

The Middridge War Memorial

*Dedicated to those men from the district who fell in the
Great War 1914-1918*



A small booklet recording the known details of those men of Middridge who gave their lives for others.

This document is a personal tribute to the fallen heroes of Middridge and is the result of some research carried out by W. J. Mellors.

If you have any additional or conflicting information about any of the details given, please let me know at wjmellors@btconnect.com

Arthur Butterfield

Arthur Wright Butterfield was born in 1885, the son of Joseph Butterfield a Butcher and farmer who carried on business at 53 Southside, Middridge with his wife Annie and two other brothers and a sister. He was living and working with his two brothers on Burn Hill Farm when he joined the army as a Private in the 1st/5th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry with service number 277340.

He was killed when aged 33 on the 23rd of March 1918 as the Allied Fifth Army was being driven back by overwhelming numbers across the former Somme battlefields.

His name is inscribed on the [Pozières Memorial](#) which commemorates 14,649 casualties of the United Kingdom who have no known grave and who died on the Somme from 21 March to 7 August 1918. He is one of the 600 of those names from The Durham Light Infantry who are listed on Panels 68 to 72 of the memorial.

George R. Farnaby

George Roger Farnaby was the son of the late John and Elizabeth Farnaby, and husband of Sarah Farnaby, of 29, North Side, Middridge, Shildon, Co. Durham. He served as a Private in the 1st/6th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry with service number 3344.

He was killed at the age of 36 on the 1st of October 1916 in the latter part of the Battle of the Somme. The battle started on the 1st July 1916 and at the end of September, Thiepval the objective, was finally captured. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions and The Battle of the Somme finally ended on the 18th November with the onset of winter.

His name is inscribed on the [Thiepval Memorial](#), the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, which bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. He is one of those names from The Durham Light Infantry which are listed on Pier and Face 14 A and 15 C of the memorial.

George R Farnaby was the uncle of Tommy Dodds and Alice McGeechan. He had a brother John William Farnaby who in 1918 was serving as a Private in the Northumbrian Fusiliers with Service No 16834

Charles H Hay

Charles Henry Hay was born in 1896 and after 1901 lived in Middridge with his grandfather Charles Hay who was a Hewer in Charles Pit and his grandmother Ann. Also in the household were his sister Alice, who was 8 years old and his great-grandmother Elizabeth (aged 85). His grandfather Charles was killed in a pit accident in 1902 when, as he was kiving, some top coal fell. Military records state that his father, Thomas Henry Hay and his mother, Mary Hay were both dead.

Charles Hay joined the 6th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry as a Private at the same time as George Farnaby and had service number 3345. He was aged 20 when he was killed in the Somme on the 18th September 1916, attacking a German trench (Starfish trench) which it was mistakenly thought was being evacuated. This attack was made by the 6th Battalion on the left and the 9th on the right, each providing 100 men. Some of the party returned to their line during the day and others at night. All who had been near the enemy trench reported it to be strongly held.

Charles is buried in the [Millencourt Communal Cemetery extension](#) in grave B.24.

Jonathon C Hutchinson

Jonathan Calder Hutchinson was born in 1886 in Amble (Northumberland) before the family moved south to Middridge. In 1901 the Hutchinson family lived at 83 Riseburn East Row and consisted of Thomas (age 49) a hewer, Mary (age 42), John (age 16) a putter, Jonathan (age 15) a driver, Thomas (age 13), Matthew (age 9) and Rose (age 2). His father was named Thomas Henry and his mother, Mary.

He enlisted as a Private in the 7th Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment at Bishop Auckland. His service number was 17868. He was killed at the age of 29 on the first day of the opening Battle of the Somme on the 1st July 1916 with 116 other comrades of the Yorkshire Regiment. He is buried in grave A.5 in [Fricourt British Cemetery](#) which was first made by the 7th East Yorkshire Regiment between 5 and 11 July 1916.

On 30 June 1916, Fricourt village was just within the German front line. It was attacked on 1 July by the 17th Division, and by the end of the day it was caught between that division to the west, the 21st to the north and the 7th to the south (where Jonathon was killed). The village was occupied by the 17th Division the following day. From 25 March 1918 to the following 26 August, Fricourt was again in German hands.

Two cemeteries were made by the 17th Division, and most of the dead buried in them belonged to that division. Fricourt British Cemetery (Bray Road) was made by the 7th East Yorkshire Regiment between the 5th and 11th July 1916. It was used until the end of October.

Jim Nelson

Jim Nelson lived with his parents Albert Henry Nelson and Clara Nelson at 11 Eden Pit Office Row. He joined The King's Own Scottish Borderers in the 6th Battalion with service number 21617. He had a brother, George Nelson who served as Private No 386896 in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

The French had handed over Arras to Commonwealth forces in the spring of 1916 and the system of tunnels upon which the town was built were used and developed in preparation for the major Arras offensive planned for April 1917. But Jim was killed before then on the 21st January 1917 at the age of 19. He is buried in the [Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery, Arras](#) in grave number III. B. 28.

Joseph Rowlands

In 1901 the Rowlands family lived in Coundon when at that time the household consisted of Joseph (aged 37), Mary E working as a Charwoman, John W (aged 14) and Joseph, 6 years old who was working as a coal belt boy (above ground). This gives Joseph's date of birth as 1895 approx.

The family must have moved to Riseburn as the absent voter's register of 1918 shows a John Rowlands living at 22 Riseburn who was serving in No R/4, the 62nd Remount Squadron of the Army Service Corp.

Joseph Rowlands served as a Private in the 5th Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Own Regiment, known as the "Yorkshire Regiment" during the war with Service No 35435.

He was killed on the 11th April 1918 in the second attack of the last great German offensive which was launched on March 21, 1918, which was opened with an unprecedented 6,000 gun barrage which delivered a lethal gas attack deep into Allied lines. During the first six weeks of fighting, the Allies lost 350,000 casualties, but more troops were rushed in

from across the channel, and American units began arriving for the first time. The attack was quickly followed by a second offensive at Ypres, but this was halted after a brief threat against the channel ports.

Joseph Rowlands was one of the 11,000 servicemen of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in this sector during the First World War and have no known grave. He is commemorated on the [Ploegsteert memorial](#) (known to the troops as "Plugstreet") in Panel No. 4.

George Webb

George Webb, born in 1887, was the son of George and Sarah Jane Webb, of 8 Railway Terrace Darlington. He married Mary P Rutherford in 1910 in West Chilton and subsequently lived 15 Eden Terrace, Middridge, where they had a child named George Albert.

George Webb served as a Corporal in the 38th Brigade, Ammunition Column of the Royal Field Artillery with service number 36211. He was killed on the 19th October 1917 at the age of 30 and is buried in grave V.F.7 at the [Dochy Farm New British Cemetery](#). There is no information about the battle in which he was killed but the cemetery was constructed after the Armistice when isolated graves were brought in from the battlefields of Boesinghe, St. Julien, Frezenberg and Passchendaele.

William Wheldon

William Wheldon was born in 1891, the son of Thomas William Wheldon (a farmer in Bildershaw) and Zilpah. In 1911 he farmed at Greenfield farm, Middridge, living there with his younger brother Sydney, his elder sister Zilpah, his married sister Elizabeth, her husband John C. Gibbeson and their son James Leslie.

He emigrated to Sydney, Australia in 1912 and worked as a carter but when the war started he returned to fight in France, having enlisted as a Private in the 31st Battalion of the Australian Infantry with service number 3005/A.

He was killed in the Battle of Polygon Wood on the 24th October 1917 aged 26 and is buried in the [Buttes New British Cemetery, Polygon Wood](#) in grave XXIV. B. 13.

George S Williams

George Shaw Williams lived at 17 Riseburn, New Shildon with his wife Charlotte.

He had a very long Army record as he first signed on in January 1897 in the North Staffordshire Regiment and served in the Boer War. His unit returned to England in 1902 and he married Charlotte Bassett on the 1st November 1902 in Hanley, Staffordshire. He transferred to the Army Reserve in January 1904 and finally he left the army in January 1909 having completed his 5 years on the Army Reserve.

In August 1914 he re-enlisted at Durham and was assigned to the 6th Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment (the Green Howards) with service number 39098. He served in Gallipoli at Suvla Bay in 1915, then in Egypt in the first half of 1916 he became a member of the Brigade Machine Gun Corps.

He went to France in the July of 1916 as a Corporal in the 32nd Company of the Machine Gun Corps and was reported missing in the field, presumed killed at the age of 38 on the 28th September 1916 in the battle for Thiepval Ridge. George Shaw Williams has no known grave but is commemorated with his colleagues of the Machine Gun Corps on the [Thiepval Memorial](#) on Pier and Face 5 C and 12 C.

A military resume of [George Shaw Williams](#) was researched by a relative and can be found on the Web.