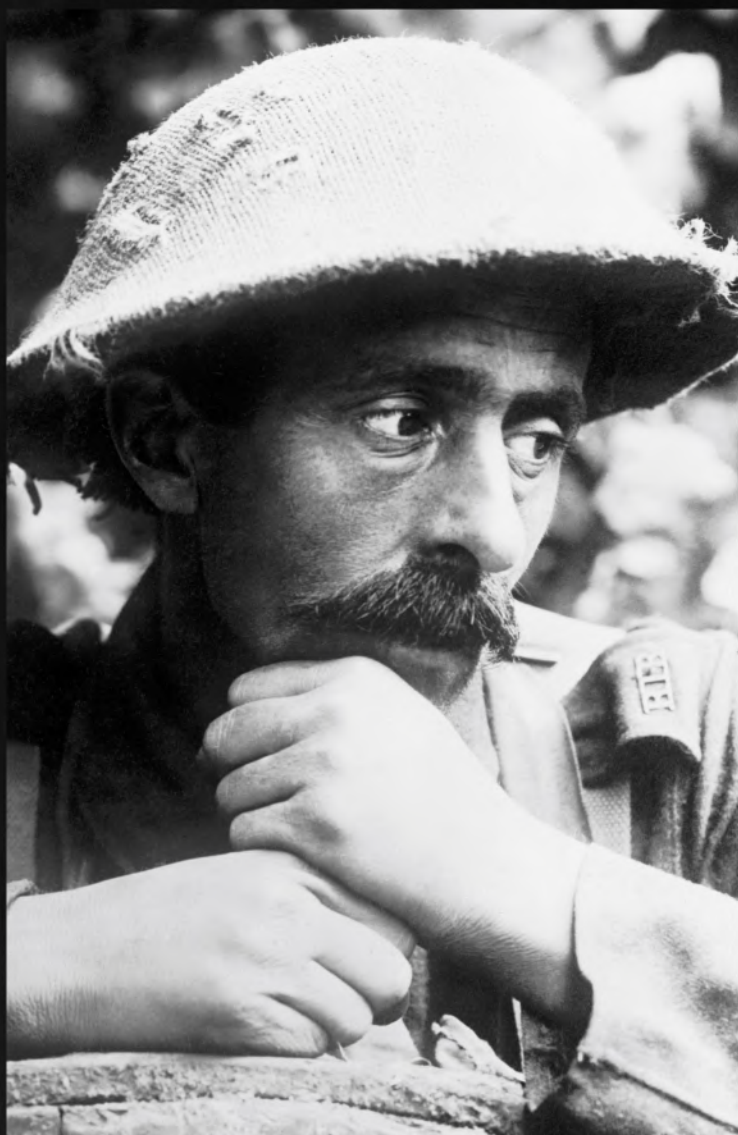




Salcombe & the Great War

1914-18



The First World War shaped the twentieth century. Nothing like it had been seen before.

The war is remembered largely because it caused such massive loss of life.

More than 9 million of those who fought were killed, along with millions of civilians who died from the fighting, disease and starvation.

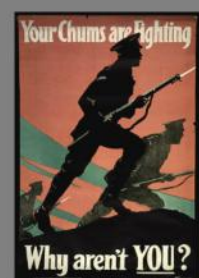
Estimates place the total at over 16 million. This death toll changed society's attitudes to war.

Millions more were wounded, with many physically or mentally disabled forever. Wives were widowed. Parents lost their sons. Children were orphaned. Few were left unaffected.

2014-18 marks the centenary of the First World War – a conflict that helped shaped our lives.

This exhibition tells the story of how the war affected the people of Salcombe and of the sacrifices they made for 'King and Country'

Enlisting for the Front in 1914



In the photograph opposite, a crowd has gathered in Fore Street, Salcombe to salute the fourteen young men who have enlisted for 'the Front'. Judging by the placards on the GWR bus, waiting to take them to the railway station at Kingsbridge, the volunteers have all booked an excursion to Berlin. Sadly, only half of the fourteen men will return.



Fore Street, Salcombe - Volunteers enlist for the Front 1914

The names of 150 Salcombe men, who served in the Great War, are listed in the records of the local Oddfellows Lodge - there may have been many more. Most enlisted in the Army, particularly in the Devonshire Regiment and the Royal Garrison Artillery.



Salcombe Section, RGA volunteers before the war



Devonshire Regt.



Royal Garrison Artillery

Many Salcombe men served in the Royal and Merchant navies, including Naval reservists and Coastguard officers called up for service in the Royal Navy. In the merchant service, at least fifty-two Salcombe born merchant seaman, were awarded the Mercantile Marine Medal, at the end of the war, for undertaking voyages in a war zone.



Devonshire Regiment drivers in Salcombe



Mercantile Marine Medal



Naval reservists and pensioners 'called up' in Salcombe

Caring for the Wounded



V.A. Hospitals

By the end of 1914 casualties from the Western Front were so high that established hospital services were in danger of being overwhelmed, so owners of large houses, such as Sharpitor (now Overbecks) and Collapit Creek, lent them to the Red Cross for the treatment of the wounded. Known as VA or VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) hospitals, they were staffed by volunteers drawn largely from the middle and upper classes.

Sharpitor V.A. Hospital 1915-1919

Mr and Mrs George Medlicott Vereker, gave up their home after their second son, 2nd. Lieut. Robert Vereker of the Grenadier Guards, was killed at Mons on the 25th August 1914, just 22 days into the war.



Sharpitor V.A. Hospital opened on 23rd August 1915. Local people provided food, bedding and nursing help. They also entertained the convalescents, organising whist drives, billiard matches and rifle matches.

By the time of its closure in 1919, 1,010 convalescents had passed through and, thanks to the skill and dedication of the staff, not a single death was recorded. However, fifteen men departed with the addition of a bride from the neighbourhood!



Sharpitor V.A. Hospital

Collapit Creek V.A. Hospital

The hospital was established in 1915 by the owners of Collapit Creek, Mr and Mrs. Ashley Froude, following the death of their only son Midshipman John Aubrey Froude of the Royal Navy, *HMS Cressy* on 22 September 1914 aged 16.



Collapit Creek V.A. Hospital

Salcombe Lifeboat Disaster 1916



Before the fatal capsize on Salcombe Bar. Painting by Paul Deacon

On the morning of October 27th 1916, in the middle of the First World War, the small community of Salcombe suffered a terrible loss when the lifeboat *William and Emma* capsized on Salcombe Bar after returning from an abortive mission. Thirteen of the fifteen-man crew were drowned.

‘The lifeboat had been called out, about six o’clock in the morning, to render assistance to the schooner *Western Lass*, which was reported to be wrecked on Meg Rock, near Prawle Point.

‘In spite of the furious gale that was raging and the tempestuous breakers on Salcombe Bar, the gallant crew of fifteen succeeded in getting out to sea, and in reaching the vessel that was in distress. Then, finding that the schooner’s crew had been rescued by the rocket apparatus of Prawle, and that no further help was needed, they started on their return voyage, but in crossing the bar their little craft capsized, and all but two of their number were drowned. Most of them were married men, who leave not only their widows, but also twelve very young children to mourn their loss.’

A contemporary account from The Devonian Year Book of 1917



Of the 15 man crew only W. Johnson and E. Distin survived



Salcombe War Memorial commemorates the 13 men who drowned

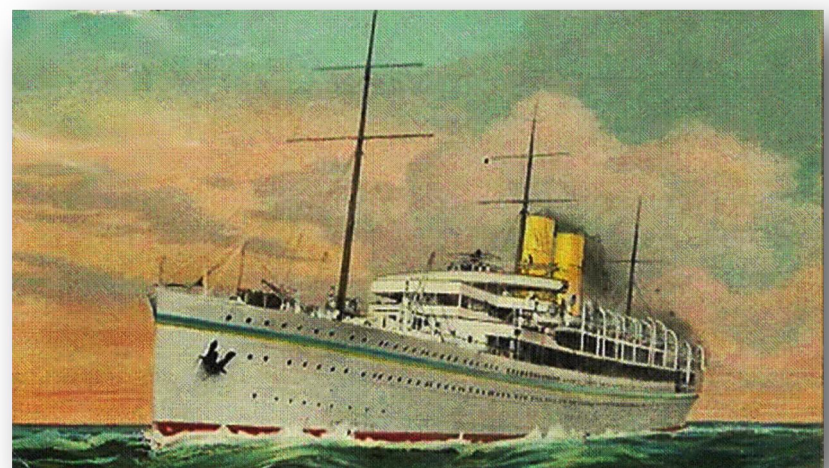
The U-Boat Threat



British and Allied Ships sunk by German U-Boats off Salcombe Harbour and Start Point in 1917 and 1918

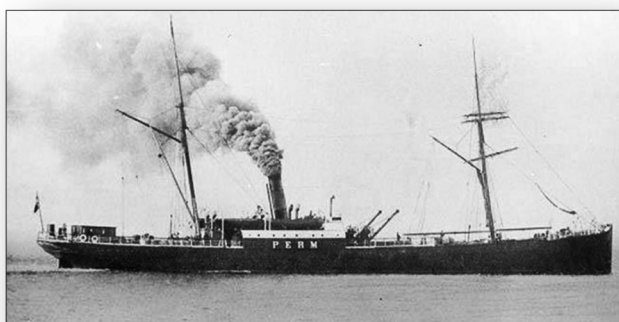
The Channel waters off Salcombe were a notorious 'killing ground' for German U-boats in the First World War with at least 25 British or allied 'merchantmen' sunk, between 1917 and 1918. Many of the victims were steam colliers carrying coal from South Wales.

One U-boat commander, Ober-leutnant Bieber of UB31, was particularly active in these waters in 1917, accounting for eleven merchant steamers.

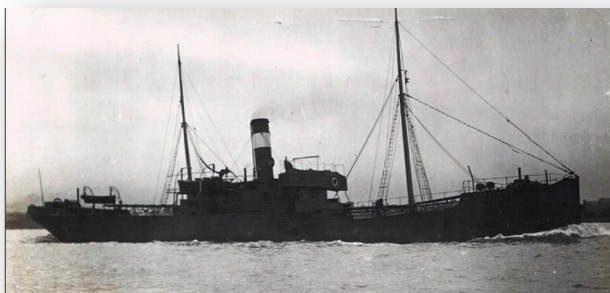


Built in 1910, the P&O liner SS Medina had been chartered as a royal yacht to take King George V to his 1911 coronation durbar in Delhi.

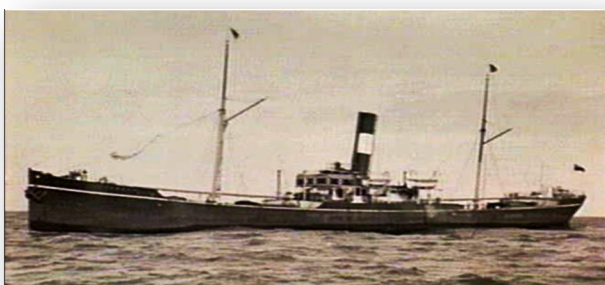
Bieber's largest victim was the 12,350 ton, P&O liner *Medina*. On 28 April 1917, when returning from India with Lord Carmichael, the retiring Governor of Madras and 410 other passengers and crew, *Medina* was torpedoed by Bieber, off Start Point. All but six of the passengers and crew were safely loaded into boats.



Perm, Danish collier, torpedoed Nov 1917



Wreathier, British collier, torpedoed Dec 1917



Uskmoor, British collier, torpedoed May 1918



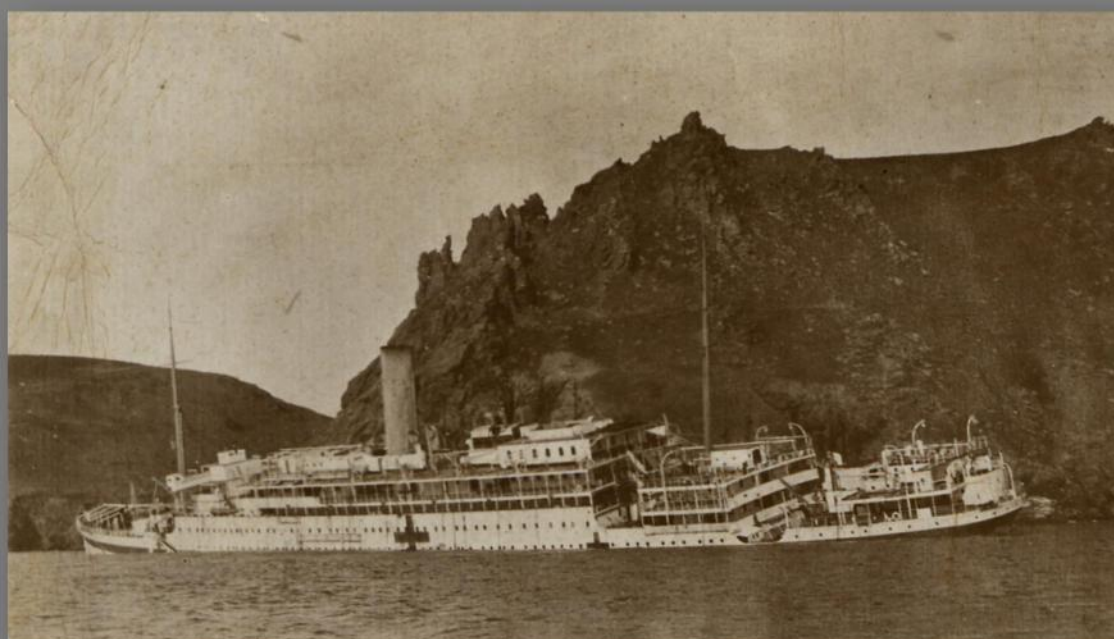
When the *Medina* sank she took with her Lord Carmichael's priceless collection of antiques. In 1987 a salvage vessel recovered some of the items, which were later auctioned at Sothebys. Items from the wreck can be seen in the Museum's Wreck Room

The Asturias Disaster, March 1917



The hospital ship *Asturias*, showing her lights and an illuminated red cross, was torpedoed without warning on 20 March 1917, by U-boat U20 five miles south of Start Point. In total darkness the ship was abandoned, but many of the crew had been killed in the initial explosion, while others drowned when two lifeboats smashed together as they were being launched.

The torpedo had lodged in a 3 ton stack of sulphur and deadly fumes enveloped the ship. In an appalling state, the vessel made it to Starehole Bay, near the entrance to Salcombe Harbour, the decks littered with bodies. The survivors were taken to the Salcombe Hotel, where they were treated with great kindness by the local people. Total casualties were 31 dead, 12 missing and 39 injured.



HMHS Asturias on the rocks at the Eelstone, near Starehole Bay, Salcombe

The 'Q Ship' HMS Stock Force, July 1918

Towards the end of the war, decoy merchant vessels known as Q ships were used to combat the U-Boat threat. A Q ship appeared to be an easy target, but in fact carried hidden armaments. On 30 July 1918, the Q ship, *HMS Stock Force*, commanded by Lieutenant Harold Auten, was off Salcombe when she was struck by a torpedo from UB98 and started to sink.

The submarine came to the surface, but was successfully lured within range of the hidden guns by a 'panic party' in one of the ship's boats. Shell after shell was poured into UB98 until she sank by the stern. The *Stock Force* later sank with colours flying, and her crew was taken off by nearby boats. Lieutenant Auten was awarded the Victoria Cross for his courage and coolness under fire.



HMS Stock Force and her commander Lt. Harold Auten V.C.

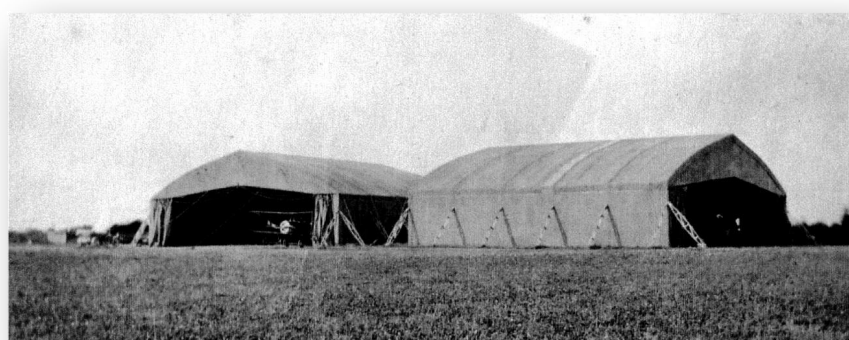
Prawle Airfield 1917-18



RNAS Prawle opened in April 1917- the first airfield in South-West England for land planes. Covering an extensive area of flat land near East Prawle, the site was close to the U-boat hunting grounds off the South Devon coast. Four canvas-covered hangars housed the flight of Sopwith 1½ Strutter bi-planes engaged in anti-submarine patrols.

The facilities provided for the 179 men were minimal – some were accommodated in huts, but most were under canvas. Except for the village inn and a YMCA hut, there was no entertainment available and the station lived up to its name 'Lonely Prawle'.

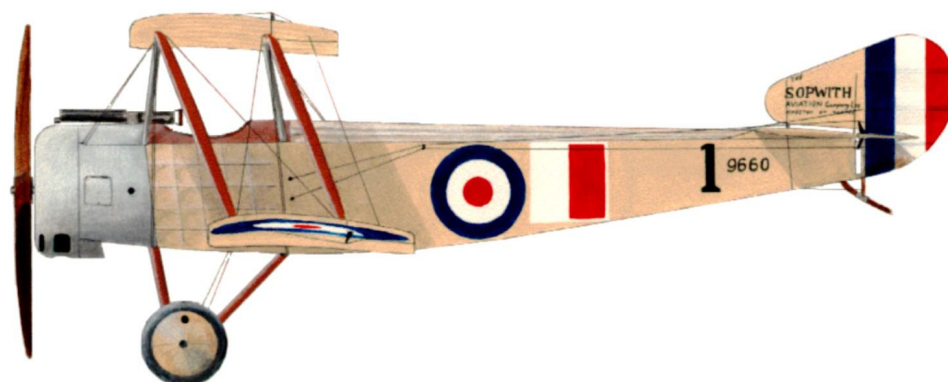
Six of the Sopwiths were involved in accidents and, within four months of the station being opened, all serviceable aircraft were withdrawn to the Western Front. In the following year, the station, now RAF Prawle Point, re-opened as a base for DH6 and DH9 bi-planes. It again suffered mixed fortunes with seven aircraft involved in accidents.



Prawle Airfield, set up to combat the U-Boat threat



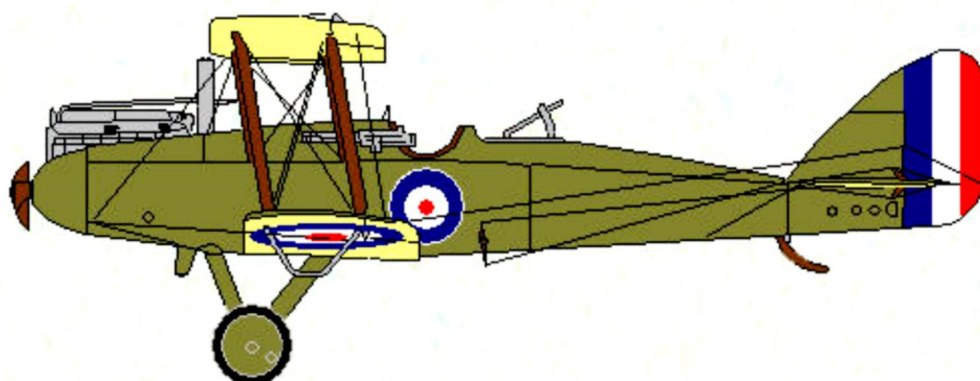
Sopwith 1½ Strutter No. 2564 at RNAS Prawle in 1917



Sopwith 1½ Strutter



A DH9 of 254 Squadron at RAF Prawle in 1917



Arco DH9

**Aircraft based at RNAS Prawle in 1917
and RAF Prawle in 1918**



DH6 B2903 of 254 Squadron at RAF Prawle in 1918



DH6

Prawle Point War Signal Station



On Constant Watch

In 1913 the Admiralty Coastguard Station at Prawle Point was put on a war footing and renamed a 'War Signal Station'. It was equipped with a 500 candle-power shutter searchlight for sending Morse code over a considerable distance.

The station's crew was hard at it day and night throughout the war, communicating with Royal Navy ships by Morse, flags and semaphore and passing on messages by telegraph to the Admiralty. They also reported and observed all movements of merchant ships



Prawle Point War Signal Station



A postcard showing Prawle Point from the east

Airships Overhead

As a means of combating the U-Boat threat, airship patrols were flown from RNAS Mullion in Cornwall but they met with little success and high losses. In July 1916, for example, airship C8 crashed off Start Point killing three members of the crew.

On at least one occasion the airships were mistaken for enemy Zeppelins. On 28 February 1916 alarm bells were ringing at Devonport when Prawle Point War Signal Station relayed by telegraph a message from Dartmouth Coastguard reporting that Zeppelins had been seen heading towards Plymouth. It turned out to be a British airship which had failed to report its identity.



A Coastal Craft Airship from RNAS Mullion

C (Revised April, 1912.)		110. 1106/1. 050
TELEGRAM.		Office Stamp or Date 443
Prefix	Code	Words
at Origin and Service Instructions.		
Handled in at	m.	Received here at m.
TO		
Prawle Point War Signal Station.		
"Coastguard reports Zeppelins coming west"		

*Telegram from Prawle Point War Signal Station
warning of 'Zeppelins coming west'*



Amongst the Fallen



Three comrades-in-arms who died together

Percy Yeoman, Nicholas Spry and John Gillard enlisted together in the 8th Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment and all three were killed in action on the 25th September 1915 at the Battle of Loos. Percy was 20, Nicholas 18 and John 23.



Percy Yeoman, Nicholas Spry and John Gillard

Brothers who died far apart

Pioneer Maurice Henry Dare of the 68th Field Company, the Royal Engineers, was killed in action at Gallipoli on 15 August 1915 aged 22.

His brother, Private Thomas Dare of the 15th Battalion, the Canadian Infantry (Central Ontario Regiment) had emigrated to Canada in 1909. He died of wounds on the Western front on 6 June 1916 aged 36.



Maurice and Thomas Dare



Gilbert Wood

Awarded the Military Medal

Lance Corporal Gilbert Thomas Wood of the 9th (Service) Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment, was the son of Thomas and Louisa Wood of Lower Batson, Salcombe. He died of wounds at Ypres on 4 October 1917 aged 23.

The Tragedy of the de Courcy Strettons

Amongst the names of the fallen on Salcombe War Memorial, that of de Courcy Stretton appears no less than five times. Four of the five sons of Major William de Courcy Stretton and his wife Beata, were killed in the Great War, whilst a grandson, Michael, died in the Second World War. The four brothers that died between 1915 and 1918 were:



Alexander, the oldest, was a captain in the Indian Army on attachment to the West African Frontier Force. Awarded the Military Cross, he was killed in action in German East Africa in 1917, aged 31.



William, a captain in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, died of wounds sustained on the Somme in 1916, aged 27.



Conrad served as an able seaman in the Royal Australian Navy and died of illness on board *HMAS Australia*, in 1915, aged 24.



John migrated to Canada in 1909 and in 1916 enlisted in the Canadian Army. He later transferred to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment as a 2nd Lieutenant. Awarded the Military Cross whilst serving in France, he was killed in action at the Battle of Bethune in 1918, aged 25.

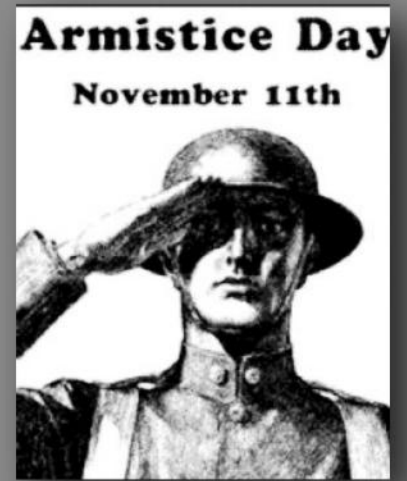
Peace at Last!



The War, which had been expected to be over by Christmas 1914, finally came to an end at 11am on 11th November 1918 following an armistice with Germany.

Thirty eight Salcombe men never returned. Many of those that did come home suffered from wounds, shell shock or the effects of chemical warfare: 'My Dad was gassed, in fact he never really got over it. I know it killed him in the end'. (Win Brodie, Salcombe).

It was supposed to be the 'War to End Wars'. Twenty-one years later Britain was again at war with Germany.



A Band of the Devonshire Regiment marches down Church Hill, Salcombe. Believed to be after the Peace.



The Thanksgiving Service in Courtenay Park on Peace Sunday, July 20th 1919



*Salcombe War Memorial
Unveiled at a special service on April 7th 1921*

Salcombe's Roll of Honour 1914-18



Edwin Adams 1894-1918. 24444 Private Edwin Clarence Paige Adams of the 55th Battalion, the Machine Gun Corps, formerly 1295 Liverpool Regiment. Born in Salcombe in the June Quarter of 1894. Killed in action on 28 April 1918 aged 23. France and Flanders theatre.

John Ball 1896-1916. 5592 Private John Adams Ball of the 2nd Regiment, the South African Infantry. Born in Salcombe in 1896. Killed in action on 23 January 1916 aged 21 at the Battle of Halaxin, Egypt.

John Calkin 1892-1917. 2nd Lieutenant John Ernest Calkin of the 22nd (Tyneside Scottish) Battalion, the Northumberland Fusiliers. Killed in action 9 April 1917 aged 25, probably in the First Battle of the Scarpe (9-14 April 1917), a phase in the Battle of Arras.

Arthur Canham 1896-1917 329222 Gunner Arthur James Canham of 192 Siege Battery, the Royal Garrison Artillery. Born in Salcombe in the June Quarter of 1896. Killed in action 16 August 1917 aged 21. France and Flanders theatre.

Maxwell Carpendale M.C. 1883-1918. Major Maxwell Montague Carpendale of the 36th Jacob's Horse Regiment (Acting Lieutenant Colonel). Born 12 July 1883 in Mussorie, India. Awarded the Military Cross in July 1916. Died of malaria whilst on active service in Damascus on 14 October 1918 aged 35.

Awdrey Cove 1898-1917. 874979 Chief Writer Awdrey Lawrence Cove of the Mercantile Marine Reserve, *HMS Laurentic*. Born in Salcombe in the June Quarter of 1898. Killed as a direct result of enemy action on 25 January 1917 aged 19, when *HMS Laurentic* struck mines off Lough Swilly, Ireland.

George Cranch 1893-1917 PLY/1210(S) Private George Moore Cranch of the Royal Marine Light Infantry, 2nd Royal Marine Battalion, the Royal Naval Division. Born in Salcombe 10 March 1893. Killed or died as a direct result of enemy action 26 October 1917, aged 24 at the Battle of Passchendaele, Belgium.

Maurice Dare 1893- 1915. 41941 Pioneer Maurice Henry Dare of the 68th Field Company, the Royal Engineers. Born in Salcombe in 1893. Killed in action at Gallipoli on 15 August 1915 aged 22.

Thomas Dare 1890-1916. 27878 Private Thomas Dare of the 15th Battalion, the Canadian Infantry (Central Ontario Regiment). Born in Salcombe 9 July 1880. Died of wounds in No. 14 General Hospital, Wimereux on 6 June 1916 aged 36.

William Distin 1899- 1918. DA/22153 Deckhand William Percy Distin of the Royal Navy Reserve, HMS Pembroke. Born in Salcombe in 1899. Died from disease 1 November 1918 aged 19.

Richard Evans 1895-1916. 4791 Private Richard Evans of the 2nd/7th Battalion, the Worcestershire Regiment. Born in Salcombe in 1895. Killed in action 10 October 1916 aged 21. France and Flanders theatre

Douglas Foster 1891-1917. Captain Douglas Cameron Foster of the Cameronians (the Scottish Rifles). Born in Aldershot in 1891. Killed in action at the Battle of Arras on 14 April 1917 aged 26.

James Friend 1896-1918. J/16823 Able Seaman James Andrew Friend of the Royal Navy, HMS Sunflower (a fleet auxiliary sweeping sloop). Born in West Alvington 20 Aug 1896. Killed or died by means other than disease, accident or enemy action on 10 February 1918 aged 22.

John Gillard 1892-1915. 10373 Private John Henry Gillard of the 8th (Service) Battalion, Devonshire Regiment. Born in Salcombe in 1892. Killed in action 25 September 1915 at the Battle of Loos aged 23.

Frederick Halstead 1893-1915. Lieutenant Arthur Frederick Halstead of the 15th Battalion, the Rifle Brigade, att. to the 1st Battalion, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Born in Argentina in August 1893. Killed in action in Gallipoli on 28-29 June 1915 aged 22.

Albert Hodder 1887-1917. 99221 (4039) Gunner Albert Berry Hodder of 266 Siege Battery, the Royal Garrison Artillery. Born in Salcombe in 1887. Killed in action 20 April 1917 aged 30. France and Flanders theatre – probably the Battle of Arras.

William Jarvis 1884-1917. TR 8/1081 William Jarvis of the 33rd Battalion, the Training Reserve. Born in Malborough in 1884. Died 6 February 1917 aged 31 at home.

William Jarvis 1883-1918. 18893 Private William Jarvis of the 2nd Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Born in Galmpton, South Huish in 1883. Killed in action 27 September 1918 aged 35. France and Flanders theatre.

Thomas Larcombe 1896-1917. 329240 Gunner Thomas Benjamin Victor Larcombe of the 159th (Heavy) Battery, the Royal Garrison Artillery. Born in Somerset 1896. Killed in action 15 May 1917 aged 24. France and Flanders theatre .





Salcombe's Roll of Honour 1914-18



James Lethbridge 1894-1919. K/14459 Stoker 1st Class James Alfred Lethbridge of the Royal Navy, HM Mine Sweeper *Kinross*. Born in Salcombe in 1894. Killed on 16 June 1919 aged 24 when *HMS Kinross* struck a mine in the Aegean.



Lewis Moysey 1870-1918. Captain Lewis Moysey of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Born in Leytonstone in 1870. Drowned on H.M. hospital ship *Glenart Castle* on 26 February 1918 aged 48.



John Murch 1893-1918. 925019 Private John Murch, 5th Battalion of the Saskatchewan Regt. Born in Salcombe in Sept. 1893. Missing believed killed on or since 26 July 1918. Location of unit at time of casualty: attack east of Arras.



Samuel Patey 1890-1916. 622038 Private Samuel Patey of the 31st Battalion, the Canadian Infantry (Alberta Regiment). Born in Hallsands on 11 December 1890. Killed in action on 14 June 1916 aged 25 at the Battle of Sanctuary Wood, south-east of Zillebeke, Belgium.



Edward Penny 1883-1917. 99237 Gunner Edward James Penny of the 266th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery. Born in Dodbrook, Kingsbridge in 1883. Killed in action on 20 April 1917 aged 34 on the Western Front - believed to be at the Battle of Arras.



Philip Putt 1899-1917. 329295 Driver Philip Alfred Putt of the 159th Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery. Born in Salcombe in 1899. Died at Salcombe on 25 November 1917 aged 18, having been discharged as no longer physically fit for war service.



Rowland Putt 1899-1916. 267 Gunner Rowland Putt of the 1st/2nd Devon Heavy battery, the Royal Garrison Artillery. Born in Salcombe in 1899. Died 9 April 1916 aged 17. Cause of death not established.



Nicholas Spry 1897-1915. 10408 Private Nicholas Henry Spry of C Company, 8th Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Born in Malborough in 1897. Killed in action 25 September 1915 at the Battle of Loos aged 18.



George Stone 1893-1914. 9152 Private George Stone of the 1st Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Born in Salcombe in 1893. Died of wounds on 30 October 1914 aged 22. Theatre: home. Burial: St. Anne's Churchyard, Hessenford, St. Germans, Cornwall.



Alexander de Courcy Stretton 1886-1917. Captain Alexander Lynham de Courcy Stretton of the 1st Battalion, Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment), attached to the 1st Battalion, the Nigeria Regiment. Born in Southampton in the September Quarter of 1886. Killed in action at Mahiwa, German East Africa on 16th October 1917, aged 31



Conrad de Courcy Stretton 1890-1915. 2955 Able Seaman Conrad de Courcy Stretton of the Royal Australian Navy, *HMAS Australia*. Born in Gosport, Hants in 1890. Died of illness in South Queensferry Hospital, Scotland on 12 March 1915 aged 25.



John de Courcy Stretton M.C. 1893-1918. 2nd Lieutenant John de Courcy Stretton M.C of the 3rd Battalion and attached to the 1st Battalion, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Born 22 May 1893 at Chester. Killed in action 11 May 1918 aged 24.



William de Courcy Stretton 1889-1916. Captain William Stapleton de Courcy Stretton of the 3rd Battalion and the 2nd Battalion, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Born in Gosport, Hants in 1889. Died of wounds on 4 September 1916 aged 27, probably at the Battle of Guillemont (Somme).



Cecil Tolcher 1897-1917. 5045 (and 391878) Rifleman Cecil Robert Tolcher of the 9th Battalion, the London Regiment (Queen Victoria's Rifles). Born at Croxley, Rickmansworth in the June Quarter of 1897. Died of wounds 23 January 1917 aged 19. Theatre: France and Flanders.



John Trinick 1896-1916. 15429 Lance Corporal John Hannaford Trinick, Machine Gun Section of the 17th (Service) Battalion, the King's (Liverpool) Regiment. Born in Salcombe in 1896. Killed in action 22 January 1916 aged 20. Theatre: France and Flanders.



Richard Twining 1896-1916. 2nd Lieutenant Richard Wake Twining of the 1st Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Born in Salcombe in 1896. Killed in action 1 July 1916 in France, aged 20.



Robert Vereker 1892-1914. 2nd Lieutenant Robert Humphrey Medlicot Vereker of the 2nd battalion, the Grenadier Guards. Born in Dublin in 15 October 1892. Killed in action 25 August 1914 aged 21 at the Battle of Landrecies, France.



Gilbert Wood M.M. 1894-1917. 10372 Lance Corporal Gilbert Thomas Wood of the 9th (Service) Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Born in Salcombe in 1894. Died of wounds on 4 October 1917 aged 23.



Percy Yeoman 1896-1915. 10401 Private Percy Yeoman of the 8th Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Born in Salcombe in 1896. Killed in action 25 September 1915 at the Battle of Loos aged 20.

