

Tracing Bucks Servicemen of the Great War

In January 1918, the Lord Lieutenant, the Marquis of Lincolnshire, accepted the Buckinghamshire Roll of Honour, recording the names of 19,450 men who had joined the forces voluntarily prior to June 1916. There are many inaccuracies on the Roll of Honour. It excludes those who were enlisted after June 1916, and it is not clear how far it records the 9,000 men assumed to be serving already in the armed forces in August 1914. Indeed, while the Roll records only 406 of those listed as being dead in January 1918, there are over 8,000 names recorded on the county's war memorials. In turn, an invaluable database of servicemen mentioned in the Bucks wartime local press and other sources carries over 44,000 names. In accepting the Roll, the Marquis also spoke of the 3,000 men serving in the domestic Volunteer Training Corps, the Great War equivalent of the Home Guard, and a further 4,000 men serving as Special Constables. The Roll, therefore, does not give anything like a full picture of the military effort of the county. Every conceivable military unit and every theatre of war is represented on the county's war memorials and on the many parish rolls of honour that have also survived. Nor should it be forgotten that many men from Buckinghamshire served in the Royal Navy, and that many others born in Buckinghamshire served in Australian, Canadian or New Zealand forces having emigrated to the dominions before the war.

The Territorial Force units raised in the county during the war comprised the 1/1st, 2/1st and 3/1st Bucks Battalions; the 1/1st, 2/1st and 3/1st Royal Bucks Hussars; the 2nd South Midland Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance; and the South Midland Brigade Company, Army Service Corps. There were also four battalions of the Volunteer Training Corps/Volunteer Force, reduced by 1918 to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Volunteer Battalions, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. Kitchener or 'New Army' Service, into which men from the county may have been recruited, included the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Service Battalions, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

The following represents those sources available for tracing specifically Buckinghamshire servicemen of the Great War.

Buckinghamshire Remembers (www.buckinghamshireremembers.org.uk) has two elements, the 'Buckinghamshire Remembers' database compiled by June and Peter Underwood of all those named on Buckinghamshire War Memorials, and 'Clint's Roll of Honour' compiled over some 20 years by Clint Lawson. Both are fully searchable.

'Buckinghamshire Remembers' lists those named on war memorials with details (where known) of name, unit, rank and service number, dates of birth and death, occupation, parents, and cemetery. It draws upon the war memorials themselves, *Soldiers Died in the Great War*, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Service and Pension Records, the 1918 Absent Voters' List, the Medal Index Cards at the National Archives, the Canadian and Australian Archives, Censuses, Baptism records, Civil Birth and Death Registers, and additional sources such as Trade Directories and Parish magazines.

'Clint's Roll of Honour' contains a record of every serviceman mentioned in the wartime local press, the Bucks Roll of Honour, the 1918 Absent Voters' List, *Soldiers*

Died in the Great War, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission registers, and the Casualty Books of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion preserved in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies. Individual entries give references to the local press entries by newspaper, date, and page number. The ten newspapers included are the *Bucks Herald*; *Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News*; *Buckingham Advertiser and North Bucks Free Press*; *South Bucks Free Press*; *Bucks Examiner*; *Wolverton Express and Bucks Weekly News*; *North Bucks Times and County Observer*; *Middlesex and Buckinghamshire Advertiser*; *Slough, Eton and Windsor Observer*; and *Windsor, Eton and Slough Express*.

Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (www.buckscc.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/centre-for-buckinghamshire-studies)

The Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies in Aylesbury has a wide variety of material relating to the Great War in Buckinghamshire. All documents and photographs of the **Buckinghamshire Military Museum Trust** are automatically placed in the Centre's TA Collection. With particular reference to servicemen it has material on local recruitment; some of the military service tribunals that adjudicated claims for exemption from conscription; correspondence on the Bucks Volunteer Training Corps, including some nominal rolls (TA/7/7 and 13); some parish rolls of honour; correspondence on war memorials; the Bucks Roll of Honour (TA/1/66); the Roll of Honour of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (TA/6/38); the Casualty Books of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion (TA/6/ 11-14), which record deaths, wounds, illnesses, periods of leave, and disciplinary offences; Order Books and Trench Logs for the 1/1st Bucks Battalion (TA/6/4-10); a roll of A Squadron of the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars (TA/3/27); casualty rolls of the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars (TA/3/82, 523, 524); nominal rolls of the 2/1st and 3/1st Royal Bucks Hussars (TA/3/41, 43); order books of the 3/1st Royal Bucks Hussars (TA/3/42); casualty lists of members of the Bucks Constabulary who died in the war (TA/3/89); and the 1918 Absent Voters' List (R-E 62)

The Centre also holds microfilm of some of the county newspapers, primarily the *Bucks Herald*; *Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News*; and *South Bucks Free Press*.

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust (www.sofa.org.uk)

Based in a new museum at Woodstock, the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust can undertake research (for a fee) into its records relating to the battalions of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry including the Buckinghamshire Battalions. In addition, the Trust has records of the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars. There is a soldier search facility online but this gives only basic information, necessitating further enquiry.

The National Archives (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Some of the Great War records preserved at Kew are now available online through www.ancestry.co.uk including the surviving Army Service Records (WO 363), Army Pension Records (WO 364), and Medal Index Cards (WO 372). WO 363 represents the 'burnt collection' of soldiers' files retrieved from the warehouse in which they were kept that was bombed in September 1940, comprising about 25% of the original total. WO 364 is the 'un-burnt' collection of supplementary records for those in receipt of war pensions. A fee is chargeable for downloaded information.

The National Archives itself has additional records online including Army Medal Cards (WO 372); Army Unit War Diaries (WO 95), an on-going programme of digitalisation; Prisoner of War Interview Reports (WO 161); Household Cavalry Service Records (WO 400); Middlesex Military Service Tribunal Records (MH 47), Women's Auxiliary Army Corps Service Records (WO 398); Army Nurses Records (WO 399); Royal Marines Service Records (ADM 159); Royal Navy Ratings' Service Records (ADM 188); Royal Navy Officers' Service Record Cards (ADM 340); Royal Naval Division Service Records (ADM 339); Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Service Records (ADM 337, BT 164 and 377); Royal Naval Air Service Officers' Records (ADM 273); Women's Royal Naval Service Records (ADM 318 and 336); RAF Officers' Service Records (AIR 76); and Women's Royal Air Force Records (AIR 80). A fee is payable to download some of the information.

Both the Medal Rolls (as opposed to the Medal Card Index), and the Roll of the Silver War Badge (Both in WO 329), for those discharged prior to the end of the war) are also available commercially.

As yet neither digitalised nor commercially available are the service records of wartime army officers (WO 339) and Territorial Force officers (WO 374). However, the name indices are now available online through the National Archives website, enabling researchers to discover if a file exists. The file can then be accessed by a visit to the National Archives or a copy can be provided for a fee.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org)

The CWGC site now has an enhanced online guide to its casualty and cemetery databases, often including the inscriptions requested by next of kin, and if bodies were subsequently relocated to more centralised cemeteries.

Government Probate Service (www.gov.uk/probate-search)

Over 230,000 surviving soldiers' wills from the Great War have been digitalised. They are downloadable for a fee.

Western Front Association (www.westernfrontassociation.com)

The Ministry of Defence has granted custody of the 6.5 million army pension index cards to the Western Front Association, which has an on-going digitalisation programme. The cards comprise those for Other Ranks Died (one million individual records), Widows and Dependents of Other Ranks Died (in excess of one million records), Other Ranks Survived: Requested/Rejected/Receiving Pension (over 2.5 million records), Officers Survived and Officers' Widows (approximately 150,000 records), and Merchant Naval Cards (about 5,000 records). At present there is a search fee payable.

Commercial Services

As well as Ancestry, there are other commercial providers including Find My Past (www.findmypast.co.uk), and Forces War Records (www.forces-war-records.co.uk) that provide access to additional records such as *Soldiers Died in the Great War*; the *National Roll of the Great War*, an incomplete contemporary publication; birth, death and marriage registers; and census material.

Dominion Records

For those who enlisted in Dominion forces, service records may be found online for Australia at www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records

and for Canada at www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx

New Zealand records are not available online but information on access can be obtained from www.nzdf.mil.nz/personnel-records/nzdf-archives/accessing-military-service-records.htm

A Bucks Bibliography for the Great War

Ian Beckett, 'The Local Community and the Great War: Aspects of Military Participation', *Records of Bucks* 20, 4 (1978), pp. 503-15.

Ian Beckett, 'The Territorial Force', in Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson (eds), *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 127-63. [Reprinted by Pen & Sword, 2004]

Ian Beckett, 'The Territorial Force in the Great War', in Peter Liddle (ed.), *Home Fires and Foreign Fields: British Social and Military Experience in the First World War* (London: Brassey's, 1985), pp. 21-38.

Ian Beckett, *Call to Arms: Buckinghamshire's Citizen Soldiers* (Buckingham: Barracuda Books, 1985).

Dorothy Blackman, *Burnham, Cippenham and Hitcham War Heroes* (Basingstoke: Privately printed, 1995).

Frank Bond, *Their Names Shall be Carved in Stone: The War Memorial at Eton Wick and Boveney* (Privately published, 2000).

Bow Brickhill Historical Society, *Bow Brickhill during the Great War* (2014)

Roger Cook, *In Memory of those men of Chesham Bois who served and fell in the Great War of 1914-18* (2011)

Captain Lionel Crouch, *Duty and Service: Letters from the Front* (Aylesbury: Privately printed, Aylesbury, 1917).

Dagnell War Memorial

D. Dawson, 'First World War Practice Trenches in Pullingshill Wood, Marlow: An Interpretation and Evaluation', *Records of Bucks* 47, 1 (2007), pp. 179-90. [Also in *Battlefields: The Journal of the Battlefield Trust* 13, 2 (2008), pp. 14-21.

Michael Farley, 'A Survey of Probable First World War Practice Trenches at Whiteleaf, Princes Risborough, Bucks' (Bucks County Council: Unpublished Report, 1988).

Edward Guinness and Kenneth Peters, *Fulmer's Fallen* (2009).

For The Village of Maids Moreton and Its Men who fought and died in the Great War

Edmund J. Hounslow, *Fighting for the Bucks: The History of the Royal Bucks Hussars, 1914-18* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2013).

R. Jupiter, *Letters from the Front: A Buckinghamshire Boy Goes to War* (2008) [Maurice Watson of Stone]

- D. J. Kelly, *The Chalfonts and Gerrards Cross at War* (Privately printed, 2014)
- Peter Kent, *To the Front and Back: Four and a Half Years in the Life of an Infantryman* (Milton Keynes: Privately printed, 2007).
- Roger Kitchen (ed.), *Your Loving Brother Albert: The Letters of a Boy Soldier, 1915-16* (Wolverton: Speakeasy Press, 1992).
- Lieutenant Colonel A. F. Mockler-Ferryman (ed.), *The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Chronicle* 5 vols. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode): 1914-15, 1915-16, 1916-17, 1917-18, and 1918-19.
- Valerie Moir, *A Great Loss: Wendover Men Killed in World War One* (2006)
- Hawtin Mundy, *No Heroes, No Cowards* (Milton Keynes: People's Press, 1981).
- David Pickup, *Lest We Forget: The Men and Women Commemorated on Aylesbury Town War Memorial* (2000)
- David Pickup, *Fighting Side by Side: The Men from the First World War who are Commemorated on the Stone, Bishopstone, Dinton and Ford War Memorials* (2014)
- Harold Pollins, 'The Rothschilds as Recruiters for Buckinghamshire in the First World War', *Bulletin of the Military Historical Society* 50 (1999), pp. 196-205.
- Lionel Rigby, *Every One a Hero: Stoke Poges in the Great War* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2006).
- Ronald Saunders, *Penn and Tylers Green in the Great War and the Men Who Did Not Return* (Penn and Tylers Green Residents Society, 2009).
- Michael Senior, *No Finer Courage: A Village in the Great War* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004). Published in a second edition as *Fromelles 1916: No Finer Courage – The Loss of an English Village* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2011).
- John Sheldon, *The Stewkley Lads Fallen in the Great War* (Stewkley Local History Group, 2009).
- [Ivor Stewart-Liberty], *A Record of the 2nd Bucks Battalion TF, 1914-18* (Chesham: Privately printed, 1918).
- Major General J. C. Swann, *The Citizen Soldiers of Buckinghamshire, 1795-1926* (London and Aylesbury: Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1930).
- Major General J. C. Swann, *The 2nd Bucks Battalion* (Aylesbury: Bucks Territorial Force Association, 1919).
- John A. Taylor, *Home Fires: Life in the North Bucks Towns and Villages during the First World War* (Southampton: Magic Flute Publications, 2014).
- John A. Taylor, *Newport Pagnell during the First World War* (Southampton: Magic Flute Publications, 2014).
- John A. Taylor, *Stony Stratford during the First World War* (Southampton: Magic Flute Publications, 2014).

Their Names Shall be Carved in Stone: The War Memorial of Eton Wick and Boveney

Kate Thompson (ed.), *Julian Grenfell, Soldier and Poet: Letters and Diaries, 1910-15* (Hertfordshire Record Society Publications, 2004).

Barry Thorpe, *The Men of Wooburn War Memorial: Their Stories* (Thames Valley Hospice, 1993).

Wartime Quainton

World War One Memorial St John the Evangelist, Radclive cum Chackmore

Captain P. L. Wright, *The First Buckinghamshire Battalion, 1914-19* (London and Aylesbury: Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1920).