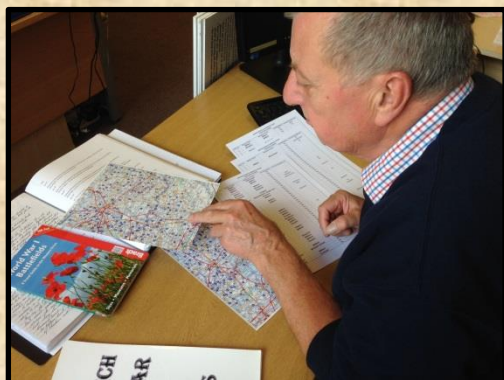


The Great War – Fourteen Names

Project aim: To research and record all Middlewich men and women who served during the Great War and to assess the impact the war made on the Town.

As a result of thorough research, it is the conclusion of all involved that the names of the following men, who obviously died as a result of their war service between August 4, 1918 and August 31, 1921, should be placed on the Town War Memorial in time for the centenary of the end of the Great War.



Left: Geoff Page, President of the Middlewich Branch, Royal British Legion, with his research on the Middlewich Fallen. Travelling in the UK, France, Belgium and Italy to visit each grave and place a cross on behalf of Middlewich Residents. Centre: The Bull Ring Memorial, work carried out by Cheshire East Council to add the fourteen names, clean and repair the memorial ready for the unveiling ceremony. Right: Royal British Legion Great Pilgrimage 90 Parade, Ypres, Belgium.



Harry Barker, 40390 Pte 8 (Prince of Wales Volunteers), South Lancashire Regiment

Harry Barker, born at Elworth, near Middlewich, in 1895, was **killed in action** on January 25, 1918, aged 23 years, and was buried at Vaulx Hill Cemetery. His entry in *The Men Who Marched Away* by Frank Rogers and Marjory Newton (2003) states that Harry Barker “formerly worked at the **Electro Bleach and Dye Products Co. at Middlewich**”, where his father and two brothers had also worked. He is named on the scroll on the wall of Electro Bleach (now ANSA) offices in Cledford Lane, Middlewich.



Walter W. Ormond Brooks, 2687 Sergeant, Royal Air Force

Born in Stroud, Kent, Walter Brooks enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps on January 1, 1915. On August 1, 1915, he was promoted to Sergeant and his rank was confirmed on April 1, 1918, when the Royal Flying Corps became the Royal Air Force. Brooks married Olive Barlow of the Royal Oak, Lewin Street, Middlewich in St. Michael’s and All Angels Church, Middlewich on September 5, 1918. He left the RAF on October 29, 1919 and was transferred to “T Reserve.” He died at home in Lewin Street, Middlewich in November 1920 and was buried in Middlewich Cemetery on November 20, 1920, aged 26 years.



Edward Clarke, 43903 Air Mechanic First Class, Royal Force

Edward Clarke was born in Middlewich in 1885 and raised his family in Middlewich. He enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps as Air Mechanic Second Class on August 14, 1916, promoted to Air Mechanic First Class on September 1, 1917 and transferred to the Royal Air Force on April 1, 1918. He served in France from March 3, 1917 to January 10, 1919. Demobbed on February 7, 1919, he returned to his home at 11 Dierdens Terrace, Middlewich and died on April 8, 1920. He is buried in Middlewich Cemetery.



William Clarke, 49877 Pte 9 Bn Cheshire Regiment

William Clarke was born in Bostock Green in 1892. He joined 5Bn Cheshire Regiment on June 26, 1916 "for the duration of the war." On October 20, 1916, he married Middlewich woman, Annie Evans, at the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Lewin Street, and Middlewich. On October 25, 1916, he embarked at Southampton for France and on November 5, 1916 he was transferred to 9 Bn Cheshire Regiment. He served 1 week (November 6-12, 1916) behind the front line. He was **killed in action** on November 21, 1916 during the Battle of Ancre. Buried in Aveluy Communal Cemetery Extension in France, he is named on the memorial in St. Michael and All Angels Church, Middlewich.



William Coppenhall, 13280 Pte 12 Bn Cheshire Regiment

William Coppenhall was born in Middlewich in 1890 and raised a family in Middlewich. He joined the Army on September 1, 1914 and became Pte William *Copnall*. He was posted to the 12 Bn Cheshire Regiment on September 4, 1914. Sent to France on September 6, 1915, and joined the Mediterranean Expedition Force on October 28, 1915. He was involved in several battles in the Balkans and remained overseas until March 18, 1919. He was demobbed and placed on "Z Reserve" on April 30, 1919. After medical examination, he was declared **50% Disabled "due to Malaria."** He was awarded a pension of 20/- per week, from September 2, 1919 and he died at home on November 18, 1919. He was buried in Middlewich Cemetery. He is mentioned on the memorial in St. Michael and All Saints Church, Middlewich and on the wooden scroll in the Middlewich Royal British Legion Branch Office, Lewin Street. His name should join that of his brother Charles on the Town War Memorial.



Russell Thomas Hatton, 17658 Pte 19 Bn Lancashire Fusiliers

Russell Hatton was born in Wheelock in 1874 but lived in Middlewich from 1891, where he married a Middlewich woman, Emma Hulme c.1901. He went to France with the 19 Bn Lancashire Fusiliers (3rd Salford Pals) on November 23, 1915. The Salford Pals were almost entirely wiped out at Thiepval Ridge on the Somme, on July 1, 1915. The 19 Lancashire converted to a Pioneer Bn on July 29, 1916 and joined the 49 (West Riding) Division on August 7, 1917 and were involved in operations on the Flanders Coast and the Battle of Poelcappelle. In 1918, they took part in the battles of Estaires, Messines, Bailleul, First and Second Battles of Kemmel Ridge, Scherpenberg, Selle and Valenciennes. Demobilisation began in early 1919. Pte Hatton died at home in Middlewich on February 16, 1920, aged 46—the oldest Middlewich soldier to die as a result of the Great War. He is buried in Middlewich Cemetery, marked by a **Commonwealth Graves Commission headstone**. He is not listed anywhere in Middlewich.

Arthur Harrison, 15459 Lance Corporal 8 Bn South Lancashire Regiment

Arthur Harrison was born in Wheelock in 1890. He joined the Cheshire Regiment but was assigned to 8 Bn South Lancashire Regiment on October 4, 1914. He went to France on September 28, 1915. Promoted to temporary Lance Corporal, December 10, 1915, his rank was made permanent on March 10, 1916. For 10 days in 1916 he was unfit for duty due to gastritis. He returned to duty on July 1, 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme. He died during the battle, on July 16, 1916. He has no known grave but is listed on the **Thiepval Memorial to the Missing**. As an employee of Brunner Mond, he is listed on the Brunner Mond private memorial in Brooks Lane.





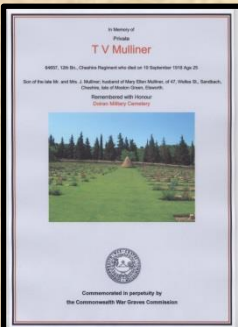
Herbert Johnson, MT/404937 Pte Army Service Corps

Herbert Johnson was born in 1890, probably in Runcorn but was working for Cheshire Lines Railway Company and living in Middlewich in 1915. He married a Middlewich girl, Julia Molyneux, on November 15, 1915 in St. Michael and All Angels Church, Middlewich. He joined the Army on December 11, 1915 and was assigned to the Army Reserve. He was mobilised on August 1, 1917 and posted to 3 Bn King's Shropshire Light Infantry. In December 1917, his unit was posted to Crosshaven, Co. Cork and then Fermoy, Co. Cork in Ireland. At the beginning of February 1918, he served briefly in France and transferred to the Army Service Corps until he was demobbed on February 24, 1919. He died at home in Middlewich on May 16, 1921 and was buried in Middlewich Cemetery. A **Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone** marks his grave but he is not mentioned on any war memorial.



James Henry Kirk, 11336 Pte 8 Bn Cheshire Regiment

James Henry Kirk was born in Middlewich in 1883. He enlisted in 3 Bn Cheshire Regiment on November 27, 1900 but was discharged 9 days later "on payment of £1." On the outbreak of war, he enlisted and, on June 26, 1915, embarked for Egypt and Gallipoli. He was involved in the battles of Sari Bair, Russell's Top and Hill 60 at ANZAC Cove. Pte Kirk was **wounded** at the Dardanelles. Evacuated from Helles on January 8-9, 1916, he saw action across Mesopotamia until May 18, 1918. Demobbed on February 25, 1919, he died at home in Middlewich on July 12, 1919. He is buried in Middlewich Cemetery and a **Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone** marks his grave. His name is not on any Middlewich memorial.



Thomas Mulliner, 64657 Pte 12 Bn Cheshire Regiment

Thomas Victor Mulliner was born in Sandbach in 1894. He worked at the Electro Bleach and Alkali Works in Middlewich. It is not known when he enlisted but he was on active service by the time of the 12 Cheshire's main engagement in September 1918, during the capture of Bulgarian positions in Greece. He was **killed in action** on September 19, 1918 and buried in Dorian Military Cemetery in Northern Greece, near the Macedonian border. His name is recorded on the memorial scroll on the wall of Electro Bleach (now ANSA) offices in Cledford Lane, Middlewich.



Harry Preston, 51587 Pte 17 Bn King's Liverpool Regiment

Harry Preston was born of Middlewich parents in Middlewich on July 4, 1897. At the age of 18 years and living in Liverpool, he enlisted in the King's Liverpool Regiment and was sent to France at the beginning of the Battle of the Somme in July 1916. He participated in the Battle of Montauban on July 1 and survived. After the fierce, prolonged fighting for Transloy Ridges on October 12, 1916, Harry Preston was dead, aged 19 years, and his body was never found. He is named on the **Thiepval Memorial to the Missing**.



William Spilsbury, 16288 Lance Corporal 12 Bn West Yorkshire Regiment

William Spilsbury was born in Middlewich in 1879, to a family that had a history of 150 years in Middlewich. He joined the North Lancashire Regiment at Preston on February 19, 1895 but was discharged 6 days later, on February 26, "mis-statement as to age on enlistment." Having re-joined later, he was sent with the West Yorkshire Regiment to France, landing at Le Harve during the first week of September 1915 and was soon in action at the Battle of Loos. In February 1916,

the regiment was fighting at The Bluff, near Ypres. Lance Corporal Spilsbury was killed in action during an attack at St. Eloi on April 3, 1916. His body was never found and he is **commemorated on the Menin Gate** in Ypres, among almost 55,000 British & Commonwealth soldiers lost but with no grave.



Joseph Stubbs, 34858 Pte 26 (Tyneside Irish) Northumberland Fusiliers

Joseph Stubbs was born in Davenham in 1896. His mother, Margaret Ann (nee Ravenscroft), from a Middlewich family was born and raised in Middlewich at Cledford Bridge, Newton. He enlisted into 15 BN West Yorkshire Regiment (“The Leeds Pals”) in 1914-1915. On December 7, 1915, they embarked the Empress of Britain for Alexandria to defend the Suez Canal, arriving at Port Said on December 21. After a few skirmishes with the Germans, they were sent to Bertrancourt, France, arriving on March 29, 1916. On July 1, 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme, all their officers were killed or wounded and Joseph Stubbs was one of only 47 uninjured. In January 1917, he was transferred to the Tyneside Irish, which took part in the offensive at Arras on April 9, 1917, when Pte Stubbs was **wounded**. Over the next 10 days he was transferred back to England, to **King George’s Hospital, London**. He developed pneumonia there and died on April 24, 1917, aged 21. His body was conveyed to Cheshire, where it was interred at Middlewich Cemetery on May 3, 1917.



William Walker, 128137 Pte 63 Company, Machine Gun Corps

William Walker was born in Winsford in 1895. Both his mother and grandmother were Middlewich women. Serving with the Machine Gun Corps, he was killed in action in France on February 27, 1918, aged 23 years. He has no known grave but is commemorated on the Arras Memorial.



The Arras Memorial in France, where William Walker and many others are commemorated. Photo: Geoff Page

