At the Going Down of the Sun and in the Morning

ANCRE SOMME ASSOCIATION

9th BN. ROYAL IRISH FUSILIERS

SCOTLAND

We Will Remember Them

LEST WE FORGET

Patron Lt. Col. Gary Tait MBE is pictured here with Ross Courtney (10) at the Service of Commemoration to Robert Beveridge MM & Passchendaele 100 in October 2017 at Strathbrock Parish Church of Scotland St. Nicholas, Uphall, West Lothian

Lt Col Gary Tait MBE – Patron

Lt Col Gary Tait MBE joined the British Army in 1983 into the 1st Battalion The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment), a Light Role infantry battalion. He progressed through the Rifle Company appointments that included a spell in the Signal Platoon and as an Armoured Infantry Gunnery instructor. Lt. Col. Tait held appointments at the Scottish Divisional Depot as an Instructor and RMAS as an officer cadet. He has deployed on operational tours of Northern Ireland, The Gulf war, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Commissioned in 2002 he held posts as the Unit Welfare Officer, Officer Commanding the Regimental Recruiting Team and Regimental Career Management Officer. Gary was further employed at the Army Personnel Centre as a Staff Officer before attending Staff College in Shrivenham for 9 months. He studied with Kings College London for an MA and undertook a senior staff appointment in a Divisional Headquarters. Gary was the lead staff officer for the implementation of the Army Recovery Centre at the Erskine Edinburgh home.

From 2010 to 2016 Gary was back at regimental duty undertaking a further two operational tours of Helmand in Afghanistan and supporting a further tour of duty in Kabul. He held the post of Executive Officer for 6 SCOTS based in Glasgow from 2016 to 2018 and is currently employed as the SO1 for Service Personnel Welfare at MOD Whitehall.

Gary is also further engaged as a director with British Forces Broadcasting Service and as the Chairman of McCrae's Battalion Trust. He also recently led a team that was credited as the Army Benevolent Fund fundraisers of the year.

Gary was awarded the MBE in 2002, a Queens Commendation for Valuable Service in 2014 and a Chief of the General Staff's commendation in 2016.

Foreword

"I am both humbled and delighted to be asked to be a Patron for the Ancre Somme Association Scotland. We can never fully repay the debt we owe those who have served and sacrificed for our country but we should all be ready to do all we can to acknowledge them through engagement, education, and remembrance.

The Association has made huge steps forward in a relatively short time and has captured the concept of remembering the Great War, WW2 and subsequent Wars and Conflicts through positive, open and transparent education and engagement across a broad cross section of the community. Encompassing all ages and backgrounds, acknowledging and supporting differing understanding and awareness of these momentous events, the Association is managing to ensure that a strong and unbreakable link to our shared history will remain and grow with those we most owe that education; our youth. There are a number of organisations who by nature support service personnel and their legacy; Ancre Somme Association Scotland also delivers this by remembrance, but crucially it is developing a credible and tangible liaison with education providers to deepen that understanding. I applaud and whole-heartedly support their positive efforts in this challenging but hugely rewarding area.

By affiliating and sharing, the Association has and will continue to reach out and engage with our communities ensuring that the core elements of its constitution are met and delivered in full. To do this, a programme of awareness and fundraising has been entered into and I commend everyone to supporting them wherever they are able to do so.

I personally further commend the Association for all the hard work that they do to preserve the collective memory of those who have served by engaging with so many and I wish them every success indeed as they continue their outstanding work. I commit my support to them in all that they do."

How it All Began

World War I (often abbreviated to WWI or WW1), also known as the First World War, the Great War, or the War to End All Wars, was a global war originating in Europe that lasted from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918. More than 70 million military personnel, including 60 million Europeans, were mobilised in one of the largest wars in history. Over nine million combatants and seven million civilians died as a result of the war (including the victims of a number of genocides), a casualty rate exacerbated by the belligerents' technological and industrial sophistication, and the tactical stalemate caused by gruelling trench warfare. It was one of the deadliest conflicts in history and precipitated major political change, including the Revolutions of 1917-1923 in many of the nations involved. Unresolved rivalries at the end of the conflict contributed to the start of the Second World War twenty-one years later.

The war drew in all the world's economic great powers, assembled in two opposing alliances: the Allies (based on the Triple Entente of the Russian Empire, the French Third Republic, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland) versus the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Although Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance alongside Germany and Austria-Hungary, it did not join the Central Powers, as Austria-Hungary had taken the offensive against the terms of the alliance.

These alliances were reorganised and expanded as more nations entered the war: Italy, Japan and the United States joined the Allies, while the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria joined the Central Powers.

The trigger for the war was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, by Yugoslav nationalist Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. This set off a diplomatic crisis when Austria-Hungary delivered an ultimatum to the Kingdom of Serbia and, as a result, entangled-international-alliances, formed over the previous decades, were invoked. Within weeks the major powers were at war, and the conflict soon spread around the world.

Russia was the first to order a partial mobilisation of its armies on 24-25 July, and when on 28 July Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, Russia declared general mobilisation on 30 July. Germany presented an ultimatum to Russia to demobilise, and when this was refused, declared war on Russia on 1 August. Being outnumbered on the Eastern Front, Russia urged its Triple Entente ally France to open up a second front in the west.

Japan entered the war on the side of the Allies on 23 August 1914, seizing the opportunity of Germany's distraction with the European War to expand its sphere of influence in China and the Pacific.

Over forty years earlier in 1870, the Franco-Prussian War had ended the Second French Empire and France had ceded the provinces of Alsace-Lorraine to a unified Germany. Bitterness over that defeat and the determination to retake Alsace-Lorraine made the acceptance of Russia's plea for help an easy choice, so France began full mobilisation on 1 August and, on 3 August, Germany declared war on France. The border between France and Germany was heavily fortified on both sides so, according to the Schlieffen Plan, Germany then invaded neutral Belgium and Luxembourg before moving towards France from the north, leading the United Kingdom to declare war on Germany on 4 August due to their violation of Belgian neutrality.

After the German march on Paris was halted in the Battle of the Marne, what became known as the Western Front settled into a battle of attrition, with a trench line that changed little until 1917. On the Eastern Front, the Russian army led a successful campaign against the Austro-Hungarians, but the Germans stopped its invasion of East Prussia in the battles of Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes. In November 1914, the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers, opening fronts in the Caucasus, Mesopotamia, and the Sinai Peninsula. In 1915, Italy joined the Allies and Bulgaria joined the Central Powers. Romania joined the Allies in 1916. After the sinking of seven US merchant ships by German submarines, and the revelation that the Germans were trying to get Mexico to make war on the United States, the US declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917.

The Russian government collapsed in March 1917 with the February Revolution, and the October Revolution followed by a further military defeat brought the Russians to terms with the Central Powers via the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which granted the Germans a significant victory. After the stunning German Spring Offensive along the Western Front in the spring of 1918, the Allies rallied and drove back the Germans in the successful Hundred Days Offensive. On 4 November 1918, the Austro-Hungarian empire agreed to the Armistice of Villa Giusti, and Germany, which had its own trouble with revolutionaries, agreed to an armistice on 11 November 1918, ending the war in victory for the Allies.

By the end of the war or soon after, the German Empire, Russian Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist. National borders were redrawn, with nine independent nations restored or created, and Germany's colonies were parcelled out among the victors. During the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, the Big Four powers (Britain, France, the United States and Italy) imposed their terms in a series of treaties. The League of Nations was formed with the aim of preventing any repetition of such a conflict. This effort failed, and economic depression, renewed nationalism, weakened successor states, and feelings of humiliation (particularly in Germany) eventually contributed to the start of World War II.

Background Picture:
Zonnebeke, West Flanders, Belgium – August 8, 2015.
Tyne Cot, resting place of 11,900 servicemen of the British Empire from the First World War, is the largest Commonwealth Cemetery in the world.


REFLECT IN SILENCE AT THE SACRIFICE MADE
1st JULY 1916
THE SOMME
WE OWE THEM A MASSIVE DEBT, THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS REMEMBER THEM

Battle of the Somme: Worst Day in British Military History

At Zero Hour on 1 July 1916, five battalions recruited in Scotland went over the top on the Somme.

As the day progressed they would be followed by others thrown into the battle plan of their fellow Scot, Gen Douglas Haig.

Haig had masterminded one of the biggest artillery attacks the world had ever seen or heard; an incredible seven-day bombardment of one and a half million shells fired by 50,000 gunners.

They were confident they had destroyed the enemy's deep dug-outs and defensive systems and cut the barbed wire in No Man's Land, thus allowing even the most inexperienced volunteer soldiers to storm not just the German front line, but the second and the third line too.

Wire not cut

But the bombardment was not concentrated enough and too many shells were poor quality and failed to explode. The barbed wire was not cut. The Germans were not all dead. Their big guns were not all out of action.

Their machine gunners might have been demoralised by tons of high explosives falling on their bunkers, but soon they were galvanised by the opportunity to hit back. And hit back they did.

Of the five battalions moving off, four of them were made up of friends and workmates recruited from their local area: from Edinburgh the 15th and 16th Royal Scots – the latter the famous McCrae's battalion, noted for its football connections; while from Glasgow came the 16th Highland Light Infantry (the Boys' Brigade battalion) and the 17th City of Glasgow.

All would suffer heavy casualties, but probably the worst affected was the 16th HLI. Most of them didn't even make it to the uncut wire, let alone the enemy trenches beyond. They were cut down in their masses by machine guns and artillery.

Within 10 minutes they had lost half their strength. Those who made it to the wire and got caught there, could be slaughtered at the enemy's leisure. And it achieved nothing.

Soon others were joining the fray. The Kings Own Scottish Borderers went in next in the attack on the village of Beaumont Hamel. They too were mown down without taking an inch of enemy trench.

Minor gains

Those who had got across: the Royal Scots, the 17th HLI, the 2nd Gordon Highlanders, now fought grimly in their hard-won bites of German redoubts.

By 09:30 the 2nd Seaforths were in action doing the same. By 10:00, there was one small ray of good news: the 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers in the south with the Manchesters, took their objective: Montauban. Their losses were light.

Much later in the day the 2nd Gordons too would take their target: the fortified village of Mametz, but for a heavier price.

Did You Know?

• The youngest British soldier was just 12 years old. A boy called Sidney Lewis (right) lied about his age so that he could join the war and fight for his country. He was one of 250,000 underage soldiers and many of them lied so that they could enlist. Most did it because they loved their country, and some to escape their poor lives.

• A battlefield explosion in France was heard in England. The majority of WW1 was fought in muddy trenches but one group of miners dug underground tunnels to detonate mines behind enemy trenches. One mine, in Messines Ridge in Belgium, detonated 900,000lbs of explosives and completely destroyed the German front line. This explosion was so loud and so powerful that the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, heard it all the way back in Downing Street, London – 140 miles away.

• Plastic surgery was invented because of the First World War. Surgeon Harold Gillies helped shrapnel victims who had terrible facial injuries with one of the earliest examples of plastic surgery. The twisted metal caused many facial injuries that were far worse than a straight-line wound of a bullet. The techniques used by Dr Gillies pioneered the techniques for facial reconstructive surgery.

• Blood banks were first used in WW1. Blood transfusions were used routinely to treat injured soldiers – transferring blood from one soldier to another. U.S. Army doctor Captain Oswald Johnson established a blood bank on the Western Front in 1917. Blood was kept on ice for up to 28 days using sodium citrate to prevent it from coagulating and becoming unusable.

The background picture on this page is of Tyne Cot Cemetery. The stone wall surrounding the cemetery makes-up the Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing, one of several Commonwealth War Graves Commission Memorials to the Missing along the Western Front. The UK missing lost in the Ypres Salient are commemorated at the Menin Gate memorial to the missing in Ypres and the Tyne Cot Memorial. Upon completion of the Menin Gate, builders discovered it was not large enough to contain all the names as originally planned. They selected an arbitrary cut-off date of 15 August 1917 and the names of the UK missing after this date were inscribed on the Tyne Cot memorial instead. Additionally, the New Zealand contingent of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission declined to have its missing soldiers names listed on the main memorials, choosing instead to have names listed on its own memorials near the appropriate battles. Tyne Cot was chosen as one of these locations. Unlike the other New Zealand memorials to its missing, the Tyne Cot New Zealand memorial to the missing is integrated within the larger Tyne Cot memorial, forming a central apse in the main memorial wall. The inscription reads: “Here are recorded the names of officers and men of New Zealand who fell in the Battle of Broodseinde and the First Battle of Passchendaele October 1917 and whose graves are known only unto God”.

The memorial contains the names of 33,783 soldiers of the UK forces, plus a further 1,176 New Zealanders. Three British Army Victoria Cross recipients are commemorated here:
Lieutenant Colonel Philip Bent (1891–1917)
Corporal William Clamp (1891–1917)
Lance Corporal Ernest Seaman (1893–1918)

Other notable persons commemorated include:
Lieutenant Allan Ivo Steel, English first-class cricketer.
Lieutenant David (Dai) Westacott, Welsh rugby international.

To the glory of God and to the honour of the twelve thousand of the Merchant Navy and fishing fleets who have no grave but the sea.

The above words are inscribed on the Tower Hill Memorial (a pair of Commonwealth War Graves Commission memorials [pictured left] in Trinity Square, on Tower Hill in London) to the personnel of the Merchant Navy who gave their lives during the First and Second World Wars.

The background picture is of the Red Ensign or "Red Duster". It is the flag flown by British merchant or passenger ships since 1707.

The U-board campaign that almost broke Britain

From the start of the First World War in 1914, Germany pursued a highly effective U-boat campaign against merchant shipping. This campaign intensified over the course of the war and almost succeeded in bringing Britain to its knees in 1917.

At first, U-boats obeyed 'prize rules', which meant that they surfaced before attacking merchant ships and allowed the crew and passengers to get away. This left U-boats vulnerable to attack, especially after the British introduced 'Q-ships' – disguised warships with hidden guns intended to lure U-boats in close and then sink them. The use of Q-ships contributed to Germany's eventual abandonment of prize rules.

On 4 February 1915, Germany declared a war zone around Britain, within which merchant ships were sunk without warning. This 'unrestricted submarine warfare' angered neutral countries, especially the United States. The tactic was abandoned on 1 September 1915, following the loss of American lives in the torpedoed liners Lusitania and Arabic.

After failing to seize control of the sea from the British at the Battle of Jutland in 1916, Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare on 1 February 1917. This, coupled with the Zimmermann Telegram, brought the United States into the war on 6 April. But the new U-boat blockade nearly succeeded and between February and April 1917, U-boats sank more than 500 merchant ships. In the second half of April, an average of 13 ships were sunk each day.

In November 1916, Admiral Jellicoe created an Admiralty Anti-Submarine Division, but effective countermeasures arrived slowly. Most important was the introduction of convoys, in which merchant ships were grouped together and protected by warships. In addition, merchant ships were painted in dazzle camouflage, aircraft and shore-based direction finding stations were introduced to locate U-boats, and warships acquired new weapons such as an early form of sonar and depth charges. On 23 April 1918, British naval forces attacked U-boat bases at Ostend and Zeebrugge. By the Armistice, the U-boat threat had been neutralised.

A World War One poster

There is no doubt without the supply and support of the Merchant Navy, we would not have sustained or won WW1.

By the end of the First World War, more than 3,000 British flagged merchant and fishing vessels had been sunk and nearly 15,000 merchant seamen had died.

During the Second World War, 4,700 British-flagged ships were sunk and more than 29,000 merchant seamen died.

Women's roles on the home front

Before World War One began, men were thought of as the 'breadwinners', bringing in the weekly wage. The jobs they did were often tiring and required a lot of strength.

Women worked hard too, but their jobs were often done in their own or someone else's home. Only about 30 % of the workforce was female and the majority of unmarried, working women were servants.

Piece work

Working class women also took in paid 'piece work' at home, as they had for generations. Carrying out piece work meant that women were paid depending on how much they produced. They undertook tasks such as washing, ironing, sewing, lace-making and assembling toys or boxes. Women also worked hard as housewives, taking care of their families and homes. Women carried out many jobs in the countryside, supporting men on farms by milking cows and helping with the harvest. They also often kept chickens and sometimes geese.

Jobs outside the home

Many employers refused to let married women work for them, so single and widowed women were more likely to have a job outside the home. Women worked in a variety of roles but their jobs were less manual than those carried out by men. Some women worked as school teachers or as governesses, teaching children at home. Well-off families would employ a nursemaid to care for their babies, a nanny to look after children and a governess to teach them until the boys went away to boarding school. Girls usually continued to be educated at home in these types of families.

Women workers

Some women worked as nurses before the war and a very small number worked as doctors. Many more women began to train and work in medicine and education during the war.

In the early 1900s, there was a rise in the number of women taking jobs in offices. Their duties were mainly limited to small administrative tasks. Other women worked in cotton factories where some of the roles involved labour-intensive work. Women prepared the cotton fibre for spinning and worked on weaving machines. The larger machines were thought to be too heavy for women to operate and were mostly worked by men.

Dramatic changes

Life for women changed dramatically during the war because so many men were away fighting. Many women took paid jobs outside the home for the first time. By 1918 there were five million women working in Britain. The money they earned contributed to the family's budget and earning money made working women more independent. Many enjoyed the companionship of working in a factory, office or shop rather than doing 'piece work' at home.

How did life change for women?

With men away at war, many women ran their homes alone. They cared for children and older relatives, managed money and often had a job as well. Shopping during wartime was hard with food and coal shortages and higher prices. The average food bill for a family of four rose from less than £1 a week in 1914 to over £2 in 1918.

Women's pay was lower than men's, even when they were doing the same work. However many working women were better off than they had been in the past. Women who took jobs in munitions factories, for example, were better paid than they had been in their previous jobs sewing clothes or cleaning houses.

Did You Know?

On September 7th 1920, in strictest secrecy four unidentified British bodies were exhumed from temporary battlefield cemeteries at Ypres, Arras, the Asine and the Somme.

None of the soldiers who did the digging were told why. The bodies were taken by field ambulance to GHQ at St-Pol-Sur-ter noise.

There the bodies were draped with the union flag. Sentries were posted and Brigadier-General Wyatt and a colonel gell selected one body at random.

A French honour guard was selected, and stood by the coffin overnight. In the morning of the 8th (a specially designed coffin made of oak from the grounds of Hampton Court, was brought and the unknown warrior placed inside.

On top was placed a crusaders sword and a shield on which was inscribed '(a British Warrior who fell in the GREAT WAR 1914-1918 for king and country'.

On The 9th of November the unknown warrior was taken by horse drawn carriage through guards of honour and the sound of tolling bells and bugle.

Calls to the quayside. There it was saluted by Marechal Foche and loaded onto HMS Vernon bound for Dover . . . the coffin stood on the deck covered in wreaths and surrounded by the French honour guard.

On arrival at Dover the the unknown warrior was greeted with a 19 gun salute, normally only reserved for field marshals. He then traveled by special train to Victoria Station London.

He stayed there overnight and on the morning of the 11th of November he was taken to Westminster Abbey where he was

placed in a tomb at the west end of the nave – his grave was filled in using 100 sandbags of earth from the battlefields.

When the Duke of York (later King George VI) married Lady Ellizabeth Bowes Lyons in the Abbey in 1923 she left her wedding bouquet on the grave as a matk of respect (she had lost a brother during the war) Since then all royal brides married in the Abbey have sent back their bouquets to be laid on the grave.

The idea of the unknown soldier was thought of by a Padre called David Railton who had served at the front during the great war and it was the union flag they used as an altar cloth at the front, that had been draped over the coffin.

It is the intention that all relatives of the 517,773 combatants whose bodies had not been identified could believe that the unknown warrior could very well be their lost husband, Father, brother or son.

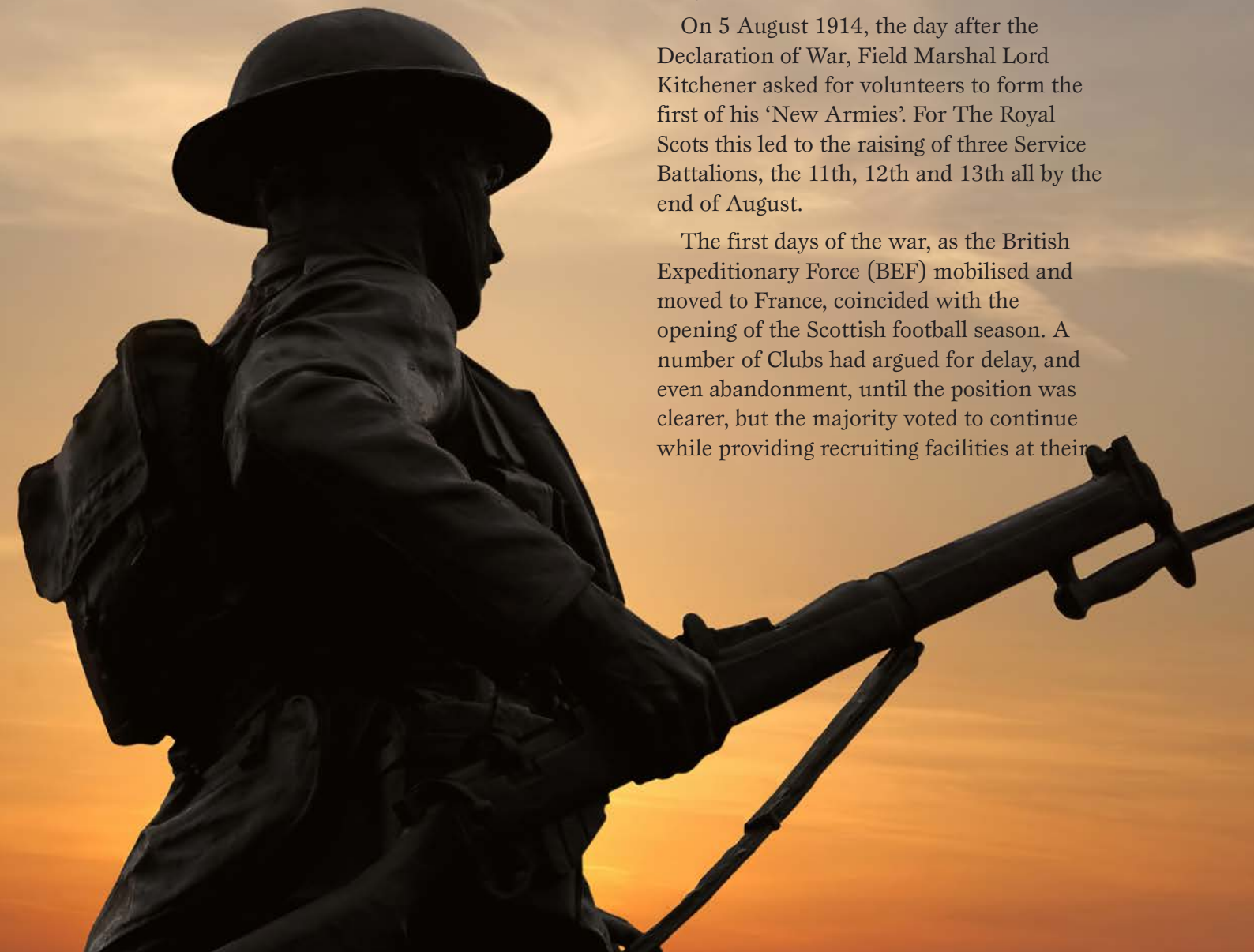
Sporting Battalion

Sir George McCrae, born in Aberdeen, was a self-made Edinburgh business man, who made his mark in the drapery trade. He became a member of Edinburgh Council in 1889. He was the City Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance Committee from 1891-1899 and also served as a Justice of the Peace. In 1899 the sitting MP for Edinburgh East died leading to a by-election. George McCrae was selected as the Liberal candidate and held the seat for that party. In 1909, after a successful career as an MP, he resigned from the House of Commons to take up a senior position in Scottish government service as Vice-President of the Local Government Board.

George McCrae had always wanted to be a soldier but ambition was in direct competition with his growing success in business. In parallel with his civic and parliamentary life he played a prominent role in the City's Volunteer and, from 1908, Territorial Force. At the age of 18, he had joined the 3rd Edinburgh Rifle Volunteers as a Private. The Battalion was re-titled the 4th and, later, the 6th Battalion The Royal Scots, under both of which names McCrae, now a Lieutenant Colonel, proved to be a highly successful and popular Commanding Officer. He was closely consulted, both as an MP and a senior Volunteer Officer, by Richard (later Lord) Haldane over the creation of the Territorial Force following the failings highlighted in the Boer War. For his services to Volunteering and to Edinburgh he was knighted in 1908. In June 1913, six months before his wife's death from cancer, and by now a full Colonel, he resigned from command.

On 5 August 1914, the day after the Declaration of War, Field Marshal Lord Kitchener asked for volunteers to form the first of his 'New Armies'. For The Royal Scots this led to the raising of three Service Battalions, the 11th, 12th and 13th all by the end of August.

The first days of the war, as the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) mobilised and moved to France, coincided with the opening of the Scottish football season. A number of Clubs had argued for delay, and even abandonment, until the position was clearer, but the majority voted to continue while providing recruiting facilities at their



grounds. This view was supported in a statement from the War Office at the end of August ahead of the start of the English season. By this time, however, the BEF was in full retreat from Mons and had suffered very considerable casualties. A vociferous campaign began against the continuance of professional football at such a time of national crisis and, in particular, the fact that the players themselves were not leading the campaign by volunteering to serve. In mid-November the War Office finally changed its position in a letter published in The Glasgow Herald in which Harold Tennant the Under-Secretary for War, was quoted as saying 'No objection is taken to occasional recreation. It is considered, however, that (league) football does not come within that category. It is much more desirable that professional footballers should find employment in His Majesty's forces than in their old occupation'. The die was

A section of 16th Royal Scots

cast, football was definitely on the back foot and the 'stoppers' as they were called stepped up their campaign for the game at that level to be cancelled and conscription be brought in. Enter Sir George McCrae.

From soon after the declaration of war Sir George had been heavily involved as Scottish chairman of The Prince of Wales's Fund for the relief of Wartime Distress. Three of his sons were serving, one as a Company Commander in 6RS, but he was conspicuous in not becoming directly involved in recruitment. Early in November, with increasingly bad news coming back from France, Sir George wrote a personal letter to his old friend Harold Tennant offering to raise a battalion, provided he was allowed to lead it in the field and to share the risks of those who volunteered to join him. On 17 November he received approval for his proposal and was reappointed to the rank of Colonel. A keen supporter and Director of Heart of Midlothian, one of the two major Edinburgh football clubs and known to everyone as Hearts, Sir George realised that, if he could get some players to join his battalion 'such a happening would ensure a mighty following and a quick formation of the unit'. Having secured the names of 11 players, six from the first and five from the second team, he announced on 24 November that formal recruiting would start with a grand meeting in the Usher Hall at the west end of Edinburgh on the evening of Friday 27th November. After hearing from a number of speakers, and the unanimous passing of motions supporting recruiting and, in particular, that for Sir George's proposed Active Service Battalion of The Royal Scots, Sir George himself rose to speak saying:

'This is not a night for titles: I stand before you humbly as a fellow Scot, nothing more and nothing less. You know I don't speak easily of crisis. But that is what confronts us. I have received permission from the War Office to raise a new battalion for active service. It is my inten-tion that this unit will be charac-terised by such a spirit of simple excellence that the rest of Lord Kitchener's army will be judged by our

16th Royal Scots Battalion Football Team

standard. Furthermore, with the agreement of the authorities, I have undertaken to lead the battalion in the field. I would not – I could not – ask you to serve unless I share the danger at your side. In a moment I will walk down to Castle Street (the local recruiting office) and set my name to the list of volunteers. Who will join me?'

With that he strode from the Hall and down to the Recruiting Office followed by most of those in the Hall. By midnight nearly 300 had enlisted. Within seven days, over 800 men had signed up for what would become 16RS but was always better known as McCrae's Battalion. That Saturday they paraded behind Sir George, around Tynecastle, at half-time in the local derby match against the other major Edinburgh team, Hibernian or Hibs. By the following Saturday, when the Battalion paraded through the City en route to George Heriot's School which was to be their initial barracks and training base, the total had risen to over 1350 including a strong contingent of professional and amateur footballers and other sportsmen. A total of at least 30 professional footballers are listed as having joined. These included, in addition to the original 11 plus, now, two further professionals from Hearts, taking the total to thirteen, seven from Raith Rovers, six from Falkirk, two from Dunfermline Athletic and one from Hibs. Seventy-five football clubs are listed as having contributed members to 16 RS by December 1914, one of these being Armadale.

The 16th RS disembarked at Havre with the rest of 34th Division on 7 January 1916. Initially they were sent to a supposedly 'quiet' sector, just south of the border town of Armentières. The 'Bois Grenier Line' (named after a front-line village) was composed of shallow trenches, protected by sand-bagged breastworks, piled high and in need of constant repair from enemy shelling. Duckboard floors were concealed beneath several inches of stinking, treacherous mud. All ranks were warned to be careful: German snipers were exceptionally vigilant.

McCrae's moved into the line on the Kaiser's birthday – 27 January – and were welcomed by the heaviest bombardment ever seen in the sector. More than 2,000 shells crashed down but only one man was wounded. The following morning the bombardment resumed and 19-year-old Private Robert Russell from Dunfermline became the battalion's first fatality. Strangely, he was a nephew of the Colonel's late wife. Robert was buried by his pals in the local cemetery.

During their spell in the north McCrae's lost 8 men killed and around 20 wounded. Death was still uncommon enough to shock, and it's plain from battalion letters that no one was prepared for the killing times to come. On 14 April they marched to the village of Houlle, near St Omer, for a fortnight's training. Lieutenant Harry

Rawson was a platoon commander in 'D' Company. 'I think we are getting ready for a show,' he wrote to his uncle. 'I don't know where (and I couldn't tell you if I did), but I know that when it comes we will be ready. The boys are spoiling for a scrap and I think they'll prove a handful for the Hun.'

The 34th Division attacked in the centre, astride the main road to Bapaume. The British front line trenches lay at the foot of two shallow valleys – 'Sausage' and 'Mash' – so that the advance had to be carried steeply up the opposing slopes into the strongest defensive position in the entire sector. The fortified village of La Boisselle protected the road; the fortified village of Contalmaison awaited any troops who were able to penetrate the complex network of strongpoints and switch lines that covered the fields in between. Wire entanglements 6 feet high and 15 yards across were laid in close proximity to each other and covered by a multitude of highly mobile machine-guns.

Inky Bill placed the Tyneside Scots of 102 Brigade on his left; I01 Brigade (including McCrae's and their sister battalion, 15th Royal Scots) took the right. Behind them, in the supporting wave, came the Tyneside Irishmen of 103 Brigade, whose advance would begin in the open, on the exposed forward slopes of Tara and Usna hills.

At Zero two huge mines ('Y Sap' and 'Lochnagar') were detonated either side of La Boisselle. The infantry rose up 'as one man' and slowly advanced. Within half an hour the Tyneside Scottish brigade had gone: they fell in no man's land beside their mates from the supporting battalions of the Tyneside Irish. The left flank of 101 Brigade, the 10th Lincolns and 11th Suffolks, didn't last much longer. They were cut down by flanking fire from machine-guns in the ruined cellars of La Boisselle. On the right, however, there was some progress. Elements of 101 Brigade, followed closely by survivors from 103 Brigade, fought their way through the enemy lines and captured the strongpoint known as Scots Redoubt. From here small parties continued the advance towards Contalmaison. Few survived these sorties, but we know that men from 16th Royal Scots and 27th Northumberland Fusiliers entered the village – only to withdraw soon afterwards. It was the deepest penetration of the German position on the front that morning.

The garrison of Scots Redoubt held out for three days and nights and was credited with 'anchoring' the modest gains to the south. The cost, however, was high. 34th Division's casualties were close to 7,000. McCrae's Battalion lost 12 officers and 573 men – more than three-quarters of its attacking strength. Three Hearts footballers had fallen – Harry Wattie, Duncan Currie and Ernie Ellis; a fourth, Jimmy Boyd, would join them within the month.

Peter Ross, head maths teacher at Edinburgh's Broughton Higher Grade School, wrote on 30 June: 'I know not what awaits myself tomorrow; but I put my trust in God and go to do my duty with one of the finest companies in the British Army.'

Peter came from Thurso, in Caithness. He was shot dead near Wood Alley at around 8.30 in the morning. By noon his company no longer existed.

Amongst the 16th Royal Scots wounded that day was a 25 year old William Jenkins, William was born in Falkirk but had later moved to Armadale, where he played for Armadale Football Club.

William enlisted in early June 1915, prior to enlisting he was employed as a miner at Bathville Colliery.

After being wounded William was sent to hospital back in the UK, after he recovered from his wounds he was sent back to France, this time however he was drafted to the 11th (Service) battalion, The Royal Scots.

William was subsequently killed on the 6th June 1917 whilst serving as a Lance Corporal with the 11th Royal Scots.

William left a widow Jeanie, and a young son James.

Did You Know?

Many men killed in the trenches were buried almost where they fell. If a trench subsided, or new trenches or dugouts were needed, large numbers of decomposing bodies would be found just below the surface. These corpses, as well as the food scraps that littered the trenches, attracted rats. One pair of rats can produce 880 offspring in a year and so the trenches were soon swarming with them.

Some of these rats grew extremely large. One soldier wrote: “The rats were huge. They were so big they would eat a wounded man if he couldn’t defend himself.” These rats became very bold and would attempt to take food from the pockets of sleeping men. Two or three rats would always be found on a dead body. They usually went for the eyes first and then they burrowed their way right into the corpse.

One soldier described finding a group of dead bodies while on patrol: “I saw some rats running from under the dead men’s greatcoats, enormous rats, fat with human flesh. My heart pounded as we edged towards one of the bodies. His helmet had rolled off. The man displayed a grimacing face, stripped of flesh; the skull bare, the eyes devoured and from the yawning mouth leapt a rat.”

The picture above shows the result of 15 minute’s rat-hunting in a French trench. Note the Jack Russell Terrier in the gentleman’s arms at left.

ROYAL FLYING CORPS

MILITARY WING

VACANCIES EXIST

REPAIR LORRY.

FOR

Men aged 18 to 30 of various mechanical trades, and others of good education.

They should apply to the nearest Recruiting Officer, or write for particulars to Headquarters, Royal Flying Corps, (M.W.), South Farnborough, Hants.

ARMY AEROPLANE B.E. TYPE

PAY.

2nd Class Air Mechanic	2/-	per day.
1st " " "	4/-	" "
Corporal	5/-	" "
Sergeant	6/-	" "
Flight Sergeant	7/-	" "
Warrant Officer	9/-	" "

Men selected to be trained as Flyers will receive in addition 2/- or 4/- per diem.

Free Clothing and necessaries, quarters, rations, fuel and light, and medical attendance.

One month's furlough per annum on full pay.

When transferred to the Army Reserve a soldier of the Corps will receive an annual gratuity of £10 in lieu of Reserve Pay.

If, while serving in the Reserve, he is placed on the first Reserve as a flyer, he receives a further £10 per annum, subject to his performing a Quarterly Flying Test.

Men of the following trades and professions are specially required :

Blacksmiths, Coppersmiths, Acetylene Welders, Instrument Repairers, Motor Fitters, and Aeroplane Mechanics.

GOD SAVE THE KING

Royal Flying Corps

The Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was the air arm of the British Army before and during the First World War, until it merged with the Royal Naval Air Service on 1 April 1918 to form the Royal Air Force. During the early part of the war, the RFC supported the British Army by artillery co-operation and photographic reconnaissance. This work gradually led RFC pilots into aerial battles with German pilots and later in the war included the strafing of enemy infantry and emplacements, the bombing of German military airfields and later the strategic bombing of German industrial and transport facilities.

At the start of World War I the RFC, commanded by Brigadier-General Sir David Henderson, consisted of five squadrons – one observation balloon squadron (RFC No 1 Squadron) and four aeroplane squadrons. These were first used for aerial spotting on 13 September 1914 but only became efficient when they perfected the use of wireless communication at Aubers Ridge on 9 May 1915. By 1918, photographic images could be taken from 15,000 feet and were interpreted by over 3,000 personnel. Parachutes were not available to pilots of heavier-than-air craft in the RFC, although the Calthrop Guardian Angel parachute was officially adopted just as the war ended. By this time parachutes had been used by balloonists for three years.

On 17 August 1917, South African General Jan Smuts presented a report to the War Council on the future of air power. Because of its potential for the 'devastation of enemy lands and the destruction of industrial and populous centres on a vast scale', he recommended a new air service be formed that would be on a level with the Army and Royal Navy. The formation of the new service would also make the under-used men and machines of the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) available for action on the Western Front and end the inter-service rivalries that at times had adversely affected aircraft procurement. On 1 April 1918, the RFC and the RNAS were amalgamated to form a new service, the Royal Air Force (RAF), under the control of the new Air Ministry. After starting in 1914 with some 2,073 personnel, by the start of 1919 the RAF had 4,000 combat aircraft and 114,000 personnel in some 150 squadrons.

The RFC was also responsible for the manning and operation of observation balloons on the Western front. When the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) arrived in France in August 1914, it had no observation balloons and it was not until April 1915 that the first balloon company was on strength, albeit on loan from the French Aérostiers. The first British unit arrived 8 May 1915, and commenced operations during the Battle of Aubers Ridge. Operations from balloons thereafter continued throughout the war. Highly hazardous in operation, a balloon could only be expected to last a fortnight before damage or destruction. Results were also highly dependent on the expertise of the observer and was subject to the weather conditions. To keep the balloon out of the range of artillery fire, it was necessary to locate the balloons some distance away from the front line or area of military operations. However, the stable platform offered by a kite-balloon made it more suitable for the cameras of the day than an aircraft.

For the first half of the war, as with the land armies deployed, the French air force vastly outnumbered the RFC, and accordingly did more of the fighting. Despite the primitive aircraft, aggressive leadership by RFC commander Hugh Trenchard and the adoption of a continually offensive stance operationally in efforts to pin the enemy back led to many brave fighting exploits and high casualties – over 700 in 1916, the rate worsening thereafter, until the RFC's nadir in April 1917 which was dubbed 'Bloody April'.

This aggressive, if costly, doctrine did however provide the Army General Staff with vital and up-to-date intelligence on German positions and numbers through continual photographic and observational reconnaissance throughout the war.

The British Infantry Regiments 1914-18

The "Poor Bloody Infantry" had the deadliest role of all and also shouldered the burden of much carrying and labouring work. The history and affiliations of every battalion of every British infantry regiment can be found on these pages.

The Guards Regiments
Considered by many to be the elite of the infantry of the regular army, the Guards had no battalions of the Territorial Force and raised none for Lord Kitchener's New Armies. In common with all other infantry regiments regiments they eventually took in both "duration only" volunteers and conscripts but the Guards took care to maintain their pre-war standards of efficiency and were amongst the infantry most feared by the enemy.

Regiments by alphabet
Coldstream Guards
Grenadier Guards
Irish Guards
Scots Guards
Welsh Guards

The Guards also raised a Machine Gun Regiment

The Line Regiments
The majority of the infantry was made up of regiments with county or other regional affiliations. Most had two battalions of the regular army in 1914: one was usually overseas and the other trained recruits in the United Kingdom. Most regiments, except those in Ireland, also had two or more battalions of the Territorial Force. All raised battalions for Lord Kitchener's New Armies and some also raised miscellaneous training and labouring units during the war.

Regiments by alphabet
Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
Bedfordshire
Black Watch
Border
Buffs (East Kent)
Cameron Highlanders
Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)
Cheshire
Connaught Rangers
Devonshire
Dorsetshire
Duke of Cornwalls Light Infantry
Duke of Wellington's (West Riding)
Durham Light Infantry
East Lancashire
East Surrey
East Yorkshire
Essex
Gloucestershire
Gordon Highlanders
Hampshire
Highland Light Infantry
King's (Liverpool)
King's Own (Royal Lancaster)
King's Own Scottish Borderers
King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry
King's Shropshire Light Infantry
King's Royal Rifle Corps
Lancashire Fusiliers
Leicestershire
Leinster (Royal Canadians)
Lincolnshire

Loyal North Lancashire
Manchester
Middlesex
Norfolk
Northamptonshire
North Staffordshire
Northumberland Fusiliers
Ox & Bucks Light Infantry
Queen's (Royal West Surrey)
Rifle Brigade
Royal Berkshire
Royal Dublin Fusiliers
Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)
Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
Royal Irish Fusiliers
Royal Irish Regiment
Royal Irish Rifles
Royal Munster Fusiliers
Royal Scots
Royal Scots Fusiliers
Royal Sussex
Royal Warwickshire
Royal Welsh Fusiliers
Royal West Kent
Seaforth Highlanders
Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derbys)
Somerset Light Infantry
South Lancashire
South Staffordshire
South Wales Borderers
Suffolk
Welsh
West Yorkshire
Wiltshire
Worcestershire
York & Lancaster
Yorkshire

The Territorial-only Regiments
Some infantry regiments were exclusively composed of part-time volunteer soldiers of the Territorial Force and had no Regular or New Army battalions.

Regiments by alphabet
Cambridgeshire
Herefordshire
Hertfordshire
Highland Cyclist Battalion
Honourable Artillery Company
Huntingdonshire Cyclist Battalion
Kent Cyclist Battalion
London Regiment
Monmouthshire
Northern Cyclist Battalion

Miscellaneous Regiments
Some infantry regiments just do not not fit into any of the classifications above.

Regiments by alphabet
The Household Battalion
Channel Islands Militia – Royal Militia of Jersey and Royal Guernsey Light Infantry
The British West Indies Regiment
Royal Newfoundland Regiment

History Beneath the Waves

Scapa Flow is a body of water about 120 square miles in area and with an average depth of 30 to 40 metres. The Orkney Mainland and South Isles encircle Scapa Flow, making it a sheltered harbour with easy access to both the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean.

The name Scapa Flow comes from the Old Norse Skalpaflói, meaning 'bay of the long isthmus', which refers to the thin strip of land between Scapa Bay and the town of Kirkwall.

Scapa Flow has been used as a harbour since Viking times, the name Skalpaflói being given to it by the Vikings. However, it wasn't until the Napoleonic wars of the early 1800s that the Admiralty first took an interest in Scapa Flow. The Admiralty used the area as a deep water anchorage for trading ships waiting to cross the North Sea to Baltic ports. Two Martello Towers were built on either side of Longhope in order to defend these trading ships until a warship arrived to escort them to the Baltic Sea.

Subsequent wars were waged against countries including France, Spain and the Netherlands – as such a northern naval base became unnecessary. However, by the early 20th century the Admiralty once again looked at Scapa Flow. This time it was to defend against a new enemy: Germany. Scapa Flow was ideally situated to provide a safe anchorage in the north with easy access to open waters. If the Admiralty were to rely on the Firth of Forth further south, there was a real risk their ships could be trapped if a minefield was placed across its mouth.

World War I

At the outbreak of World War I defences were put in place to guard the Grand Fleet in its new home. Coast defence batteries were built and boom defences, including anti-submarine nets, were stretched over the entrances to prevent enemy vessels from penetrating Scapa Flow. Old merchant ships were also sunk as blockships to prevent access through the channels.

It was from this well guarded naval base that the Grand Fleet sailed in May 1916 to engage in battle with the German High Seas Fleet at the Battle of Jutland. On 5 June in the aftermath of the battle, the Minister of War – Lord Kitchener – visited the Grand Fleet in Scapa Flow on his way to Russia for a goodwill visit. He never made it to Russia. She sank in twenty minutes with a loss of 737 men (Orcadian 2015: 21) including Lord Kitchener, only 12 of the company survived.

A greater loss of life would be suffered the following year when the battleship HMS Vanguard exploded at anchor in Scapa Flow with the loss of 843 men; only two of those on board survived. It is thought that spontaneous combustion of cordite triggered the devastating explosions.

As part of the Armistice agreement at the end World War I, Germany had to surrender most of its fleet. A total of 74 ships of the German High Seas Fleet arrived in Scapa Flow for internment.

On 21 June 1919, under the mistaken belief that peace talks had failed, Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter gave the command to scuttle the entire fleet in the Flow. A total of 52 ships went to the seafloor and this remains the greatest loss of shipping ever recorded in a single day.

The majority of the German ships were raised in one of the largest ever salvage operations in history. Only seven of the 52 ships remain in the Flow, although evidence of others can still be seen in some locations on the bottom of Scapa Flow.

Ancre Somme Association Scotland Our Aims and Objectives

Ancre Somme Association Scotland was formed in 2016 by a group of people who were interested in their Armed Forces heritage from WW1, WW2 and all subsequent Wars and Conflicts.

ASA Ambassador for Scotland MSP Alexander Stewart MBE, Officers and members created our vision, mission and strategy in 2016.

Alexander "I am indeed honoured and humbled to be the Ambassador of Ancre Somme Assocation Scotland, I would ask the public to support the important work of the Assocation"

Education – we will continually teach children and our communities about their local and National military heritage.

Remembrance – we will remember those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country from WW1 to the present day.

Supporting – we will continually support our Armed Forces charities and ASA Scotland projects.

ASA Scotland welcomes any individuals, groups or businesses to our Association; members must promote the Aims & Objectives of the Association.

E-mail: **info@asascotland.org.uk**

Lest We Forget

Scots Soldiers that died during the Great War estimated to be between 100,000 and 148,000.

887,000 soldiers from the UK and colonies died in the Great War, and more than 1.6 million were wounded, according to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

World War One was one of the deadliest conflicts in the history of the human race, in which over 16 million people died. The total number of both civilian and military casualties is estimated at around 37 million people. The war killed almost 7 million civilians and 10 million military personnel.

Ancre Somme Association Scotland educating children of their heritage

Ribbon of Poppies

About us

The Ribbon of Poppies project was the brainchild of Iain Henderson from Iver Heath, Buckinghamshire.

His initial idea would see the creation of a carpet of crimson from Land's End to John O'Groats to remember all those killed or wounded during the Great War.

Iain and colleagues from The Memorial Mob, a group dedicated to creating memorials and events to help remember the "uniformed" services, are hoping the poppy "ribbon" will be "a living legacy to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice."

Since Iain launched the Ribbon of Poppies project hundreds of Scout, Cub, Guide and Brownie groups have pledged support, as well as a number of schools and other community organisations.

Soon after the launch it soon became apparent to all involved that this project was going to bigger than just the United Kingdom as pledges started coming in from all four corners of the globe.

Around the same time the Ancre Somme Association launched a similar initiative that had the same aims and objectives and it made sense to work in partnership on the campaign.

This partnership has helped ensure that the Ribbon of Poppies reached a wider audience and to date it has totally exceeded all expectations.

As of June 2018 the Ribbon of Poppies has became a fully constituted organisation and has applied to OSCR to become a charitable organisation.

The Ribbon of Poppies is now an annual living memorial to all those brave men and women who have fought and died serving in the British Armed Forces.

We Will Remember Them.

Please visit for more information on how your Group, Club, Association or Organisation can get involved:

www.ribbonofpoppies.org.uk

Scottish Parliament endorses Ribbon of Poppies

Ribbon of Poppies

Registered charity (SCIO) SC048597