

Hemel Hempstead Dead in Selected Somme Cemeteries or on Selected Somme Memorials

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Key:

KIA Killed in Action (killed during a battle or attack)
DOW Died of Wounds (died after a battle or attack due to being wounded)

CITADEL NEW MILITARY CEMETERY, FRICOURT

Location: V. E. 4

- Private 16296 **Fredrick Charles Bladon**, 8th Devonshire Regiment, KIA 24th May 1916, age 22. Son of Charles and Daisy Bladon, of 107, High St., Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

HAMEL MILITARY CEMETERY, BEAUMONT-HAMEL

Location: I. D. 19

- Private 15903 **Frederick Eames**, 1st Hampshire Regiment, DOW 31st July 1915 age 19. Son of Walter Eames, of 8, South Hill Rd., Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

POZIERES BRITISH CEMETERY, OVILLERS-LA BOISSELLE

Location: III. D. 8

- Private 12911 **John Buckley**, 6th Bedfordshire Regiment, KIA 15th July 1916, age 22. Son of Thomas and Elizabeth Buckley, of 32, Winifred Road, Apsley End, Hemel Hempstead. Native of Midleton, Co. Cork.

Location: III. G. 23

- Private 17525 **George Grover**, 6th Bedfordshire Regiment, KIA 15th July 1916, age 27. Son of Mrs. Annie Grover, of Bourne End, Boxmoor, Herts.

Location: IV. G. 43

- Second Lieutenant **Henry Leslie Paxton Balderson**, Devonshire Regiment, attached 1/6 Gloucestershire Regiment, KIA 23rd July 1916, age 24. Son of Robert Henry and Edith Balderson, of South Lea, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Henry Balderson enlisted as a part-time soldier, known as a Special Reservist, in 1911. He was then aged 18 and was training to be an accountant, working in Tower Hill in London. Being in the Special reserve meant attending training for as much as a month a year, at an army camp. It also meant joining the regular army as a full-time soldier if war broke out. So in August 1914, Balderson joined the 28th London Regiment, known as the Artists' Rifles. In little more than a month his officer potential had been recognised and he was transferred to the 8th Devonshire Regiment as a Second Lieutenant. Balderson's battalion was sent to France in July 1915, and he received a gun shot wound in action at Loos on 25th September 1915. As a result, Balderson was sent back to England it was not until May 1916 that he was fit for service.

Balderson was sent back to France in late June 1916, and was soon transferred to the 1/6th Gloucestershire Regiment. When the battalion played its part in the battle of the Somme, at Ovillers, Balderson was reported missing on 23rd July 1916. The battalion attacked soon after midnight, and immediately faced very heavy German machine gun fire. Meanwhile, the Germans fired shells which made it difficult for the wounded to be brought back to British lines. The officer who wrote the battalion War Diary said, 'The cause of the failure was in my opinion the lack of artillery preparation. None of the M.G.s [machine guns] ... had been knocked out and the enemy line had hardly been shelled at all.'

When Balderson's mother received the notice of that she would have had no certainty over whether or not he was dead. A month later, 24th August, she received a telegram saying that her son was dead. In her efforts to try to find out more, she was told at one point by the 1/6th Gloucestershires that they did not have any record of him serving in the battalion. That can only have confused his mother who was waiting for news.

At the end of the war, as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission tried to establish where all graves were, Balderson's body was found to be near to Pozieres, but not with other British graves. So his body was moved to the Pozieres British Cemetery. [Source: National Archive Kew, WO 95/2758, 1/6th Gloucestershire Regiment & WO 339/21495 File on H.L.P. Balderson.]

WARLENCOURT BRITISH CEMETERY

Location: VIII. D. 14

- Company Sergeant Major 13313 **Frederick Arthur Clamp**, 4th Bedfordshire Regiment, KIA 24th August 1918, age 23. Son of Mrs. Alice Clamp, of Westbrook Lodge, Boxmoor Herts.

POZIERES MEMORIAL

Panel 28

- Private 30822 **Thomas Childs**, 2nd Bedfordshire Regiment, KIA 1st July 1918, age 34. Husband of Lizzie Childs, of 2, Alban Cottages, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Panel 29

- Private 23762 **Victor George Thomas Perkins**, 7th Bedfordshire Regiment, KIA 22nd March 1918, age 20. Son of Tom and Mary Elizabeth Perkins, of Three Horse Shoes, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Location: Panel 47

- Private G/17257 **Leonard Wiseman**, C Company, 13th Royal Sussex Regiment, KIA 26th March 1918, age 19. Son of Mary Ann Wiseman, of 3, Victoria Terrace, Albion Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, and the late Samuel Wiseman.

Location: Panel 50

- Private 26396 **John William Clark**, 5th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, KIA 23rd March 1918, age 40. Son of John and Mary Clark, of Harefield, Middx; husband of Lizzie Clark, of Georgeville, Apsley End, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Location: Panel 54

- Private 73605 **Charles Alfred Viney**, 15th Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment), KIA 28th March 1918, age 19. Son of Alfred and Lilian Viney, of 70, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.
- Private 72419 **James Henry Philbey**, 16th Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment), KIA 16th April 1918, age 33. Son of the late Edward and Jane Philbey; husband of Caroline Philbey, of 10, Bridge St., Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Location: Panel 55

- Private 40312 **William Edward Barber**, 2nd Northamptonshire Regiment, KIA 24th April 1918, age 29. Husband of Emily A. Barber, of 220, London Rd., Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Private Barber was killed at a stage of the war when the allies had just about held off a German advance which had, at one point, looked as if it might lead to a German victory. That was launched on 21st March 1918 and it was a month before the allies could truly claim to have stopped the Germans. However, even by 24th April, there was still heavy fighting on the frontline. There were two occasions that day when Private Barber could have been killed. The first, in the very early hours, was when his battalion was shelled with both gas and high explosives, while resting in a wood called the 'Bois de Blaney'. Several men were killed during this that bombardment. Later in the day, at 9.15pm, the battalion was ordered to take part in an attack on German lines at Villers-Brettoneux. Two Australian battalions led the charge, with the 2nd Northamptonshires following behind. However, during the attack, the British and Australian soldiers became tangled in barbed wire (which had originally been set up by

the allies). Before they found a gap in the line they suffered losses due to heavy German machine gun fire. Once free of the wire, Barber's battalion successfully gained some ground. It was dark by this time which might have helped them to advance, but the Germans fire flares into the sky and this enabled the German machine guns to pick out targets more easily. Casualties were very heavy and the attack was called off. Even during the retreat, the 2nd Northamptonshires lost men to more German machine gun fire. Over night, the men dug new shallow trenches to allow them to hide from the machine guns. A British tank joined the battle the next day and this helped to push the Germans back in some areas. [Source: WO 95/1722]

- Private 19774 **William Odell**, 6th Northamptonshire Regiment, KIA 23rd March 1918, age 33. Son of William and Sarah Odell, of 102, High St., Hemel Hempstead; husband of Louisa Odell, of 82, High St., Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Location: Panel 75

- Rifleman 41894 **Harry William Freeman** 2nd Royal Irish Rifles, KIA 24th March 1918, age 20. Son of James Thomas and Louisa Freeman, of Fireman's Cottages, Apsley Mills, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

The 2nd Royal Irish Rifles was originally recruited from what is now Northern Ireland, especially in Belfast. But by 1918 it contained men from throughout the United Kingdom. Freeman had originally served in the Northamptonshire Regiment, in which he had won the Military medal. He had been transferred into the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles to make up for losses in that battalion. The battalion took part in the desperate effort to resist the German Spring Offensive which began on 21st March 1918. The German advance was fast and effective. All along the British lines, battalions were forced to retreat after making gallant efforts to hold up the Germans for as long as possible. Although the attack was eventually stopped after a month of bitter fighting, the Germans had come within 50 miles of Paris and it had looked that they might even win the war.

On 24th March, the battalion was at Cugny. At about 2pm in the afternoon, the Germans attacked with artillery and machine gun fire, supported by low-flying aeroplanes. When the German infantry arrived, many of the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles had fired all their bullets and were left with only their bayonets to fight with. That meant there was hand-to-hand fight and 150 men from the battalion faced this attack. Of those, 92 were killed, among them Harry Freeman. [Source: Cyril Falls, *The History of the 36th (Ulster) Division* (Belfast, 1922), pp. 215–16.

Location: Panel 81

- Sergeant 1302 **Thomas Jennings**, 3rd Rifle Brigade, KIA 27th March 1918, age 32. Son of Thomas and Elizabeth Jennings of Ebbens Rd., Apsley End; husband of Ellen Jennings, of 10, White Lion St., Apsley End, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. Jennings was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

THIEPVAL MEMORIAL

Location: Pier and Face 1 C

- Private 17572 **Arthur Whitman**, 1st Norfolk Regiment, 27th July 1916, age 21. Son of Mr. Whitman, of 26, Potton End, Berkhamsted, Herts; husband of Grace Spencer (formerly Whitman), of 2, Bailey's Yard, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Location: Pier and Face 2 C

- Corporal 18255 **Herbert Arnott**, 7th Bedfordshire Regiment, KIA 27th September 1916, age 21. Son of James and Elizabeth Arnott, of 29, Bury Hill, Hemel Hempstead; husband of Winifred May Sear (formerly Arnott), of 54, Cotterall's Rd., Hemel Hempstead, Herts.
- Private 10474 **John Biswell**, 1st Bedfordshire Regiment, KIA 27th July 1916, age 19. Son of Henry and Louisa Biswell, of "Belconey", Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.
- Private 20704 **Ernest Claridge**, 8th Bedfordshire Regiment, age 26. KIA 15th September 1916. Son of Elizabeth Claridge, of 70, Queen St., Hemel Hempstead, Herts, and the late Charles Claridge.
- Corporal 16427 **Robert Alfred Quartermass**, 7th Bedfordshire Regiment, KIA 28th September 1916, age 27. Son of John and Henrietta Quartermass, of Bods End Farm, Hemel Hempstead; husband of Mary Louisa Quartermass, of 56, High St., Berkhamsted, Herts.
- Private 22080 **Frederick Taylor**, 8th Bedfordshire Regiment, KIA 15th September 1916, age 34. Husband of Kate Taylor, of 7, St. John's Rd., Boxmoor, Herts.

Location: Pier and Face 3 D

- Lieutenant **Robert Chauncy Masterman**, 19th Lancashire Fusiliers, KIA 1st July 1916, age 20. Son of the late Henry Chauncy Masterman and Alice May Masterman, of Rough Down, Boxmoor, Herts. Educated at Harrow School. Enlisted Sept., 1914. Gazetted Dec., 1914. Also served at Gallipoli.



Lieut R.C. Masterman (photo courtesy of Harrow School Library)

Robert Masterman was born on 23rd January 1896 and enlisted as a Private in the Bedfordshire Regiment about a month after war broke out. His personal records show that he was relatively tall for the time at just under six feet, with dark hair and brown eyes. After initial training he was sent first to the regiment's 7th battalion, and then the 6th, both of which were in England. When he had enlisted he was still at school, preparing for university entrance, but he had served in his school's Officer Training Corps (OTC). His school was Harrow, the famous public school, which would have meant that he came from a wealthy family. His background and his time in the OTC meant that he was soon picked out as being a potential officer. During his training he applied for university, winning a scholarship to Hertford College, Oxford, which would have been taken up after the war. On being made a Lieutenant he joined the 9th Royal Lancashire Fusiliers which left Liverpool aboard a ship on 5th July 1915, headed for the Gallipoli Peninsula on the coast of Turkey where Britain was fighting the Turkish army. The battalion arrived there on 6th August 1915. Conditions were very tough there, which many men falling ill, and after nearly two months, Masterman's time at Gallipoli was short as he caught dysentery was led to serious diarrhoea. He was sent back to England on 3rd October 1915 on a ship called the *Carisbrook Castle*. The sea voyage lasted just over three weeks. Masterman was in hospital in Oxford until January 1916 when he was fit enough to join another battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers, the 19th,

which had been in France for two months. [Source: National Archive, Kew, WO 339/14147 File on Lt. R.C. Masterman; Harrow School Magazine.]

On 1st July 1916, the 19th Lancashire Fusiliers were part of the advance on the Somme, in the area of Authille Wood, close to Thiepval. When they arrived in the wood they heard from another battalion (1st Dorsets) which had been in an earlier stage of the attack, that British losses were heavy, but there was no question of turning back. As the battalion left the wood they came under heavy German machine gun fire. On reaching the first line of German trench taken by the British they found that it was so crowded with men who had tried to advance earlier that it could take no more soldiers. They sent a message back to the Brigade headquarters and were told simply to wait and not to send any more men forwards. Masterman had already been killed in this initial advance. The battalion held its position until being sent back behind the lines for rest later in the evening of 1st July. Of the 20 officers and 577 men who had gone into battle in the morning, about half were casualties of whom two officers and 38 men were dead. The battalion war diary noted, "Throughout the operation the Battalion behaved with the greatest steadiness, and the advance was carried out without hesitation on the part of the men – in spite of the intense artillery and machine gun enfilade fire." [Source: WO 95/2394, War Diary of 19th Lancashire Fusiliers.]

Masterman's Captain sent a letter home to his sister which said, "He was killed when leading his men to attack the enemy trenches. The ground we had to cross was swept by heavy machine gun fire and I am sorry to say that your brother was hit just before he got up to the enemy's wire. He led his men with great dash and was such a brave fellow. He had not been with us long, but during that short time he had become most popular with us all." [Source: Harrow School Magazine.]

Location: Pier and Face 4 A

- Private 202268 **William Bowsher**, 4th Royal Welsh Fusiliers, KIA 15th September 1916, age 26. Son of Mrs. Mary Jane Bowsher, of Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Location: Pier and Face 5 A

- Private 39567 **William Joiner**, 8th Gloucestershire Regiment, KIA 18th November 1916, age 19. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Joiner, of The Royal Oak, Bovingdon. Boxmoor, Herts.

Location: Pier and Face 6 B

- Private 3005 **Archibald John George**, 8th East Surrey Regiment, KIA 1st July 1916, age 21. Son of Mr. and Mrs. W. George, of 3, Catlin St., Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Location: Pier and Face 8 C

- Private 50400 **Edward Minter**, 11th Royal Fusiliers, KIA 17th February 1917, age 23. Son of Edward and J. Minter, of 75, Cowper Rd., Boxmoor, Herts; husband of Emily Florence Minter, of 5, Adeyfield Cottages, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

- Lance Corporal 19825 **Denis Augustus Westwood**, 26th Royal Fusiliers, KIA 15th September 1916, age 21. Son of Arthur and Annie Eunice Westwood, of "Horndean," Manor Estate, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Location: Pier and Face 8 D

- Private 24087 **John Henry Coker**, 2nd Grenadier Guards, KIA 25th September 1916, age 19. Son of Walter and Mary Coker, of 80, Cotterell's Rd., Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Location: Pier and Face 9 D

- Private 250839 **Thomas Chandler**, 1st/3rd London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers), KIA 8th October 1916, age 24. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Chandler, of 63, London Rd., Boxmoor, Herts.

Location: Pier and Face 10 C

- Private 71084 **Albert Edward Crawley**, 17th Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment), KIA 20th October 1916, age 19. Son of Henry Crawley, of 19, Mill St., Apsley End, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Location: Pier and Face 11 D

- Private 27458 **Edward George Goodenough**, 2nd Royal Berkshire Regiment, KIA 1st July 1916, age 24. Son of Frank Joseph and Emma Elizabeth Goodenough, of New Cottage, Bennetts End, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.
- Private 36425 **Reginald Pratt**, 6th Royal Berkshire Regiment, KIA 26th September 1916, age 18. Son of Thomas and Eliza Pratt, of 41, Puller Rd., Boxmoor, Herts. Pratt was formerly a member of the Hertfordshire Regiment.

Location: Pier and Face 13 A

- Private R/10604 **William James Burness**, 1st King's Royal Rifle Corps, KIA 27th July 1916. Husband of Clara Ann Burness, of 18, Weymouth St., Apsley End, Herts.
- Rifleman R/32 **Walter Nash**, 2nd King's Royal Rifle Corps, KIA 9th September 1916, age 35. Husband of May E. Nash, of 6, Flint Cottage, Durrant's Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.