

THE LION & THE DRAGON



The Museum staff, permanent and volunteer, have worked extremely hard to produce a fitting tribute to the thousands of young men who made the Supreme Sacrifice at the Somme and other Great War battlefields.

The special presentation to the Fallen of that grim struggle on the Somme will be available to view until the 18th November 2016, the anniversary of that date in 1916 when the 141 days of bloodletting finally came to a close.

A fuller report on the research and presentation involved in this project is on Page 7



The Hartness brothers, of Skelton, near Penrith, who died within six weeks of each other in the early days of the Battle of the Somme.

Their story is told in page 2.

They were just two of many blood brothers who would die as Brothers in Arms during the period we call The Great War. Some parents found themselves grieving for three – or more – of their offspring in a matter of months.

The Vickers Medium Machine Gun



The Vickers Medium Machine Gun was the standard medium machine-gun of the British Army and Commonwealth Forces from 1912 through two world Wars and in use until the mid-1960's, when it was replaced by the General Purpose Machine Gun.

It was a modification of the Maxim gun made by Vickers (initially as the Vickers-Maxim) in their factories at Erith and Crayford in Kent. In 1914 there were two guns per infantry battalion and four from 1915. In 1915 the machine-gunners from each of the four infantry battalions in an infantry brigade were grouped together in a brigade machine-gun company. These became part of the Machine-Gun Corps (MCG) in late 1915.

The gun was extremely reliable, very effective in trained hands, and was held in great regard by those who used it. The gun was water-cooled, a condensing tube ran from the water-jacket into a half-filled two-gallon (9.14 litre) can. After firing about 300 rounds the water in the jacket boiled and the steam passed through the tube to condense in the can. Every so often the water was topped up via a filling point in the top of the jacket. The gun had a crew of two with four other men to carry ammunition.

The calibre was .303, the standard British rifle cartridge, and it could range to 2900 yards (2650 metres). The rate of fire was 450-550 rounds per minute from 250-round belts. In trained hands the Medium Machine Gun (of either side) was the King of the Battlefield by mid- 1916.

On 31st March 1911 John Hartness, farmer and Innkeeper, of Skelton Road Ends near Penrith, completed the Census paper and handed it to the enumerator. In his twenty-six years of marriage John and his wife Hannah had borne seven children. Four are listed as residing at Skelton Road Ends on the date of the Census. They are Mary Hartness, 22, described as a barmaid, and her three brothers, Ernest Hartness 17, a farm worker, Francis Richard Hartness 15, also described as a farm worker, and the youngest, Thomas Clarke Hartness, a 12 year old schoolboy. The Inn or Public House of which John Hartness was landlord, The Sun Inn at Skelton Road Ends, closed in 1920 and is now a private home.



In 1901 on the death of Queen Victoria, Britain and her Empire had entered the Edwardian era, and the British Army returned from the Anglo-Boer War to continue its role of policing that great Empire. The mainly agrarian communities of the peaceful and productive Eden valley were looking forward to the new century. In 1911 war was the last thing on the minds of the hard-working folks of Westmorland and Cumberland despite the loss a decade or so earlier of a number of young men of the Penrith area in the South African campaign.

We have noted that the two youngest sons of John and Hannah Hartness were 15 and 12 years old when their father wrote their names on that census return in 1911.

By the middle of 1915 we find both these young men, barely out of childhood, serving in their local battalion of the Border Regiment. Thomas, who had given his age as 19 although his true age was 16, enlisted in the Lonsdale Bn on 27th January 1915. Richard followed suit, enlisting in the same battalion in the following May. He was 19.

Photographs of them in uniform soon after enlistment clearly show their youthfulness. Thomas in particular looks very much his true age. Those who accepted his application could not help but be aware he was underage.

Perhaps at the time, at that early stage of the conflict, the authorities still believed that the campaign would be short and youngsters like Thomas would never reach the battlefield. We can only imagine what his parents thought.

At 07.30 am on 1st July 1916 Thomas advanced with his battalion, 11th (Lonsdales) The Border Regiment, into the cauldron of death we call The Battle of the Somme. Thomas's true age at that moment was 17. In a short but horrific period over 500 officers and men of the battalion became casualties, dead, wounded, or prisoners. Among the dead was the young man from Skelton. And he was not the only "boy soldier" of that awful day. Many others had also lied about their age, indeed some were younger.

We do not know the moment when Thomas died, we do not know whether his death was quick and relatively painless, or whether it was slow and agonising. We do not know where his body lies. In the succeeding weeks and months what remained of Thomas Hartness was absorbed into the mud and blood of the battlefield. This would be his grave, unidentified and unrecognisable as the last resting place of a brave young man on the threshold of adulthood.

In due course the name of Private Thomas Hartness, of 11th Bn Border Regiment, would appear with over 72,000 of his comrades, on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing. And on the War Memorial of St Michaels Church, Skelton. Six weeks later Thomas's older brother Francis Richard also joined the Fallen. The War Diary of the battalion tells us that during an early morning quiet period of 12th August 1916 an explosive bullet killed one NCO and one Other Rank. In a subsequent "hate" exchange of artillery fire three other soldiers were wounded.

It would appear that the "Other Rank" who died was 19 years old Francis Richard Hartness. He is interred in Cambrin Churchyard Military Extension, in grave P50.

And a second telegram would be delivered to the Hartness family, of Skelton Road Ends, Penrith.



Children practicing gas drills in WW2.

At various stages of the Great War poison or toxic gases were tried by both sides with varying success. However the primitive methods of delivery and the resultant limited advantage rarely proved tactically useful.

But this situation changed dramatically in the early days of WW2. The mass use of toxic chemicals being delivered onto an unprepared civilian public through aerial bombardment became a distinct possibility.

Respirators or, "gas masks", were rapidly produced and issued. Soon everyone in the United Kingdom would carry a little cardboard box containing a respirator. They would practice the immediate action drill which would become real when they heard the words "Gas, Gas, Gas", and the clanging of alarms. Failure to react quickly could result in a painful and obscene death.

And what of the children? Respirators were produced in all sizes and in various designs. Children's masks were made in bright colours and given funny names. Schools would practice gas drills regularly, generally once a day during the months of highest risk. Failing to carry your gas mask at all times would get children – and adults – a severe ticking off!

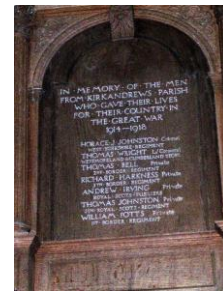
But what of infants and new-borns? Well they too had a "gas mask", actually a rubberised bag with a little Perspex window. The child was put into this head first and secured around the waist. An adult, themselves wearing a gas mask, would operate a pump which supplied filtered air to the respirator.

Health Visitors and Child Welfare Centres gave lessons on how to use the mask. Despite instruction courses, few parents were totally happy with encasing their child in an airtight chamber. In fact there was some question over its safety. During demonstrations there were reports that babies fell asleep and became unnaturally still inside the masks! It is likely that the pump didn't push enough air into the mask and the babies came close to suffocating. Luckily, they were never put to the test in a real situation. The author of this had one of these but thankfully remembers nothing of the drills!



A respirator for a very small child!

Pte Thomas Bell was 22 years old when he died in battle on 4th Oct 1917, somewhere in the area between Zillebeke and Broodseinde in the Ypres Salient. He was serving with 2nd Bn Border Regt. Thomas was the son of Mr and Mrs William Bell, of Beckside, Longtown. He has no known grave and is commemorated on Tyne Cot Memorial, near Passchaendale, on Panel 85/86, and on the War Memorial of Kirkandrews on Esk Church



The local paper of the day, the Carlisle Patriot, tells an interesting story of the Bell family.

Thomas's father, Mr William Bell, of Beckside, Longtown, appeared at a hearing of the Conscription Advisory Committee (a group which considered pleas for exemption from those served with Conscription – or "Call-up" - Notices). Mr Bell asked that his youngest son Richard, age 18, should have his Notice suspended for a period as he was the only one left at home. Six of his brothers and two of his sisters had already volunteered. The Committee gave Richard a complete exemption from call-up in any service.

However the local newspaper reports that eventually nine members of this family served in uniform. Richard was not to be left out! He enlisted and served until the end.

Against all the odds everyone but Thomas came safely home.



"Rutland of Jutland".

The massive aircraft carriers of WW2 and the years following are a familiar picture to those interested in 20th century naval history. These ships and their crews were a strategic part of the navies of the world of the latter years of the Second World War and the succeeding "Cold War" era. Today we think of these great ships and their squadrons of aircraft as a mid-20th century innovation soon superseded by missile carrying submarines with many times the destructive power of any aircraft carrier ever launched.

However the concept of the "aircraft carrier" actually goes back to The Great War. Daredevil pilots flying aircraft primarily constructed of canvas and wire, and with a very basic rotary engine, proved that they could take off from a ship at sea, search for the enemy and survive to return to that ship with useful information. But the earliest seaplane "tenders" did not have a flight deck! For a time seaplanes, usually fitted with both floats and wheels, would actually be lowered into the sea by crane – with the pilot on board! Many aircraft, with their pilots, were lost in rough seas before even taking off.

The planes the early WW1 tenders carried were generally for reconnaissance only so the pilot would avoid direct combat. Some would carry an observer but limitations on weight meant that the pilot would usually fly alone. Radio communications were in their infancy and any information gained had to be signalled back by Morse code. Or verbally when the pilot returned to his "tender".

On return from a mission the pilot would land as close to the tender as was safely possible. A recovery team would then use a deck crane to recover plane and pilot, often in a turbulent sea. Unfortunately this was not always successful and pilots and planes were lost.

This was the procedure at the time of the Battle of Jutland. Seaplane Tender HMS Engadine launched one of its aircraft as the British Grand Fleet approached the Danish coast. The pilot was Lieutenant Frederick Rutland, DSC and Bar, AM. He had joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Sailor in 1901. By the time of Jutland he was a skilled and resourceful air reconnaissance pilot.

On spotting the German High Seas Fleet he returned to HMS Engadine and made his report.

At this point the lightly armed Seaplane Tender would normally stand off from the actual battle.

In the subsequent engagement battlecruiser HMS Warrior was badly damaged. She was on fire and taking water having been struck by at least fifteen 11" and six 5.9" shells. Losing power, and near to foundering, she was taken in tow by the much smaller Engadine.

Warrior's captain decided to abandon ship and Engadine drew alongside to take off survivors. During the rescue a wounded crewman fell between the ships and was in great danger. Lieut Rutland, against orders, dived in to rescue him and succeeded in attaching a line. Unfortunately when the man was brought on board he was found to have succumbed to his injuries. Forty-eight others of Warrior's complement also died, Longtown man Walter Jackson among them.

About 675 of Warrior's crew were taken on board HMS Engadine, causing her to list dangerously until the extra weight was distributed.

Lieut Rutland was awarded the Albert Medal 1st Class for his heroic act. And soon after, the sobriquet, "Rutland of Jutland". His Citation is on page 7.

The earliest of the actual "carriers" were either merchant ships or warships with an extra elevated deck fitted above the superstructure. Unfortunately this made them somewhat top-heavy and unstable. Limited space also meant that few carried more than one aircraft. This concept was refined during the Second World War although even then a scarcity of suitable ships meant that some strange modifications appeared.

On 28 June 1917, Rutland, now a Flight Commander, took off in a Sopwith Pup from a flying-off platform mounted on the roof of one of the gun turrets of the light cruiser HMS Yarmouth, the first such successful launch of an aircraft in history. And the beginning of the modern aircraft carrier. Frederick Rutland went on to an interesting career and died in 1949.



Rutland's Sopwith Pup takes off from a platform on the forward gun turret of HMS Yarmouth, June 1917





Operation Dynamo, the Evacuation of Dunkirk, is considered to be the period from 27th May until 6th June 1940.

However not all allied soldiers left by that date. The remnants of the 4th Bn Border Regiment did not return to England until 18th of June.

For one young Carlisle soldier there would be no return. Twenty-one year old Pte 3601133 George Hetherington still lies, with a number of his comrades, in a Communal Cemetery at Ailly-Sur-Somme, in France.



George Hetherington enlisted on 28th June 1939. He was the fifth child of the family of ten children of John and Katherine (nee Bone) Hetherington who ran the smallholding of Lane End Farm, Cargo, near Carlisle.

On the beautiful spring morning of 24th May 1940 George William Hetherington and his comrades of the 4th Bn. began their allotted task of clearing the enemy from three bridges on the River Somme west of Amiens. While one bridge assault was successful the men of the Borders suffered heavy casualties at the other two. This is where George Hetherington fell. The survivors fought a stiff rear-guard action and after many further tribulations the remnants of the battalion embarked from Brest to arrive in Southampton on 18th June 1940.

The survivors of the 4th battalion conducted a fighting retreat and, following a series of battles, eventually arrived at the port of Brest, on the French coast. There they took ship for Southampton. The weary and hungry soldiers disembarked on the morning of June 18th 1940.

The grave of George Hetherington and his comrades in Ailley-sur-Somme Communal Cemetery. George lies third from the left.



The sons of John Charlton, RBA, RI, ROI.

Lieut Hugh Vaughan Charlton was serving with 7th Bn Northumberland Fusiliers when he was killed at Whychaete on 24th June 1916. He was 32 years old. His grave is in La Laitere Military Cemetery, south of Ieper (Ypres).

Captain John Macfarlan Charlton fell at La Boisselle seven days later on 1st July 1916, in the opening hours of the Battle of the Somme. He died on his 25th birthday. He was commanding a company of the 21st Bn (Tyneside Scottish) Northumberland Fusiliers on that fateful morning. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, on Panel 10b/12b.

They were the only sons of John and Kate Charlton, originally of Bamburgh, Northumberland, but later of Banks House, Lanercost, near Brampton. Their mother Kate had died in 1893. Their father, John Charlton, RBA, RI, ROI, was a skilled painter and illustrator. He excelled at military scenes and portraits of horses and dogs. One of his paintings is "Balaclava – The Charge of the Light Brigade". It illustrates the moment the charge reached the Russian guns.

The brothers were both keen ornithologists, highly talented, and had inherited their father's skill with paints.

John Charlton never recovered from the death of his sons just seven days apart. Broken-hearted, he died at Banks House Lanercost, just seventeen months later.



The Memorial to the Charlton brothers in Lanercost Priory



This Roll of Honour, until recently in the care of BT and within the main Carlisle Telephone exchange building, is now part of a collection of such memorials in the Museum, and accessible to view. It tells us that of the 30 men of the Carlisle section of the Post Office Engineering Department who went off to war, five would not return to their families.

The five who made the Supreme Sacrifice are:-

Sapper J Burnett, of the Royal Engineers 22nd Airline Section, died on 4th June 1916 at the age of 32. The son of Mr and Mrs Burnett, of 1 Bishop's Court, Princess Street, Carlisle he is interred in Amara War Cemetery grave XXI.D.13, in Iraq. An "Airline Section" was part of the telephonic communications systems of the Army in the field. During the Great War, this was one of the many roles of the Corps of Royal Engineers.

Sgt George Stirling Bain Died on 13th April 1918. He was 25 years old, born in Edinburgh, the son of Thomas and Euphemia Bain. George was the husband of Constance, of 2 Bedford Place, Kempston, Beds. He was serving with the Royal Engineers and attached to 51st Division Signal Coy. His grave is B28, Lillers Communal Cemetery Extension, near Bethune.

Able Seaman John William Marsden, serving with Howe Bn of the Royal Naval Division, died on 13th November 1916 in the final straggling battles of the Somme offensive. He had been a Royal Navy Volunteer Reservist but found himself serving as an infantryman in the bloody mayhem of that grim struggle. He has no known grave and is commemorated on Panel 1A of the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing.

Sgt George Henry Basil Shaddick(s), was reported Killed in Action on 19th June 1915. He was born at St Stephen's, London and had enlisted in 2nd Bn Border Regiment early in the war. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Le Touret Memorial, Le Touret Military Cemetery, near Bethune.

Pte Maurice J. Towers, born in Keswick, was serving with 11th Bn Border Regiment when he was reported Killed in Action on 18th Nov 1916 the closing day of the Battle of the Somme. He was one of the thousands who fell victim to the long-drawn out sequel to the Somme offensive which began so disastrously on 1st July 1916. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, on panel/face 6A/7C.

The Citation of Lieutenant Rutland, DSC and Bar, Albert Medal.

RESCUE LEADING TO AWARD OF ALBERT
MEDAL OF THE 1ST CLASS : 1st June 1916

"During the transhipment of the crew of HMS Warrior to HMS Engadine on the morning of the 1st of June 1916, succeeding the naval battle off the coast of Jutland, one of the severely wounded, owing to the violent motion of the two ships, was accidentally dropped overboard from a stretcher and fell between the ships. As the ships were working most dangerously, the Commanding Officer of the Warrior had to forbid two of his officers from jumping overboard to the rescue of the wounded man, as he considered that it would mean their almost certain death. Before he could be observed, however, Lieutenant Rutland, of HMS Engadine, went overboard from the forepart of that ship with a bowline, and worked himself aft. He succeeded in putting the bowline around the wounded man and in getting him hauled on board, but it was then found that the man was dead, having been crushed between the two ships. Lieutenant Rutland's escape from a similar fate was miraculous. His bravery is reported to have been magnificent."



Voices From the Somme 1916 - 2016 The Community Poppy Project

The poppy project has astounded everyone with the support received from across the County and beyond. The seeds of an idea twelve months ago has turned into a successful community project which has captured the imagination of the residents of Cumbria. One hundred years ago, communities at home knitted and crocheted 'comforts' for soldiers. Recreating the same support poppies knitted or crocheted by communities across the County are contributing to a living memorial at the Museum. The project is supported by the Women's Institute, with kind help from Stead MacAlpin and Carlisle City Council, and people are donating their woollen contributions daily! The poppies are attached to rolls of jute which are hung from the windows of Alma Block. The initial unfurling of the memorial took place on 1st July with the playing of the Last Post to symbolise the losses on the first day of the battle. The memorial will be unfurled daily, until the 18th November, to represent the number of soldiers from the Border Regiment alone, killed during the 141 days of the campaign. The success of this project has been highlighted in the support we have received. Poppies have arrived from all over the North West, hand delivered or through the post. The original target of 1700 poppies has been far surpassed and we are now well on the way to 5000 poppies, the excess of which will be utilised for Armistice day in November and for donations to the Royal British Legion.

By the 18th November, the Museum will reflect the contribution these men made and provide a sobering reminder of the impact of the Somme campaign on the local population creating a unique memorial to the soldiers from the Border Regiment who fell at the Somme in 1916.

Update on Voices from the Somme 1916-2016 project
Jules Wooding, Learning & Access Officer



This is part of our commemorative display at the Museum. The poppies represent the Fallen of just one regiment of that grim struggle. There were many other regiments with equally horrific losses.

The Somme 100 project with its roadshows, talks in the community, assemblies in local schools community engagement, Young People's film Project and the temporary exhibition (Voices from the Somme 1916-2016) that will run until late November has so far been a great success. The opening of the exhibition on 23rd June was attended by over 80 people with tremendous support from Caldew School and PRISM Arts. The whole project has been co-ordinated by Jules Wooding our Learning and Access officer and supported by a grant of £9900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Arts Council England (ACE) have given a grant of £14500 to support community engagement work with the Carlisle based PRISM Arts Group and an artists in residence at the Museum.

Our Lecture Programme of talks to groups throughout the county, the Museum's 2016 lecture programme, has been very well attended and we are most grateful to well-known external speakers, John Sadler, Professor Hew Strachan, Taff Gillingham, Gary Sheffield and Andy Robertshaw for agreeing to speak at the Museum.

The Somme exhibition has given us the first real opportunity to use our temporary exhibition space to display material from the collections and on loan from a number of individuals. The publicity generated has brought material in for the collections both donated and loaned and documentary material that we have been able to copy and scan. On top of this a huge range of other items and documents have been donated and loaned during the year.

There is still a need to attract those who may only be interested in the Museum rather than the Castle and we are pleased that individuals and a number of groups are choosing to visit in increasing numbers. A large amount of publicity and increased marketing, much of which has been connected with the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, has helped. There has been wide coverage throughout the county including reports on Radio Cumbria and filmed interviews with Stuart Eastwood and Matt Lund on the Somme in June with Border TV.

Tuesday Talks Series

Our Tuesday Talks series continues. All talks begin at 6pm.

Tue 13 September
Remembering the Great War and The Somme: A Very British View
Taff Gillingham

Tue 11 October
Gallipoli and the Somme: One Disaster, One Success?
Prof Gary Sheffield

Tue 8th November
Ghosts on The Somme: Filming the battle June-July 1916
Andy Robertshaw

Tue 13th December
Subject and Speaker to be confirmed

Jan 10th Dec
Subject and Speaker to be confirmed

Feb 8th Feb
Subject and Speaker to be confirmed

All Talks are in the Museum Lecture Room unless otherwise intimated.

NOTICE:

This newsletter is printed and sent out to some members, however if you want to be among the first to see this newsletter please send your email address to Peter Yorke. You will receive future newsletters in PDF format.

This Newsletter is edited by James Henderson UD, on behalf of the Friends of Cumbria's Museum of Military Life, and is currently published tri-annually.

Contributions to this Newsletter are welcomed. Features should be around 400-600 words and may be accompanied by illustrations. Please send to; ambus246@gmail.com



The Museum is extremely grateful to the growing band of Museum volunteers who have helped build the exhibition, man the roadshows, and do a wide range of tasks in the Museum. With the pressures on the staff of opening the Museum seven days a week, the volunteer help is absolutely vital.

The Museum management would also like to put on record its appreciation of the support of the schools and individuals who at various times provide assistance with special projects. Research provided by North Lakes School, Penrith, who represented the North West at the Somme on 1st June attracted great interest.

Friend's News

The Friends of the Museum of Military Life have arranged a variety of events and meetings for the following months.

Wed 14th Sept - *Dining out our outgoing Chairman, Ms Doreen Parsons* – Stoneybeck.

Wed 5th Oct – *Committee meeting* – Stoneybeck.

Sat 8th Oct – *Dinner & Fine Wines* – Golden Fleece.
Sat 22nd Oct - Somme Film and Exhibition – Museum

Sat 29th Oct – Food & History – subject *Ireland (at Thursby – Stuart Eastwood & John Croach)*.

Sun 13th Nov – *RHQ Remembrance Sunday*.

TBC - Nov – *Operation Telic, the British Campaign in Iraq, 2003-2009* – Museum 1700hrs.
Presented by Tim Ripley.

Sat 10th Dec – *Committee meeting, followed by Carols and Mince Pies* – Museum.

TBC - Feb 2017 – *Food and History* - date and subject TBC.

The Friends wish to publically thank the staff and all those who have supported the Museum in so many ways. The Museum is still evolving. A number of new acquisitions have been added to the collections and more are promised.

