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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