

SPALDWICK ROLL OF HONOUR



“Lest we forget”

For The Fallen

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill; Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres,
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

Laurence Binyon 1914

John William Burton

Arthur Robert Chandler

Percy William Chandler

John William Chapman

Walter Whittlesea Dighton

William Woodham

Donald Robert Church

Leonard Cyril Nickerson

Lionel Watson Goodwin

William Burton

Private 31909 J William Burton, 6th Battalion Bedfordshire Regt, died from wounds received, and pneumonia, whilst in action in France, 24th April 1917, aged 38.



The 6th Battalion was a "Service" battalion, raised specifically for the duration of the war in August 1914, as a part of 'K1' - Lord Kitchener's first call to arms for 100,000 men to fight for their country against the King's enemies. Initially, the battalion was attached to the 9th (Scottish) Division at Aldershot whilst training, but when the 37th Division was formed in March 1915, the Battalion was moved to join them at Andover and trained on the Salisbury Plains, where it was transferred into the 112th Brigade.

On the 21st April 1915, the Division moved to Cholderton on the south east boundary of the Salisbury Plain and continued training in preparation for their entry into the war. By early June specialist training was in full swing and the troops realised they would not be waiting long before they got to grips with the enemy.

Finally, the Battalion boarded trains at Ludgershall Station, 7 miles north-west of Andover, and arrived at Southampton late

that afternoon. They left English shores at 6.30pm on board the Empress Queen and landed at 7a.m. at Le Havre in France on the 30th July 1915. Having gathered their supplies, the Division concentrated around St Omer before moving forward to the front line.

Following his conscription William joined the Regiment in January 1917 but spent little time with them. They were engaged at the Battle of Arras in April, specifically at the First and Second Battles of the Scarpe and the Battle of Arleux (when they came out of their assault against Greenland Hill on 29th April with just 58 men).

The 6th Battalion served entirely on the Western Front until disbanded in May 1918.

Miss Davis, late resident of The Manor, Spaldwick wrote of him in 1984:

“Son of William and grandson of John. A Spaldwick man if ever there was one. I remember when the news came that he had been seriously injured and then that he had died of his injuries. All who knew him respected him and his family were sad. He left a wife (Ethel) and daughter. He was a brother of Mr Ernest Burton who was so well known in the village”.

William’s grave is in the Military Cemetery in Aubigny.

Arthur Chandler

Corporal 9213 Arthur Robert Chandler, C Company, 1st Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment, died 16th March 1915, aged 25.

The 1st Battalion were a Regular Army battalion, who were



at Mullingar, Ireland, at the outbreak of war. On mobilisation they left Ireland as part of 15th Infantry Brigade in the 5th Division and went down in history as one of the battalions of "*Old Contemptibles*" who fought against the Kaiser's larger armies in the early engagements of the war. The original soldiers of the 1st

and 2nd Battalions were amongst the "*Old Contemptibles*" - the title proudly adopted by the men of the original British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) who saw active service before 22nd November 1914. They were the professional soldiers of the British army, almost all of whom were regular soldiers or reservists. They took their honourable title from the famous "Order of the Day" given by Kaiser Wilhelm II at his headquarters in Aix-la-Chapelle on the 19th August, 1914 - "*It is my Royal and Imperial Command that you concentrate your energies, for the immediate present upon one single purpose, and that is that you address all your skill and all the valour of my soldiers to exterminate first the treacherous English; walk over General French's contemptible little Army.*" No documentary evidence appears to have survived verifying the Kaiser's order so whether the phrase was the result of propaganda or not is open to debate.

Their division landed in France on 16th August 1914 as a part of Haig's II Corps and fought in the early engagements of the war. They were engaged at the Battle of Mons in August and fought during the stand at Le Cateau, where five Victoria Crosses were won by their division. After service during the battles of the Marne and the Aisne, they were rushed north to Flanders and were also involved in the Battle of La Bassée, followed by the First Battle of Ypres. By the end of November the division had suffered 5,000 casualties and

stayed in a purely defensive role that winter. Having moved to the Ypres salient early in 1915, the division were engaged at the Second Battle of Ypres, defending Hill 60, where another four Victoria Crosses were won in one day.

Arthur's CO wrote to his wife:

*1st Bedfords
Ypres
France
22.3.1915*

*Dear Mrs. Chandler,
I very much regret to have to inform you of the death of your husband, Corporal Chandler. A pluckier man in action I have never seen, always ready to do his duty. He was the best bomb thrower in the company and did very good work throwing bombs into German Trenches. He was killed instantly by a chance shot. His comrades asked permission to carry him right back to a chateau near Ypres, where he was buried. As a general rule men are buried close to the firing line, but his comrades wished to take him, so it was done. I sympathise most deeply in your loss.
Yours sincerely,
W. Allason (Major)*

And his "best chum" wrote:

*C Company
1st Bedfords
France
18.3.1915.*

*Dear Mrs. Chandler,
Regarding Arthur. He died on the morning of the 16th inst. (March) at half-past three. I had been talking to him about an hour previous. It was very dark, and hearing a shot,*

I asked him if he was shot. He said, "I think so". Those were the only words he spoke. I found he had been shot in the neck, and he lived only ten minutes.

He was the most popular man in our company. He was my best chum and the bravest amongst us.

You will be able to tell your boys when they grow up, how bravely their father fought and died for His King and Country.

Permission was asked by the men of his section to bury him, which was granted.

He was carried to the Chateau at Ypres and a cross was placed over his grave.

*You have the sympathy of the whole of "C" Company.
Corporal Green.*

Miss Davis wrote of him:

"I do not remember him but I knew his parents well and I remember his widow and two beautiful little boys so well brought up and cared for"

Arthur was the son of William and Jane Chandler and he is buried in the Perth Military Cemetery at West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Percy Chandler

Company Sergeant Major 7612 Percy William Chandler, 2nd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment, died of wounds to the head 28th June 1916, aged 31.

The older brother of Arthur Chandler (by six years) Percy was a much senior ranking soldier and who would have lived for the past 15 months knowing his brother had been killed.

He had himself been wounded severely in the right shoulder on 31st October 1914 and sent home to recover; he returned to the Front three months later. He was a regular soldier and over the previous 13 years had seen service in Gibraltar, Bermuda and South Africa.

The 2nd Battalion were at Roberts Heights near Pretoria (South Africa) at the outbreak of war and were immediately recalled to England, landing at Southampton on 19th September 1914 and forming part of the "Immortal" 7th Division. Having refitted for European warfare, the Division left Southampton at 8am 5th October on the S.S. Winifredian and after a brief stop at Dover for supplies, landed in Zeebrugge at 6.30am on the 7th October.

The Division moved almost 40 miles south to meet the rest of the army and on the 18th October 1914, around the 10km marker stone on the Ypres-Menin road, they met the German Army for the first time in a brief skirmish. The following day saw the Division attack Menin and the battalion were joined in a European battle for the first time. Their involvement in the Great War would last for another forty-nine months, with their last action being fought at Preux-au-Bois on the 4th November 1918, 8 km north east of Le Cateau and not far from their first engagement four years earlier. In 1916 they were engaged in several phases of The Battle of the Somme, namely the Battle of Albert (including during the opening day when their Division broke the German lines and the assault on Trones Wood).

The Chaplain wrote to his mother:

*56th Field Ambulance H.B.F
28th June 1916.*

*Dear Mrs. Chandler,
I am sending you the sad news of the loss of your son Percy*

William Chandler, who died of wounds in the head, this morning at 6.30 a.m. During the night he arrived at this hospital but was quite unconscious and passed away without feeling any pain.

You have given a very valuable life for our dear old country. May God give you strength and courage to bear the loss and may you be rewarded for the great sacrifice your son has made.

For him I have no sorrow. He is with those who have so nobly served and given all for us. They are at peace and safe in the keeping of our Heavenly Father.

I shall see that he is given a worthy burial and cross in our well kept little cemetery here.

Later the Graves Office, London will tell you the exact spot. If I can do anything here to help you please write and ask; it will be done willingly.

May God bless and comfort you.

*Faithfully yours,
Sudren. G.F.*

Miss Davis wrote of him:

“Arthur’s older brother. I do not remember him but he was married and I think had one child. Like his brother he was in the regular army”.

Percy is buried at the Dive Copse Cemetery, Silly-le-Sec.



John Chapman

Private 74007 John William Chapman, 2nd Battalion, Devonshire Regiment, died 31st May 1918 aged 19.

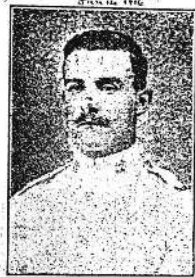
Miss Davis wrote of him:

“He was called up at aged 18 but looked less. In a later life he might have been still at school. He was just a slim young boy. One of Mr and Mrs Frank Chapman’s ten children”.

Witt Dighton

Private 8743 Walter Wittlesea Dighton, 2nd Battalion Norfolk Regiment, died 22nd November 1915, aged 24.

The Battalion was in Bombay in 1914 part of 18th (Belgaum) Brigade, 6th (Poona) Division of Indian Army. They moved to Mesopotamia, landing on 15th November 1914.



The Ottoman/Turkish army (some 600,000 troops divided into 38 divisions) was of an unknown quality. But with Germany as an ally, the Ottoman Empire represented a serious threat to the British Empire, so in a pre-emptive strike, London immediately landed an Anglo-Indian force at Basra, near the estuary of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. This was done to protect the Anglo-Persian oil pipeline, which was vital to the British navy, and to show the Union Jack in this strategically important area in the Persian Gulf.

The muddled thinking that led to this campaign continued during the resultant savage fighting, and the predominantly British force suffered heavy losses (205,000 British soldiers, and 47,000 French - with the sick included in the figures) and had to be withdrawn. The Ottoman/Turkish Fifth Army, well armed and fighting from strong defensive positions proved

more than a match for the Allies.

Witt died at the Battle of Ctesiphon, one of 682 killed, 3674 wounded and 237 missing.

Miss Davis wrote of him:

“Known as “Witt” he was one of Police Sergeant Dighton’s tall sons. His brother Tom was 6’4½” and Witt was about ½” less. He wrote my father thanking him for a gift parcel and the letter contained a sprig of dried leaves “gathered in the place Christ was born””.

Witt’s name is recorded on the memorial at Basra.

William Woodham

Private 19540 William Woodham, 8th Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment, died 18th October 1916, aged 39.

He became one of Kitchener’s volunteers in February 1915. After his training at Ampthill, William joined the 8th (Service) Battalion of the Bedfords in August 1915. By November 1915 they had become a part of 16th Brigade in the 6th Division. William joined them in France in January 1916 when they were located near Poperinghe about 5 miles west of Ypres. After several disastrous actions they built back up to strength and went through intense training for the Somme battles. The 8th Bedfords part in the Somme Battles began on August 2nd and in mid-September their individual objective was a heavily supported strong point called the Quadrilateral. On the 15th they renewed their attack but this time it was intended to be with tanks. In the event it was no more successful than the attack on the 13th. The supporting artillery barrage dropped short causing many casualties

amongst the advancing troops. As for the tanks they did not arrive in this sector. The attack went ahead but ground to a halt amidst the mud and entanglements. William's battalion was relieved and went into the reserve trenches about a mile to the rear at Guillemont.

On the 18th September they were in reserve for the final, and this time successful assault on the Quadrilateral by their Division, the 6th. Overall they had more than 400 casualties, mainly incurred on the 15th September, for the attacks in this area. On the 19th September they retired to Morlancourt for a well-earned rest. Early October was spent at Meaulte receiving replacement troops, cleaning up and more training. This was a typical work regime for any infantry battalion on the Western Front. Between the 8th and 10th October they underwent attack training at Trones Wood. This was now at the rear of the line but on 12th July 1916 it was where Percy Chandler's 2nd Bedfords had lost 244 men during an unsuccessful attack two weeks after his death. On the 12th October the 8th Bedfords were once again in the front line this time a little to the north at Guedecourt. This was in fact the furthest point east that the BEF was to reach in this sector. There were becoming bogged down again and the rainy weather was aiding the enemy.

In October 1916 the Regiment was in trenches east of Guedecourt. Enemy artillery was active and also snipers. On the 16th the sky was clear and aircraft were very active resulting in less hostile daylight shelling. However there was intense shelling at 5.45pm and the following day, the 17th, after active daytime artillery, there was a further hostile bombardment lasting 40 minutes – four killed and three wounded. On the 18th an attack was made at 3.40pm in the rain and on ground so sodden that tanks were unable to operate. The following day the regiment was relieved and

moved back, but without William.

Miss Davis wrote of him:

“I do not remember him but I believe he was very good looking. I knew his widow (Sarah Ann, neé Burton, Church Lane) and his family well. His youngest son Douglas served throughout the Second World War”

William’s name is recorded on the Thiepval Memorial.

Donald Robert Church

Lance Corporal 5827587 Donald Robert Church, 2/5 Battalion, The Queen’s Royal Regiment (West Surrey), died 12th May 1943, aged 24.

169 Brigade spent the winter of 1942/43 in Iraq, and when ordered to join the 8th Army (*in North Africa*), drove straight from Iraq into action at Enfidaville on 28th April. Its approach march of 3,313 miles in 31 days, an average of 107 miles a day, is the longest in military history.

Miss Davis wrote of him:

“An only child. I remember him a smiling baby in his pram. He could only have been in his early twenties when he was killed. It was while relaxing with his companions – he had just lighted a cigarette when a piece of shrapnel caught him”.

Don, son of Herbert and Ruth Pickering Church, is buried in Enfidaville War Cemetery in Tunisia.

Leonard Cyril Nickerson

Trooper 7944530 Leonard Cyril Nickerson, 4th Royal Tank Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps, died 28th May 1944, aged 22.

Miss Davis wrote of him:

“The youngest of a family of four. He won a scholarship and went to Kimbolton school. Afterwards he had a job in Thrapston, I think at Stewart and Lloyds. Soon after joining up he was taken prisoner and on one sad afternoon, while his mother had gone to the Red Cross in Huntingdon to see about getting him a pair of boots sent to him, a telegram arrived to say that he had died in the prisoner-of-war hospital”.

Leonard is buried in the War Cemetery in Berlin.

Lionel Watson Goodwin

Fusilier 22610183 Lionel Watson Goodwin, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment). Killed in action in Korea, 29th April 1953, aged 19.

The following account of a patrol action was written by L/Cpl Whelan who was taken prisoner in the action, and released from captivity in September 1953.

“A PATROL ACTION IN KOREA 29th/30th APRIL 1953

The patrol was formed from D Company and that the objective was to lay an ambush in the valley in front of point 159 position, which was then held by C Company, in order to deal with the enemy who were worrying the forward platoon on most nights. The patrol strength was 1 Officer and 15 Other Ranks, and was controlled by OC C Company, 2/Lt

Robin Ruhemann. He was killed in this action, along with Fus Goodwin, and Cpl Smith, 2/Royal Australian Regiment.

The position of the ambush was about 600 yards from our positions and in the paddy field in the valley floor. The route to the ambush position was not direct and required an approach move of about 200 yards. It was a darkish night, but it was possible to see up to about 50 yards. The paddy bund was soft. We were organised into three sections led by 2/Lt Ruhemann, Sgt Couchman and myself, in groups of five. About 50 yards of where we clashed with the enemy, we had a routine stop of some minutes to listen. Mr Ruhemann came over and told me when next we advanced to take my section 40 yards to his right, which I did. His idea was that should his group bump the enemy, mine would be in a position to carry out a flanking movement and give him plenty of fire support. We advanced again and Fusilier Haynes and I saw Chinamen on our right on the small paddy. I saw four of them, but he thought there were more – how right he was! They were moving slowly, rather like large frogs, knees bent and crouching down. They had not seen us. I motioned my section to get down and sent Fus Haynes to warn off Mr Ruhemann. Fus Haynes returned, and no sooner was he back, than Mr Ruhemann shouted “FIRE”.

Mr. Ruhemann's group was immediately engaged in a terrific fire fight with the enemy on the other side. We directed our fire at the enemy on the other side of the ditch. They seemed somewhat confused and were running back and forth across the paddy bund. Some moments later, a group of Chinese opened fire on us from our immediate front and later, another group behind them also opened fire. At this stage, the patrol had a large number of enemy to its front and right flank, and as the seconds went by, it seemed to me highly probable that more enemy would appear on our right. I, therefore, deployed

my section so that three of us could engage the enemy to our front, whilst the other two could warn us and fire on any Chinamen appearing on our right flank. The patrol had been putting up a pretty good show of fire-power and there was a great deal of jabbering and groaning at the Chinese end, on Mr Ruhemann's paddy bund. It seemed to me that, up to this time, our fire-power was good, hitting its mark and keeping the Chinese at bay. My Sten then jammed, and so I threw my grenades. At this point, other men in my section seemed also to be in trouble with their weapons, with the exception of Fus Haynes who was putting up a magnificent show. Mr Ruhemann shouted across "FIRE" and again "3 SECTION FIRE". For at least 15 seconds, we produced nothing very effective, except a few sporadic bursts and as the Chinese in front were slowly creeping towards us, firing like hell, the situation was suddenly becoming unpleasant. I got my Sten working again and the rest of the section made a great come back: The Chinese were scurrying off into the darkness – but not for long.

The Chinese at the end of Mr. Ruhemann's paddy bund directed some of their fire on us. Mr Ruhemann, in the meantime was having a furious fire-fight with the enemy on the other side of his paddy bund. The Chinese in front of us were firing blindly from out of the darkness. The party behind them must, at this time been moving around our right flank, and as no fire was coming from them Mr Ruhemann shouted "3 GET BACK" and I shouted back in acknowledgement. However, only three of my chaps got back in the first move of about 40 yards, and so I crawled forward again to find out what had happened. Those missing were Joyce and our Aussie friend, who before we were ordered to move, were on the left of my section. There was no trace of a body, or any other clue, as it was too hot to remain, I made a dash across the paddy field towards some undergrowth. I was too late.

Chinamen appeared on the right and in front from where I had just come, they advanced at a loping run, firing their Burps and throwing grenades as they came. Thinking my last moment had come, I got into a paddy rut and opened fire. Two crumpled up in front of me but I was then overpowered, dragged off to a ditch and trussed up.

The rest of the Chinese continued their advance. I was not aware of the ditch until I was taken to it. It was dead ground from where we had been originally fighting. In this ditch, when I was being trussed, I saw twenty to thirty Chinese crouching down, and from their immobility, it appeared they had been there for some time. This seemed strange, because, if it were so, they had only to throw their grenades which would have landed amongst us. It seemed to me they had taken no part in the action at all. They had a wireless set, and it must have been a pretty powerful one as the mush was very loud. I wondered why so many Chinese were out that night. I estimated there were eighty of them. The next morning saw nine dead bodies and counted twenty-three stretcher cases being carried back to their lines. I was astounded for, although I knew we had done a lot of damage, I never expected as much as that”.

Miss Davis wrote of him:

“He was killed on National Service in Korea. He was the youngest child of Mr and Mrs Goodwin who at that time were living at “West Lodge”. What made his death especially sad was that the time was almost up for his return and his mother had made a cake for his homecoming party and celebrations. Someone said of him that he was too young to have any say in the government of his country – the age of majority was then 21- he never had a vote but was old enough to give his life. I think all the village mourned with his parents, brothers and sisters (he was the youngest brother of Jean Bradshaw).



Sources and Acknowledgements:

<http://www.roll-of-honour.com>

<http://www.fusiliermuseumlondon.org>

<http://www.britishembassy.or.kr>

<http://www.royaltankregiment.com>

<http://www.cwgc.org>

<http://www.bedfordregiment.org.uk>

<http://rrflondon.2day.ws>

Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), the poet and art critic, was born in Lancaster in 1869. He worked at the British Museum before going to war, having studied at Trinity College, Oxford where he won the Newdigate poetry prize. Whilst on the staff of the British Museum he developed an expertise in Chinese and Japanese art.

Aside from his best known poem *For The Fallen* (1914), most notably the fourth stanza which adorns numerous war memorials, Binyon published work on Botticelli and Blake among others. He returned to the British Museum following the war. His *Collected Poems* was published in 1931.



