

LOWCA LOWDOWN CENTENARY ARMISTICE

COMMEMERATIVE EDITION

***Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the end of
World War One***

Lest we forget, Lowca's WW1 Fallen Heroes



1918 to 2018

- Joseph Boyles** Private 14818 7th Battalion Border Regiment. **Died 5th Sept 1915, age 22**
William Jackson Private 14830. 'C' Cmpy 7th Battalion Border Regiment. **Died 27 Mar 1916, age 20**
Stanley Mellon. Private 14839 7th Battalion Border Regiment. **Died 2nd May 1916, age 28**
Thomas McClellan. Private S/8326 8th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders.
Died 10th May 1916, age 17
James Tweddle. Private 15532 11th Battalion Border Regiment. **Died 1st Jul 1916, age 25**
Charles Johnston. Private 12801 7th Battalion Border Regiment. **Died 4th Aug 1916, age 20**
Robinson Burns. Private 18166 King's Own Royal Lancs. Regt. 8th Battalion.
Died 16th Aug 1916, age 32
William Tweddle. Private 12732 7th Battalion Border Regiment. **Died 23 Apr 1917, age 31**
Samuel Agnew. Private 23771 7th Battalion Border Regiment. **Died 23 Apr 1917, age 27**
John James Moore. Private 39526 B Coy" 7th (Westmorland and Cumberland) Bn. Border Regiment
Died 21st Sept 1918, age 19

BACKGROUND

When the Great War broke out in August 1914, young Lowca men left work, home and families, responding to Lord Kitchener's 'call to arms' and Lord Lonsdale's appeal for a 'Pals Battalion'. This special commemorative edition of the Lowca Lowdown honours those who gave their lives in the effort, and are remembered on the Lowca War Memorial.

Since 1920, when the Memorial was erected, it has been a tribute to the Fallen, but there were also men who served and returned from the Great War to resume life and work in the Village, and there were men who died but whose names are not included on the Memorial. This is a tribute to them all.

When the Parish Council undertook to carry out this special Remembrance, it prompted a former 'resident' to pass on what she had researched about the men. Growing up in Lowca had brought her security and standards of equality, friendship and generosity lasting a lifetime. For the young men who went to war, with that similar sense of 'belonging to Lowca', they would have known that there is no better feeling than being a 'Lowca Pal'.

"As children, we circled the memorial while waiting for Sunday School, reading out the names without any idea why they were there. As we became adults, we learned about War but they were still just names. Today, those names are people with faces and histories, and part of local families. For those in the Great War, having visited the sites in Belgium and France where they died, and met some of their current day families, we can now tell their stories".

100 years ago on 11 November 1918, the Great War ended, but further conflicts were to come. In 1939, another generation of young men from the Village went to war on our behalf. As the centenary of the erection of the War Memorial approaches in 2020, we will, hopefully, also have their story to tell. It is hoped that this special Lowdown will prompt more details about all those named on the Lowca War Memorial and that, on 25 August 2020, there is another very special edition of Lowca Lowdown to honour them. The information in this issue has been gathered from Public Records, personal family archives, regimental sources and the memories of local people. Can you add to its history?

As you pass the War Memorial you may give a nod and take time to reflect. Lowca has never forgotten, will never forget and, in the future, many more generations of youngsters will circle its boundaries and read out its names.

In this commemorative booklet we have provided the details on the front cover to record the fallen heroes in the order they fell in battle. Inside we have provided the detail in the order they are recorded on the memorial.

A copy of this booklet, in full colour, can be found on the Lowca Parish Council website at www.lowcapc.org.uk select the Lowca Lowdown Newsletter section and click on "War Mem" button in the dates section.

Samuel Agnew
Private 23771, 7th Battalion Border Regiment
Died 23 April 1917

Samuel was born in Moresby Parish in May 1889, the son of James and Annie Agnew and one of 10 known children, three of whom had died in 1911. The family lived at 15 West Row, Lowca. James was a Colliery Coke Burner and Samuel was a Colliery Lamplighter.

It is likely that Samuel enlisted with the other Lowca 'Pals' in 1914 and was in France from 1915. His war record, like so many others was destroyed in the London Blitz during WW2.

On 23 April 1917, his Battalion was advancing on attack at the Front Line near Arras. As they passed through Bayonet Trench under heavy machine gun fire from Rifle Trench, many troops were mown down. Wounded were left hiding in shell holes until they could be recovered at night. Very serious losses on the day included 204 casualties in the 7th Battalion.

Samuel died that day (age 25), alongside William Tweddle. He has no known grave, and is remembered on the Arras Memorial (Bay 6).

Joseph Boyles
Private 14818, 7th Battalion Border Regiment
Died 5 September 1915



Joseph was born in Armagh in November 1893 to John and Mary Boyles of Saltcoats, Scotland and Bangor, Ireland, the eldest son of seven known children.

Living at 8 East Row, Lowca, he was a Coal Miner, like his father and brother, and his sister worked on the Screens.

Enlisting at Whitehaven into the Border Regiment on 2 September 1914, together with his brother James, he is described as 5ft 8" tall, 161 lbs, 40 "chest with dark hair and complexion, blue eyes and a member of the Church of Scotland.

Joseph was part of the 7th Battalion Border Regiment which was formed in Carlisle on 7 September 1914 as part of the Second new K2 Army. Moving to Wool in Dorset, Andover, Bovington and Winchester in Hampshire, they landed in Boulogne, France on 15 July 1915.

He was the 'First Lowca Man to fall' on 5 September 1915 age 22. He was reported as being shot through the neck by a German sniper while in the Trenches and died shortly afterwards. He was buried in a small churchyard near Ypres and his friend, William Jackson of Lowca, who enlisted with Joseph, was allowed to attend. William would be killed in action in 1916.

Joseph's grave must have been lost in later conflict and he is remembered on the Menin Gate monument in Ypres. He was single. His brother James survived the war.

Charles Johnston
Private 12801, 7th Battalion Border Regiment
Died 4 August 1916

Charles was born in Parton around 1896 to John and Hannah Johnston and one of 11 Known children, one of whom had died in 1911.

He was a coal miner (Trailer), together with his Father and older brother Thompson who were coal miners (Hewer).

In 1911, the family were living at 4 Lowca Villas, High Lowca,

Charles enlisted in the 7th Battalion Border Regiment in 1914 and would have been in France from 1915.

He was killed in action on the Somme on 4 August 1916 aged 20. At the time of his death, he was engaged as a Bomber (a specialist infantryman trained in the use of Grenades).

The regiment were in Pommiers Redoubt (a Redoubt being a reinforced fort like structure of trenches) and relieving a Berkshire Regiment in the famous Delville Wood, when they found themselves in extraordinary difficulties from incomplete trenches, an impassable state of Wood and heavy enemy artillery fire.

His death was announced in the Whitehaven News following a letter from William Tweddle intimating Charles's death.

Charles has no known grave and is remembered on the Thiepval Monument on the Somme (Pier and face 6A and 7C) near James Tweddle.

His informal will of 1915 left his effects to his mother, Hannah.

William Jackson
Private 14830, 'C' Company 7th Battalion Border Regiment
Died 27 March 1916

Born in Whitehaven on 16 August 1895 to Thomas and Jane Jackson, who were innkeepers in Tangier Street before moving to 6 West Row Lowca. At the time of his death, the family were living at 56 Main Street, Parton and after the war, they would live on Meadow View, Lowca. He was the eldest of 4 known children and a Coal Miner (Putter).

William enlisted in Whitehaven on 2 September 1914. Described as being 5' 7½", 140 lbs and girth 35½" with a fair complexion, brown hair and blue eyes and member of the Church of England

He was part of the 7th Battalion Border Regiment landing in Boulogne, France on 15 July 1915.

William was killed in action on 27 March 1916 age 21. The Battalion were reinforcing Trenches around Armentieres close to the Front Line and most casualties were incurred through day-to-day Trench warfare rather than as part of a major offensive. William has no known grave and is remembered nearby on the Ploegsteert Memorial in Belgium.

William was an active member of the Methodist Chapel at Lowca and its members held a special memorial service for him in recognition of the esteem in which he was held.

William was unmarried. In 1915, soldiers on active service were encouraged to draft informal wills. William did draft such a will, leaving his effects to his mother, Jane (a common arrangement at the time).

John Moore
Private 12334, 7th and 1st Battalion Border Regiment
Died 30 July 1916

John was born on 29 August 1874 in Lowca to Thomas and Isabella Moore and the family lived at 9 East Row, Lowca. He was one of 14 children with 3 of his siblings having died by 1911.

John enlisted on 2 September 1914 into the 7th Battalion Border Regiment, and in France from 1915. He is described as being 5 ft 9 ins tall, 146 lbs and a girth of 38 ins, with blue eyes and dark brown hair and a member of the Church of England.

The Battle of the Somme commenced on 1 July 1916 with heavy losses to the Border Regiment. During the second phase, the 2nd and 7th Battalions continued to take an active part. Considerable gains had been made but progress was slow and involved very hard fighting.

John Moore was in the 1st Battalion attached to the 16th Battalion Manchester Regiment at this time. This Battalion was made up to strength from drafts from many different regiments before embarking on an attack on Guillemont, a key strategic defence point held by the Germans.

The attack started on the night of the 29th July when the battalion moved to be in their positions for 4.45am the next day. They attacked in dense fog and were savaged by machine guns and rifle fire from both flanks. Several attempts to get through were made but eventually they were beaten back with heavy casualties.

John Moore was declared missing in action on 30 July 1916 and subsequently declared as one of the Dead on that day. He has no known grave and is remembered on the Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres

Stanley Mellon
Private 14839, 7th Battalion Border Regiment
Died 2 May 1916

Stanley was born in Lowca on 2 August 1887, the son of Richard and Mary Mellon. His mother died in 1902 and he had two brothers, William and Thomas Mellon. Richard was a retired naval seaman and Stanley was a Coal Miner (Hewer).

In 1911, Stanley and his father were resident at 19 West Row, Lowca with Richard Wilson and his family. Stanley lists Richard as a half-brother and his next of kin after his father died on 15 March 1915. Mary Mellon had been married to a Richard Wilson and had a daughter Margaret Jane as well as a son, Richard, before marrying Richard Mellon.

Stanley enlisted in Whitehaven on 2 September 1914. He was described on enlistment as 5' 6" tall, 140 lbs and Girth of 36", with a dark complexion, brown hair and brown eyes and a member of the Church of England. He was part of the 7th Battalion Border Regiment which entered France in July 1915.

Stanley died of wounds on 2 May 1916, age 29 and is buried in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension (Nord) in France, near the Belgium border. This area, near the Front Line was engaged in a long campaign of defensive Trench warfare with bombardment on both sides being the common form of battle rather than organised attacks.

Stanley left an informal will, naming his half-brother, Richard Wilson as the beneficiary of his estate.

His brother Thomas died in childhood but his brother William Mellon would marry and have a family, with future generations bearing the name of Stanley Mellon to this day.

William Tweddle
Private 12732, 7th Battalion Border Regiment
Died 23 April 1917

William was born in Lowca on 7 March 1886, the second son of John and Ann J Tweddle (nee Agnew) and one of eight known children. His brother James is another of the casualties listed in this tribute.

William married Annie Larkin on 8 April 1910 and they had a daughter, Ann Jane, who was born on 8 December 1916 at Lowca. In 1911, the family were living at No. 4 Concrete Cottages Lowca and William was a Coal Miner (Hewer).

William enlisted into the 7th Battalion Border Regiment on 2 September 1914 and was posted to France on 2 December 1915.

He is described as being 5' 6", 154 lbs, 39" Girth, Fair complexion, with grey eyes and light hair and a member of the Church of England.

On 23 April 1917 his Battalion were advancing on attack on the Front Line near Arras. As they passed through Bayonet Trench under heavy machine gun fire from Rifle Trench, many troops were mown down. Wounded were left hiding in shell holes until they could be recovered at night. Very serious losses on the day included 204 casualties in the 7th Battalion. William died (age 33) that day, has no known grave, and is remembered on the Arras Memorial (Bay 6).

A short time after his death, his wife and daughter were living at 18 West Row, Lowca (the same address as his brother Andrew). William left no effects. His wife received a widow's war pension of 18s 9d per week.

James Tweddle
Private 15532, 11th Battalion Border Regiment
Died 1 July 1916



James was born in the Harrington district (possibly Lowca) in 1891 to John and Ann Tweddle (nee Agnew), one of 8 known children. In 1911, the family were living at 11 Newhouses, Lowca.

He married Jane Ann Weir of Queen St. Whitehaven in 1912. They had a daughter, Jane who was born and died in 1914, and a son, James born in 1915. James senior was a collier at No. 9 Pit.

James enlisted on 1 November 1914 into the 11th Battalion (The Lonsdale Pals) and arrived in France on 22 September 1915.

On the first day of the Somme, 1 July 1916, he was one of 800 members of the Border Regiment who went into action. The majority of his D company, were wounded or killed. Initially he was seen by a comrade as wounded, but by the end of the day, James was one of 500 of the Regiment who were killed. James, age 25, has no known grave and is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial on the Somme (Pier and Face 6A and 7C).

James' mother died in 1939 at 11 East Croft, Lowca and it is believed his wife remarried in 1923 to John R Tubman of Whitehaven.

His brother Joseph, had two sons, James and George, who both lived at Lowca on Ghyll Bank.

Robinson Burns
Private 18166, King's Own Royal Lancs. Regt. 8th Battalion
Died 16 August 1916

Robinson was born in Greysouthen in the early part of 1884, the son of William and Betsy Burns and one of nine children. The family were living at Sea View, High Lowca in 1901 and 1911. William and Robinson worked as Coke Fillers in 1901 and then Coal Miners (Hewer) by 1911.

Robinson married Hanna Moore on 23 June 1907 and they had four children, William, Betsy, Robinson and Margaret.

The 8th Battalion formed in Lancaster in October 1914 as part of the K3 New Army, arriving in France on 15 October 1915. They participated in many of the major battles of the Somme around Albert, Delville Wood, and Ancre in the summer of 1916.

On the Somme, many Battalions were involved with the French in the Battle for Guillemont between July and September 1916. It was a key strategic fortress held by the Germans, with a maze of underground tunnels, concrete emplacements and a huge number of troops. It would be later in the year before the allies succeeded at Guillemont. Robinson died at Guillemont, on 16 August 1916. Robinson is buried in Guillemont Road Cemetery (Plot X111 D10).

Thomas McClellan
Private S/8326, 8th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders
Died 10 May 1916



Thomas was born in Whitehaven in early 1899, the son of George and Bessie McClellan, from Ireland. George was a Coal Miner (Hewer). Thomas had two older sisters, Bessie (Eliza) and Margaret, two older brothers George and Charles and a niece, Mary. His parents had a further six children who had died by 1911.

In 1911, the family were living at 7 Burley Court, Duke Street, Whitehaven. His mother's maiden name was Morgan and his parents married in 1878. George senior died in 1924.

The 8th (Service) Battalion were formed as part of the Second New Army (K2) in August 1914. Thomas was posted to France on 7

October 1915 and is likely to have seen action in the Battle of Loos and on the Somme.

The enemy had been carrying out large-scale gas attacks, under cover of heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, probably in an attempt to destroy mine shafts. This was usually then followed by infantry attacks. On 10 May 1916, the Highlanders came under a barrage of enemy fire, including Shrapnel, High Explosive and heavy mortars. 16 soldiers died or were badly injured in the sustained bombardment.

Thomas died of wounds on 10 May 1916 and was buried in Vermelles British Cemetery in Pas de Calais on the road between Lens and Bethune.

Space restricts a more detailed life history of the 10 Fallen Heroes of Lowca. It is to be hoped that we have been able to provide information that may provoke you to recall other fallen WW1 soldiers from Lowca. This was never intended to be a comprehensive history, but Saturday 25th April 2020 will be the centenary of the Lowca war memorial being officially unveiled. It is intended that the parish council will produce a similar booklet to celebrate that event and provide details of the fallen heroes named from the Second World War. If you have details of those individuals please contact a member of the parish council or the clerk, be it photos or written material, or just your memories.

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has decided to add Lowca War Memorial to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The memorial is now listed at Grade II. List entry No 1457587. As this booklet is being compiled the rededication of the memorial is planned for Tuesday 30th October at 1pm with the service being carried out by Rev Paul Kerry of St Bridget's Church with children from Lowca school being in attendance, members of the British Legion with appropriate musical accompaniment.

The Centennial Remembrance Day Service will be held on Sunday 11th November 2018 at 11am and all Lowca residents and friends are invited to attend to mark this special anniversary occasion.

Lest we forget



This is Bailleul Cemetery.

Bailleul is a large town in northern France close to the Belgium border.

This is the resting place of
Private Stanley Mellon



This is Guillemont Cemetery.

It is located in Somme, France

This is the resting place of
Private Robinson Burns



This is Thiepval Memorial, it is

Located on the Somme and was
unveiled in 1932.

Private James Tweddle is remembered
here as is Private Charles Johnston



This is the Menin Gate Memorial at
Ypres, Belgium, it bears the names of
54000 soldiers with no graves.

Privates Joseph Boyles and
John Moore are remembered here.



This is part of the Arras Memorial situated in the Faubourg-d'Amiens cemetery this memorial celebrates 35000 servicemen with no known grave. Privates William Tweddle and Samuel Agnew are remembered here.



This is the Ploegsteert Memorial located in Belgium. It commemorates 11000 servicemen with no known graves. Private William Jackson remembered here.



This is Vermelles Cemetery situated just north of Lens, France. There are 2134 casualties in this British cemetery, Private Thomas McClellan being one.

If you enter the cemetery or memorial names into your internet search engine you can find comprehensive details of these location and their history compiled by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission or similar organisations.