

Kohima Epitaph

“When You Go Home, Tell Them Of Us And Say,
For Their Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today”.

Rothersthorpe Memorial



We Will Remember Them

Author's note

I decided to research those names on the village war memorial whilst helping Jodie with the 'best village' competition and seeing other villages who had done similar. This alongside the research we had already done into the Boyson family and my love of military history inspired me to undertake the task.

In searching for the information, I've used various sources, exclusively via the internet and in some places made some guesses where the information has been sparse. I'm sure given a week's unrestricted access to the National Records Archive in Kew I could come up with much more; however that is a task for another day.

The records which are publically available, vary in their quality, with this in mind I've tried to keep my guesses to a minimum however I have made some but would like to think that I've got the majority right.

Should someone be related to any of those individuals named on the memorial and feel that I've got it wrong then please let me know, likewise if any of the information is new to you, and you'd like to see where I got it from then please, contact me.

It is my intent, once the village has had the opportunity to view this, and more importantly any mistakes I've made have been corrected that I'll organise to print off a few copies and they will be made available for a small fee, in support of the church funds. Should you wish to order one, just let me know.

Andy Johnson



Plate 3 – Pte Fred Boyson (taken from a family photo)



Plate 4 – Serjeant Kate Boyson (from same photo as above)

BOYSON, HARRY BILLINGHAM, Corpl., No. 11/858, 4th Reinforcements, 6th Wellington Mounted Rifles, New Zealand Expeditionary Force, *s.* of John Edward Boyson, of New Cottages, Rothersthorpe, co. Northampton, Foreman at Hunsbury Hill Iron Furnaces for over 40 years, by his wife, Harriett Anne, dau. of Henry Billingham; *b.* New Cottages aforesaid, 1 April, 1890; educ. Rothersthorpe Village School; went to New Zealand in Dec. 1910, and settled at Gisborne, where he was employed as a Slaughterman at Nelson's Freezing Works; volunteered for Imperial Service, and joined the Wellington Mounted Rifles in Nov. 1914; left for Egypt in March, 1915; served with the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force at Gallipoli from 14 Aug. following, and was killed in action in the fight for Achi Baba on the 27th of that month; *unm.*



Harry Billingham Boyson.

BRADBERRY, CYRIL CHRISTOPHER DAVID, Private, No. 2630, D. Coy., 24th (Sportsman's) The Royal Fusiliers (London Regt.), elder *s.* of

Plate 1 – Pte Boyson

HURST, HUBERT EDWARD, Private, No. 863, 7th Battn. 2nd Infantry Brigade, Australian Imperial Forces, only *s.* of Frederick Charles Hurst, of The Lodge, Rothersthorpe, near Northampton, by his wife, Matilda, dau. of John Lawrence; *b.* Rothersthorpe, 20 April, 1894; educ. there; served for some time as member of the Northants Territorials; went to Australia in Oct. 1913; joined the Australian Expeditionary Force in Sept. 1914; served in Egypt 2 Dec. 1914, to April, 1915, including the repulse of the Turkish attack on the Suez Canal in Feb., and was killed in the attack at Cape Helles 8 May, 1915. An officer of his company wrote that on the day of the landing at the Dardanelles (25 April) and during the subsequent severe fighting, Private Hurst conducted himself like a brave and gallant soldier, and that had he lived he would have been promoted; *unm.*

Plate 2 – Pte Hurst (Herbert's military records include a letter from the Aus Ministry of Defence regarding the incorrect spelling of his name on the above obituary).

Herbert James

Private 7494

Northamptonshire Regiment (1st Bn)



Died 01/10/1914 – UK

Private Herbert James was the son of Emma James and lived with her and his Grandfather Robert in Rothersthorpe according to the 1901 census. James' military records show that he was married to Mabel Alice James of Frensham Common in Surrey, however they had lived at 52 Oxford St, Far Cotton previously.

The 1st Bn Northamptonshire Regiment was part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) which landed in Le Harve in 1914 and were placed under the command of the 2nd Bde, 1st Infantry Division. They were heavily involved in the Battle of Mons and the subsequent retreat from Mons following the collapse of the French 5th Army on their right flank. By the time of Herbert's death the Regiment had been involved in two further battles on the western front at both Marne and Aisne, the later which saw the first orders given to the 'BEF' to entrench their positions. Herbert is recorded as 'dying of wounds sustained' having been repatriated to the UK. It is likely that these wounds were sustained in one of those actions named above. He is remembered in Birmingham (Lodge Hill) Cemetery – Screen Wall. B10. 2. 210B.

Harry Billingham Boyson

Corporal 11/858

Wellington Mounted Rifles (N.Z.E.F.)



Died 27/08/1915 – Gallipoli

Corporal Harry Billingham Boyson was the son of John Edward and Harriett Ann Boyson of New Cottages Rothersthorpe. Having emigrated to New Zealand in 1910 (please see plate 1), on the outbreak of war he signed up and subsequently served in the Wellington Mounted rifles.

The Wellington Mounted Rifles Regiment was one of four mounted rifle regiments raised to serve overseas in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force during WWI. The Regiment departed NZ in October 1914 headed for Alexandria in Egypt after joining up with the main body of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Once in Alexandria the regiment undertook a number of months of training before receiving orders in May 1915 to move to Gallipoli as an infantry unit to reinforce the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) already engaged in fighting against the Ottoman Turks. Arriving in ANZAC cove on 12th May 1915 the men of the regiment were immediately thrown into the fighting and spent much of their first few months 'up on the line' with little respite. In August the regiment was involved in the Battle of Chunuk Bair which saw a major attempt by the allies to break out of the Gallipoli peninsula. It was during this battle that the regiment was ordered to assault a key Turkish position (Hill 60) which they finally took at their second attempt on the 27th August 1915. The position was fiercely fought over during that day and evening and as a result the WMR suffered 2 officers and 48 other ranks killed of which Corporal Boyson was one.

He is remembered on the Hill 60 (New Zealand memorial) which today stands at the site of the battle.

Kate Boyson

Serjeant W/12785

Auxiliary Territorial Service

Died 04/03/1943 - UK



Serjeant Kate Boyson was the daughter of Frederick and Sarah Ann Boyson of the New Cottages, Rothersthorpe. Also the sister of Private Fred Boyson (16th Bn, Manchester Regiment).

The Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) was the women's branch of the British Army during WWII. It was formed on 9th September 1938 and existed until 1st February 1949. Initially the ATS were employed as cooks, clerks and storekeepers, however as more men were called up to join the war effort both the size and employment of the ATS increased, seeing many working as drivers, postal workers, ammunition inspectors and even members of mixed sex anti-aircraft batteries.

Unable to find Kate's records at this moment in time, I cannot even speculate as to how she died. More to follow hopefully.

Kate Boyson is buried in Rothersthorpe cemetery.

Joseph Dumbleton

Private T/14427383

Royal Army Service Corps

Died 09/04/1945 – Italy



Private Joseph Dumbleton was the son of Alfred and Caroline Dumbleton of Rothersthorpe, Northampton.

The Royal Army Service Corps roots lay in the royal Waggoner's, raised in 1794. During WWI the Army Service Corps provided the bulk of supply and transport services to the British Army and was granted their Royal 'prefix' in recognition of its services during this period. In WWII the Corps operated all of the Army's road transport, and included some responsibility for sea and air transport as well, supplying rations, stores, ammunition and fuel.

The date of Joseph's death, tied in with his place of burial makes it likely that he was caught up in what would appear to have been an ammunition accident which shook the port of Bari in Italy on 9th April 1945. On this day, in berth 14, was docked the USS Charles Henderson, loaded with about 2,000 tons of munitions (both 1,000 and 500 lb bombs) for use by the US Army Aviation Force. Whilst she was being unloaded an explosion occurred in number 5 hold which resulted in the vessel being torn apart, showering the entire port with burning debris from the ship. The explosion not only destroyed the Charles Henderson but devastated the berth, adjoining sheds and all the port equipment in the vicinity. It also created a tidal wave that resulted in damage sustained to every other ship in the port. Losses are recorded as 42 crewmen from the Charles Henderson, approx 270 Italian workers and an undetermined number of Allied military personnel.

Joseph Dumbleton is buried in Bari War Cemetery, Plot XIV.F.39.

Herbert Edward Hurst

Private 863

Australian Imperial Force (7th Bn)

Died 08/05/1915 – Gallipoli



Private Herbert Edward Hurst was the son of Frederick and Matilda Hurst of 'The Lodge', Rothersthorpe. Having emigrated to Australia (please see plate 2) at the outbreak of war he signed up to fight and subsequently served with the 7th Bn (Infantry) of the AIF.

The 7th Bn AIF was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF. Recruited from Victoria it was raised within two weeks of the declaration of war and embarked just two months later to Egypt and then Gallipoli. The Bn took part in the initial ANZAC landings on 25 April 1915 and was then moved 10 days later Cape Helles to help in the attack on the village of Krithia. On the morning of the 8th May 1915, the 7th Bn, along with the 5th, 6th and 8th Bn's were preparing for a major assault on the Ottoman Turk forces in that area. At 5pm that evening they were given orders to attack, forming up into firing line and advancing by 5.10pm. Advancing alongside their sister battalions the 7th was ordered to hold the advance after moving only 250 yds. Later that evening, having continued their slow advance an order came from the 6th Bn to dig in. However because the 7th had advanced slightly further than the rest they had to retire under the cover of darkness to complete the line. During the evening fierce fighting continued as the line off to their right was enfiladed by the enemy. As a result of the action throughout the 8th May the Bn diary records a total of 250 casualties including 19 officers. It is assumed that Private Hurst was among these. His death is commemorated today on the Helles Memorial in Gallipoli, panel 201 to 204.

The book entitled 'Our Dear Old Battalion' The story of the 7th Bn AIF 1914-1919 by R. Austin is available online.

William Ellis James

Private 27976

East Yorkshire Regiment (10th Bn)



Died 05/10/1917 - France

Private William Ellis James was the son of Frederick and Matilda James of 4 Castle Farm, Rothersthorpe.

Private William Ellis James originally served with the 4th Bn Northamptonshire Regiment which was a 2nd line unit based purely in the UK spending most of their time in the Harrogate and Stockton. It is likely that whilst in that area many individuals were transferred to those NE Bn's being raised and as such Private James found himself serving with the 10th East Yorkshire (Service) Bn (1st Hull) more commonly known as the Hull Commercial. Moving to France in 1916 the Bn was assigned to the 92 Bde, 31 Div and fought during the 1916 Somme Offensive and the 1917 Arras Offensive. At the time of William's death the Bn had recently been involved in fierce fighting including the Battle for Oppy Wood which was assaulted by the 92nd Bde during May 1917. The assault conducted by the 10th/11th and 12th Bn's East Yorks was significant due to the sheer amount of casualties suffered. The 10th themselves suffered 13 Officers and 223 other ranks killed or injured out of a total of 16 Officers and 484 ranks who began the assault. As with many other battles during this period, the Arras Offensive changed very little on the Western Front and despite the Bn's losses at Oppy Wood they remained within the Arras area and it is during the subsequent phases of the Offensive that Pte James was killed.

He is buried at Roclincourt Military Cemetery. Plot I.E.7.

Ronald Frank Bayliss

Lance Corporal 4805290

Suffolk Regiment (5th Bn)

Died 25/11/1943 – China



I have been unable to locate any records for Lance Corporal Ronald Frank Bayliss. Further to this, with the last publicly available census dated 1911, Ronald would not yet have been born and is therefore hard to trace. There were no Bayliss' living in Rothersthorpe during 1911.

The 5th Bn Suffolk Regiment (along with the 4th) were sent to the far east during late 1941 as part of the 18th Infantry Division and ended up diverted to Singapore on the entry of Japan into the war. They fought gallantly in the battle for Singapore, however when it finally fell on 15 February 1942, those surviving the battle were made prisoners of war and found themselves constructing the infamous Burma railway where many lost their lives due to the inhuman treatment they received.

Ronald Bayliss is buried in Sai Wan War Cemetery on the island of Hong Kong. This particular cemetery is mostly for those individuals who died in the defence of Hong Kong, however the remains of those POW's who died in Taiwan were brought to the cemetery for burial in 1946. It is possible Ronald was one of these individuals. He is buried in plot V.E.9.

In Flanders Fields



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, through poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Maj John McCrae, May 1915.

John Thomas Botterill

Private G/15372

Royal Sussex Regiment (12th Bn)

Died 10/10/1916 – France



Private John Thomas Botterill was the son of Francis and Emma Botterill of Rothersthorpe.

The 12th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment (2nd South Down) was formed at Bexhill on 3rd November 1914. It moved to France in March 1916 landing at Le Harve where it was subordinate to the 116th Brigade of the 39th Infantry Division. The pals battalions of the Royal Sussex - the South Down battalions, or "Lowther's Lambs", - suffered terrible casualties on 30 June 1916, 24 hours before the much better known "First Day on the Somme". This was in a diversionary attack, a large scale raid launched by 39th Division at a position called the Boar's Head, near Richebourg l'Avoue. Just under 1,100 casualties (dead, wounded and prisoners) were incurred in a fruitless attack that had no effect on the enemy's abilities to withstand the next day's assault on the Somme. At the time of John's death the 39th Division was heavily involved in the battle of the Ancre, (a phase of the battle of the Somme, 1916) including the assaults on the Stuff Redoubt (which fell to a Bn from the 39th a day before his recorded death) and the follow up assault on the Schwaben Redoubt, both key German defensive positions.

He is buried at Varennes Military Cemetery, Plot I.C.6.

Ellis Victor Ashby Smith



Private 28965

Essex Regiment (98th Bn)

Died 13/01/1917 – UK

Private Ellis Victor Ashby Smith was the son of Mr and Mrs Thomas Smith of Church St, Rothersthorpe, and husband of Evelyn Emmie Smith of 7 Rickard St, Far Cotton.

His record shows service with the 14th (Training) Bn Essex Regiment who were based in Northampton from January to May 1916, converting into the 98th (Training Reserve) Bn on 1st September 1916. Shortly after this date he was transferred to the Army War Reserve and found employment in Coatbridge, Lanarkshire as a munitions worker. In Coatbridge he worked for William Baird and Co within their Ironworks in the area. Although the records do not detail his death, it was as the result of an industrial accident on 13 Jan 1917. Although his military records make no reference to his place of burial, his records show numerous appeals from William Baird and Co to the MOD requesting them to fund his body's repatriation from Scotland back down to Northampton, appeals they seemingly won.

Ellis Smith is recorded as being buried at Northampton, Towcester Road Cemetery.

Fred Boyson

Private 51004

Manchester Regiment (16th Bn)

Died 29/09/1917 – France

Fred Boyson was the son of Frederick and Sarah Ann Boyson of the New Cottages, Rothersthorpe.

Private Fred Boyson began his army career serving with the Middlesex Regt, however was transferred into the 16th Manchester (Service) Battalion (1st City Pals). The Bn, part of the 90th Brigade, 30th Infantry Division had been in France since November 1915.

In mid 1917 the Bn was heavily engaged what is now known as the 3rd Battle of Ypres or the Battle of Passchendaele. In particular the entire 30th Division was involved in the opening phase of this 3rd Ypres effort, the battle of Pilckem Ridge, where their objective was the Glencorse Wood. The Division attacked this early on the morning of 31st July, however deep mud and heavy German resistance led to little ground gained and their objective remained in enemy hands at the end of the days fighting. In subsequent phases of Passchendaele the Division saw action at the Battles for Menin Road Ridge (20-25 Sep) and Polygon Wood (26 Sept – 03 Oct). The Division actually took Polygon Wood on the 26 September and was then subjected to numerous, desperate German attempts to retake the lost ground. It is likely that Fred's death occurred during one of these many engagements.

He is buried in Outtersteene Communal Cemetery, in Bailleul. Plot I.C.29.

