



UPHILL REMEMBERS

The War Years 1914 - 1918

Collected articles from *Uphillviews* published in remembrance of those from the village who gave their lives in The Great War.

U p h i l l
Remembers
 The First World War

This is a collection of tri-yearly articles that chronologically follow the 100 year centenary of the events that transpired during the First World War, with a focus on how these events affected the residents of Uphill Village. Around 130 men with ties to the parish of Uphill marched off to war during the 4 year period and 20 marched to their deaths.

We are told to remember the fallen which makes the aim of these articles to assist those who now live in the village, many with no connection at all to their 100 year counterparts, to find out about the sacrifices made by these forbearers and “remember them.”

I first got involved in village history in 2014 during the centenary of the start of the war. I decided to research Uphill’s involvement in WWI as part of an extended project qualification. This lead me to Donald Brown who had extensively researched and written a book; “Uphill’s Great War 1914-1918”, as a response to the refurbishing of the War memorial on the hill in the year 2000 and the fact that no one at the rededication ceremony knew anything about those named on it. It seemed to him that Uphill had forgotten, something which we both believe should never happen.

I noticed that “Uphillviews;” the tri-yearly village magazine, were running updates that followed the war as it would have happened 100 years ago and told of the Villagers whose lives were transformed by the conflict. The updates started to race too far ahead by spring 2015 so I volunteered to write the column which was enthusiastically received. It has been my pleasure to write the column for these last 3 years and I hope it has helped you to learn about the war time village and villagers, as well as to “remember them.”

Josh Cottrell

Author of the “Uphill Remembers” column of “Uphill Views”, Spring 2015 – November 2018



U p h i l l



Remembers

The First World War



August 1914

In the glorious sunshine of June 1914 there were no thoughts of war, no international crises and no hint that the crowned heads of Europe were poised to tumble one after the other. The assassination of the heir of the Austro-Hungarian Empire by a Serb-sponsored terrorist on 28 June was neither predictable or inevitable. Yet within weeks, millions of men were on the march. On 4 August with Austria and Germany already at war with Russia and France, and with German troops marching into Belgium on their way to Paris, Britain declared war on Germany.



In August 1914, some 650 people occupied about 150 houses in Uphill on Somerset's Bristol Channel coast. In the next four years almost every able-bodied man aged between 18 and 50 went to war; 19 to die on active service.

Village life moved slowly round its church, school and chapel, five farms, two pubs, a brickyard, a quarry and a muddy little wharf. Above the quarry, the seaward wall of a roofless Domesday church was white-washed as a marker for fishermen returning across the bay to unload sprats and shrimps caught off Brean Down. They sold some on the wharf for 1d per lb. but the bulk was carted off to back yards where women were paid in fish to seal the catch into barrels for despatch by rail to London's Billingsgate Market. Coast going sloops brought in coal and timber, taking out cargoes of bricks, tiles and lime. Biggest of them all was villager Leonard Smart's Jane, a 40 ton Bristol Channel trow built in 1800 of English oak, the oldest British merchant ship still afloat.

Encouraged by martial music from Mogg's Military Band, hundreds of volunteers flocked to a Recruiting Tent on Weston's Beach Lawns where Sergeant Major Harry Baker of the Royal Field Artillery, a veteran of Ladysmith, signed them on as Tommies, the traditional nickname of British soldiers.

From Uphill came F Baker (2 Ynishir Terrace), Harry Ellard (16 Rhyne Cottages), Herbert King, Robert William King (1 Hillside Cottages), G Marshall (3 Parish Cottages), William Minifie (9 Sandcroft Cottages), G Phillips, Lionel Pople (Hillview, 3 Rhyne Cottages), Edwin Porter (5 Hillside Cottages), Charles and Ray Valentine (3 Sandcroft Cottages).

Four joined the Army Service Corps: Reg Fear (Rose Cottage), Henry Wason (1 Lower Rhyne Cottages), E Whitlock and J Whitlock (Elm Cottage), while Edward Stanley Luff (Manor Farm) and Harry Taylor (Southfield House) signed for the North Somerset Yeomanry.¹

In our heart of hearts believing
Victory crowns the just,
And that braggarts must
Surely bite the dust,
Press we to the field ungrieving,
In our heart of hearts believing
Victory crowns the just.

Hence the faith and fire within us
Men who march away
Ere the barn-cocks say
Night is growing gray,
Leaving all that here can win us;
Hence the faith and fire within us
Men who march away.

"Men Who March Away (Song of the Soldiers)" was written and published by Thomas Hardy in September 1914 at the very start of the Great War. English optimism was high at this time - a speedy victory seemed assured - and young men eagerly took their place in the ranks. (In fact, September recorded over 460,000 British volunteers; more than twice that of any subsequent month throughout the war.)



¹ Extract from Uphill's Great War by Donald Brown published by UVS, a commemorative edition of which will be available soon.

A permanent ferry crossed the River Axe at high tides, rowed on demand by William Pople of Beachend, 4 The Links, Beach Road. He also operated the penstock where Uphill Great Rhyne sluiced into the Pill. Of his five grandsons, two would be killed, two wounded and one taken Prisoner of War.

Behind the wharf, the quarry had two lime-kilns, one burning pebbles brought in by boat to produce a brown lime, the other making white lime from local quarry stone. A narrow-gauge quarry rail-track carried the product to the quayside. In addition to quarrymen and masons, several workers were employed in making the lime which was used by farmers to improve soil. Other villagers worked in Uphill brickyard, making tiles and bricks by hand from local clay.

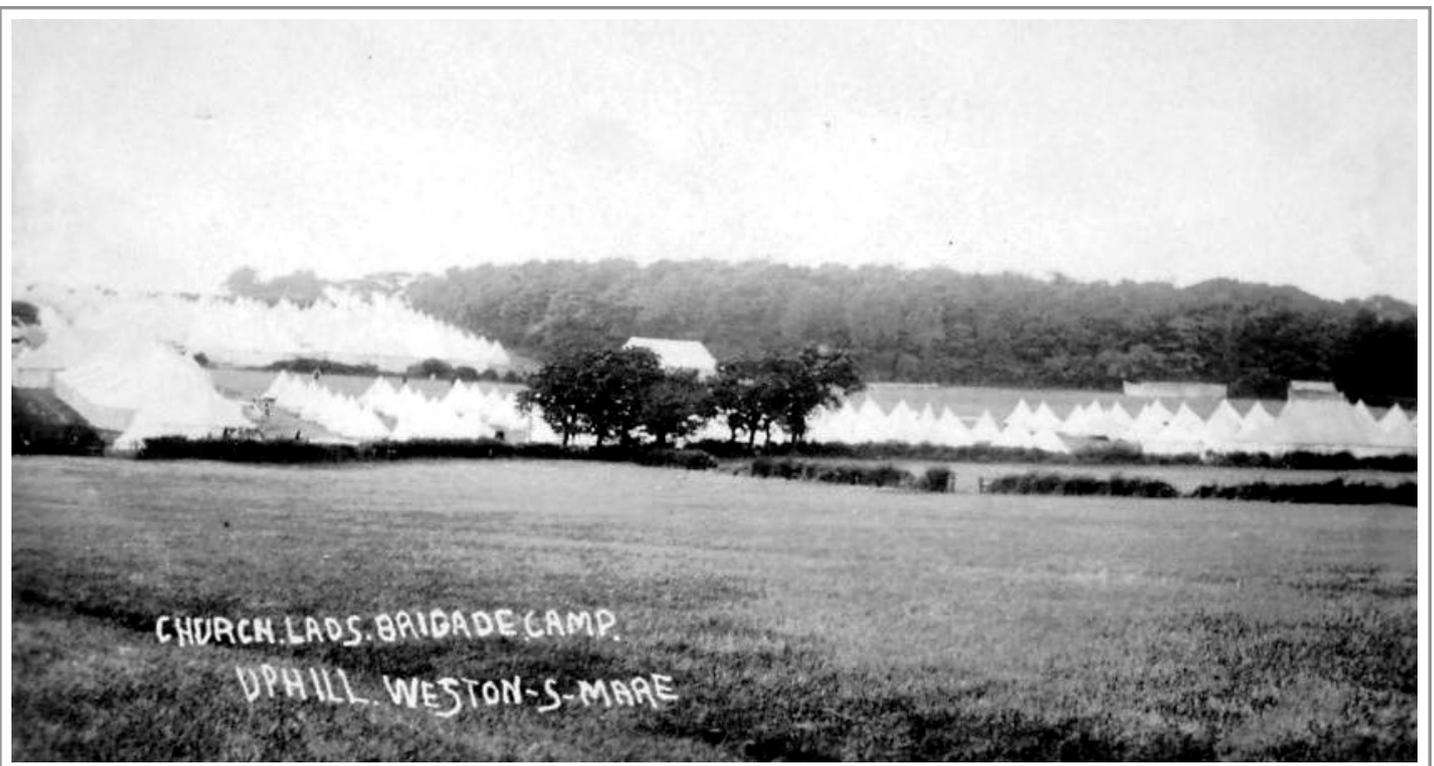
A cart track, now Uphill Road North, led northward between ditches towards Weston-super-Mare, a popular resort for holiday makers brought in by rail from the Midlands and by Campbell's steamers from Wales. From the Royal West of England Sanatorium, an occasional tram ran into Weston. There were no buses. Most villagers walked or rode bikes, although flies – ponies and traps – were available for hire. The few rich families had cars as well as horse-drawn carriages.

The village had plenty of little shops and other services, generally operating out of front rooms. At age 5, children started at the National School, built and donated by the Graves-Knyfton family with four classrooms accommodating 130 pupils; at 14 they left school for employment.

School Log: No mention of the events in Europe or the outbreak of war appear in the log for the village school with it merely stating - " June 29th. J. Stacey, Esq., H.M.I visited the school this morning at 10 am and left at 10.20 after examining the Registers." and recording that on 'July 31st School closed this morning for the Midsummer Holidays 5 weeks."



Lord of the Manor Reginald Benett Graves-Knyfton of Uphill Manor served as a pre-war captain in the 4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry (Territorial Army). He commanded E Company, largely recruited in Weston and known as the Weston Rifles. Already mustered under canvas on Salisbury Plain in August 1914, the battalion was immediately mobilised for war service. Re-designated the 1st/4th Battalion, it sailed with the Wessex Division on 9 October for India, the first local unit to leave for foreign service and the first Territorial unit to serve in India. The voyage in HM Transport Braemar Castle took a month. As the Territorials left Uphill, 200 boys from Bristol and Bath arrived for the annual Boys Brigade summer camp, pitching their tents on the hill and enduring daily bathing parades.



Winter 1914

The North Somerset Yeomanry was formed on the creation of the Territorial Force in April 1908 and placed under orders of the 1st South Western Mounted Brigade. It was headquartered at Bath with B squadron being headquartered in Weston-super-Mare and covering Uphill, Axbridge, Clevedon, Langford and Nailsea.

In November 1914, whilst the Uphill school log recorded the admission of three new children, a member of staff being away with influenza and the administration of Diocesan Examinations followed by a half day holiday the Yeomanry was engaged in war on the battle fields of France and facing the first battle of Ypres.



North Somerset Yeomanry training on Uphill Beach - NS Museum Service



HARRY TAYLOR of Southfield House in Uphill was one of many from the Somerset area joining the North Somerset Yeomanry and seeing service in the early months of the war and finding themselves involved in the first battle of Ypres. Harry joined the Yeomanry at the outbreak of war along with Edward Luff of Manor Farm, Uphill.

On November 17th, B Squadron North Somerset Yeomanry repelled the elite Prussian Guard, filling columns of the *Weston Mercury* and *Weston Gazette* with casualty lists of local men who had been cheered out of Weston station just two months before. In those two months, Harry had been promoted to Lance Corporal and was wounded in the neck with a shrapnel bullet. After treatment at No 6 War Hospital in Rouen, he convalesced in a hospital in Brighton, returning to Uphill on sick leave in January 1915.

The official war diary of the North Somerset yeomanry for November 1914 details the events of the battle Harry was involved in:-

War diary of the North Somerset Yeomanry: November 1914

2nd November

Forest Row

The regiment strength 26 officers 1 warrant officer and 474 other ranks with 500 horses under the command of Lt Col G C Glyn DSO left Forest Row in 4 special trains to Southampton where it embarked during the evening on SS Rosetti.

3rd November

At sea

The Rosetti reached Havre at 3pm and the regiment disembarked and moved off at 6pm to a rest camp at La Hève 2 ½ miles NW of Havre. The transport wagons did not leave the dock till 8pm.

4th November

La Hève

In the morning the regiment was inspected by the base Commandant Col H B Williams DSO. The regiment completed its equipment from Ordnance. 5 wagons received from Deptford on 1 November 14 having become unserviceable were changed.

5th November

La Hève

The regiment received orders to entrain for St Omer and left in 3 special trains between 3.45pm and 6.45pm.

6th November

On rail

The regiment arrived at St Omer and spent the night in French artillery barracks there.

7th November

St Omer

The regiment paraded at 10.30am and marched to its billeting area in and around Esquerdes. The men in sheds and horses in the open.

8th November

Esquerdes

In the afternoon the regiment was practised in digging trenches.



9th November

Esquerdes

The regiment paraded at 12.30pm for drill. 1 officer and 2 NCOs per squadron under Major A H Gibbs went to Blendecques to see the entrenchments being made there.

10th November

Esquerdes

The regiment paraded at 8.15am and went to Blendecques to take part in the entrenching scheme. It returned at 2.30pm.

11th November

Esquerdes

The regiment paraded for drill at 8.45am. At 10.50am while the regiment was still out at the field orders were received to march at once to billets around St Sylvestre. An officer (Capt J H S Tyssen) was sent on a motor bicycle to report to GOC 1st Army Corps at Chateau de Trois Tours Vlamertinghe for orders.

The regiment marched at 1pm and billeted that night in 3 farms close to St Sylvestre arriving about 8.45pm. The night was wet and stormy. The horses were in the open. Capt Tyssen brought orders to proceed to Hooge without distressing the horses.

12th November

St Sylvestre

The regiment marched to Dranoutre at 10am via Bailleul arriving there at 2.30pm and billeting in 4 farms. The horses were in the open. The water for

horses was not good. The regiment's arrival was reported to GOC 1st Army Corps.

13th November

Acting on orders from GOC 1st Army Corps the regiment marched at 10.30am to Ypres via Locre and Dickebusch to Ypres railway station and there along the railway to Halte on the Menin Road. The regiment's arrival was reported to GOC 3rd Cavalry Division. The regiment was posted to the 6th Cavalry Brigade.

The regiment went into billets in a chateau next to L'Ecole de Bienfaisance on the Menin Road ½ mile E of Halte. While the regiment was coming along the railway it was shelled. In these billets the horses were tied up round the sides of the field. The regiment was ordered to proceed to the trenches near Zillebeke in support and marched at 4pm. The men carried 200 rounds per man. On arrival the regiment halted for an hour and not being required for duty returned to billets. The billets were shelled during the day and night several shells falling amongst the horses which however escaped without injury.

14th November

Ypres

During the night the billets were shelled so the regiment saddled up at 3.30am and marched at daylight to the railway just N of Halte on the Menin Road. The horses were tied along the west side of the cutting and the men made sma

dugouts on the E side. Echelon B remained in billets.

At 1pm the Brigade received orders to march to a billeting area near Vlamertinghe. The regiment was billeted in 2 farms. The billets were very cramped and the water supply bad. The weather was cold snow and the horses not being under shelter felt it. The regiment was warned to find 300 rifles for the trenches on 15-xi-14 for 48 hours.

15th November

Vlamertinghe

Orders were received at 2.45am to saddle up and stand to at 6.30am. The regiment paraded mounted at 3.30pm [am?]. The men carried 200 rounds per man. The Brigade concentrated near Ypres railway station at which point the horses were sent back. The regiment under Lt Col G Glyn DSO marched dismounted to Zillebeke via the railway line which leads to Comines.

On arrival at Zillebeke C Squadron under Maj H G Spencer was ordered to join the 10th Hussars. A Squadron under Maj G Lubbock, B Squadron under Capt F A C Liebert and the Maxims under Maj H B Mathews were placed under the orders of Col O Smith Bingham DSO 3rd D[ragoon] Guards and told to occupy the trenches SE of Zillebeke. The relief of the 1st Life Guards was effected at 7.30pm. A Squadron occupied the centre trench in the firing line with the Maxims between 2 squadrons 3rd D Guards. B Squadron was in the reserve trenches.

The night 15/16 was fairly quiet but there was a certain amount of intermittent shelling and sniping and a small attack which was easily repulsed.

16th November

Zillebeke

During the day there was continuous shelling and sniping and a few casualties from shrapnel. At 6.30pm B Squadron and one troop of A squadron under 2/Lieut N Bailward relieved A Squadron which went into the reserve trenches. The Maxim guns stayed in the firing line. There was a

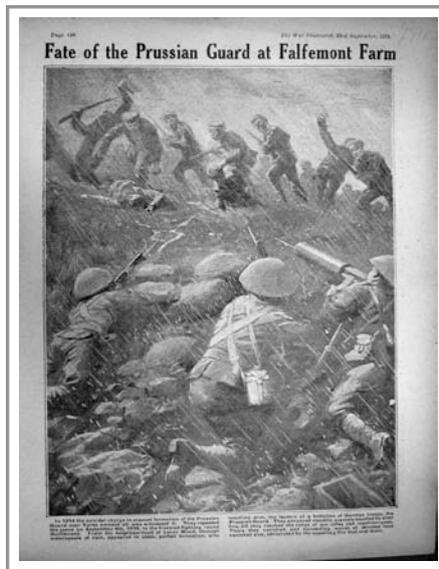
small attack about 9pm which was easily repulsed.

17th November

Zillebeke

9am heavy shelling started and the trenches were searched by shrapnel and HE shells which gave off repulsive fumes. 2 German aeroplanes passed up the lines followed by a 3rd. The trenches had already been damaged by shell fire and as no RE [Royal Engineers] were available they were repaired by the men as best they could but owing to the softness of the soil and no materials for revetting being available the trenches were soon rendered vulnerable again.

A determined attack was made at noon which was repulsed with heavy loss causing the regiment many casualties including Capt Liebert who was killed. The attack was renewed and Brig Gen Lord Cavan was now informed and asked for reinforcements. He sent up 2 coys Coldstream Gds who occupied the reserve trenches at 3.30pm. Meanwhile the attack had been continued and Lt J S Davey killed. 30 men of A Squadron were sent up under Capt R E English to



replace casualties. Later on the remainder of A Squadron under Maj G Lubbock was sent up.

The enemy made another determined attack at dusk but was repulsed with heavy loss making it unnecessary to call up the Coldstream Guards. The enemy sent up a balloon at midday with

flags attached and in the evening used magnesium light to direct the attack. The relief of the trenches was carried out at 6.30pm by the 2nd Life Guards in the firing line and R[oyal] Horse Guards in reserve. C Squadron came under heavy shell fire in the reserve trenches but did not occupy the front trenches.

The regiment marched dismounted to Ypres where it picked up its horses and returned to its billets near Vlamertinghe.

Casualties - Capt F G C Liebert and Lt J S Davey killed. Capt S G Bates 7th Hussars (adjutant) and 2/Lt A N Bailward wounded. NCOs and men killed 22. Wounded 39. Missing 3. Total casualties 64. Out of these 59 were sustained by the 200 rifles in trenches at Zillebeke.

The weather has been bitterly cold the last few days and the horses suffered from exposure.

18th and 19th November

Vlamertinghe

The regiment remained in billets.

20th November

The transport moved off at 7.30am and the Brigade at 3pm to a billeting area just N or Merville. The roads were very slippery owing to frost and the regiment did not reach its billets till between 12 and 2am. Each Squadron and the Maxim gun occupied a group of farms and regimental HQ were established at the Chateau Bultot [??] ¾ mile N of Merville on the Hazebrook Road. All the horses were placed under cover.

The rest of the diary for 1914 records that from 21 November until 13 December the regiment remained in billets at Merville undergoing training. On 14 December it moved to billets at Bailleul, with the horses tied up in the open and the men in glass houses ¼ mile away. The regiment stayed there one more day and then returned to its original billets in Merville on 16 December. It saw out the rest of the month there in more training, finally leaving Merville on 28 January 1915.

The diary is held at the National Archives in Kew in the following file: WO 95/1153 1/1 North Somerset Yeomanry 1914 Nov. - 1918 Mar.

Christmas 1914

F J Williams of 3 Hillgrove Terrace, Uphill had worked for JJ Leaver, the High Street ironmongers in Weston-super-Mare and had played football for Weston and Somerset. Later, as Sapper 970 Williams of 2nd Wessex Field Company, Royal Engineers, he went to the same Rouen hospital as Harry Taylor to be treated for trench foot, the consequence of standing for days in water and liquid mud.

Trench foot was a serious disorder during World War I, especially during the winter of 1914-1915, when over 20,000 allied men were affected, with 74,000 allied troops afflicted by the end of the war.

In Flanders and France trenches were dug in land that was often at or near to sea level and where the water table was just beneath the soil surface. After a couple of feet of digging the soldiers inevitably hit water and the trenches became flooded. To make matters worse, the heavy artillery barrages destroyed the agricultural land-drains and the whole landscape became a sea of mud in which men could literally drown.

After hours and days of standing in soaking wet socks and boots, trench foot would begin to set in. The men's feet would swell and go numb and then the skin would start to turn red or blue. Untreated feet rapidly became gangrenous and would need to be amputated.

To minimize the chances of contracting trench foot, the men were ordered to change into dry socks as often as possible. Around 1916, John Logie Baird started to sell socks prepared with borax to help alleviate the problems of wet feet. These were widely used by soldiers at the front. The soldiers were also instructed to grease each other's feet with whale oil at least once a day. It is estimated that a battalion (1007 men and 30 officers) at the front would use up to ten gallons of whale oil every day.

If he had not been suffering from trench foot what might Sapper Williams have been doing at Christmas 1914?

In the first months of the First World War, soldiers fighting in the trenches around Ypres held a truce. Over the Christmas period they set aside their weapons and met in 'No Man's Land'. This Christmas Truce was an unplanned and unexpected event. It happened many times and in many places. German, French, British, Belgian and Indian soldiers were excited to meet one another. They sang Christmas songs together, exchanged souvenirs and took photos of one another. And in some cases, it seems that they even played football.

It is very hard to pin down the story of the 1914 Christmas Truce and even harder to find out about the football matches. This was not planned, arranged and recorded like much else in the war. It was spontaneous and informal. It was an example of 'fraternisation' – when enemies met up, shared comforts and even became friends – which naturally met with disapproval from military command.

To this day, there is debate about whether or not anyone really played football in No Man's Land. There is plenty of evidence, however, that the truce did take place. It involved thousands of men and was reported in dozens of newspapers as soldiers wrote home to family and friends.



Uphill
Remembers
The First World War

UPHILL
VILLAGE
SOCIETY

heritage
lottery fund

Spring 1915

On his appointment as Secretary of State for War shortly after the declaration of the war, Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener issued a call for volunteers to increase the size of the army. The response to Kitchener's appeal was rapid but soon reduced to an average of only 100,000 men per month. Steps had to be taken to encourage further enlistment.

In addition to joining the 'regular army' on Lord Kitchener's instructions a new form of "short service" was introduced, under which a man could serve for "three years or the duration of the war, whichever the longer". - Kitchener's Army".

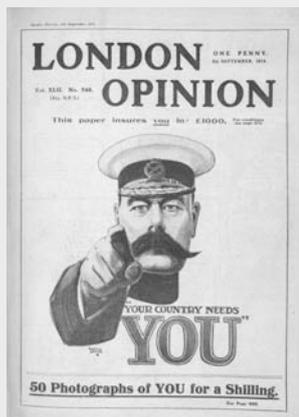
At a meeting in Uphill school room, recruiters discussed how to call more men to the Colours. One commented: "Uphill has already given between forty and fifty men, but it is the duty of every man who is physically fit and can be spared to offer himself in this crisis."

George Herniman joined the Somerset Light Infantry. His father Henry Waterman Herniman ran the butcher's shop in Beach Road, now 60 Uphill Way. Herbert Hollier gave up selling greengroceries to enlist in the Royal Garrison Artillery. He lived in Primrose Cottage on Windwhistle Road, now the Wessex Water pumping station. Gilbert Exon and Albert James volunteered for the Army Service Corps (Mechanical Transport). Ray Valentine stayed with familiar horses as a driver in the Royal Army Medical Corps, but nearly lost his ambulance when his team bolted down Colchester High Street.

Somerset Light Infantry

The Great War saw the Somerset Light Infantry increasing in size to nineteen battalions, which fought in the three main theatres of war: on the Western front, in Mesopotamia and in Palestine, whilst other battalions remained on garrison duty in India, Burma and at home.

With the declaration of war on 3 August 1914 the 2nd battalion was on garrison duty in India and it was to remain here for the duration of the war. The 1st battalion was stationed at Colchester as part of the 11th Infantry Brigade of the 4th Division. It was the



Alfred Leete designed the most iconic image of the First World War showing Lord Kitchener

Born in Northamptonshire on 28 August 1882. His parents moved to Weston-super-Mare in 1893 when his father became ill. Alfred enjoyed drawing so his father arranged for him to leave school aged twelve to work for a surveyor in Bristol.

In 1897 his first cartoon was accepted by the Daily Graphic and he began to contribute regularly to the Bristol Magpie and by the age of 32 when the war started, Alfred was one of the best commercial artists. On the 5 September 1914 Alfred's drawing of General Kitchener featured on the front of The London Opinion magazine with the words 'Your Country Needs You'. This image was later adapted into an unofficial recruiting poster by the magazine with the words 'Britons [Kitchener] Needs You'.

Alfred died on 17 June 1933 in Kensington, London. He is buried in the Milton Road Cemetery in Weston-super-Mare. His drawing of Kitchener is still being reproduced, copied and adapted today.

first Somerset Regiment to be selected for active service and within days from the declaration of war the battalion was mobilised. In just two weeks the battalion was in France on the Western Front, where they would remain for the duration of the war. Forming part of the British Expeditionary Force the 1st battalion was soon confronting the enemy during the battle for Le Cateau, before becoming embroiled in the retreat from Mons. Early October saw the 1st battalion entering the trenches for the first time, they took a position in Ploegsteert Wood, Belgium, where they remained for the winter.

In April 1915 the 1st battalion became embroiled in the second battle of Ypres. In May the 6th battalion moved to France (as part of the 43rd Infantry Division) and two months later they were joined by the 7th battalion (as part of the 61st Infantry Brigade). The 8th battalion, as part of the 63rd Brigade, arrived in France in September. On 25 September the 6th, 7th and 8th battalions became embroiled in the Battle of Loos. July to November 1916 saw the Battles of the Somme. On 1 July 1916 at 7.30 am fourteen British Divisions, including the 1st battalion, began the attack. On the first day 26 officers and 478 men of the 1st battalion were killed, missing or wounded, the immediate result was nil. The 6th, 7th and 8th battalions also became embroiled in the Battles of the Somme during the summer.



Officers of the 1st Battalion Somerset Light Infantry in a deep shell hole on the Western Front, spring 1915.

World War One Roll of Honour returned to Uphill Village

The Roll of Honour, which lists the names of every man from Uphill who went to war in 1914 - 1918, was returned to the village at a presentation held at the village's Victory Hall in December.

Its return comes 23 years after it was thrown into a skip and feared lost, before being rediscovered earlier this summer.

When it was originally commissioned, the plaque was paid for by members of the Thrift Club at The Ship Inn – some of whom served during the war. It used to hang in The Ship Inn in Uphill Way, and later in a florist's shop in Milton.

Uphill Village Society originally discovered the roll for their Millennium Exhibitions but had spent the last few years trying to trace it again after it went missing when the florist shop closed.



James Scott, who used to live in Uphill, tracked down the missing plaque after being told of its whereabouts by the person who had seen it in the skip and fished it out.

He returned it at a special presentation at the Victory Hall 50 years to the day after he had performed in a school play at the same venue.

Mr Scott said: "I am deeply honoured to bring it back to the village. Everybody was so pleased to see it again. We have got to remember these men who served and it is priceless for the village."

The plaque was unveiled by Weston MP John Penrose, who spoke about it being a fitting tribute in the centenary year of World War One.

Earlier this year, Uphill Village Society was given a £6,000 grant to tell the story of those from the village who went to war – and found out about the rediscovery of the plaque just days after the funding was confirmed.

Village Society Chair Stewart Castle said: "It's important for us to remember and to preserve their memory. It gives a sense of the character and duty Uphill had during that period and an emphasis on the importance of community."

The roll of honour will be the centrepiece in an exhibition on Uphill's role in the war planned for some time next year, prior to its being permanently displayed at the Victory Hall

W.D. Authority Promoted Corporal on Enlistment

(27268) W 6749-900 250 M 10/14 T.C.L.D. 27 Army Form B. 2505.
Gen. No. 2326

DUPLICATE

SHORT SERVICE.
(For the Duration of the War.)

A.T.

7/1/065464
No. _____ Name Reginald Fear Corps A.S.C. 475

ATTESTATION OF

Questions to be put to the Recruit before enlistment.

1. What is your Name? ... Reginald Fear
2. What is your full Address? ... Rose Cottage Uphill Weston Super Mare
3. Are you a British Subject? ... Yes
4. What is your Age? ... 26 Years ... 0 Months.
5. What is your Trade or Calling? ... Gardener
6. Are you Married? ... No
7. Have you ever served in any branch of His Majesty's Forces, naval or military, if so, which? ... Yes removed A.S.C. Coy
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? ... Yes
9. Are you willing to be enlisted for General Service? ... Yes
10. Did you receive a Notice, and do you understand its meaning, and who gave it to you? ... W. White Name ... Private Corps
11. Are you willing to serve upon the following conditions provided His Majesty should so long require your services?
For the duration of the War, at the end of which you will be discharged with all convenient speed. If employed with Hospitals, depots of Mounted Units, and as Clerks, etc., you may be retained after the termination of hostilities until your services can be spared, but such retention shall in no case exceed six months. ... Yes

Reginald Fear 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 made.

Reginald Fear SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT.
W. White Signature of Witness.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

Reginald Fear swear by Almighty God, 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 the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING 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 Up Hill on this 1st day of March 1915.

W. White Signature of the Justice 1915

† Certificate of Approving Officer.

I certify that this Attestation of the above-named Recruit is correct, and properly filled up, and that the required forms appear to have been compiled with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to the rank of Private.
If enlisted by special authority, Army Form B. 203 (or other authority for the enlistment) will be attached to the original attestation.

Date 1st March 1915
Place Up Hill
W. White Approving Officer.

† The signature of the Approving Officer is to be affixed in the presence of the Recruit.
‡ Here insert the "Corps" for which the Recruit has been enlisted.

* If so, the Recruit is to be asked the particulars of his former service, and to produce, if possible, his Certificate of Discharge and Certificate of Character, which should be returned to him conspicuously endorsed in red ink, as follows, viz.—(Name) _____ (Rank) _____ (Regiment) _____ on the (Date) _____

The Short Service Certificate of Reginald Albert Fear. Born in 1891 Reginald lived at Rose Cottage, one of the oldest properties in Uphill. At the time of joining the services in March 1915 he worked as a gardener, presumably at Uphill Manor. He had served in the territorial army since 1912 and although initially appointed to the rank of Corporal at his own request he reverted to the role of a driver shortly after until promoted to Acting Lance Corporal in May 1917 before his eventual discharge after the war in April 1919. His army records show him as single upon signing up but by 1917 his next of kin is described as his wife living in Coventry.

On his appointment as Secretary of State for War shortly after the declaration of the war, Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener issued a call for volunteers to increase the size of the army. He did not believe that the Territorial Force was an appropriate structure for doing this. The public response to Kitchener's appeal was rapid and at times overwhelming but soon died down to average only 100,000 men per month. Steps soon had to be taken to encourage further enlistment.

It was still possible to enlist into the regular army on standard terms, usually twelve years as described above, throughout the war. In addition to this, on Lord Kitchener's instructions in August 1914 a new form of "short service" was introduced, under which a man could serve for "three years or the duration of the war, whichever the longer". Men joining on this basis, including all of "Kitchenere's Army" and the "Pals" units were technically of the regular army and were serving on this basis.

Though 2,466,719 men joined the British army voluntarily between August 1914 and December 1915, even this enormous total was insufficient to maintain the British Expeditionary Force at a strength which would enable it to fight a modern industrialised war involving mass conscript armies. Declining recruiting totals led to increasing calls for compulsory military service throughout 1915. On 27 January 1916, the first Military Service Act introduced conscription for single men of military age, this being extended to married men by a second Military Service Act on 25 May 1916.

Uphill to Baghdad 1914 - 1916

When the Great War broke out in August 1914, volunteers of the 4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry were already at their Territorial Army Camp on Salisbury Plain. Major RB Graves-Knyfton, Lord of the Manor of Uphill, commanded E Company, the "Weston Rifles". He knew all his men, mostly working lads from Weston and Cheddar, who saw the TA as their only chance of a summer holiday away from home. It was to be a long holiday; many never saw home again.

In October 1914 they boarded HM Troopship Braemar Castle for a month-long voyage to India. Passing through the Suez Canal, they exchanged ribald gestures with regular Army units sailing the other way, from India to the front in France.

Up in the forbidding mountains of India's North West Frontier, hostile tribes saw this as a good time to rebel. As part of the British Frontier Force, the Weston Rifles and the rest of the Somersets crossed into Afghanistan to establish a fighting base at Abezai. They were not far from the city of Jellalabad, a name that already shone on their cap badges as the battle honour won by their grandfathers in the 1st Afghan War.

Meanwhile, British Expeditionary Force "D" had invaded Mesopotamia, then a Turkish territory, now Iraq. Landing near Basra, they advanced hundreds of miles up the River Tigris aiming to capture Baghdad. But, facing unexpected opposition far from their base, they

entrenched themselves in a loop of the Tigris at Kut-el-Amara and awaited reinforcements. The Turks dug in round them, repelling three relief attempts in early 1916.

Recalled from the Frontier, the Somersets embarked in Karachi to augment the relief force. From Basra, they sailed on river boats up the Tigris, through landscapes of rich farmland, past Qurnah, an oasis so fertile that it was said to be the original Garden of Eden, and on into sun-baked desert where the only green was the river's rim of reedy marshes.

They disembarked to join 37 Infantry Brigade, now numbering 20,000 men. An amazing 12 hour overnight march, in full kit and in silence, through 20 miles of desert achieved surprise. With no time even to re-fill their water-bottles, the battalion went straight into action at dawn on 8 March 1916. Alongside 1st/2nd Gurkhas, they attacked the Turks in their Dujaila Redoubt. A ferocious ten hour battle cost the lives of a thousand soldiers from both sides. Out of 500 men from Somerset, 12 were killed, 55 wounded and 4 missing. Of the Weston Rifles, two were dead and three were wounded including Major Graves-Knyfton.

The attack failed, turning into dismal retreat with the seriously wounded travelling twenty miles overnight on unsprung mule carts across rough terrain: many died. The 1st/4th Somersets fought the rearguard action in which three more Weston Rifles were killed.

The wounded were shipped to military hospitals in India. On recovery they returned to Mesopotamia via a Somerset Regimental Depot commanded by Major Graves-Knyfton. He succumbed to the epidemic of influenza that swept the world in 1918 and was buried aged 45 at Trimulgherry.

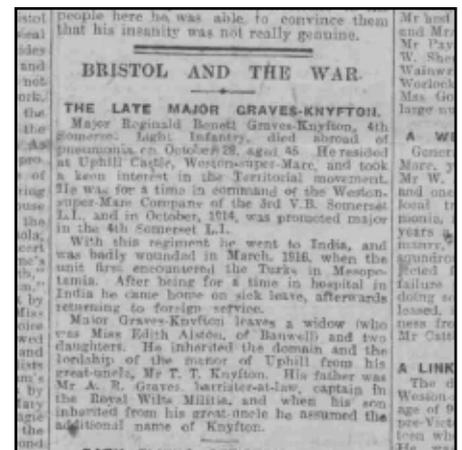
With all food gone, the Kut garrison surrendered on 29 April 1916. Of 10,000 British and Indian soldiers, 4,000 died in captivity. It took another 12 months and an army of 166,000 to defeat the Turks and take Baghdad.

Major Graves-Knyfton's funeral



THE LATE MAJOR GRAVES-KNYFTON. Major Reginald Graves-Knyfton, Light Infantry, died abroad of October 29, aged 45. He resided at Uphill Castle, Weston-super-Mare, and took keen interest in the Territorial movement. He was for a time in command the Weston-super-Mare Company of the 3rd V.B. Somerset L.I., and in October, 1914, was promoted major in the 4th Somerset L.I.

With this regiment he went to India, and was badly wounded in March, 1916 when the unit first encountered the Turks in Mesopotamia. After being for a time in hospital in India he came home on sick leave, afterwards returning to foreign service. Major Graves-Knyfton leaves a widow (who was Miss Edith Alston, of Banwell) and two daughters. He inherited the domain and the lordship of the manor Uphill from his great-uncle, T. T. Knyfton. His father was Mr A. R. Graves, barrister-at-law, captain in the Royal Wilts Militia, and when his son inherited from his great-uncle he assumed the additional name Knyfton.



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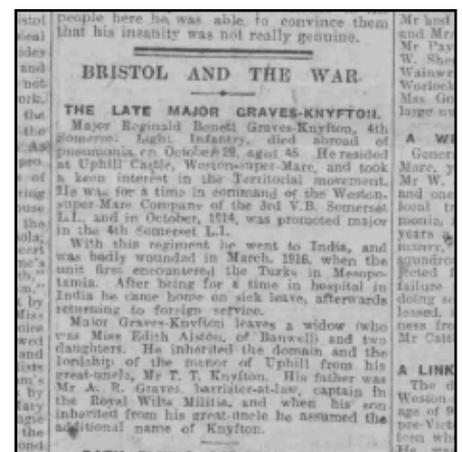
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Turkey - or the Ottoman Empire - was a nation which was in the Triple Alliance with Germany and other nations. While Turkish hostilities began against Russia in revenge for the loss of colonies in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, Britain was brought into this conflict area in defence of her own colonies and to protect the Caspian oil fields which the Royal Navy depended on. The 1st/4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry was the first local and Territorial unit to be deployed to a Turkish front (India) in 1914. In 1915, both the 1st/4th and 2nd/4th Battalion left the company of the 2nd Battalion at the Regimental Depo, and joined Regular Army forces in Afghanistan and India's North West Frontier.

Before becoming immortalized as a great war leader during the Second World War, 1st Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill devised a plan; which would become disastrous, to break the deadlock of the war effort. His plan was to mount an amphibious landing on the beach of Gallipoli to directly attack Turkey. Though the large scale landing was met with little resistance in most areas, once Allied forces moved inland they were met with yet more deadlock and ferocious opposition. Although no Somerset infantry Battalions (not including Yeomanry units) went to Gallipoli, Westonians may have gone to that front under other cap badges including other infantry regiments (such as the Gloucestershire Regiment which was the local regiment of Bristol which many joined rather than the SLI) and support regiments (such as the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery). On 25th April 1915, the Campaign began.

...on the Home Front



Postcard of Uphill posted 1915

>> “Uphill has already given between forty and fifty men, but it is the duty of every man who is physically fit and can be spared to offer himself in this crisis” <<

As it had become apparent to the soldiers that the war was going to be prolonged, it had also become obvious to the civilians at home as well. The government had almost believed their own propaganda of a war “over by Christmas” and so consequently faced two main issues; preparing enough ammunition to continue the war and recruiting more soldiers to fight the war. 1915 saw a ‘shell shortage’ where there were not sufficient levels of ammunition to continue fighting into late 1915. The solution would solve both questions: allow women into the work place. Women could replace men in the work place so that they could go to war, and women could work in munitions factories to produce more shells

as the lack of men was not producing enough.

Over a million men had volunteered for military service. “Uphill has already given between forty and fifty men, but it is the duty of every man who is physically fit can be spared to offer himself in this crisis” said a recruiter in 1915 in Uphill school-room. And with that comment, more men joined the colours including some of the 35 who had already volunteered to be special constables in 1914, a duty which women were now allowed to perform at that time.

In addition to the special constables, George Herniman left his father's butcher's shop in Beach Road and joined the Somerset Light Infantry. Similarly, Herbert Hollier, of Primrose Cottage on Windwhistle Road (now Wessex Water Pump station), gave up working at the green grocers to enlist in the Royal Garrison Artillery, while his father continued working on the Graves-Knyfton estate of Uphill Manor and his wife continued dress making. Gilbert T. Exon and Albert James Exon joined the Army Service Corps, as many did from the village as many were agricultural workers. Other alternatives for former agricultural workers included the Royal Field Artillery, the North Somerset Yeomanry (although horses for use in the Calvary were declining by this stage) and as drivers in various regiments like the Royal Corps of Transport and the Royal Army Medical Corps, which Ray Valentine decided to volunteer for. Valentine nearly lost his ambulance when his horses decided to bolt down Colchester High Street.

The war was starting to touch the civilian population. Though Birnbeck Pier continued to provide entertainment the lights all around Weston bay were forbidden to shine out to sea. Fishing and leisure boats such as; the 'Barry,' 'Jane' and 'Campbell's Steamers' were commandeered for military service, performing tasks including; transporting soldiers to Gallipoli, carrying out surveys in the Bristol Channel, and mine sweeping in the Atlantic (all respectively).



Many village women assisted in Red Cross programmes. Mrs Edith Mary Graves-Knyfton organised much of the work, establishing a temporary Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) Hospital in Ashcombe House to aid the thousands of casualties coming in from the front line. Her daughter; Majorie Graves-Knyfton, left school early to train as a nurse. Nursing was a common war time occupation for women during the war, but it was one of hundreds of tasks performed by women at the time.

Josh Cottrell

Coming up in the next installment: September-December 1915 on the Western Front (notably: the Battle of Loos). The end of the Gallipoli campaign. More of the activities of the Weston Rifles in the Middle East. An update of Village life, including the Christmas 1915 appeal. And more...

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to the following for supplying sources used in the production of this instalment;

Donald Brown and his book "Uphill's Great War 1914-1918"

Weston and North Somerset Museums

forces-war-records.co.uk (PH Helmet photo)

The Somerset Remembers project - somersetremembers.wordpress (1915 photo "guarding the Atlantic cable")

The Weston Mercury.

"The Complete Illustrated History of World War I" by Ian Westwell - Hermes House publishing.

If you have any stories to share of relatives in local regiments or civilians during the First World War, please feel free to send them in via the emails located in the back of this issue. The stories may well be published. Equally if you have any ideas, constructive comments or suggestions as to how our local history is reported in future instalments, feel free to get in contact.

The Ship Roll of Honour

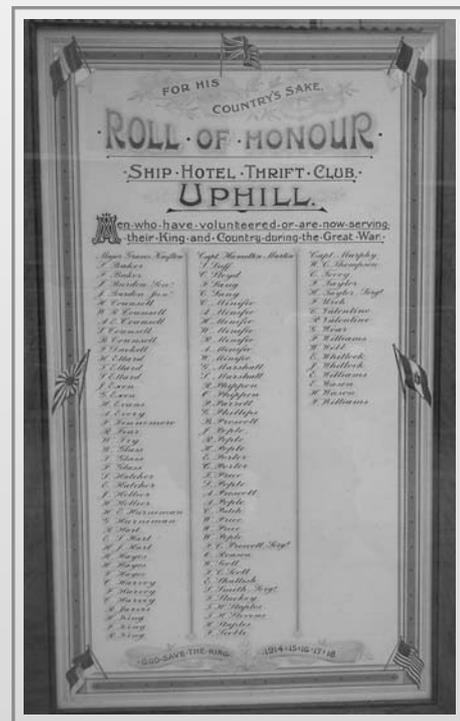
Research has shown that the Ship Inn's Honour Roll, which was recently been returned to the village is in fact an incomplete list of names of Uphill's Service men from World War 1. A fuller list is being compiled with the aim of researching and compiling a profile of all of Uphill's service men of WWI. We list below those names on The Ship Roll of Honour with those who gave their life in highlighted in italics. If you know of any other men or woman who served their country during this period or can provide details on those named please contact the Editor.

Major Graves Knyfton

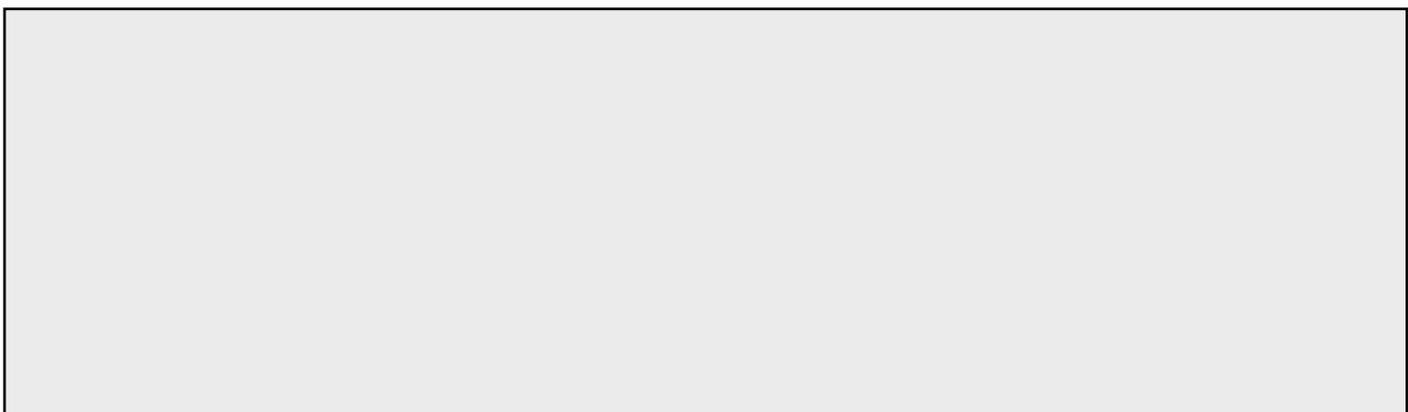
- S. Baker
- F. Baker
- J. Burden Sen
- J. Burden Jun
- H. Counsell
- W.R. Counsell
- A.E. Counsell
- S. Counsell
- B. Counsell
- F. Duckett
- H. Ellard*
- T. Ellard
- S. Ellard
- J. Exon
- G. Exon
- H. Evans
- A. Every
- F. Finnemore
- R. Fear
- W. Fry
- W. Glass
- F. Glass
- F. Glass
- S. Hatcher
- E. Hatcher
- J. Hollier
- H. Hollier
- H.E. Hurniman
- G. Hurniman
- R. Hart
- E.S. Hart
- H.J. Hart
- F.J. Hayes
- H. Hayes
- F. Hayes
- C. Harvey
- F. Harvey
- C. Harvey
- R. Jarvis*
- H. King
- F. King
- R. King*

- Capt. Hamilton Martin
- S. Luff
- C. Lloyd
- F. Lang
- C. Lang
- C. Minifie
- A. Minifie
- H. Minifie
- W. Minifie
- R. Minifie
- A. Minifie
- W. Minifie
- G. Marshall
- S. Marshall
- R. Phippen
- O. Phippen
- P. Parret
- G. Phillips
- B. Prescott
- J. Pople
- R. Pople*
- H. Pople*
- E. Porter
- C. Porter
- T. Price*
- L. Pople
- A. Prescott*
- A. Pople
- C. Patch
- W. Price
- W. Price
- W. Pople
- F.C. Prescott
- O. Reason
- W. Scott*
- F.C. Scott
- E. Shallish
- S. Smith*
- F. Sluckey
- T.H. Staples
- T.H. Stevens
- H. Staples*
- F. Seoble

- Capt. Murphy
- W.C. Thompson*
- C. Tovey
- F. Taylor
- H. Talyor
- F. Uich
- C. Valentine*
- R. Valentine
- G. Wear
- F. Williams
- W. Webb
- E. Whitlock
- J. Whitlock
- E. Williams
- E. Wason
- H. Wason*
- F. Williams



The Ship Roll of Honour



Autumn/Winter 1918 on the Western Front

In May 1915 the 6th Battalion SLI was moved to the Western Front as part of the 43rd Infantry Division. In July the 7th Battalion followed as part of the 61st Infantry Brigade and the 8th Battalion as part of the 63rd Infantry Brigade arrived in September. All three battalions were involved in the Battle of Loos (25th September – 18th October), a British Offensive. Though initially Britain had broken the German line on the first day, this was with high casualties. The lack of reinforcement and resupply of the British front line allowed Germany to retake captured ground the next day. The offensive did not regain momentum until early October, by which time the force was 'spent' (The Division which the 8th Battalion was part of suffered over 3,800 casualties and took the rest of the year to rebuild) with bad weather leading to the last major event of the year on the front to be called off.

In the previous issue, the evolution of warfare and the depleting role of the Cavalry were mentioned. Somerset had two Yeomanry regiments. Yeomanry is the name given to the group of mounted soldiers which are put on home service duties. At the wars breakout, many were put on 'Territorial Service' which meant they could be deployed overseas. This split Yeomanry regiments into two line regiments with those able to serve overseas and those who were not. The 3rd Line regiments were formed in 1915 and in the summer it was affiliated to a Reserve Cavalry Regiment at Tidworth. In September, the 1/1st West Somerset Yeomanry; which had not yet been deployed on 'Territorial Service' and stayed in Britain, were moved for the final time to Thorpe-le-Soken where the Battalion was dismounted. The 1/1st North Somerset Yeomanry however, had been deployed in 1914 and during 1915 took part in the Second Battle of Ypres specifically the Battle of Frezenberg Ridge, 11–13 May) and the Battle of Loos (though only between the 26–28 September). Due to the nature of trench warfare, most actions in these battles were as dismounted infantry.



Actions during the year entitled soldiers to a 1914-15 Star. The medal would be established in December 1918, never being issued alone but with the British War Medal 1920 and the Allied War Medal. Despite the heavy cost of 1915 on Britain – 295,000 killed, wounded or taken prisoner – none of Uphill's men fell during that year.



Above: Cavalry Training: A "Yeomanry" Regiment still mounted in the old style c1930's
Right: An Imperial Service badge and 1914-15 Star Medal.

On the Turkish Fronts

The war against the Ottoman Empire would have seemed completely alien to a veteran of the Western Front. In these landscapes of endless sand dunes, the heat was blistering and unlike in the muddied fields of Flanders, horses still held the key to victory. Massive Cavalry charges were used by both sides across the vast deserts and so a far more traditional war was being fought against the Ottoman Empire. In addition to this, modern motor vehicles would suffer from the harsh conditions so Horses, mules and Camels were the primary resource for transporting guns, troops and logistical supplies. Even the uniform of the British Army was different – thinner for comfort in that climate and of a colour closer to that of the sand.

While the 1st and 2nd lines of the 4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry were fighting rebels, stationed in Afghanistan and India's North West Frontier, part of the British Army under General Townsend had been pushed back by Colonel Nureddin's Turkish XVIII Corps and on the 7th of December the siege of Kut-al-Amara began. The Somerset Light Infantry would not be sent to Townsend's aid until February 1916.

Meanwhile, those facing the Ottomans in the Gallipoli campaign were facing stalemate just like on the Western Front. On the 9th of October the 'Olympic' (younger sister of the Titanic) landed at Suvla bay (the last British attempt to break stalemate) with the 1/1st West Somerset Yeomanry which were moved from Thorpe-le-Soken and deployed on dismounted service in Gallipoli. The attack took place behind Turkish lines and started unopposed, however a failure to advance inland rapidly meant that a hold could not be established. While still at Gallipoli, the battalion was remounted and transferred to 2nd Mounted and then 53rd (Welsh) Divisions. However by December the West Somerset Yeomanry was evacuated from Gallipoli and despatched to Egypt as the British High Command realised that the stalemate could not continue and after several failed localized counter attacks. Between the 10th and 20th of December 105,000 men 5,000 animals and 300 guns were withdrawn under the cover of darkness. The total withdrawal would continue until the 9th of January 1916, when the remaining 35,000 men and 3,700 animals were evacuated. The Ottoman's didn't realise the retreat was taking place so only 3 men were killed over the period. In total, the Allies lost 276,000 men in the failed Gallipoli campaign and the Ottoman's lost an estimated 250,000.

By the end of 1915, Britain's war was looking disastrous with complete stalemate on the Western Front, and all Turkish Fronts on the retreat. Liberal MP Winston Churchill resigned as first lord of the Admiralty after the failure of his Gallipoli Campaign and returned to the Army, this time he enlisted as a Private Soldier to fight on the Western Front, some say in an attempt to 'save his soul.' He would return to politics after the war as a Conservative MP and later Prime Minister during the Second World War where he redeemed himself, becoming known as the greatest war time leader of all time.



On the Home Front

With many men gone from home, labour became scarce. Though women had taken many jobs that men had done before the war, there were still many jobs unfilled and female replacements were encouraged but none the less still voluntary. To fill these posts, the local Council allowed 11 year old boys to leave school to work the land. They were exploited, being paid far less than a man for the same work – which was 6am-6pm every day, and in summer a ‘daylight saving time’ was established through practice, as boys were forced to work the extra hour of sunlight with no pay gain. Wounded soldiers on convalescing leave also filled in for those away. Horses came back on the market as the army sold horses that had become unfit for military duty. Some were sold for as little as 30/- each.

Bread prices went up to 9d for a 4lb loaf (£1.61 today). Meanwhile, quarry workers demanded more money to face the inflation. The quarry master offered a pay increase of 26/- per week and a shorter working week – ending at 4pm on a Saturday. The stone-masons downed tools and demanded 27/- with Saturday work ending at 2pm.

As the war drew to an end of its first year the British people at home began to become demoralized. The war that was to end by Christmas 1914 was still going on at Christmas 1915. Relatives were still away from home, some being killed and others gaining life changing injuries on a daily basis. As morale was as low at home, as it was abroad, the villagers in Uphill kept spirits up for all by hosting a Christmas appeal. Mrs Smith and Miss Vaughan of ‘Slimeridge Farm’ raised £6-16s-2d; the equivalent of £293.17 in *today’s money, for the Belgian Relief Fund by giving everyone a collection envelope to be passed around the table on Christmas day.*

For the soldiers and sailors, small mouth organs became quite popular. They were simple, easy to play and small enough to distribute to the front easily. The village collected many of them and sent them off so that soldiers could fill their dug outs and no man’s land with the tunes of “[It’s a long way to] Tipperary,” “Pack up your Troubles [in your old kit bag]” and “Keep the Home Fires Burning.”

Gramophones were another item sent to the troops. Miss Alice Byrnes of The Gables in Uphill wrote to the Mercury as part of the appeal: “What a welcome gift a Gramophone is at the front... The cheery tunes seem to hearten the men even when being badly strafed.” Another villager who wrote to the Mercury that Christmas was Private Harry Ellard of 7 Rhyne Cottages serving on the Western Front with D Company of the 12th Battalion the Gloucestershire Regiment. He wrote to thank Harry J. Trapnell who had sent a Christmas parcel to every former Weston Ruby 1st XV player who was serving King and Country. Other items to go to the front were bundles of books and magazines, collected by Phillput’s Bookshop. in Weston-super-Mare.

Josh Cottrell

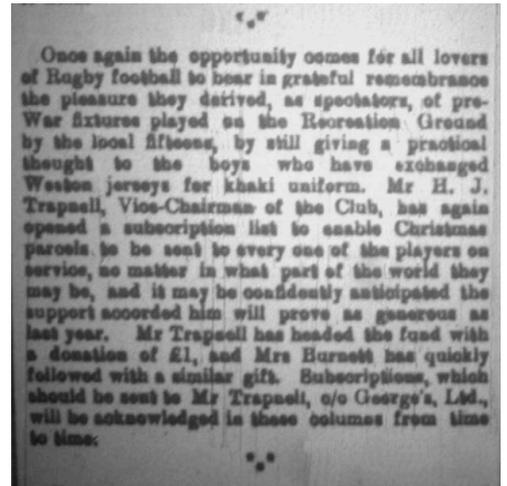
Coming up in the Spring edition of Uphillviews:

The 1916 campaign on the Western Front starts again. One by one, the boys begin to fall. The Weston Rifles engage the enemy in the Middle East. An update of village life on the home front. And more...

Acknowledgements: Thank you to the following for supplying sources used in the production of this history;

Donald Brown and his book “Uphill’s Great War 1914-1918”. Weston and North Somerset Museum. The long, long trail: NSY, WSY, SLI. The Weston Mercury. Somerset Remembers.

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The embroidered postcards were very popular with British soldiers who often sent them home. They were sold in thin paper envelopes but were seldom sent through the post in them. They were too fragile and, more particularly, they represented quite an investment – they were not cheap souvenirs. Usually they were mailed with letters. For this reason, they are often unwritten, with no marks on the back, any message having been sent in an accompanying letter.

Winter/Spring 1916

...on the Western Front

The quick advance tactics of 1914 had long since failed and the stalemate of trench warfare developed in 1915 continued. Britain had already lost thousands of men yet the war was only a year and a half in, and Britain's citizens would soon be suffering losses never seen before. 1916 saw even fiercer fighting and development of weaponry, and equipment. The year would see new and terrifying inventions such as Tanks and Mustard Gas. In February, the Germans restarted the campaign on the front after the winter months which triggered the longest battle of the war against the French – The Battle of Verdun (21/02/1916 – 18/12/1916). This would see more offensives attempted by the British to relieve their French allies and deliver the “Big Push” that would seemingly bring victory.

As the war waged well into its second year tragedy would begin to hit Uphill. Though a handful of men had been struck down with various injuries such as shrapnel wounds and trench foot, Uphill would now be losing its first citizen to the battlefields of the western front.

Captain Edmund E.C. Wellesley was born in Uphill Village in 1886, however he had since moved away from the Village to a rubber plantation in Malaya where he married and worked. When war broke out, Wellesley returned to Britain and enlisted in the Norfolk Regiment. He was the younger son of Captain and Mrs EEC Wellesley and a descendant of the duke of Wellington. His mother remarried to the Reverend Arthur J. Burr of Uphill Rectory (now St. Aubyn's Avenue). Capt. Wellesley was killed in action on 30th April 1916, when he was struck in the heart by shrapnel, while taking over frontline trenches on the Ypres salient.



POST OFFICE		TELEGRAPHS	
Ao 5/5/16 Date	Island Official	Telegrams only	No. of Telegram 608
Office of Origin and Service Instructions	Words	Rate	I certify that this Telegram is sent on the service of the
O. H. M. S.		By	Signature <i>Richard</i>
Attention is called to the regulations printed at the back hereof			Date and Stamp
TO: Mrs Wellesley, Eden Field, Llanfairfechan, Merionethshire			
Deeply regret to inform you Capt E E C Wellesley 9th Norfolk Regt was killed in action 30/4/16. Lord Kitchener expresses his sympathy.			
FROM SECRETARY, WAR OFFICE.			
The Name and Address of the Sender, IF NOT TO BE TELEGRAPHED, should be written in the space provided at the back of the Form.			

War Office Telegram 5/5/16 to Mrs Wellesley, Eden Field, Llanfairfechan. Entry reads: Deeply regret to inform you Capt E E C Wellesley 9th Norfolk Regt was killed in action 30/4/16. Lord Kitchener expresses his sympathy.

Private Charles C. Porter of Weston Comrades Company, Bristol's Own, 12th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment was severely wounded at Delville Wood on the Ypres salient (a month after Wellesley's death) in May. Having been hit in the hip and the right hand, Porter was invalided to a hospital in Liverpool. Porter was born in 1894 to George John Porter (a stonemason born in Uphill in 1867) and Frances Porter of 5 Ynishir Terrace. He had a brother two years older called Tom and a sister two years younger called Emily. Before the war, Porter had worked on Birnbeck Pier with Henry James Pople until the two together with Pople's cousin, Reginald Albert Pople joined Weston Comrades. Porter wrote a letter to his employer, Harry Cole the Birnbeck pier master, describing some of the horrors he had witnessed including: "The battalion on our left went over the top with 800 men and returned to roll-call with 6." By the summer, all three men who went away to war would no longer be serving. (The next instalment will cover the summer of 1916 and Uphill's bloodiest day: 1st July 1916 – The first day of the Battle of the Somme.)

Local regiments:

Those from Uphill and Weston who joined the infantry mostly joined one of two regiments; the Somerset Light Infantry and the Gloucestershire Regiment.

While no notable action occurred to the Somerset Light Infantry between the Battle of Loos (Autumn 1915) and the battle of the Somme (Summer 1916), the Gloucestershire Regiment saw reinforcements land throughout spring 1916 in the form of new battalions:

The 14th (Service) Battalion (West of England) landed at Le Havre in January 1916. The 13th (Service) Battalion (Forest of Dean) (Pioneers) landed in France in March 1916 as Divisional Pioneers to the 39th Division. In May the 2/4th (City of Bristol), the 2/5th and the 2/6th Battalions (all Territorial Army battalions) landed in France and saw action on the Western Front.

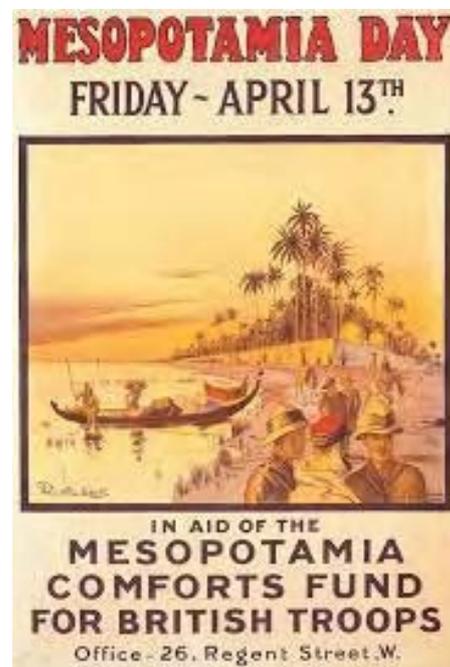
The 2/1st North Somerset Yeomanry relocated from Canterbury to the Colchester area in March 1916. On 31 March 1916, they became part of the 15th Mounted Brigade and joined 4th Mounted Division. Meanwhile the 2/1st West Somerset Yeomanry part of the 2nd Mounted Brigade and joined the 1st Mounted Division and in May 1916 they went to Norfolk.

...on the Turkish Fronts

The war against the Ottoman Empire was about to get 'interesting' for the 'Weston Rifles' 1/4th Battalion S.L.I. In February 1916 they left the North Western Frontier of India and Afghanistan to sail for Mesopotamia to join a force of 20,000 men mustered to relieve General Townshend who was trapped at Kut by the Turkish XVIII Corps. They travelled to Basra and then sailed down the Tigris river past Qurnah (a fertile oasis said to have been the sight of the Garden of Eden). 20 miles from Kut, the force of 20,000 achieved surprise by undertaking a 12 hour silent march across the desert overnight. After that march the tired Somerset battalion went straight into action at 0630 hours on 8th March.

The battle, ultimately was a resounding failure with thousand killed on both sides in the 10 hour battle. Out of 500 men of the Somerset Battalion, 12 were Killed, 55 wounded and 4 missing. Two of those that died and 3 of those wounded were Weston men including Major Graves-Knyfton of Uphill Manor who was dangerously shot through the ribs. The support force, including the Somerset's, were forced to withdraw. With the relief force gone and supplies running low, the Kut garrison surrendered on 29th April 1916 to the Turks. Out of the 10,000 British and Indian troops to surrender, 4,000 died in Turkish captivity. It took a force of 200,000 to defeat the Turks at Baghdad a year later.

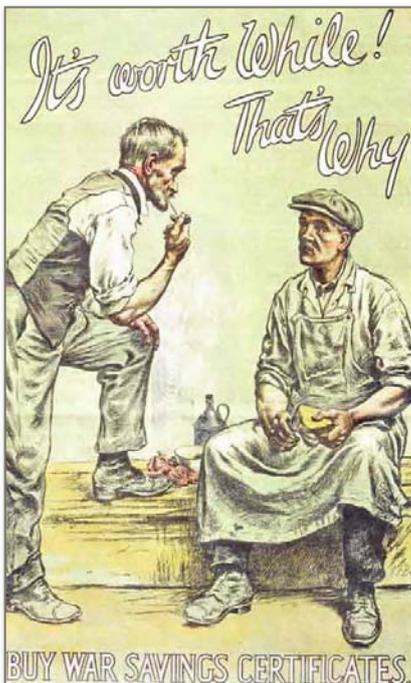
After the disastrous campaign at Gallipoli, British and Empire forces had been dispersed with many going to Egypt. Having been evacuated from Gallipoli in December 1915, the 7th (Service) Battalion Gloucester Regiment were deployed to Egypt in January 1916. In February, the 1/1st West Somerset Yeomanry as part of the 2nd South Western Mounted Brigade were absorbed with parts of the lowland and highland mounted brigades, into the 2nd Dismounted Brigade. For the next 11 months the regiment would serve on the Suez Canal defences as part of the Western Frontier Force.



Poster urging support for troops under siege at Kut

...on the Home Front

After 18 months of war and with recruitment dwindling the requirements for joining up lowered to include married men between the ages of 27-35 and single men as old as 41. Weston's Boar war veteran recruiter – Sergeant Major Harry Baker was relieved of his recruitment duties to instead become a gunnery instructor. Though this post did not last very long as he was back in Weston not long after as a patient in Ashcombe Hospital for septic poisoning. One Uphillian, Harold Hart of Sandy Villas, Sea View Terrace, would be taking to the skies, having qualified with 1st class passes for the Royal Navy Flying Corps. The church bell ringers were called up, but before leaving, Archie Williams and Robert Jarvis helped Reginald Phippen design and make a piece of apparatus that would allow tunes to be chimed on the 6 church bells. The church had a tradition of holding an annual "open air (outdoor) service." However this service would be different as an hour of hymn tunes played on the church bells preceded, with over 50 people attending. As the bell ringers left for the front, village girls would take over their duties.



In Uphill's new church headmaster and organist Mr E.C. Dyer supervised the renovation of the church organ which cost £136-15s-0d. A chiming and striking clock was installed as a belated commemoration to King George V's coronation (which took place 22/06/1911). Mr Dyer was also in charge of the village's efforts with the government's War Savings Association, which was introduced to help pay for the war which was costing around £5m a day. People would give a weekly payment of 6d for 31 weeks which would earn them a 15/6 savings certificate which would earn interest at 6%. Money was short in the village but that did not stop 10% of villagers (69 people) from paying into the scheme.

Dig for Victory was not just a Second World War concept. In Uphill during the First World War, villagers were encouraged to keep allotments to consume home grown food to fight the food shortages that rationing would be introduced to solve. Col C.E. Whitting and Mr B. Hill gave cash prizes for the best allotments, with villagers keeping 1/4 or 1/8 acre plots. Blackouts also began and Zeppelin raids on the east coast of Britain meant that precautions had to be taken including hours of lights out and a response plan was taught to special constables for what to do if raiders should appear.

JOSH COTTRELL

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If you have any stories to share of relatives in local regiments or civilians during the First World War, please feel free to send them in to society@uphillvillage.org.uk. The stories may well be published. Equally if you have any ideas, comments or suggestions as to how our local history is reported in future instalments please feel free to get in contact.



Class of 1906

Boys of the Gardening Class at the village school 1906.

Left to right: Jim Pople, Harold Hart, Robert King, William (Bill) Minifie, Cecil Dyer (school master), Herbert Hayes, Charles Valentine, E. B. Whitelock, Herbert King, Stanley Hart.

Within 10 years how many of the pupils were to face the horrors of the Western Front after visiting their old school master in their smart new uniforms before they left, some not to return.

If anyone can put names to the men we would be pleased to know. Contact society@uphillvillage.org.uk



Summer/Autumn 1916 ...on the Western Front



The 1st of July 1916 was a beautiful, warm, picturesque summer's day. But as the sun glinted off of a line of bayonets which spread across the French countryside, Britain was about to experience the single biggest loss of life of military personnel in all its history in a single day. This day would go down in infamy as the first day of the Battle of the Somme – which would claim more lives than any other battle to date. Not even the beaches of Normandy in 1944 saw as much British blood spilled. On the first day 120,000 British soldiers went over the top. They did not run. They did not scream. At first, they did not even take cover in shell holes (*initially doing so was a court martial offence for this offensive*). It was supposed to be a walk across no man's land and up a slope to seize bunkers full of German dead with little or no resistance. However this was not to be and 57,470 of them would fall that morning – 19,240 of which were killed outright. Only 1/3 of the objectives along the 20 mile front would be completed. 7,000 French would become casualties. 4,200 Germans would be taken prisoner while 8,000 Germans would become casualties.

The context of the Somme was that the French needed a diversion in order to relieve pressure of German attacks at the fortress town of Verdun (*21 February - 18 December 1916, the longest battle of the war*) The British agreed to attack south of the line along the river Somme. This area was not muddy and had good drainage. There was just one 'small' problem – the Germans had been at the Somme for 2 years already. They had deep underground dugouts, some of which were made of concrete. In addition to this the Somme was on a slope and the German's had the high ground. On the 24th of June, the Royal Artillery commenced a week long bombardment of the German lines. The mixture of explosive and shrapnel shells were supposed to destroy the German fortifications and sever the barbed wire.

On the 1st of July, The artillery barrage stopped. The Royal Engineers had dug tunnels and placed mines under some of the German lines. At 07:20, these mines were detonated 10 minutes early, the likes of which could be heard in London. One of the most famous of these mine locations was Hawthorn ridge, which was captured on film. The Germans who had not been close enough to the explosions were alerted to imminent attack. The barrage had failed at destroying the fortifications. The bunkers had been re-enforced by the chalky earth of the Somme. Many of the shells which had been fired were duds, which farmers are still finding in their fields today. The wire had not been cut by the shrapnel. As the Tommies left the sanctity of their trenches, the plan fell apart and the mixture of fresh recruits from Lord Kitchener's Army (*the ordinary men who had joined up as part of the large recruiting campaign but had spent a year or longer training in Britain, in Pals Battalions*) and the remains of the Old Contemptibles (*professional soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force who had been in France since 1914*) were slaughtered as they walked towards the German line.

141 days of battle would see 481,842 British, 250,000 French and 500,000 Germans become casualties. The battle

ended on the 18th of November. The big push had actually been a mere 7 mile advance. Tanks saw their first use during the Somme. Chemical warfare was at its peak with all sides having disregarded their early war morals and now using gas as a psychological weapon and as a horrific, battle winning, killer. British gas mask switched to the small box respirator and would not be upgraded until after the war. Mine and tunnel warfare had become firmly established. The hard, chalky landscape of the Somme was transformed into a barren, muddy, waste land, much as northern France had been transformed during the earlier campaigns. While life had seemingly been obliterated, like with the fields of Flanders, the surviving Tommies could gaze at lone Poppies which blew in the autumnal breeze.

The Locals:

While the Gloucestershire Regiment was placed in reserve during the first day of the Somme, they saw fierce fighting throughout the rest of the campaign. The 1st and 8th Battalions of the Somerset Light Infantry however were present as part of the 4th Division. 13 divisions were supplied by the British while the French contributed 6 divisions against a force of 6 divisions of Germans. The 1st Battalion lost (*killed, missing, injured*) 26 officers (*16 later found to be killed, 8 wounded, 1 died of wounds on the 6th and 1 remained missing, presumed dead*) and 438 men. The 1st and 8th Battalions suffered 282 men killed on the first day – the highest count of all the South West regiments (*BBC Points West spent the centenary 'tweeting' the 282 names*). At least two of these names were Weston residents, the majority of the names are of Bristolians and residents of Taunton, Highbridge, Bridgewater and the villages of North Somerset. Throughout the battle, the local pals – *the Weston Comrades Company of Bristol's Own Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment* lost 736 of their 950 men. Although no men of Uphill died on the First day, at least 8 would become casualties, of which 6 would die on the Somme.



Percy's headstone - Old Uphill churchyard

On Sunday the 23rd July 1916, Private **Percival "Percy" Batstone** (service no. 2905) was reported missing, aged 30. He was official assumed dead on the 29th January 1917. As one of the missing, *he is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial. He is also named on the Weston-Super-Mare memorial in Grove Park and on his family headstone in the Old Churchyard.* Percy had joined the 1st/6th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment soon after the outbreak of war in 1914. He lived outside of the Village but within St. Nicholas Parish at 5 Charlton Road, Weston-Super-Mare. Born in 1886 to William (1847-1903, *self-employed*) and Alice (1854-1933) Batstone, Percy was a keen sports man who played Tennis and Hockey, the latter of which for Weston and Somerset. The Mercury once said "*As a resourceful and clever centre-half, he had few equals in the Western Counties hockey team.*" He left behind brothers, one of which; J Batstone, joined the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars in August 1914. He also had 2 sisters; Elizabeth (*who died 10/10/1953*) and Alice (1878 – 11/03/1969 *aged 91*) who became a nurse for wounded soldiers based at Weston's, Ashcombe House Auxiliary Red Cross Hospital.

Private **Sidney Hatcher** was born in Uphill in 1891. He joined the King's Royal Rifle Corps and was given the service number 13691. Pte Hatcher was wounded on the Somme on the 19th of August 1916. Though other Uphill residents may have been wounded, Sidney is confirmed in our records. More research would need to be done to discover details of the others.

Private **Thomas James Price** (service number 16734) was



Thomas Price

Killed in Action aged 20 on Sunday the 3rd September 1916. He was Uphill's first soldier to be confirmed Killed in Action as the others before him had been noted as wounded, missing, or no longer village residents. He was born in December 1895 as the only son of James and Eliza Ann Price. He had a sister Elsie who was a year older. The family lived at 1 Coast Guard Cottages, where his mother ran a shop in the front room of the cottages.

Thomas was a chorister and bell-ringer at St. Nicholas Church before he tried to join up at war's outbreak before he turned 19 but was unsuccessful. He instead waited until he was old enough and tried again, enlisting in February 1915 into the 12th (service) (Bristol) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. Thomas was sent to France after 7 months of training. He fought for 17 months, fighting in 2 other battles before the Somme. His comrades described him as a "*capable, cool and courageous soldier.*" The church bells rang in his memory. *He is remembered at the Thiepval memorial, Uphill war memorial, St. Nicholas Church and on the Weston-Super-Mare memorial.*

Sergeant **Stanley William Smith** (service no. 11980), of 65 Moorland Road, was killed in Action aged 24 on Saturday 16th September 1916 alongside his friend Private George House of 124 Moorland Road, which the church acknowledged and rang bells for both men. Stanley was a Private in the pre-war territorial Weston Rifles, B Coy. of 4th Battalion



Sidney outside his shop in Uphill Way

Somerset L.I. On the outbreak of war he transferred to the Weston Pals Company of 6th Battalion S.L.I. Stanley was born in Surrey in 1892 to John W and Susan Smith. His family moved to Uphill to become the owners of the Ship Inn. Stanley went to Uphill school and was a chorister who went on to worked as an upholsterer, first at Lance & Lance in Weston high street, then on Whitecross Road with Henry Podger. In France he had been Mentioned in the Despatches for “*gallant and meritorious service*” while under heavy bombardment as he dug out comrades who had been buried alive by shell fire, at Pilkem on 9th February 1916. This lead to a field promotion to sergeant, but he was refused an officer’s commission. *He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial (position: pier and face 2 A), St Nicholas Church, Uphill memorial and the Weston-Super-Mare memorial.*



Stanley Smith remembered on the Thiepval Memorial



On Monday the 25th September, Private **Reginald Albert Pople** (service no. 14744) Died of Wounds aged just 18. Reginald had joined up at the age of 16, well underage for military enlistment. He had signed up to Weston Comrades Company of 12th (service) (Bristol) Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment. He had just written home about his Uphill School friend Thomas Price’s death. Another friend Lance Corporal Hewlett of Weston wrote home to Reginald’s parents. *He is remembered at Bronfay Farm Military Cemetery, France, Uphill War Memorial, St Nicholas Church and the Weston-Super-Mare memorial.*



Reginald and Harry Pople

Two days later (Wednesday 27th September) his elder brother, Rifleman **William Henry “Harry” Pople** was Killed in Action aged 20. Like his brother he joined up under aged, at 18. Harry joined 1st/7th Battalion, Price of Wales’s Own (West Yorkshire Regiment). Harry saw heavy fighting being severely wounded at the 2nd battle of Ypres. He was invalided back home at Christmas 1915 to recover from shrapnel wounds to his left hand and right shoulder, as well as a fractured lower jaw. He returned to France in September 1916 where he spent his last 24 days engaged in heavy fighting. *He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, Uphill war memorial, St Nicholas church and the Weston-Super-Mare memorial.*

The two boys had a cousin – Private **Henry James Pople** (service no. 14743) who also joined Weston Comrades Company Gloucestershire Regiment. He joined up with Reginald and Private **Charles C. Porter** (service no. 14743) who was wounded in May 1916 (mentioned in the last issue). Henry’s story is somewhat remarkable. He endured 15 months of heavy fighting before the Somme. During the October on the Somme he was captured during a German counter attack. He struggled with his captors but escaped back to his own lines after receiving 5 dagger wounds. He spent 4 months in a Canadian field hospital before being sent back to the front.

Private **Alfred John Newton** (service no. 19812) enlisted in Taunton into C Coy. 6th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry. He was immediately posted to France. Mortally wounded on 16th September 1916 he died of his wounds 4 days later aged 37. He left behind a wife; Caroline whose father was Edward Lang. Caroline re-married to Mr Say of Sandcroft Cottage Uphill. Alfred was born in 1879 to Daniel and Eliza Newton of Fairfield, Bath. Alfred had moved to Uphill to marry Caroline. *He is remembered at Helly Station Cemetery, Mericourt l’Abbe’, Somme. His absence from the Weston and Uphill memorials is proof that these are not conclusive lists.*

...on the Home Front

Often when studying history, the toll on families is forgotten, so here are some accounts of families directly affected by the Somme offensive.

Thomas Prices' father, James, was born in Uphill in 1863. His son worked with him as a Gardner-labourer after he left school. James took up Thomas' duties when he left for war. After his son's death, James received his own call up papers. He appealed on the ground of his vital work in the village and that his son had been killed. The judge said 'there had been no hardship involved' and so James was still obliged to join. Before his call up came into effect, he had won a prize for his allotment. One day while picking marigolds, he died of a heart attack. He had never had a day's illness or trip to the doctor's in his life. It was put down to heart break.

The two brothers had been born to Abram and Eliza Jane Pople of 4, Parish Cottages, Uphill, and were Grandsons of William Pople the village ferryman. Abram Pople was a general labourer born in 1871 in Uphill while Eliza was born in Taunton in 1869. They also had a daughter, Elsie who was born in 1901. Eliza had become severely ill and was a permanent invalid by the time of the war. Harry was born in January 1896 and had been "the best and smartest lad" on the roll of Uphill National School and a Church chorister. He had moved out of the Village to work at the new college, Harrogate before enlisting. Reginald was born in February 1898 and worked on Slimeridge farm after Uphill school.

Their cousin Henry was born in 1894 to William George and Emily Pople of Hill View 3 Rhyne Cottage, Uphill. He was also a grandson to the local ferryman, William Pople. William George was born in 1866 and became a masons labourer. Henry had a younger brother Lionel George Pople who ended up being captured in August 1917 but unlike his brother did not escape and spent the remainder of the war in a PoW camp. Their younger siblings were; sister Gladys May (born 1898) and brother Christie Thomas (born 25 December 1899). Henry Pople was married and worked at Birnbeck pier after leaving Uphill school.

Josh Cottrell

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The British offensive on the Western Front ends and the troops prepare for winter.

Weston-Super-Mare raises a home service Battalion while village life continues on the home front.

Local regiment and theatre of war updates, and more...

Due to the mass publicity of Somme 100 there is an abundance of materials available for exhibition which we could not reproduce in this article. If you have been interested by Somerset's involvement on the Somme and would be interested in finding out more, particularly with seeing the roll of SLI 01/07/1916 battle deaths and/or the 1st Batt. SLI's 01/07/1916 war diary, please get in touch and we will be glad to assist you.

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Many thanks to one reader who got in contact with us to supply information of a Village officer who was awarded the Military Cross. It would be fantastic if we could get more contacts with clues, pictures and/or information of the period. Please send any information to society@uphillvillage.org.uk or make use of any of the contact details on page 3.

See also item on page 11 regarding Uphill's moving War Memorial



Josh Cottrell, author of these World War One articles, and James Dibiase in reproduction WW1 uniforms at this years village fete where they put on a display of artefacts from the period and hope to do so again at the memorial exhibition still in the planning.

As requested above the Village Society seeks more memories, artefacts and memorabilia from the period but with particular reference to Uphill for inclusion in the exhibition so please search you family records and photograph albums and ask older members of the family what they recall even older members of the family talking about from the period.

Autumn/Winter 1916

...on the Western Front

This time 100 years ago, the two most infamous battles of WWI came to an end. These were the Battle of the Somme (01/07/1916 – 18/11/1916) and the Battle of Verdun (21/02/1916 – 18/12/1916). For the British on the Somme, the landscape had changed dramatically. In the summer of the Somme campaign, the ground was chalky with good drainage. In autumn, this became the stereotypical muddy, swampy, landscape that has stayed secured in the public mind when remembering the First World War. In winter, the landscape underwent a further change. The winter of 1916-1917 was the coldest on record for between 22-34 years – dependant on the so called expert spoken to. Europe became engulfed in ice and snow.

On the 18th of November; after 141 days of battle, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig called off the Somme campaign. He later reflected on the battle; *“Verdun had been relieved; the main German forces had been held on the Western front; and the enemy’s strength had been very considerably worn down. Any one of these three results is in itself sufficient to justify the Somme battle.”* 420,000 British, 200,000 French and between 434,000-500,000 German men had become casualties. The gain was a push of 10km (6 mile) in to German held land. Critics will argue over who the victor at the Somme was. If you follow the checklist of goals set by Haig, it can be seen as an allied victory. The same could be said for the allies winning the ground – however small that land grab was. However it can also be seen as a German victory. The big push was successfully quashed. The German’s defended a large strip of front from an opposing force twice its size (51 British and 48 French divisions engaged 50 German divisions throughout the campaign) and sustained fewer casualties than the allies. For these reasons, many agree that the battle was actually a truce.



Christmas 1916 on the Somme Front, painting W.B. Wollen

The fortress town of Verdun had changed hands many times throughout 1916 however the pressure of the Somme eventually lead to the Germans having to rely on small localized attacks and artillery cover to fool the French into expecting attacks and therefore keeping forces from re-enforcing the Somme. This had limited success with France retaking and securing Verdun. 303 days saw 1,140,000 French face a force of 1,250,000 Germans with between 315,000-542,000 French casualties and between 281,000-434,000 German casualties being taken over the course of the battle.

Over the winter, the German army abandoned Verdun and the Somme and withdrew backwards to establish a new fortification known as the Hindenburg line. The Somme was supposed to be the great push to break the deadlock of the Western Front and end the war with Germany. Instead, 2 more years of horror would drone on.

...on the Home Front

In November 1916, a new battalion was raised and stationed in Weston-Super-Mare. The 10th (Home Service) Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry within 216 brigade of the 72nd division, was designated one task – to protect the Weston based Atlantic cable which provided tele-communications between America and Great Britain. The Atlantic cables were laid in the Victorian era by Brunel steamers which hauled the large coils of cable and unravelled them onto the sea bed during there Atlantic crossings. The Weston cable was deemed of a higher quality to the cable based in Cornwall, so this link was of vital importance.

The men of the Home Service battalion were volunteers who were not obliged to serve overseas – often due to this they were men who were slightly too old for over sea service, or not medically fit enough to serve at the front. The Home Service Battalions took over from where the majority of the Territorial Force left off – guarding Britain from attack and civil unrest while the Territorial Force and the Regular Army were fighting at the front.



The men of the 10th SLI paraded on Weston Sea front, on and around the two piers where visibility out to sea in the vicinity of the cable was good. They were armed not with SMLE (Short Magazine Lee Enfields) Lee Enfield No 1 Mk 3s or concurrent field equipment but with Charger Loading (Long) Lee Enfields (CLLEs) and 1888 pattern bayonets. The CLLEs were 1907 modifications (to 303 caliber – the same as the SMLEs) of black powder cartridge firing Long Lee Enfields which had been used alongside the Lee Metford rifles during the Boer War (1899-1902). Due to all available SMLEs being needed for the vast number of frontline forces, the home service battalions and reserve lines were often issued with older, less effective rifles.

As the winter set in, the British public prepared to endure another Christmas period. This was the 3rd Christmas of the war. The war that was supposed to be over by Christmas 1914 was still raging in Christmas 1916 only this time 6 families would be brought to the realisation that they would never again share a Christmas with their loved ones fighting the war. One of these families (the Pople's) had lost both their son's (Reginald [18] and William [20]) while another family (the Price's) would be mourning for their son (Thomas [20]) and father (James [53]) who passed away from heart break while gardening in his allotment.

1916 was a year of upmost significance. It was the first time many weapons had been used, saw the largest loss of British lives in a single day in a single campaign and saw the first of the Villages soldiers killed. The year before had seen a handful of villagers return home with injuries, however the coming year would see another 7 villagers killed across multiple campaigns and fronts.

Josh Cottrell

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Winter/Spring 1917

...on the Western Front

As the ice and snow began to melt from a record breaking cold winter, the activity on the western front began to pick up yet again. The allies launched two campaigns during April and May; the battle of Arras (9th April – 15th May) and the Nivelle offensive (16th April – 9th May). These actions resulted in heavy French losses for little territorial gains and small early victories for the British which soon was followed by stalemate. The main aims of these attacks were to smash the Hindenburg line – the defensive line the Germans had retreated to after the Somme campaign.

Meanwhile, the belligerents of the war would slowly change. The Russians had taken 6.6 million casualties by the end of 1916. The Russian's had completely lost moral and many blamed the monarchy of the Country – Tsar Nicholas II who in 1915 had made himself the supreme commander of the military and plotted many disastrous campaigns with his staff. The Tsar was also of relation to the German Kaiser through their sharing of Queen Victoria as their grandmother. Russian citizens also grew irritated at the Tsarina who was German and involved in scandal with her links to the womanizing mystic Rasputin. The February revolution (which actually occurred in March due to Russia using a different calendar to most of the world) saw Russian citizens rise up against their establishment, spurred on by far left wing radicals (*the Bolsheviks*). The Russian royal family was captured ending their dynasty. They would be executed a year later by their Bolshevik guards and the war on the Eastern front would be ended.



While Russia's war was in shambles, the allies would soon gain a strong ally. On the 6th April the United States of America declared war on Imperial Germany. There were 2 main reasons for this; the unrestricted submarine warfare which was sinking US ships – including the Cruise liner the Lusitania, and the discovery of a telegram intercepted by the British between Germany and Mexico. A quarter of America's population were of German heritage so the country had been very wary of getting involved in a European conflict where US soldier would be fighting effectively their own people, as they saw it. German sentiment was fairly neutral while Britain traditionally had been the enemy of the US due to the Wars of Independence (1775-1783 & 1812-1815) with France the ally. The discovery of the telegram would change everything. Germany had plotted with Mexico to attack American soil to keep the US from potentially putting boots on the ground in Europe. Tension between the US and Mexico had always been high due to the Mexican American war, when the US took large amounts of land from the Spanish empire and Mexico to form its southern states. American troops would not reach the western front until summer 1918.

On the 24th April, Private W Glass was wounded in the face by shrapnel a year after joining the Gloucestershire Regiment. He recovered in a French hospital. Glass was one of 3 sons doing their bit. One brother was serving throughout the Mesopotamian campaign; the other was still in training on Salisbury Plain. Their parents; Mr & Mrs A Glass owned the Dolphin Inn.

During the spring campaign, another family in the village would lose a son. Second Lieutenant Cecil William Thompson of the 6th Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers died of wounds, aged 20 on 5th May 1917. He was the only son of William and Alsie Thompson of 2 Hillside Cottages. The Thompsons had come to Uphill village originally from Hoghton, Preston. He is named on the Ship honour roll as a private soldier – “W.C. Thompson.” This may suggest that Thompson became an officer after joining the ranks. Some of the snobbier Etonian officer class would refer to this situation as making a temporary gentleman due to the shortage of officer class left alive later in the war as being an officer was seen to be more deadly than being a private soldier due to their appearances (different uniform and equipment) which made them easy targets for German sharpshooters to spot. Thompson is not listed on any known memorial – including the Weston-Super-Mare or Uphill memorials however he is mentioned on his family's head stone in St Nicholas churchyard. 2Lt Thompsons grave is located in Etaples Military Cemetery, Pas De Calais, France.



WW1 Memorial (Death) Plaque of Cecil Thompson.

In 1916, the British Government decided that steps should be taken to create a memorial for the next-of-kin of service personnel who had died during the war. In the summer of 1917, it was announced that a government committee had decided that the memorial would take the form of a bronze plaque. In addition to the memorial plaque, the next-of-kin would also have received a memorial scroll. Each plaque was individually cast with the name of the soldier appearing in a rectangular box and sent out to the next-of-kin after the war.

...on the Home Front

Strange souvenirs found their way to Uphill's residents during 1917. The soldiers of the Somerset Light Infantry serving in Mesopotamia sent home live tortoises wrapped in damp moss to keep them alive and sustained during the journey to Britain. Major Graves-Knyfton who had been wounded a year earlier, during the Kut offensive – shot through the ribs, wrote home to Uphill manor. He had been evacuated to India after the battle. As his injury had rendered him too weak to command a company again he was put in charge of the regimental depot. Unlike many of the men, Graves-Knyfton did not send home a tortoise.

Despite the amusing nature of the gifts coming home, hard times had hit the home front. Prices were rising rapidly. The price of beer doubled between the brewer and bar. Coal went up to over 24/6 a ton. The milkmen were now charging 7d for milk worth 3d and the milk had already been skimmed to make butter which was mysteriously unobtainable. Pension requirements, land rates and all manner of grocery prices soared to the point where the government had to set limits of how much could be charged. A change which sparked outrage in the rural community was the decision by farm owners to stop supplying a free meal to the farm hands for their labours. They were told they could continue to have a free pint of Cider but the meal would come out of their pay – leading some to exclaim “no blooming grub, means no blooming work!” The government took the workers sides and legislated a wage of 25/- a week (and most importantly) free meals and cider!

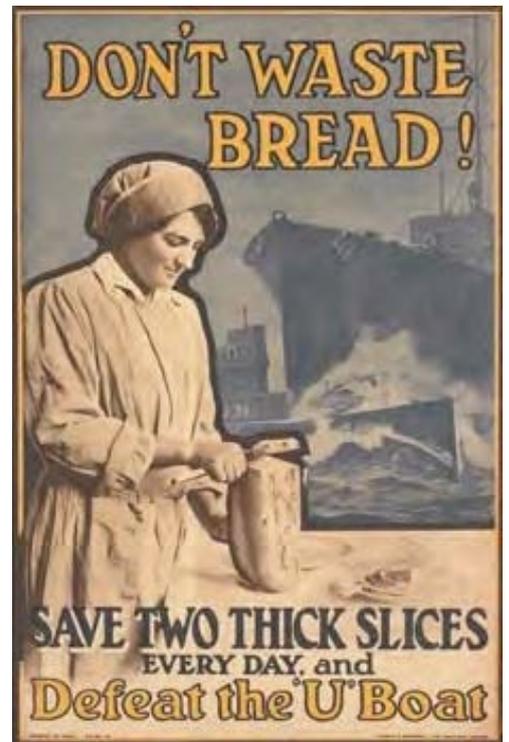


Henry John "Harry" Patch, dubbed in his later years "the Last Fighting Tommy", briefly the oldest man in Europe and the last surviving combat soldier of the First World War from any country.

Then as recruiting stagnated, the age of conscription lowered from 19 to 18 and rose from 42 to 50. In Wells, a young Harry Patch would be recruited at 18 due to this conscription drive after he abandoned his pursuit of conscientious objector status to join the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and serve as a Lewis Gunner in the battle of Passchendaele (3rd Ypres) later that year. Many military tribunals were heard in Weston and Axbridge which dealt with (usually by rejecting) calls against conscription due to hardship.

Eighteen year old Archie Williams received his call up papers and joined the Hampshire regiment but was discharged soon after being diagnosed with TB. Williams was a bell ringer and worked at White Cross Nurseries for William Brooks. He lived at 3 Hope Cottages, Old Church Road. Williams would die of the disease shortly after the armistice. He is buried in the old churchyard.

In addition to this the *Swansea Packet*, a 21 ton vessel, operating between Uphill and South Wales, hit a series of rocks by Flat Holm called *Wolves Rocks*. It passed beneath the waves with all 60 passengers and crew! It was safe to say the year had started disastrously and as more and more of Britain's men and boys were killed, people panicked and many marriages were entered into, with new couples making the most of what time they may have together. There will be more to follow on that in the next instalment



Bread and flour were hard to come by and government posters encouraged people to eat less bread

Josh Cottrell

Coming up in the next instalment: The 3rd Battle of Ypres - Passchendaele.



'Love' is in the air as many village couples get hastily wed.
Local regiment and theatre of war updates, and more...

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If you have any pictures or stories to share of relatives in local regiments or civilians during the First World War or if you have any ideas, comments or suggestions as to how our local history is reported in future instalments please send them to info@uphillvillagesociety.org.uk.

Editors note: The Memorial Plaque for 2nd Lt Thompson shown on page 4 recently came up for sale on Ebay with the following message from the seller: "You are buying a World War One Death plaque named to Cecil William Thompson, it comes with a white envelope that the family have kept it in for many years, also there is a white sticker on the back of the plaque with Cecil's details, this plaque came direct from the family and was purchased by me in Preston not far from where I lived over 20 years ago. Please check the pictures for Cecil's details. There is one more on the CWGC with this name. Would be nice to reunite the plaque with Cecil's medals. More research needed, could turn up a very interesting story." Indeed it could - any information which might help the search would be welcome.

Summer 1917 ...on the Western Front

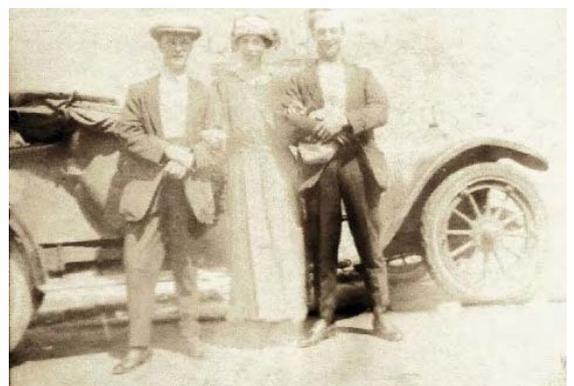


The summer of 1917 brought another large allied offensive. The Third Battle of Ypres raged from the 31st July to 10th November 1917 and saw horrendous weather conditions. The rain and mud of this battle is where the typical weather stereotype for the whole war comes from. 275,000 men under British command became casualties while 220,000 Germans were killed or injured. The battle was won by the allies with the capture of Passchendaele.



Sapper Walter T Scott joined the Royal Engineers with the service number 506516 in June 1916, as soon as he was old enough to sign up. By the 15th June 1917; aged 20, he would be dead – killed in action. Walter was born to Fred and Rosina Scott in 1897. Born in Bridgwater, the family lived in Centre Farm, Uphill Way. Today their home is known as Centre House. Prior to signing up, Walter was being trained in his father's craft of carpentry. His brother had immigrated to Canada but returned to Europe with the Canadian Army Contingent. Walter's friend Sapper Singleton said of Walter on his death that he was *"one of the bravest men in the company. He was like a brother to me and I shall miss him very much. His last action prior to death was to give his field dressing to a wounded comrade in our section."* Walter's Sergeant was from Clevedon so used some of his leave to visit Walter's parents with his possessions and attend his memorial service. Sapper Scott is listed on the Uphill, Weston-Super-Mare and St Nicholas Church memorials.

Lionel George Pople (to the left in photograph with his younger brother Christie) was taken prisoner at the age of 21 during an attack on 16th August. Lionel joined the Somerset Light Infantry in January 1916 but transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. Initially, Lionel was reported as wounded and missing. By September his mother; Mrs George Pople, had received a postcard through to the family home of Hill View, 3 Rhyne Cottages, from Limburg, Germany. The postcard explained that he had sustained no injury but had been taken prisoner with a number of other men who had been cut off during an attack. Lionel was grandson to the well-known ferry man William Pople who lived at Beachend, 4 The Links, Beach Road. After leaving Uphill school, Lionel worked for Mr Henry Podger's furniture and carpet store at 59 Whitecross Road. Lionel worked at the same store Stanley Smith had worked at before being killed on the Somme in 1916. Lionel's elder brother, Henry was taken prisoner on the Somme but had managed to escape captivity.



Private Reginald Manley of the 1st/9th battalion the King's (Liverpool) Regiment was reported Missing in Action on the 20th September 1917. He was later updated to Killed in Action. Reginald was 24 and is remembered on the Tyne Cot memorial. His parents, William and Agnes, for many years were the landlords at The Dolphin Hotel. Reginald had 2 sisters and a brother; Violet (born 1892), Lena (1896) and Clifford (1898).

Private Charles Albert Marcroft (Service Number 202243) of the 1st/4th battalion, York and Lancaster Regiment was killed in action on Tuesday 9th October 1917 at the age of 33. He was born and remained in Rotherham, working as a bank clerk however his parents Joseph (1840-1921) and Fanny Elizabeth (1842 – 1921) moved to 2 Steep Holm Cottages, Uphill. Charles had married a woman by the name of Lucy Ann who died 8th December 1970. He had two sisters; Fanny Elizabeth (died 1939 aged 61) and Helen (died 1969 aged 101). All three of these women are buried in Uphill's old churchyard. He is buried at Tyne Cot cemetery and remembered on the War memorial at Clifton, Rotherham.

....on the Home Front

Due to the war and the uncertainty it brought, many villagers found it urgent to get married. The first couple to get married that year was Bessie Baker of 2 Ynishir Terrace to Walter Martin, a Sergeant in the Canadian Army Contingent. Their bridesmaids were Nora Whitting and Lily Williams.

Lillian Frances Fear married Rudolf William Carter, a Sergeant Major in the Army Service Corps. The wedding was held at St Nicholas Church and was described as a "pretty wedding." Lillian taught at Christ Church School and was the youngest daughter of Mrs William Fear of Uphill Nurseries in Rose Cottage.

Lillian's brother; Lance Corporal Reginald Fear of the Army Service Corps, married Daisy Gardiner, in Coventry. Another Army Service Corps Lance Corporal, Wilfred Stone of Bleadon married Miss LS Shallish of Park Cottage. Mercantile Marine Steward Stanley Walter married Lily Phippen of Eldon House.

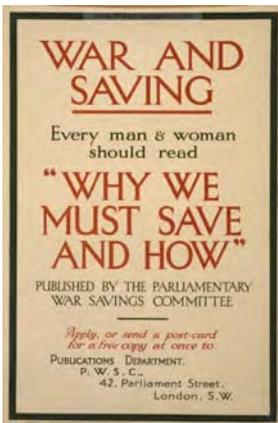
Assistant head teacher, Miss Clara Radford who lived next door to the Ellard's at 1 Sunbeam Villas, 17 Rhyne Cottages, married the headmaster of Uphill School, Mr EC (Cecil) Dyer. Mr Dyer had been headmaster of the school and superintendent of the Sunday School since 1902. Mr Dyer's sister, Miss VE Dyer retired in the August of that year and was replaced by Clara. Miss Dyer's retirement was marked with a "handsome gold expanding wristlet watch."

The Dyer's return from their honeymoon was marked with bunting and flags on the school while "the scholars formed up in reception order and sang suitable selections and the bell-ringers contributed merry peals." That year, the pair had put on a concert for the wounded soldiers in Ashcombe hospital. Mr Dyer had made his mark in the village community as not just the head teacher but a wood work teacher, organist, choirmaster and the secretary for Uphill's bell ringers. Using this skill set she trained the children of Uphill school to perform in the concert. The Concert also included tea provided by the Sub-postmaster Mr Herbert William Coward in the post office tea rooms. The Rev Dr and Mrs Dunn contributed cigarettes too. The Angling Association had donated half the catch of a recent fish in the River Axe at Bleadon, to Ashcombe hospital and presented this at the concert.



Pupil of the village school gardening group in 1906 - many of who were later to serve on the Western Front after saying their goodbyes to Headmaster Cecil Dyer.

Mr Dyer had been exempted from military service twice on 18 July 1916 and 14 June 1918 at a military board in Taunton. His contribution to the war effort was running regular concerts for soldiers using his musical talents as well as leading a War Savings movement to raise funds for serving villagers. He actively encouraged his pupils to grow their own food on their allotments and pick herbs and flowers for flower shows and use in healing remedies. Some of the food grown went forward in a collection to sailors of the North Atlantic Fleet.



Josh Cottrell

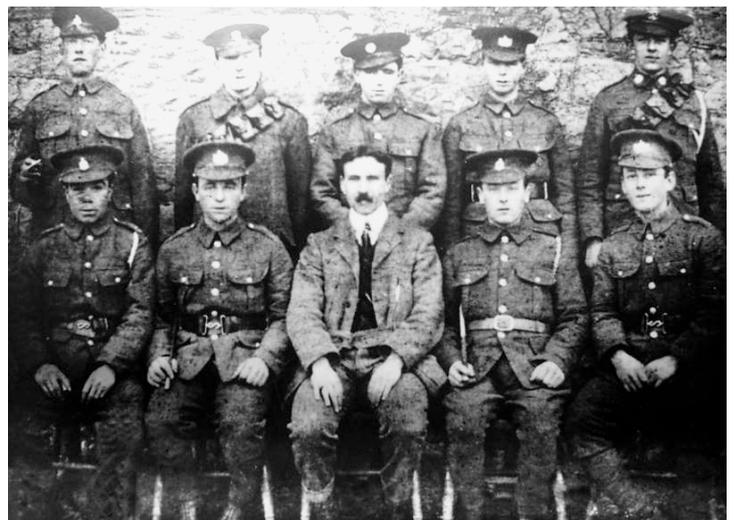
Coming up in the next instalment:

The 3rd Battle of Ypres - Passchendaele.

'Love' is in the air as many village couples get hastily wed.

Local regiment and theatre of war updates, and more...

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Autumn/Winter 1917 ...on the Western Front

Autumn of 1917 saw the end of the Passchendaele campaign on 10th November. Another battle took place over November and December; Cambrai. Throughout the summer, Uphill men gave their lives during the campaign. More would die as the last full year of the war drew to an end.

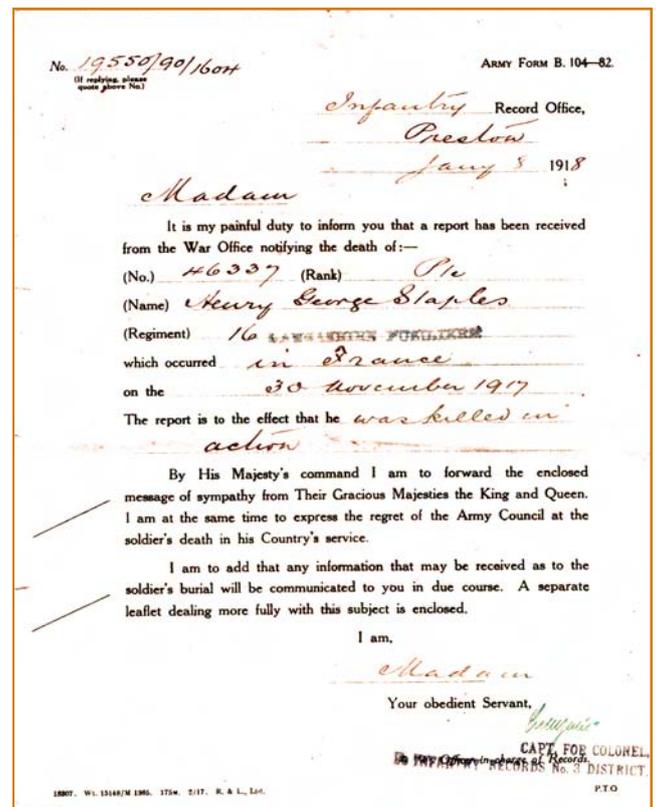
Henry "Harry" George Staples was born in 1893 to the limestone quarryman George (born 1859 in Uphill) and Fanny (born 1862 in Uphill) Staples of 8 Sandcroft Cottages, Uphill Road. Harry had 3 siblings; elder sister Gertrude (1889), brother Sidney (1891) and younger sister Ella (1896). Before enlisting, Harry worked at Uphill Manor and on 30th September 1916 Harry married Lottie, having 1 child. Harry Staples enlisted in Weston-Super-Mare but joined the 7th Battalion, Middlesex Regiment as a Private with the number 6709. Harry later transferred with the number 46337 to the 16th Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers. On Friday 30th November 1917, Harry Staples was killed in action aged 24, leaving behind his child and widow. Lottie would eventually re-marry as Lottie Dean of Ashcott, Bridgwater. He is remembered on Tyne Cot Memorial in Belgium, Uphill War Memorial, St Nicholas Church Memorial and the Weston-Super-Mare Memorial.

Herbert "Harry" George Ellard was born in 1898 to carpenter-joiner George (Bleadon 1859 – 1931) and Laura May (1861 – 1948) Ellard of 2 Sunbeam Villas, 16 Rhyne Cottages, Old Church Road, Uphill. Harry was the 5th of 6 children; Winifred (1888), Reginald (1889), Stanley W (1892), Rita L (1894) and Francis S (1901). Harry played for Weston Rugby Club 1st XV and was a member of the Athletic Club as a miler. Harry enlisted as a Private with the number 14656 into the 2nd/4th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. Harry was a veteran of the Somme campaign a year earlier where he was wounded and suffered shell shock. On Monday 3rd December 1917, Harry Ellard was reported missing in action, aged 19. His death was not confirmed until April 1919. He is remembered on Cambrai Memorial in France, Uphill War Memorial, St Nicholas Church Memorial, Weston-Super-Mare Memorial and is mentioned on his parents head stone in the old Uphill churchyard which at the time of writing this is lead down having been damaged by intruding cows.

...on the African Front

The First World War was a global conflict fought not just between individual nations but also their empires. Britain had a large empire including many countries in Africa. Germany had a smaller African empire and saw the war as an opportunity to seize land from Britain while the colonies were not as strongly defended, as many troops were needed to fight on the multiple front lines, especially the Western Front where the war would seemingly be won. In order to remove this threat, British garrisons had to be stationed at countries throughout the empire. One example already discussed in prior articles was the stationing of the Weston Rifles (1st/4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry) in India during 1914 and 1915. Unfortunately sending troops as a deterrent was not enough and more fronts were opened where British and German soldiers fought over every inch of land. The cavalry had more of a role fighting across the vast deserts of some of the fronts which would be hostile to motor transport that would break down in desert conditions.

Frank E Urch enlisted in July 1916 and was posted to Egypt. Frank was married to the second daughter of Mr and Mrs F Exon. They had 4 children. Frank was wounded multiple times in his service. The first was in November 1916 followed



No. 19550/90/1600
ARMY FORM B.104-82

Infantry Record Office,
Preston
January 8 1918

Madam

It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has been received from the War Office notifying the death of:-
(No.) 46337 (Rank) Pte
(Name) Harry George Staples
(Regiment) 16 LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS
which occurred in France
on the 30 November 1917
The report is to the effect that he was killed in action

By His Majesty's command I am to forward the enclosed message of sympathy from Their Gracious Majesties the King and Queen. I am at the same time to express the regret of the Army Council at the soldier's death in his Country's service.

I am to add that any information that may be received as to the soldier's burial will be communicated to you in due course. A separate leaflet dealing more fully with this subject is enclosed.

I am,
Madam
Your obedient Servant,
CAPT. FOR COLONEL
THE WYVERN DISTRICT RECORDS No. 3 DISTRICT
PTO

by another injury in January 1917. Urch recovered in a Cairo hospital for 4 months. In November 1917 Frank Urch was injured severely in the right thigh and was sent to recover at Albassia Hospital in Egypt.

...on the Salonika Front

In 1914 the war was triggered in Sarajevo with the shooting of Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand. Austria declared war on Serbia. Through the famously complicated series of alignments, Serbia was on the side of the Allies, so the Allies shipped goods to Serbia via the Greek port of Salonika. The French and British task force sent to Greece had been 600,000 men strong. However by 1917, reduced by disease and becoming battle field casualties, the task force now numbered only 100,000 fighting fit soldiers. The task force was condemned only to fight defensively. They would not take the offensive until after the German collapse on the Western Front in 1918.

Henry Wason of 1 Lower Rhyne Cottages, died on this front, however he was not struck down by illness or killed in battle. Henry Wason drowned during a river crossing. Henry was born in Huntspill in 1892, son of E and C Wason. Henry worked on Mr F Counsell's farm opposite his home, where Little Orchard now stands. Both Henry and his brother Ernest enlisted into the army. Henry joined up in Weston as a Driver with the number T4/212673, at the outbreak of war. He joined the 109th Company, 22nd Divisional Train, Army Service Corps. Many from Weston and Uphill joined the corps as they dealt in transporting good via mules and horses, something the farm workers of the area knew well.

Henry's company commander, Captain JPC Neilson wrote home to Henry Wason's parents while "in the field" near Salonika, to explain how their son died aged 25 on Tuesday 13th November 1917: "Your son was driving the head mules of the wagon and team. It was a stormy afternoon with very heavy rain and whilst crossing a small ford the stream was so swollen that it nearly carried the mules off their feet. Your son was seen to dismount and the moment he did so was swept away by the stream. His body was recovered downstream." Another officer wrote of Driver Wason that he was "always popular" and a "good and trust worth soldier." Enclosed with the letters home were the contents of Henry's pockets and his other possessions were sent home by parcel.

Wason is remembered on Karasouli Military Cemetery in Greece, Uphill War Memorial, St Nicholas Church Memorial and the Weston-Super-Mare Memorial.

...on the Home Front

With America now in the war and the Atlantic Cable no longer a priority to protect, the 10th Home Service Battalion Somerset Light Infantry, stationed in Weston were disbanded. The men would likely disperse and be absorbed by other Home Service Battalions. Though Weston's battalion was no longer present, individuals from the area would join the services but stay within the realm. One of these men was E James Burdon who suffered an accident in November 1917.

E James Burden Jnr of The Cottage, Old Church Road was born in Uphill in 1899 to E Burden. During the war, James Burden served in the Army Service Corps in France while E James BurdenJnr became a Lance Corporal and served as a bomb instructor. This job involved teaching recruits how to throw hand grenades. Between 1915 and 1918, 33 million hand grenades; nicknamed Mills bombs after their inventor Sir William Mills, were issued to British troops. Sir William Mills moved into St Nicholas parish in 1931, living in a Broadoak Road bungalow. In November 1917, L-CPL Burden lost two fingers and damaged his thumb on his right hand when a grenade went off as he threw it. James was treated in St. Marks Hospital, Tunbridge, Wells.

Five women from Uphill worked in Ashcombe House VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) Hospital during the war. They cared for the soldiers convalescing at V.A.D hospitals provided by the Red Cross (who the Nurses worked for) and local voluntary efforts. All kinds of organisations donated including the YMCA which donated a hut to be used for dining, social and religious services. This was part of the 1917 Ashcombe Extension Fund which focused on renovation of the kitchens and building an annexe. The annexe was complete in time for 148 patients to spend Christmas of that year, in. Ironically, the following month, the Hospital burnt down on 19th January.





His Majesty the King at investiture at Durdham Down
November 8th 1917

One of the five Uphill women was decorated on 8th November 1917 by King George V in Bristol for their work with injured service men. Sister Alice Batstone was presented with the Order of the Royal Red Cross. Alice Batstone was born in 1878 to William (1847 – 1903) and Alice (1854 – 1933) Batstone of Aberdovey, 5 Charlton Road, Weston-Super-Mare. Alice had an older sister; Elizabeth (died 10/10/1953) and two brothers. One of those brothers was Percy Batstone who had died on the Somme in 1916. The family moved to Uphill before the war. Alice Batstone died 11th March 1969 aged 91 and is buried in Uphill Old Churchyard.

Another Uphill woman received the same decoration. Mrs Edith Mary Graves-Knyfton gained her award for organising the Weston branch of the Red Cross Society. Edith would go on to be awarded an OBE for her efforts in 1918 at Buckingham Palace by King George V. Her Husband, Major R. B. Graves-Knyfton was overseas commanding the

Somerset Light Infantry Regimental Depot in India. Their daughter, Marjorie Graves-Knyfton left school early to train as a VAD nurse.

The fourth Uphill woman was Miss Alice Byrnes of The Gables, Uphill. Alice Byrnes was born in Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey in 1866. Miss Byrnes was the Hospital Treasurer and personally was a woman of independent means.



Finally, Miss May Lilley Whitting of the Grange, Uphill was in charge of fund raising for the hospital. May Whitting was born in 1897 to Charles Edward Whitting MA JP (formerly a Colonel in the Somerset Light Infantry) and Jessie May Whitting. Miss Whitting had two younger brothers; Charles Edward (born 1898) and Richard (born 1900) who would die in 1918 in a training accident at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (an Army Officer training school).

Josh Cottrell

Coming up:

The final and bloodiest year of the war begins. Chaos for the Allies during the German Spring offensive. Ashcombe House Hospital burns to the Ground. Further rationing measures. Local regiment and theatre of war updates, and more...

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Winter/Spring 1918 ...on the Western Front

At the beginning of 1918, Germany was being strangled by the allies. The Royal Navy was blockading the countries ports; the German people were malnourished and starving. The German army was starting to mix saw dust with what little rations they could scrape together, merely to baulk the food out. Despite the deadlock of the Western front, the central powers were facing a large threat; starvation at home and fresh US troops finally entering the conflict. The German high command knew that if Germany was going to win the war, it would have to do so before the US could mobilise in large numbers. The Germans were determined to break the stalemate. Russia had been defeated which freed up 1,000,000 German soldiers to move to the Western front.



The fittest German soldiers were selected for the Stormtrooper corps – an elite fighting force of the best soldiers with the best equipment. Experimental weaponry was given to the Stormtroopers such as anti-tank rifles (such as the Gewehr M1918) and hand held machine guns and pistols (such as the MP18 and the MG08/15). On Thursday 21st March 1918, the German Spring Offensive - known as the Kaiserschlacht (Kaiser's battle) or the Ludendorff Offensive, began. The offensive marked the largest land gained by Germany since 1914. Many miles were gained by the Stormtroopers, who shocked the Allies, breaking the line and nearly winning the war, pushing the British back towards the sea. However, the Stormtroopers had pushed so far that German supplies could not keep up so the advance eventually ground to a halt. The Stormtroopers were pushed back and the regular German army units couldn't

offer effective reinforcements as their best men and equipment had been thrown into the Stormtrooper corps, which by this point had been decimated. The offence ended on Thursday 18th July 1918.

One of Uphill's men killed in the offensive was Private Robert John Jarvis. He enlisted at the age of 17 in Weston-Super-Mare in 1915. Underage for active service, Jarvis saw fierce fighting in 1916, first with the Somerset Light Infantry with the number 25472. In May 1916 he transferred to the 2nd/7th Battalion The Sherwood Foresters (the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment) with the number 307300. Jarvis was wounded in April 1917 but returned to the front after a month. On the first day of the German Spring Offensive, Jarvis' unit came under attack South East of Arras. That day the unit lost 171 men. As his unit fell back, Jarvis was seen to be shot in the chest but was reported missing in action. Jarvis was captured and sent to a German military hospital in Erchin. 3 days later on Sunday 24th March 1918, Jarvis died in that hospital of his wounds at the age of 20. He is remembered on the Weston-Super-Mare, Uphill and St Nicholas Church War Memorials, on the family headstone, and London Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France.



Frederick C. Patch was wounded in the offensive. Patch was born in 1900 in Uphill to Fred and Jessie Patch. They lived at 10 Rhyne Cottages, next door to Robert Jarvis. Patch had been a chorister as a boy at St Nicholas Church where his father; Fred, had been an active practitioner for 20 years. He had worked for Mr George Smith, alongside Reginal Albert Pople at Slimeridge farm, before Pople was killed in 1916. On 17th October 1917, Patch enlisted in the Wiltshire Regiment. Patch served in France for 6 weeks before being wounded in the chest on 3rd May 1918. Patch was evacuated to 83 General Base Hospital in Boulogne and then to King George's Hospital in London.

Five days after Patch's injury and serving in the same regiment, Private Arthur Prescott was killed. Prescott was born in 1894 to Robert and Sarah Prescott of 35 Winstanley St. Barton Hill, Bristol. The family moved to 4 Steep Holm Cottages, Uphill. Later, Prescott would move to Taunton. Arthur Prescott enlisted as Private 2328 into the 2nd/1st Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry at Weston-Super-Mare. He was then transferred as Private 203464 to the 2nd Battalion Duke of Edinburgh's Wiltshire Regiment. Arthur Prescott was killed in action aged 24 on Wednesday 8th May 1918, opposing the last advance of the offensive. He is remembered on the Weston-Super-Mare, Uphill and St Nicholas Church War Memorials, and on the Tyne Cot Memorial in Belgium.

During the winter of 1918-1919, Christie was deployed to Russia. Towards the end of the First World War, there was an allied effort to stem the tide of Bolshevism in revolutionary Russia. The campaign would be spear headed by American and British Empire forces and lasted until 1920, though some Japanese forces sustained occupation of certain areas until 1925. The allies withdrew mainly due to war weariness, lack of support from those back home and divided objectives between commanders.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions from the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in ink.

The contents of this Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE (last birthday) and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE		PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged 15 years and upwards		BIRTHPLACE of every person	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country	DEFERRED
			Married	Widowed	Personal Occupation	Industry or Service with which related to occupation			
1. William George Poph	Head	45	Married	20	Labourer	390	Uphill	British	None
2. Emily Jane Poph	Wife	43	Married	20			Uphill	British	None
3. Henry James Poph	Son	17	Single		Shop Porter	2000	Uphill	British	None
4. Louis George Poph	Son	15	Single		Apprentice	2000	Uphill	British	None
5. Gladys May Poph	Daughter	12	Single		at Home		Uphill	British	None
6. Charles Thomas Poph	Son	11	Single		school	390	Uphill	British	None

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

1	2	3	4	5	6
			4	2	6

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in charge, or in charge of this dwelling)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Parlours, or Apartments). Count the kitchen as a room, but do not count outhouses, lavatories, sheds, cellars, or workshouses, unless they are workshouses, offices, shops.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: *Wm G. Poph*
 Postal Address: *Uphill W. T. Devon*

...on the Home Front



Richard Harcourt Whitting, the youngest son of Retired Colonel Charles Edward Whitting MA JP (formerly of the Somerset Light Infantry) and Jessie May Whitting, would be accidentally killed in a training incident while at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Gentleman Cadet R H Whitting would not live to become an officer, see active service or the end of the war. The incident occurred on 21st September 1918. Whitting was 18 years old and is remembered on the Uphill, St Nicholas Church and Weston-Super-Mare memorials. In addition to this, Richard is buried in St Nicholas church graveyard in the family plot. Richard Whitting had attended St Peter's school and had been a promising athlete, going to Rugby school prior to his enrolment at Sandhurst. He has 2 older siblings; Mary Lilley Whitting (1897) who was a nurse at Ashcombe house, and Charles Edward Whitting Jr (1898).

Food prices and other goods underwent further rationing during 1918, due to overall food shortages. Land was being ploughed up for crops such as the Golf Links for vegetables. Uphill Castle's Cricket ground was given to Edward Luff of Manor Farm for growing oats and later in 1919, potatoes. Luff brought the first motorised tractor into the village and used it to turn up the pitch. Mr Smith at Slimbridge Farm, not to be out down, acquired his own tractor soon after. Even Uphill Hill's pastures had areas fenced off for wheat cultivation.

The Small Box Respirator (late WWI gas mask) had a filter including a carbon element. Due to coal being so precious, collection points were established to gather fruit stones and nut shells. The stones and shells were then processed into carbon for gas mask filter production. Meanwhile the price of coal went up from 1d to 1½d.

In July, official rationing measures allowed each person a week; 8oz sugar, 4oz butter or margarine (better than the ½lb per person limit set by shops unofficially prior to the new rationing rules), 1½oz lard and 10d of butchers meat, though there were extras allowed for heavy manual workers and boys aged 13-18. Customers had to register at one shop for their rations to prevent people shopping around and hoarding rationed good. Shop keepers were creating issues by raising their prices. For this reason, prices had to be legally fixed and limited to certain quantities of the product. Shop

DEFENCE OF THE REALM, 1918.
 MINISTRY OF FOOD.

BREACHES OF THE RATIONING ORDER

The undermentioned convictions have been recently obtained:-

Court	Date	Nature of Offence	Result
HENDON	29th Aug., 1918	Unlawfully obtaining and using ration books	3 Months Imprisonment
WEST HAM	29th Aug., 1918	Being a retailer & failing to detach proper number of coupons	Fined £20
SMITHWICK	22nd July, 1918	Obtaining meat in excess quantities	Fined £50 & 25 5s. costs
OLD STREET	4th Sept., 1918	Being a retailer selling to unregistered customer	Fined £12 & 25 5s. costs
OLD STREET	4th Sept., 1918	Not detaching sufficient coupons for meat sold	Fined £28 & 25 5s. costs
HESTER-LE-STREET	4th Sept., 1918	Being a retailer returning number of registered customers in excess of counterfoils deposited	Fined £10 & 25 5s. costs
HIGH WYCOMBE	7th Sept., 1918	Making false statement on application for and using Ration Books unlawfully	Fined £10 & 25 5s. costs

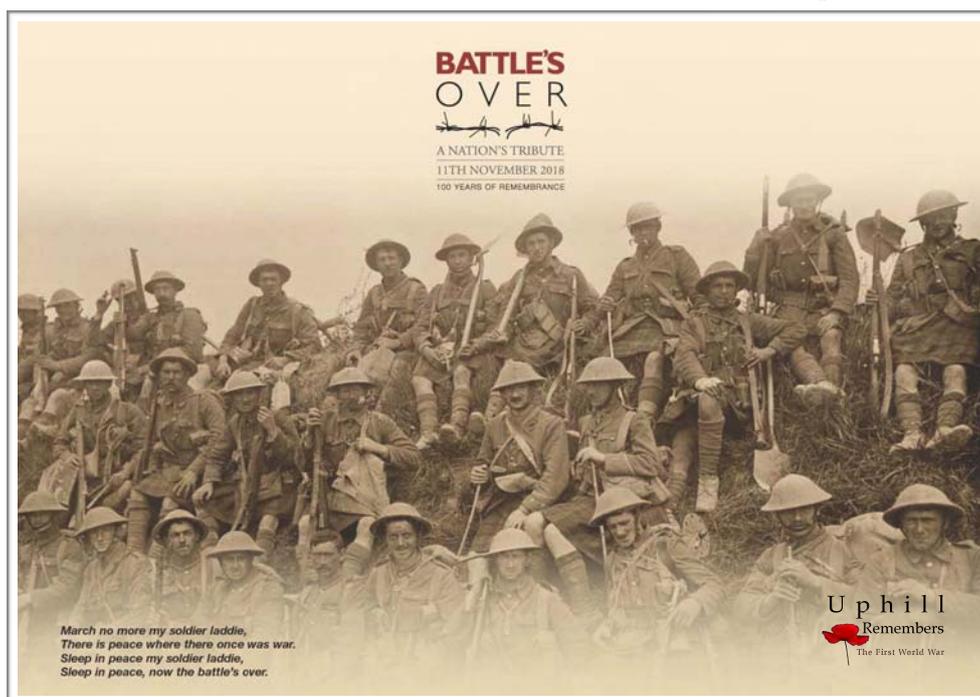
Undermentioned Breaches, Penal Administration Division, MINISTRY OF FOOD.

keepers had to display lists of the new prices and quantities. This included; a shoulder of pork limited to 1/3lb, potatoes to £6-10s-0d a ton and the price of jam was fixed at 9½d per lb even if that jam was homemade rather than commercially made. Queues stretched 100 yards from Weston High Street to Meadow Street. Another issue caused by the shop keepers was that they were trying to make people pay for their goods in addition to handing over the government issued ration coupons, saying the coupons were not payment enough. When soldiers returned home during the war, there was no system in place to grant them ration coupons so they had to share what their families could struggle to spare.

Rats had become such a destructive force to food supplies that local governments were encouraged to spend without reservation on killing the pests. This was known as the “Rat Order” and “Rat Weeks” were held dedicated to exterminating them. Other animals affected by rationing were wild rabbits and ducks which became a normal meat to find in many family kitchens to supplement the meat ration. Poaching had gone up so wildfowl shooting became illegal in the Axe estuary, though this was implemented more to protect rare species rather than to keep the hunters from supplementing their meat rations. A soldier who would have been pleased with the ban was Harry Cox former lessee of Steep Holm and for many years the Society for the Protection of Birds' warden on Brean Down. Although over age on outbreak in 1914, Cox volunteered for the army giving a false date of birth and saw active service in France. Cox was invalided home but then signed up again, this time for an officer's commission and was posted to India, then on to Mesopotamia.

Josh Cottrell

Please see previous articles for Acknowledgements



A Village Remembers - Battle's Overs

As the nation commemorates the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1 so does Uphill with a series of special events.

7 - 11 November. Uphill's Great War 1914 -1918 - Uphill Remembers. A special exhibition looking back at the war years and those from the village who served their country and those who lost their lives for it. Uphill Village Victory Hall. Opening times tbc.

9 November. Commemoration Service (tbc). Cannon site, Uphill Way.

10 November. Commemoration concert by Weston Light Orchestra. Music and words from the period. St Nicholas Church 7.30pm

11 November. In commemoration of the ending of the war Uphill takes part in the national events. 6.00am A lone piper on the hill will play the air Battle's O'er. 11.00 am the national service of remembrance conducted at the War Memorial. 6.55pm The Last Post played at the Uphill beacon one of 1,000 to be lit across the country at 7.00pm followed at 7.05pm by Ring Out For Peace. The bells of St Nicholas old church joins others around the country in celebration of the end of the First World War.

1 December. The Battle's Over. In the next edition of Uphillviews our final look back at World War One and it's effect upon the village. Villagers return and the War Memorial is erected in honour of those who died.

Late Autumn 1918

...on the Western Front

The allies were now into their 100 days offensive (as it would be known after, this was the last 100 days of WWI and lasted from 8th August to the armistice) and the German army had just adopted the tactic of ceding small amounts of land at a very high cost for the allied. Booby traps were left attached to piano keys (so that they would explode when played), books and paintings in abandoned houses rigged to grenades, traps left in surrendered trenches and food poisoned. The American Expeditionary Force was now well established and was feared by Germans. American soldiers were recklessly brave due to their fresh faced inexperience. These last few months were now the deadliest to have served in during the war.



An American anti-aircraft machine gun in Raucourt - 10 November , 1918

Germany was in chaos. The Royal Navy had blockaded the countries ports, limiting food via sea to German citizens. Germans had become incredibly war weary and communism arose through the nation, brought over from fraternization between German and Russian soldiers on the Eastern front. German soldiers returned home and then went to the western front, spreading their new found ideology. This created disobedience and protest at home as well as mass surrendering across all fronts. Germany's monarchy was not like Britain's. In Britain, the role of the monarchy is ceremonial with power vested in parliament, while in Germany; parliament had little power while the monarch and his generals were effectively dictators.

General Erich Ludendorff; head of German strategy on the Western front was now prone to fits and panic attacks. On 30th September Bulgaria surrendered to the allies. Then a month later on 30th October, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) surrendered. On 3rd November, Austria-Hungary surrendered. The stress of fighting a losing war was clearing effecting Ludendorff, each capitulation of an ally only making his conditions worse. He was determined to lead Germany to victory until one day when he was driven by his staff to a road side ditch not too far away from the front. In the ditch were the bodies of a few German pilots under tarpaulins. Ludendorff pulled back one tarpaulin and discovered the body of one of his step sons. A family man, Ludendorff fell into a depression and started making arrangements for peace talks.

Talks were arranged with America as Britain and France were not trusted to be fair to Germany; however America were not interested in peace talks with the military dictatorship. President Woodrow Wilson insisted that America did peace talks with the German parliament instead of the Kaiser or any military men. This forced a constitutional change on Germany. Now the German parliament had more power than the German military establishment. What followed next would change Germany for ever and would sow the seeds of the Second World War.

President Wilson insisted that Germany become a republic before engaging in peace talks could even be considered. This meant the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Ludendorff snapped out of his depression on hearing this and became enraged, ordering the German army to hold on and for peace talks to cease. The Kaiser organised a suicide mission to

the Navy, to take on the British blockade to protect the Reich and reinvigorate the war effort. The Navy, infested with Communism, refused and mutinied against Germany. This event started the Red Scare that would plague the country for years to come. The Army at home now rallied against the nation, shooting their officers and joining protestors in the streets. The German Parliament based in the Reichstag moved out of Berlin to Weimar in order to escape the danger of protests and accepted President Wilson's demands. On the 10th of November, the Kaiser would be forced to leave for a life in exile. On the 11th, the war would be over.

11th November 1918

...on the Western Front



At 5am on the morning of 11th November 1918, the armistice bringing to end hostilities was agreed to and signed 20 minutes later in a railroad carriage at Compiègne. The armistice would come into effect at the 11th hour. Tragically 11,000 casualties would be taken that morning including 2,700 killed. 2,400 of the casualties were commonwealth soldiers, 863 of which were killed. German losses for the morning are estimated to be 4,100. French leaders would edit the graves of all French soldiers killed on the 11th to say they were killed on the 10th but the estimates for their losses are 1,170. American casualties were as high as 3,500.

Several factors caused these losses. The most costly factor being the belief that 'Germany should be defeated properly' held by American Generals. The German army had never been pushed back into Germany from invaded Belgian soil and many believed that they would use that as ground to restart the conflict later on. Due to this, American Generals ordered their men over the top and into battle when if they had waited, they could have simply walked over and taken the land at the stroke of 11. The news hadn't reached every unit across the front or wasn't believed so soldiers continued actively trying to kill each other in some areas. Another factor is that the numbers include people who had taken injuries prior to that day and had died of their injuries that morning.

The last British soldier to die was 40 year old Pte George Edwin who fell 90 minutes before 11 at 9:30am. He fell at Mons, in the same area where the first British soldier died – Pte John Henry Parr, who died aged just 17 on 21st August 1914. The two are buried facing each other. The last commonwealth soldier to die was 25 year old Canadian Pte George Lawrence Price who was shot by a sniper at 10:58am. just 2 minutes before the end. The last German to be killed was an

officer; Lt Tomas, who offered accommodation buildings to his enemies after 11am. He was shot by the American's who hadn't heard about the end of the war. Augustin Trebuchon was the last French soldier killed at 10:50 while he brought a message to the front that hot soup was being served after 11. The last American and last allied soldier to be killed in action was Henry Gunther who was killed with 60 seconds to go as he and others stormed a German trench. The Germans fired warning shots over their head which made them duck. It was foggy and they could not be seen. The Germans assumed that would be the end of the assault, it being so close to 11 but Gunther got back up and ran at the German parapet. The Germans waved their arms and pleaded that he stop running, but he kept up his attack. The Germans were forced to shoot him.

Units who knew the war was nearly over spent the morning firing ammunition just over the enemy's trenches, so that they did not kill anyone unnecessarily, got rid of ammunition that now wouldn't be needed and made it look like they were doing something. There was a report that a lone German machine gunner fired his gun until 11am, then stopped, stood up, took off his helmet, bowed and left. The war had indeed been over by Christmas... Christmas 1918, however the majority of allied soldiers wouldn't return home until before Christmas 1919. After the 11th, they became part of the army of occupation that invaded the Ruhr in Germany to make sure hostilities did not continue.

...on the Home Front

By now, news had reached Uphill Manor that Major Reginald Bennett Graves-Knyfton, Uphill's "Lord of the Manor" had died of the "Spanish" Influenza epidemic aged 45 on Tuesday 29th October 1918. Graves-Knyfton was born on 15th October 1873 to Mr Albert Reginald Graves at Charlton House, Wimbourne Stoke, Wiltshire. In 1897 he married Miss Edith Mary Alston and had 2 daughters; Marjorie and Joan. Reginald lived in Uphill Manor and was a land owner, justice of the peace, chaired Uphill Parish council, was a church warden and president of Uphill Castle Cricket Club. Reginald served as a Captain in the 4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry before the war and on outbreak was promoted to major and sent off with his Battalion (which had now been split and re-designated the 1st/4th Battalion) to India and then on to Mesopotamia to fight the Turks at Kut in 1916. The attack was unsuccessful and the major was invalided back to India with a bullet wound through the ribs. Major Graves Knyfton would never properly recover from his wound and was given command of the regimental depot in India to sit out the war but keep useful. He had been the first of Uphill' men to go off to war and now he was Uphill's final war death. He is remembered on the Uphill, Weston-Super-Mare and St Nicholas church memorial as well as the Madras 1914-1918 war memorial in India.



In Uphill, the end of the war was greeted with flags and bunting flying from houses and the school. The school children sang patriotic songs, the church bells rang out "Merry Peals" for the first time in 4 years and St. Nicholas Church was packed for a joint Anglican-Wesleyan thanksgiving service. While in France, Uphill Villager Pte Henry Price of 1

Coastguard Cottages represented his Battalion; the 2nd/5th Gloucestershire Regiment in Paris during the Allied Victory March. Henry's brother Thomas Price was killed on the Somme in the same battalion.

Ashcombe Hospital eventually closed down with donors being invited to reclaim their possessions. Children's parties and sports were held on Sandcroft Field to mark Peace day. Miss Julia Davies was awarded an MBE (Member of the British Empire) for bravery in rescuing wounded off of the streets of London during German Zeppelin raids. Davies was born in Cardiff in 1859 to Thomas Seth Davies RNR (Royal Naval Reserve). Her family moved to Uphill via St Issells, Pembrokeshire. Davies died on 21st January 1934 and is buried in Uphill Old Churchyard. Not everything was rosey however. One soldier had written to the Weston Mercury and told how he had written to his old employer from France asking to return from the war to his old job. That Tommy never heard back from his employer and complained to the Mercury about being snubbed after serving his country.

At the Ship Inn Thrift Club's Christmas 1918 payout, members agreed to contribute to a collection for £5-10s-0d which would go to Messrs Roe to pay for an intricate wooden case for their list of 103 villagers to join the colours. The list and case was to be treated as a war shrine and now hangs in St Nicholas Church. A second shrine was made for the fallen and presented by Mrs Burr, the Mother of Captain Wellesley who fell at Ypres in 1916. The second shrine held the names of those killed. This second shrine was made by village carpenter Fred Scott whose son; Sapper Walter Scott, was killed at Passchendaele. The wood for the shrine came from an original belfry beam from the old church where so many amongst the dead of the shrine had been church bell ringers.

Ideas for the village war memorial included a lych gate for St Nicholas, a bronze plate on the church wall and a monument in the old church yard on the hill. The monument was the eventual decision and was built by remembrance day 1920 originally the monument was in the centre of the churchyard but was later moved to the front, its current location so that no matter where you stood in the village, you could look up, see the memorial and remember those who gave their lives for Uphill. 12 year old choirboy Charlie Howe carried the processional cross at the dedication ceremony of the memorial. Speaking in 1990, Howe recalled *"Music was a problem, there only being a small harmonium up there. But one of the names on the memorial was Sgt Stanley Smith and his brother-in-law was Charlie Baker who played the cornet in Mogg's Band."* The men of Uphill were played out on their way to war by a young Charlie Baker in Mogg's Military Band. 6 years later, now Corporal Charlie Baker MM (Military Medal) played the last post at the ceremony. *"I can still remember the sound of his cornet and the people singing the hymn, 'hark the sound of holy voices, chanting in crystal sea' while down below us the sun shone on Weston Bay and the River Axe where boats were coming in on the tide."*

St Nicholas Churchwardens' Accounts for Thursday 11 March 1920 recorded:

"At 3 o'clock this afternoon, the War Memorial, erected by Public Subscription in the old Parish Churchyard of St Nicholas to the memory of those of the Parish who fell in the Great War, was dedicated by the Archdeacon of Wells – the Ven Archdeacon Walter Fauer of St Michaels, Glastonbury – with full church and Processional hymns etc, choir and clergy."

The memorial, a Runic Cross and pedestal of Shap (Westmoreland) Granite supplied by the Shap Granite Co carved and erected by Messrs Cox & Sons Weston-super-Mare at cost of £95-12s-0d a curb of granite to be added to complete at a cost of £21-10s-0d by W Hillier (late Cox & Son). Total: £117-2s-0d.

The school master, Mr Cecil Dyer who had taught, as boys so many of the men from the village who had served in the war, wrote in Uphill School Log Book:

21 July 1919:

The School closed today at 12 o'clock to enable the rooms to be prepared for the entertainment of the returned soldiers and sailors of the village.

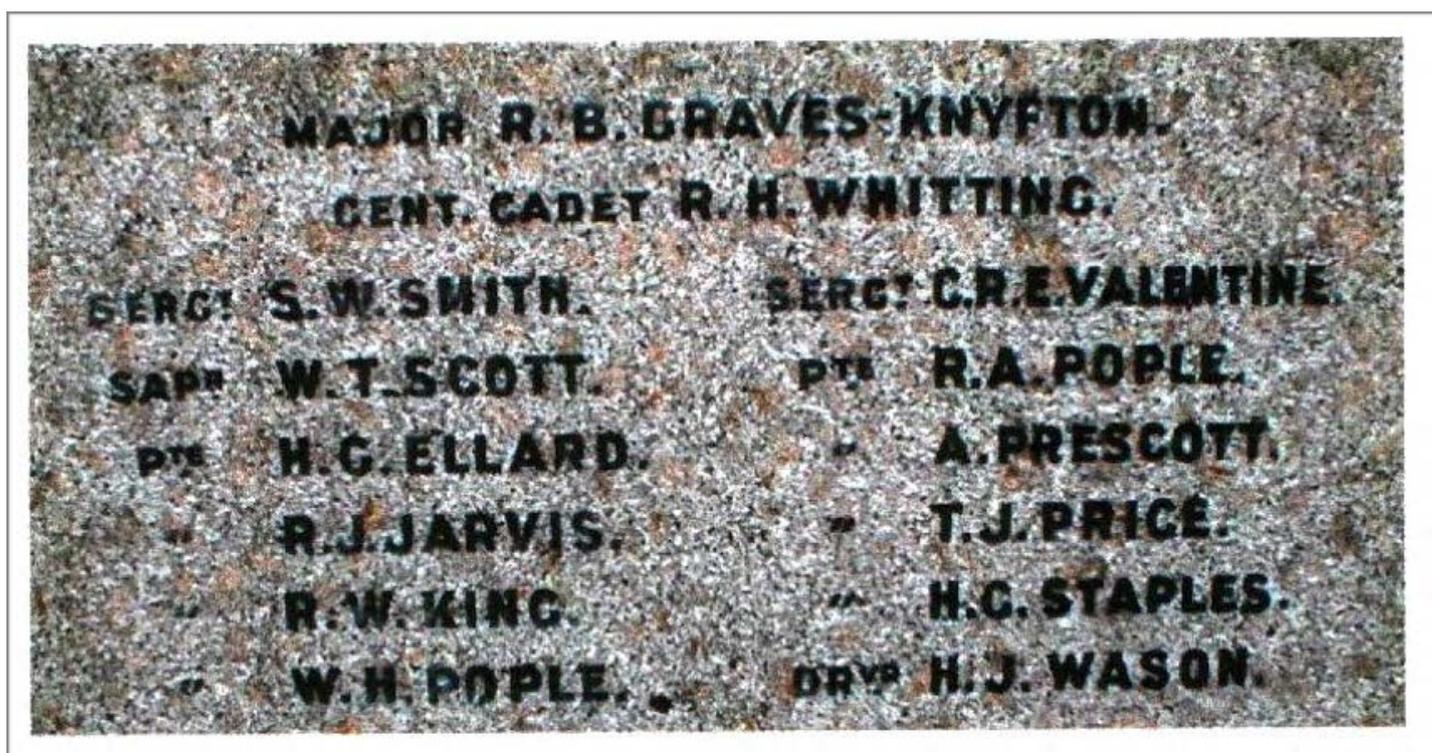
11 November 1919, the first Armistice Day: A minute or two before 11 o'clock this morning the children assembled in the main room and in



accordance with the King's wish, at the hour there was a complete stoppage of work and silence for two minutes. Afterwards, the hymn "O God Our Help in ages Past" was sung and the Rev Dr Dunn, who was present, offered prayers. One verse of the National Anthem was sung at the close.

11 March 1920: Owing to the unveiling of the War Memorial to the fallen taking place this afternoon in the Old Church Yard, the children were given a half holiday.

A captured German trench mortar stood opposite the Dolphin pub for 20 years, serving as another memorial of "the war to end all wars." Children would play on and around the cannon until one day in 1940; it was removed and melted down for use in the Second World War effort. In 1945, 12 more names were added to the Uphill memorial on the hill to represent Uphill Second World War dead. You can view and remember these names on the opposite side of the memorial that bears the 14 First World War names.



To the Glory of God in grateful tribute to our Brothers of the Parish who gave their lives for their Country in the Great War 1914-1918.



Thank you for sticking with these seasonal updates these last 4 years. I took over the column in 2015 and would like to thank Donald Brown for his extensive research into "Uphill's Great War" without which this column would not be what it has become today, and Stewart Castle for providing the opportunity to take this on and his work finding supplementary pictures in the newspaper archives. **The aim of these articles has been to help Uphill of today remember its First World War heroes. We will remember them.**

Josh Cottrell

Wartime poem 'In Flanders Fields' still holds meaning today



A memorial cross—seen on Aug. 2, 2014 in Ypres, Belgium—is affixed to the wall inside the fortified Advanced Dressing Station, near Essex Farm Cemetery, where Canadian Lt.-Col. John McCrae treated the wounded and is believed to have composed his famous poem 'In Flanders Fields.'

It was published nearly 100 years ago, but its words still ring true today.

Despite the passage of time, Canadian Lt.-Col. John McCrae's poem *In Flanders Fields* — often recited around Remembrance Day (and used on the Village Society's remembrance poster) or when a soldier dies in the line of duty — has managed to remain relevant to every conflict since the First World War.

McCrae was a military doctor who served on the battlefields of Western Europe during the First World War. He was inspired to write his famous poem in May 1915, after the combat death of a close friend.

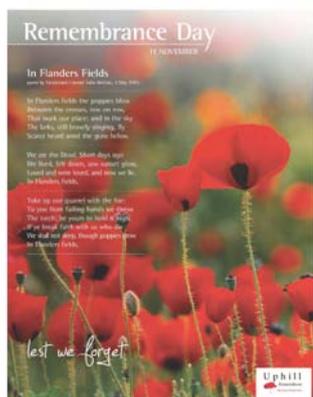
The simple, clear emotions contained in his text could apply to anyone suffering a loss.

McCrae's poem was first published anonymously in *Punch* magazine, a British weekly, and immediately became incredibly popular, not just among those in the military but also with civilians back home.

He wrote the poem to help himself recover from this very difficult event...it helped him deal with the pain. While the poem was about honouring the war dead, it was also an appeal for men to see where their duty lay, and to take up the places of the wounded and the dead.

McCrae did not, however, live to see just how much an impact his poem had, particularly on the eventual use of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. He died of pneumonia and meningitis in a small town in France in January 1918.

The opening lines of his poem — "In Flanders fields the poppies blow/Between the crosses, row on row" — have immortalized the image of the small red and black flowers growing amid the destruction of the war's bloody battlefields.



In Flanders Fields by John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we
lie

In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies
grow
In Flanders Fields.

U p h i l l
Remembers
 The First World War

U p h i l l
Remembers

The First World War

UPHILL REMEMBERS
The War Years
1914 - 1918

"We Will Remember Them"