

FRONTLINE TOWN...

FOREFRONT REMEMBRANCE...

...New Names for our Memorial?

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Since we began The Dover War Memorial Project on Remembrance Sunday 2005, it has been our great pleasure to visit and talk to many of the relatives and friends of our Fallen. One question that so many asked was why their loved one was not commemorated on the Town Memorial. There are a number of reasons for this; however as it was a source of grief and concern for the families, we asked the Town Council if the memorial could be updated with new names. New plaques had been added previously in 1934 and in 2000.

With great understanding the Town Council resolved in 2006 that they would consider updates every three years. The first of those updates occurred on Armistice Day 2009, and the new plaque is at the base of the memorial, at the back.

We have never seen published any criteria for inclusion on the Memorial, but from much research in archives, reports, and into our Fallen themselves, it is possible to discover guidelines.

One common misconception is that casualties may be commemorated only on one memorial. This has arisen owing to confusion between the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) records and other

types of memorials, such as the civic and the community. The CWGC, made up of six member countries, commemorate casualties only once, as its remit is to record and maintain their last resting places. Where there is no grave, the casualty will be commemorated on a cenotaph for the missing.

However, even the CWGC occasionally commemorates more than once. John Joseph Brimble, a pilot in the RAFVR, has two. Owing to the tragic circumstances of his death and the delays in recovery of his body, he is



Margate Memorial

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buried in two graves, at Sittingbourne and at Brookwood.

The Town Memorial is a civic memorial, such memorials are erected and maintained by local authorities. A third type of memorial are the community commemorations; these are created by local groups, such as schools, workplaces, clubs, and church congregations. A magnificent example of a community commemoration is the South Eastern and Chatham Railway memorial, at the former Marine Station. Several of the Fallen on our Town Memorial are commemorated there, including the oldest and youngest - Daniel Wyborn, 65, and Bertie Gilham, aged 15.

Others of our Fallen are commemorated on civic memorials elsewhere. Charles Laing, killed in action in 1915, is on the city memorial at Canterbury, while Walter Corteen, a bell-ringer at St Mary's, Dover, is remembered in his home county, Norfolk, at King's Lynn. Frank Balding is on the civic memorial at Louth in Lincolnshire - but the furthest we've yet found are Thomas Claringbould and Edward King, both commemorated on the Brant County Memorial in Ontario, Canada. They are rather pipped though by Charles Daynes, commemorated at River, whose name is inscribed on the Seddon District memorial in New Zealand.

Some of our casualties appear on several different memorials; Tommy Eaves, a much-loved master at St Martin's school, is on the school memorial. He's also commemorated as a former pupil at his

old schools of the Boys' Grammar and Deal Parochial, and at his teacher-training college, now in Plymouth. At the Deal and Walmer Memorial - the Victoria War Memorial Hospital - Tommy's name appears on the large Roll of Honour boards just inside the entrance.

More recent memorials commemorate some of our Fallen. Keith Gillman was a Battle of Britain pilot, renowned as the Face of the Few. He was lost over the channel at the age of just 19. His name was added to our Town Memorial in 2000. He was also commemorated for the millennium on the River parish memorial, near his home, and in 2005, the 65th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, on the memorials at Capel-le-Ferne and the Thames Embankment, London. Keith is one of the many casualties to have roads named after them. Walter Tull is another; his Walter Tull Way is in Northampton, where he once played professional football.

Not all the casualties on our Town Memorial lost their lives in action or from wounds in the battlefield. Some died from illnesses attributable to their war service, such as Edward Gatehouse who contracted tuberculosis while in the Royal Navy. Others fell to the influenza pandemic, like Charles Wood, buried at Buckland.

Some were indeed unfortunate. Percy Maxted was killed by a lathe falling onto his head. He had hitched his hammock to it, hoping to get a good night's sleep in a warm workshop at Sheerness docks. John Darwall, was unpacking his cases

in a London hotel, having just come home on leave. The chambermaid found him clinging to the bedpost after he rang for help. His last words were, "I've shot myself accidentally. I forgot my pistol was loaded. Go and fetch a doctor."

Our casualties fell across the world, and are connected in various ways to our town. Not all of them had homes in Dover when they died. The names on our Town Memorial were collected in 1924 through advertising for nominations from individuals and by canvassing groups such as workplaces, schools, and churches. A pupil of Dover College between 1895 and 1900 was Arthur Leyland Harrison, VC, who lost his life in the Zeebrugge Raid. Edward King, meanwhile, had emigrated to Canada with his family and was serving as a Corporal in the Central Ontario Regiment when he was killed in 1917. Iris, his widow, returned to Dover in 1920 with their children. She asked for Edward to be commemorated on the Town Memorial, as did Walter Tull's sisters, then living at River, request their brother, though Walter himself had never lived in Dover.

Also commemorated are people who died after the wars. Nelson Cork was killed while on service in Palestine in 1938; William Dixon lost his life serving in Ireland in 1920. Charles Vigor was said to have met his death in 1921 through gas poisoning. This was attributable to service, but Arthur Davis' illness was not. He had been discharged from service in 1915 as unfit. Called up in 1917 he was again rejected. This weighed heavily upon him, and before

he died in 1921 he requested a badge to show his fourteen months service in the Artillery.

The commemorations on civic and community memorials do not always correspond with people recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. For the Great War the CWGC collects only the information between 4th August 1914 and 31st August 1921. Walter Mills died in 1922, and is on our Town Memorial.

However, our Town Memorial does not record women, which the CWGC does. Equally, we have men on our Memorial who were not recorded by the CWGC. One, added to the CWGC records in 2009, is Cecil Sambrook, who died in 1917 from "gas poisoning" (his death was in fact from a service-caused illness). The Town Memorial itself is not infallible though. Remembered there is H R Anstrews; his surname was actually Andrews. Meanwhile, John Baker Saunders has the distinction of being the only casualty commemorated twice on the Memorial; under J Baker and J B Saunders.

Women and civilians are two significant groups that have not yet been commemorated on the Town Memorial. We have found so far two women who died while serving in military units; Margaret Care, in the WRNS, and Florence Johncock in QMAAC. Both succumbed to illness in 1918.

Several Dovorians Great War civilians died on war service; Sidney Holbourn was one of the three killed in the Great Faversham Munitions Explosion in 1916.

His mother asked for him to be commemorated but he was turned down as a civilian, even though Kitchener had said in 1914 that "they, in carrying out the great work of supplying munitions of war, are doing their duty for their King and Country, equally with those who have joined the Army for active service in the field".

The then Town Clerk had gathered the names of Great War civilian casualties in his memorial files, but the Town Memorial was erected in some haste and financial uncertainty and many names were omitted. Other civic memorials, such as Margate, do commemorate their Great War civilian casualties; they have ten victims of the Faversham explosion, and recorded too are eighteen people killed in raids, amongst them Baby Jack Dodman, just nine months old.

The only Great War civilian casualty remembered in Dover is little Francis Hall, aged 9 when he was killed in a raid while he was on his way to Sunday school. He is commemorated on a

plaque in the Dover Baptist church. The Charter of the CWGC does not permit them to record Great War civilian casualties; if they are not commemorated on civic or community memorials, our Great War civilians are completely forgotten.

Yet civilians were the fifth service, vital to war work on the home front and keeping "the Home Fires Burning". Underlining this, it is a very sad coincidence that Lena Gilbert Ford, who wrote the words to that popular patriotic song, should have become a Great War civilian casualty herself. She and her son Walter were killed by a raid on London in March 1918.

The next update to our Town Memorial is due this year; The Dover War Memorial Project has submitted two lists of names to the Town Council for their consideration. The names were requested by the family and friends of the Fallen since the last update in 2009, many of them relatives of the closest degree - a mother, sons, daughters, sisters. A number of them are now elderly and infirm; poignantly, for one it was a dying wish.



Margate Great War Memorial

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"Gone but not Forgotten" are words we often see on headstones. Dover loses its children, but Dover never forgets. With its scheduled updates to our Memorial, we're proud to say that Dover, our Frontline Town, is at the Forefront of Remembrance.