

The fallen of the First World War - As commemorated in St. George's Church, Lisbon -

By Edward Godfrey

As we continue to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War I decided to try and find out a little bit more about the members of the British Community in the Lisbon area who died and whose names appear on the tablet, set up in 1922, in the War Memorial Chapel of St. George's Church Lisbon. The results of my research appear below. It should be noted that although several men were of local British families, others have no local family connections and were no doubt working for Lisbon business houses when war was declared.

The principal source of this information was the web site of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) which lists the 1,700,000 men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the two world wars. Further information was found in sources such as the burial register, and in the case of Private George Milner Robinson, information from the web sites of the Fundação Robinson and www.Findmypast.UK.

The rank and names in bold type appear on the tablet. However in many cases information regarding rank and name on the CWGC register differs slightly from that on the tablet. It is likely that the CWGC information is more complete as it would have been sourced from official records, whereas the tablet would have been based on local memory.

I have also included information regarding the five First World War graves in the British Cemetery. Three men included on the tablet are buried in the cemetery as well as a further two who died in Lisbon and had no ties with the local community.

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The Tablet in St George's Church

**THIS TABLET IS SET UP
IN MEMORY OF
THE FOLLOWING MEN
WHO DIED ON ACTIVE
SERVICE
IN THE GREAT WAR**

Capt. Gerald Andrews – Royal Artillery

Unfortunately I can find no reference at all to Captain Gerald Andrews, Royal Artillery, on the CWGC site. I have widened my search, but can find no relevant casualty record.

Capt. Percy Clinch– Manchester Regiment

Corporal Henry Percy Clinch of the Manchester Regiment, 1st/6th Battalion, died on 29/05/1915, aged 26. He is commemorated on a panel on the Helles Memorial, the panels of which contain the names of 20,878 casualties. The Helles Memorial stands on the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula. It takes the form of an obelisk over 30 meters high that can be seen by ships passing through the Dardanelles. He was the son of Marriott William and Mary Harriett Leahy Clinch of 19, Wellington Square, Oxford.

Pte. John Creswell – Honourable Artillery Company

Lance Corporal John Lancashire Creswell of the H.A.C., died of wounds on 3/04/1917, aged 24, on the Somme. The Creswells were a well established Lisbon family, T. Creswell having served as a churchwarden at St. George's Church between 1878 and 1885 and C G Creswell in 1905. The CWGC site records John as being the son of Frank S. and Emily Creswell, of 17, Darlaston Rd., Wimbledon, London. His grave is in the Euston Road Cemetery, Colincamps, the Somme.

Lt. Victor King – Machine Gun Corps

Second Lieutenant Victor Algernon Robert King of the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) died on 29/09/1917, no age given. He had married Gladys Wright in Richmond, Surrey in late 1916. His name is on a panel on the Tyne Cot Memorial in Belgium, the panels of which contain the names of 34,948 casualties. The Tyne Cot Memorial is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. In the Third Battle of Ypres an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June 1917 to dislodge the Germans from the Messines Ridge was a complete success, but the main assault north-eastward, at the end of July, quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally ended in November with the capture of Passchendaele.

Lt. Henry Mitchell, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

Lieutenant Henry William Mitchell of the 5th Bn., attached 4th Bn, of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, died on 22/11/1917, aged 25 and is buried in the Jerusalem War Cemetery. He was the son of Henry and Gertrude Barnard Mitchell, of Cintra (sic), Portugal.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Palestine (now Israel), was part of the Turkish Empire and it was not entered by Allied forces until December 1916. The advance to Jerusalem took a further year. By 21 November 1917, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force had gained a line about five kilometers west of Jerusalem, but the city was deliberately

spared bombardment and direct attack. Very severe fighting followed, lasting until the evening of 8 December, when the 53rd (Welsh) Division on the south, and the 60th (London) and 74th (Yeomanry) Divisions on the west, had captured all the city's prepared defences. Turkish forces left Jerusalem throughout that night and in the morning of 9 December; the Mayor came to the Allied lines with the Turkish Governor's letter of surrender. Jerusalem was occupied that day and on 11 December, General Allenby formally entered the city, followed by representatives of France and Italy.

Capt. William Raymond Croft Murray – Grenadier Guards²

Captain William Raymond Croft Murray, 5th Bn. Grenadier Guards, died in Lisbon on 26/02/1917 aged 30. He was not a local man, being the son of Lt. Col. Denman Croft Murray; and husband of Mary Agneta Francis Boyle Murray, of 6, Mulberry Walk, Chelsea London. According to a note in the burial register, he was wounded at the Battle of Loos, (September/October 1915) and. he was going to Madeira (for convalescence?) and died of enteric fever. After the war, his widow requested the church committee responsible for the bronze tablet and the fitting out of the War Memorial Chapel that his name should be included on the tablet, and to this the committee readily agreed.

The grave reference is Plot E, 3, Grave 36, which can be found on the top left hand side of the path leading from the cemetery entrance to the church.

Lt. George Norton - RAF

Lt. George Norton, RAF, No.1 Observers School of Aerial Gunnery (New Romney), died in a London hospital on 10/05/1919 as a result of a fractured spine incurred in an aeroplane crash in London. He was aged 21 and the son of the late George Frederick and Laura Norton. He is buried in the family vault, reference C.1.9.37. in an area near the former parsonage.

Lt Douglas Rawes – King's Royal Rifles

Lt Douglas Rawes, 6th Bn. King's Royal Rifle Corps, was wounded in Flanders on 26/06/1915, died in London 16/08/1915 and was buried in the family vault on 1/09/1915. He was aged 34, the son of James and Helen Augusta Rawes. The Rawes family is one of the oldest British families in Portugal and continues to have interests in the shipping and travel businesses in Lisbon and Porto. The family vault - Plot C, 4, Grave 35, is to the East of the cemetery, near the memorial to the Boer prisoners of war.

L/Cpl. George M Robinson – VII Gloucesters

Private George Milner Robinson of the 28th Bn., London Regiment (Artists' Rifles), died on 22 October 1918, aged 35, and is buried in Cambridge City Cemetery. George was a third generation member of the Robinson cork family and was born in Portalegre

in 1882, the son of George Wheelhouse (1857 to 1932) and Fanny Isabella Robinson, née Milner.

He originally enlisted in the 7th Bn., the Gloucestershire Regiment, on 31 August 1914, his occupation being recorded as a cork merchant, but returned to Portugal on the PSNC vessel Orita, leaving Liverpool only two weeks later on 14 September. It seems probable that the British authorities felt that his services would be more valuable in running the family cork business, cork being no doubt a raw material of strategic value to the war effort. He re-enlisted in the Artists' Rifles in early 1918. It would appear that he died from illness rather than wounds sustained in battle.

Trooper H Lacy Street

Private Hamilton Lacy Street, 20th Bn. Royal Fusiliers, died on 4/03/1917, aged 32. He is commemorated on a panel on the Thiepval Memorial, in the Somme district of northern France.

The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, 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. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916.

Trooper Street was the son of Arthur Lacy Street and Alma Rosa Eldridge. He had married Drusilla Sarah Summers in South Stoneham Hampshire, his birthplace, in 1909.

Major James Henry Lionel Vaughan – King's African Rifles

Major James Henry Lionel Vaughan, of the General List, attached King's African Rifles, died on 05/05/1918 aged 33. He is commemorated on the Dar es Salaam British and Indian Memorial.

At the outbreak of the First World War Tanzania was the core of German East Africa. From the invasion of April 1915, Commonwealth forces fought a protracted and difficult campaign against a relatively small but highly skilled German force under the command of General von Lettow-Vorbeck. When the Germans finally surrendered on 23 November 1918, twelve days after the European armistice, their numbers had been reduced to 155 European and 1,168 African troops. The Memorial, which stands within Dar es Salaam War Cemetery, commemorates by name more than 1,500 officers and men who died in East Africa during and after January 1917 (the advance to the Rufiji River), who have no known grave.

Major Vaughan was the son of the late Lt. Col. Henry Vaughan, R.A.; husband of Eleanor Mary Vaughan. He was married to Mary Eleanor Bucknall, daughter of Henry Leahead Bucknall and Eleanor Carver Creswell, the Bucknalls and Creswells both being well established Lisbon families.

Commonwealth war graves in the British Cemetery, Lisbon

There are five First World War Commonwealth War Graves in the British Cemetery.

In addition to the graves of Capt. William Raymond Croft Murray, Lt. George Norton and Lt. Douglas Rawes, as mentioned above, there are a further two graves of servicemen who died on active service, but without any local or family connection. These graves are located on the east side of the church and the headstones are in the style typical of most Commonwealth War Graves.

Corporal Albert G Farley of the Royal Engineers,

Died in Lisbon on 17/11/1918, aged 22. According to the burial register he was a member of the Military Mission to Portugal and died of variola (smallpox).

Private Arthur Henry Harris, Royal Marine Light Infantry

SS Merionethshire, died in Lisbon on 10/07/1918, aged 24. The burial register records that he was a gunner on the SS Merionethshire was a cargo vessel of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company. Information on the website www.wrecksite.eu reads as follows: on 27 May 1918 the Merionethshire, on a voyage from London to the River Plate with general cargo, was torpedoed by the German submarine U62 off the Azores. There were no casualties and all were picked up by the Spanish schooner Luna and landed in the Azores. Presumably Private Harris died of injuries incurred in the incident.

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