

EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS WHO DIED IN WAR

My nearer relatives well know that we very fortunate not to lose anyone close in either of the World Wars but it is sobering to realise that many members of our extended family gave their lives for their country. The tables at the end of this review list 89 men who lost their lives in the two wars and are consistent with reported numbers of deaths. There were approximately 734, 697 British Military deaths in WW1 and 383,700 in WW2, a ratio of 2:1, and relatively limited compared with global deaths of approximately 9.6 and 23 million respectively. Despite this terrible global carnage we will focus on our own families and the impact of the wars on them.

In order to consider each of the more personal deaths from these wars it is most practical to look at each branch of the family in turn. Where possible I have included as much detail as could be found regarding the manner of the deaths and the family situation. I will also mention some of those who were severely wounded in either war, made a notable contribution or provided medical care as their Military service. A brief mention of the Boer Wars will also be made but earlier wars generally will not be covered here.

FIDDIAN

An initial search revealed only two Fiddians who had died, one in each World War, but the actual impact was greater than this. In fact there were at least 5 men who belonged to our extended family and gave their lives in WW1 alone and another, who was severely shell-shocked. Four of the deaths occurred in 1917 and three of these share common features, being husbands of Fiddian wives who died or were mortally wounded in the trenches.

Lieutenant William Ronald Corrie born in 1887 at Beckenham, Kent was married to Gladys Kathleen Fiddian my 1st cousin twice removed in 1913 at Ealing London, but had not yet started a family. William joined the Artists Rifles in 1914 and served in Flanders in 1915 where he got his commission before being invalided home with shell-shock and thigh wounds. The following year he retrained as a Grenade Officer and in 1917 returned to France as a 2nd Lieutenant in the East Yorkshire Regiment. On 9 April he was mortally

wounded at the Battle of Arras whilst serving as Officer Commanding in the Battle Police and died on 23 April at Le Touquet. He was later buried at the Military Cemetery in Etaples. Sadly I know very little of what became of Gladys after William's death, except that in 1934 she eventually remarried to a Herbert Guy Loder and died in 1965 at Hounslow in London.

John Edward Jordan was born in 1883 at Aston, Warwickshire and before the war was a Brewer's Stocktaker. He had married Edith Carrie Fiddian in 1908 at Aston, my 3rd cousin twice removed, and they had a daughter Vera Catherine Jordan in 1909 at Smethwick in Staffordshire. John was a Private in the South Staffordshire Regiment and on 14 March 1917 he was killed in action at the town of Bapaume on the Somme. I think Edith may have married again after the war but Jordan is a common surname so I cannot be sure. She had been an Assistant Schoolmistress before marrying and so may have had the possibility of working as a Teacher.

Percy Herbert Keel was born in 1885 at Berwick St James, a village in Wiltshire. He actually joined the army in 1902 on a Short Service Commission at the age of only 16, giving his age as 18 and three quarters, he was 5 foot 6 inches and weighed only 9 stone but was still accepted. It is quite likely that he was escaping a life of drudgery as a Farm Labourer but can't have found the 7th Dragoon Guards any easier. He married Ellen Fiddian my 4th cousin once removed at Walworth in South London in 1914 and the following year they had a daughter Doris Ellen Keel. Percy signed up again, this time as a Private in the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment and was sent to France. In 1917 he was killed in action at Flanders Fields and was buried at Ypres in Belgium. Ellen never married again and died in 1958 at Rochford in Essex.

Alfred Oswald Peart was born in 1892 at Coventry, Warwickshire and is my 3rd cousin once removed. Before the war he had worked as an Analytical Chemist and was unmarried. In 1916 he enlisted in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve and the following year he was serving as an Ordinary Seaman on board the SS Ravensworth, a Newcastle Iron Steamer. They were outward bound from Cardiff to Norway when the ship foundered after a collision with the SS Eveleen 4.5 miles from the Copeland Islands in the North Irish Sea. Only 5 men were drowned but Oswald was one of them. He was buried at the Plymouth Naval Memorial in Devon. His parents had had one other child, a daughter Hildred.

Our fifth family member who died was actually a Fiddian and my 4th cousin twice removed. He was Frank Fiddian born in 1894 at Sparkhill in Birmingham and in 1911 was working as a Stock-keeper in a Boot Factory. He was engaged to 20 year old Lydia May Harris when she died suddenly in January 1915 leaving him devastated. Not long afterwards he enlisted in the Machine Gun Corps and was later sent to France. On 2 October 1918 whilst serving as a Private in the French part of Flanders Fields he was badly burnt by Mustard Gas and died from his wounds. He was buried at Mont Huon Military Cemetery in Le Treport, France near Dieppe.

Cedric Moulton Fiddian was the brother of Gladys Kathleen Fiddian, wife of our first fatality Lieutenant William Corrie. Like his sister he was born in Cuttack, Bengal, India in 1890 where his father was a District Judge as was my great-grandfather, so he is my 1st cousin twice removed. After graduating from Cambridge University he became a Schoolmaster but was called up in 1915. By October of that year he was an acting 2nd Lieutenant in the South Staffordshire Regiment but following exposure to intensive bombardment was overcome with shell-shock. This resulted in him taking absence without leave and he was removed from the Army as a result. Had he been an ordinary soldier he may well have been subject to Field Punishment Number One or even treated as a coward and shot (304 of our men were executed in WW1). He later returned to teaching and became Headmaster of King's College School, Cambridge where he continued to be haunted by his experience of war.

During WW2 only one member of our immediate family was killed and he was part of the 1st Australian Imperial Force. Sergeant James Moulton Fiddian was born in 1911 at Creswick, Victoria, Australia and was working as a Bank Officer before the war. He was also married to Kathleen May Hawthorne and they had a son Richard Moulton Fiddian (sadly Australian records are more scant than those in the UK). From 1939 Acting Staff Sergeant James Fiddian was stationed in Indonesia with the Australian Infantry and in 1942 he was on Ambon Island when they came under attack from the Japanese army. He was reported as missing in action and presumed dead. Sadly no body was recovered but he is remembered on the Roll of Honour at Ambon Memorial, Maluku, Indonesia.

Another more distant casualty was Harold Fiddian Green, a 5th cousin once removed. Harold was born in 1911 at Southam in Warwickshire and in WW2 joined the Coldstream Guards rising to the rank of Sergeant. At some point,

possibly as early as 1943 he was captured by the Germans and sent to Stalag VIII-A Prison Camp in Gorlitz, Saxony. There he was held as a POW with the prisoner number 155386. Although liberated in September 1945 his health was poor and he was sent to the Emergency Hospital in Birmingham where he died on 3rd November. He was buried at Stratford-upon-Avon Cemetery in Warwickshire in a war grave.

WHITE

There are no records of any White family members being killed or severely wounded in either World War. However my Auntie Olive married to Uncle Tom White, one of the Fulbourn farming families, was born a Turvey. She was one of four children including her twin sister Ellen Jessie Turvey who lived to be 102 years old. Their older brother was Horace Albert Turvey born in 1900 at Cambridge, a long serving Chief Mechanic in the Royal Navy. In 1942 he was serving on HMS Phoebe off the coast of West Africa when they were torpedoed with the loss of 46 lives. Horace died on the following day, 24 October, and was buried at Point Noir European Cemetery, French Equatorial Africa along with 28 other casualties.

ROBERTS

None of our Roberts family was killed during WW1 or WW2 but one of them was severely gassed. Our mother's father was Hubert Roberts but we never got to meet him because he died early at the age of only 47 as a result of his WW1 experiences. He was born in 1891 at Slaithwaite in Yorkshire and was a Clerk in a Woollen Mill before the war. Hubert enlisted in 1915 and rose to the rank of Sergeant in the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment). He fought in the trenches of the Western Front in France and Flanders and on at least one occasion experienced a Gas attack. Though he continued in service until the end of the war the gassing had a lasting effect on his health and was purported to have hastened his death. He initially worked as a Commercial Clerk after the war and married my grandmother Marion Beatrice Brooksbank in 1919 at Huddersfield.

BROOKSBANK

The Brooksbank family are generally considered to be a single clan, but they are a large family and have had a propensity for military careers over the years. As a result there are quite a few family casualties from the two World Wars but not many of these are from amongst my closer relatives. So from the tables at the end of this discussion there are only two Brooksbanks that I have included as family members, who died in WW1 and there is another who was seriously injured.

The two deaths were part of an even greater family tragedy that saw an entire generation die prematurely. It began with my 11th cousin four times removed Edward Clitherow Brooksbank, Eton and Cambridge scholar, JP, Deputy Lieutenant for the West Riding of Yorkshire, Officer of the Order of St John and Lord of Healaugh Manor. He married in 1885 and had four children, three sons and a daughter, who were all destined to die young. Indeed the youngest of them died first, Hugh Godfrey Brooksbank was born in 1893 at Healaugh Hall and by 1914 was in the Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment. He was serving as a Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion at the age of only 21 when he was severely wounded at the first Battle of Ypres on 2 Nov 1914. He was returned to London but died from his wounds 6 weeks later having twice been mentioned in Despatches for conspicuous gallantry.

His eldest brother Stamp Brooksbank was born in 1887 at the family home studied at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge then qualified as a Barrister before entering the army. He was a Captain in the same Regiment as his younger brother, but on 25 Sep 1915 he was reported as wounded and missing at the Battle of Loos and presumed killed in action. Whether to compensate in part for the sacrifice of his sons, Edward Clitherow was in 1919 created 1st Baronet Brooksbank of Healaugh Manor. But fate had not finished with him yet and his two remaining children would die before him, his unmarried daughter Margaret in 1926 aged only 35 and his middle son Lieutenant Colonel Edward York Brooksbank killed in a car crash aged 46 years. Even his wife Dame Katharine was to die first in 1939 and he finally died alone four years later.

Another somewhat distant 12th cousin three times removed, William Richard Brooksbank was severely wounded in WW1 but survived. He was born in 1886 at Hatcham in London and became a Gardener as a young man before joining the Royal Navy in 1904 on a Short Service Commission. In the end he remained

in the Navy until 1921 as an Acting Seaman but in 1918 he was badly injured when his ship, the Minesweeper HMS Newbury was shelled and sunk by a German Destroyer in the Dover Straits. He survived and returned to his family, a wife and four children, who had spent the latter part of the war in Hartley Wintney and lived another 50 years.

There were 14 more Brooksbanks who died in WW1 and another 7 who were killed in WW2 but I know little about them other than what is summarised in Table 1. Since they are even more distant relatives I ask only that they are remembered by us all as having given their lives for us, but will not share any more of their stories here.

MOULTON

Rather like the unfortunate Brooksbank family discussed above the main tragedy related to WW1 involved a single Moulton family. My 2nd cousin twice removed, the Rev Prof Dr James Hope Fiddian Moulton born in 1863 had married Eliza Keeling Osborn in 1890 at Portsea Island and they had had two children at Cambridge when the youngest Edith Hope Moulton died in 1902 aged only 8. They then had two more children at Chorlton in Lancashire and all was well until war broke out. Eliza died in 1915 at the age of only 47 and James took himself off to India as a Methodist Missionary. Meanwhile their eldest son William Ralph Osborn Moulton born in 1892 had joined up in 1914 and was a 2nd Lieutenant in the Manchester Regiment based in France.

In 1916 the Regiment were caught up in the offensive known as the Battle of the Somme and on 4th August launched an attack on German lines near Longueval. The manoeuvre failed and Lt William Moulton was killed in action, later being buried at Bernafay Wood British Cemetery, Montauban, France. His father then decided in 1917 to return to England via Egypt and was taking the SS City of Paris out of Port Said when they were torpedoed and sunk off the Gulf of Lion. James, a friend and several others managed to escape in a lifeboat but he died on the third of the four days it took to reach safety on Corsica. Two days later, on 9th April he was buried at sea leaving two orphans back home.

The only other casualty in WW1 was Corporal Herbert Percival Moulton who was born in 1894 at Hampstead in London. A saddler before the war broke out he joined up with the Royal Field Artillery in 1914 and was serving in France in

1915 when he was badly gassed in the trenches. This led to him being discharged from the army on medical grounds but he still received all his Campaign Medals. There were no known casualties of our Moulton family members during WW2.

VASEY

Remarkably the only two war deaths in this branch also came from a single family. My great-great uncle George Brinsden Vasey born in 1860 in Heidelberg, Victoria, Australia was a Barrister and Solicitor. He married Alice in 1890 and they had six children, although one of the two girls died aged 11. Three of their sons saw service in WW1, the fourth being too young. The eldest son Thomas Arnold Vasey born in 1891 in Australia, a Wool Buyer happened to be in England when war broke out and so he joined the Royal Navy. He served as an Able Seaman, survived the war and received the standard British Campaign Medals (Pip, Squeak and Wilfred!) before returning to Australia.

The second son John Brinsden Vasey born in 1893 at Malvern, Victoria was a Surveyor when the war started and so he joined the 2nd Field Company, Australian Engineers. By 1915 he had been promoted to Corporal and was serving in Gallipoli, Turkey when he was wounded in the face and leg on 7th August. He was being transferred to Malta for treatment when a week later he developed septicaemia and died. He was buried at Pieta Military Cemetery on Malta.

The next son was George Alan Vasey born in 1895 at Malvern who had entered the Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1913. With the outbreak of war his class graduated early and he was commissioned a Lieutenant in the Permanent Military Forces (PMF) in 1915. He saw action at the Somme in 1916 and was promoted to Captain, commanding the 13th Field Battery. Alan as he was known fought at Messines and Ypres, being promoted to Brigade Major in 1917 then took part in the defence of Amiens, the allied offensive and the attack on the Hindenburg Line. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and was twice mentioned in despatches by Sir Douglas Haig.

Alan returned to Australia in 1919, resuming as a Lieutenant and honorary Major in the PMF. He was only promoted to a full Major in 1935 and had considered giving up the army having qualified as an Accountant. In 1937 he

joined Army HQ in Melbourne and was promoted to Lt Colonel in 1939 before embarking for Palestine. By 1941 he was a temporary Brigadier, had been appointed a CBE and was Commander of Australian Forces on Crete. He was awarded a Bar to the DSO and the Greek Military Cross (1st Class), then returned to Australia as Deputy Chief of General Staff. Promoted to Major General in 1942 he fought a major campaign in Papua New Guinea for which he was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) and was awarded the US Distinguished Service Cross in 1943. He then had to return home severely ill with polyneuritis but recovered and flew north to assume command of the 6th Division. The Hudson aircraft he was in then crashed into the sea killing all on board, a tragic end for such a distinguished officer.

Major-General George Alan Vasey, CB, CBE, DSO & Bar aged only 49 was buried at Cairns, Queensland with full military honours. He had served with distinction in both World Wars and I feel deeply privileged to be able to claim him as a cousin (twice removed). I would encourage the reader to learn more about his amazing exploits which can be readily viewed online. You should also discover that his wife, born Jessie Mary Halbert in 1897, was also honoured. She had been the Founder and President of the War Widows' Guild of Australia in 1940 and continued the work after Alan's death. Jessie fought for increased War Widows' pensions, formed the War widows' Craft Guild and then set about improving housing. With £5000 donated by Sir William Angliss, son of Eliza Fiddian (my 3rd cousin thrice removed), she bought her first property for the Vasey Housing Association for ex-servicemen and their families. She was appointed an OBE in 1950, then a CBE in 1963 and featured on a 1995 Australian postage stamp.

LEAFORD

This is my wife's family name and so clearly they are only related to me through marriage but it seemed appropriate to include them here. There have been three fatalities in the two World Wars from this family. The first of these was William Harris Leaford born in 1895 at Plympton in Devon, a 2nd cousin twice removed of my wife. He joined the Royal Garrison Artillery in 1914 and served as a Gunner in the Western European Theatre. In 1917 they were stationed in Flanders Fields when William was wounded and on 10th August he

died from these wounds. He was buried at a British Military Cemetery in Ypres, Belgium along with many thousands of unknown soldiers.

Charles Leaford, a 7th cousin once removed of my wife, was born in 1892 at King's Lynn in Norfolk. In 1915 he joined the Army Service Corps at Luton and ended up serving in the Balkan Theatre as a Wheeler Corporal. He contracted dysentery in 1918 and was admitted to Salonica General Hospital in Greece. Charles died there from his infection on 24th September.

Charles Victor James Leaford was born in the year of William's death, his 2nd cousin once removed, at Romford in Essex. Charles had joined the Royal Navy in 1939 and was serving as a Stoker 1st Class on RN HMS Arethusa. In 1942 they were part of an escort for a convoy that had left Alexandria bound for Malta. About 450 miles out they were torpedoed by a low flying enemy aircraft and the resultant explosion and fire took 156 lives of the 500 men on board and injured many more. Their ship was the only casualty of Operation Stoneage and the convoy made it to Malta ending the siege there. Sadly Charles was one of the fatalities and was buried at sea on 18th November with a memorial at Chatham in Kent. He had only married Paulina Moir Rothwell at Ilford in Essex a little over a year before but they had not had any children.

PRATER

The only other reasonably near relative of my wife to have died in war was a 5th cousin twice removed, Cyril Francis Prater born in 1905 at Birkenhead in Cheshire. He was one of 6 children who went to Australia with their parents when they emigrated in 1911. Cyril was a Stoker in the Royal Australian Navy in WW2 and on 4th May 1942 he was serving on HMAS Yarra when it was sunk by Japanese warships. Out of a crew of 160 plus 40 Dutch rescues from the Paragi they were carrying, only 34 survived the initial sinking. By the time they were rescued by a Dutch submarine 5 days later only 13 were still alive but Cyril was not one of them. Since the date of his death was given as 9th May it is assumed that he must have survived the initial event.

There are another 8 Praters who died in WW1 and two who died in WW2 that are listed in Table 2. They are not included in my wife's family tree but are distantly related as the name is unique to the one family. They have been

included for completeness and because we should remember all those who gave their lives for us.

VIVIANS

I have also included a list of Vivians who died in the two World Wars in Table 3. Although it seems very likely that they are related to the Fiddians and so to me, no direct link has yet been found. Rather more surprisingly they are related to my wife, though the link is quite distant, and this would provide another reason for including them. One of them, Lord Worsley, bears the surname Pelham but was married to a Vivian and is a 21st cousin of my wife. This might seem rather a tenuous link but like the Brooksbanks, the Vivians are an interesting family with strong military connections and so I honour their sacrifices here.

This brings us to the end of the family names of those that died or were seriously wounded in the two World Wars but this seems to be a good place to recognise others who made a notable contribution.

1. ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS (RAMC)

Seven members of our family have served in the RAMC during the wars and all can be traced back to the Rev Samuel Fiddian, my 2x great-grandfather. Two of his sons, Dr Alexander Paull Fiddian and Judge James Paull Fiddian had sons who were doctors at the time of WW1. The former had a son Dr Arthur Edwin Fiddian born in 1881 who was a Captain and was mainly stationed in Egypt. The latter had three doctor sons who would all serve in the RAMC although he had died when they were children. My grandfather Dr James Victor Fiddian born in 1887 served as a Captain in France and recounts some of his experiences in his memoirs "Small Town Surgeon". He tells of treating and rescuing the wounded from no-man's land at the Battle of the Somme. His twin brother Dr Guy Vasey Fiddian was a Captain in the RAMC from 1917 and served in German South-West Africa.

Their younger brother Dr Eric Alfred Fiddian born in 1893 was actually in the Navy during WW1. In 1915 he was a Surgeon Probationer in the RNVR serving on HMS Nereide (a Destroyer). Then in 1916-7 a RN Temporary Surgeon on HMS Glory (a Battleship). By 1918 he was a Surgeon Lieutenant in the Royal Navy. Not to be outdone by his older brothers he then served in the RAMC during WW2, first as a Captain but later promoted to Major, at the No 1 Clearing Station in Italy for which he was awarded a MBE. Finally my aunt, Dr Barbara Hilda Bryson (my grandfather's eldest daughter) was commissioned in the RAMC as a Lieutenant in 1942. She remained in service until 1951 when she was promoted to Captain.

The Rev Samuel Fiddian had a sister Elizabeth Fiddian who married Richard Green and their son Richard Fiddian-Green was the first of the Fiddian-Greens. He in turn started another branch of Leedham-Greens who have also produced doctors in the family. The first of these was Dr Charles Albert Leedham-Green born in 1867 who completed his medical training at two German universities. In fact he was a Civilian Surgeon during the Second Boer War in 1900 but was invalided home after contracting enteric fever. Then in WW1 he was a Major in the RAMC at the First Southern General Hospital in Birmingham. His son Dr John Charles Leedham-Green was born in 1902 and trained as a surgeon. In 1940 he joined the RAMC and was initially based in Scotland, then went to West Africa where he was a Lieutenant Colonel in charge of a Surgical Division. He also went to France, back to England and then ended the war at India Command in Calcutta.

2. SENIOR RANKS

Remarkably we are distantly related to Douglas Haig, 1st Earl Haig who was a Field Marshal in WW1. He was married to Dorothy Maud Vivian and is a 21st cousin (twice removed) of my wife. It is somewhat controversial to claim him as a relative since he was Commander of the British Expeditionary Force in 1915 and during the Battle of the Somme, so could be claimed responsible for many of the deaths discussed herein. Shortly after victory he was praised as the man who had won the war and was given a huge state funeral in 1928. But after his death other views were more widely discussed and he was even called the "Butcher of the Somme". Still he was the highest ranking army officer from 1915 to 1918.

We can also lay claim to two Generals in the family during WW2. Major-General Ralph Ernest Vivian born in 1891 trained at the RMC Sandhurst and rose to Acting Major during WW1 when he was mentioned in Despatches and awarded the Military Cross. During WW2 he served in India, Burma, Ceylon and Iraq, was appointed CBE and rose to the rank of Colonel and Honorary Major-General. The other Major-General was George Alan Vasey born in 1895, who died in 1945 and was discussed previously.

The only Lieutenant Colonel we can lay claim to during wartime was Charles Fiddian Fiddian-Green born in 1864. Besides being Managing Director of his own Metal Company he was a Major in the 1st Voluntary Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment in 1908. During WW1 in his 50s he was Lt-Col and Deputy Commanding Officer of the 5th Battalion of the same Regiment and was awarded a DSO for his services. There were also several Majors and Captains, many of whom have already been mentioned. Indeed our father Dr James Anthony Fiddian born in 1922 was a Captain/Acting Major during WW2 and served in both North Africa and Burma, but never spoke of his wartime experiences.

OTHER NOTABLES

There remain a number of wartime tales about notable individuals or situations that are worth recounting.

- Although from an earlier time Major Clement Walker-Heneage born in 1831 must surely be worth mentioning. A 21st cousin of my wife through his marriage to Henrietta Vivian, he was an officer in the 8th Hussars and survived the Charge of the Light Brigade in 1854. As a Captain in the Indian Mutiny in 1858 he led a charge with 3 men and routed the enemy, charging through their camp and capturing two heavy guns. For this amazing deed he was awarded the Victoria Cross.
- Another recipient of the Military Cross was Captain Ronald Frank Strickland Mauduit born in 1894 and educated at Wellington College and Sandhurst. During WW1 he was a Flying Ace in the Royal Flying Corps seconded from the 7th Dragoon Guards, credited with 9 aerial victories. In 1919 he married Irene Brooksbank becoming my 12th cousin (3x removed). He remained in the army and died in 1928 playing polo in India.

- Percy Arthur Brooksbank, Gentleman born in 1897 and another 12th cousin had many stories to tell. Educated at Eton and Sandhurst, he was so annoyed by delays in getting his commission for WW1 that he ended up serving as a Captain in the French army. In 1917 he married a dubious lady in London who gave him VD on their wedding night. He divorced her after the war and married Annabelle Ralphs a US grocery heiress. Between wars he was a Racing Driver, Polo Player and Arabian horse Breeder then in WW2 worked for British Intelligence. Perhaps not surprisingly he was dead by 54.
- Lord John Fletcher Moulton, Baron Moulton of Bank, GBE, KCB, QC, PC, FRAS, FRS born in 1844 is a cousin 3x removed. He had already accomplished much and was a life peer by the outbreak of WW1. In 1914 he was made Chairman of the committee advising on the supply of explosives for the British war effort. Soon he was appointed Director-General of the Explosives Department, first in the War Office then the Ministry of Munitions. They were highly successful increasing production 20-fold and he received the GBE, KCB and other awards. In 1917 he was ordered to produce poisonous gases but this was against his better judgement.
- His son Major Hugh Lawrence Fletcher-Moulton born in 1876 served in France during WW1.
- My great uncle George Edward White was only born in 1899 but was desperate to join the army. In 1915 at the age of only 16 he was a Private in the Cambridgeshire Regiment and saw action in both Belgium and France. Discovered to be underage in 1916 he was then sent home. But in April 1917 as soon as he was 18 he re-enlisted and returned to active service.
- Roy Alan Birtles born in 1909 a 4th cousin once removed was a Captain and Acting Major in Italy during WW2 and received the MBE for his services.
- Alison Stirling Tulloch born in 1906 was married to Sir William Brooksbank, an 11th cousin 4x removed. She was a Captain in the Women's Royal Army Corps during WW2 and was awarded a MBE.
- Close to home my father's younger brother Richard Vasey Fiddian born in 1923 was a Captain in the Royal Engineers in the latter years of WW2 and oversaw Japanese POWs helping to rebuild the Burma Road critical for transport in that part of the world.

- RSM Ernest John Leaford born in 1909 is a 3rd cousin once removed of my wife. In 1940 he was a Staff Sergeant on the HMT Lancastria off the coast of Brittany. The ship was a converted Cunard liner carrying 4000-9000 refugees, troops, RAF personnel and crew. They were being evacuated as part of Operation Ariel two weeks after Dunkirk. The ship was bombed by German Junkers planes and after three direct hits she rolled over and sank in 20 minutes. There were 2477 survivors (including Ernest), meaning between 1500 and 6500 personnel died. This would have been a devastating blow to British moral and so the Government suppressed the story. Although news leaked out about 5 weeks after, the full story never came out.

So, it would seem that the family rose to the challenges of the World Wars and generally gave of their best, even giving their lives in many cases. We should be very proud of their efforts and remember the ultimate sacrifice made by those that died.

Paul Fiddian – February 2016

Table 1 – My Relatives Who Gave Their Lives in WW1 and WW2

Rank	Name	Born	Died	Place of Death	Notes
Stoker	William Henry Brooksbank	1884	1914	Sheerness	HMS Bulwark
Lieut	Hugh Godfrey Brooksbank	1893	1914	London	Wounded at Ypres
Capt	Stamp Brooksbank	1887	1915	Loos	Hugh's bro, MIA
Cpl	John Brinsden Vasey	1893	1915	Gallipoli	Buried in Malta
Lieut	William Ralph O Moulton	1892	1916	Somme	Killed in action
Pte	Albert Brooksbank	1885	1916	Somme	Died of wounds
Pte	Frederick George Brooksbank	1897	1916	Somme	From Ashton-u-L
Lieut	Hugh Freeth G Brooksbank	1885	1916	Somme	Killed in action
Cpl	John Brooksbank	1882	1916	Staffs	Died of wounds
Sgt	Rufus Brooksbank	1895	1916	Normandy	Died of wounds
Rev Dr	James Hope Fiddian Moulton	1863	1917	At sea	Off Corsica
Gunner	Frederick Stanley Brooksbank	1896	1917	Normandy	Died of wounds
Lieut	William Ronald Corrie	1887	1917	Le Touquet	Wounded at Arras
Pte	John Edward Jordan	1883	1917	Somme	Killed in action
Pte	Percy Herbert Keel	1885	1917	Flanders	Killed in action
Seaman	Alfred Oswald Peart	1892	1917	Irish Sea	SS Ravensworth
Pte	Harold Brooksbank	1898	1917	Flanders	From Ashton-u-L
Pte	Leonard Brooksbank	1889	1917	Nord	Killed in action
Pte	George William Brooksbank	1899	1918	Nord	Killed in action
Pte	Gordon Brooksbank	1886	1918	Nord	Buried at Arras
Pte	Joseph Brooksbank	1899	1918	Nord	Killed in action
Pte	H Brooksbank	-	1918	Salonika	RAMC
Gdsmn	Lancelot Brooksbank	1883	1918	Nord	Killed Nov 2nd
Pte	Frank Fiddian	1894	1918	Flanders	Mustard Gas
Sgt	Denis Brooksbank	1911	1941	England	RAF Vol. Res.
Sgt	James Moulton Fiddian	1911	1942	MIA	Ambon, Indonesia
Trooper	Alan Brooksbank	1919	1942	Malaya	Buried in Singapore
L Cpl	Herbert Brooksbank	1897	1942	Burma	KOYLI
Ch Mec	Horace Albert Turvey	1900	1942	W. Africa	HMS Phoebe
Sgt	Alfred Clifton Brooksbank	1922	1943	England	RAF Vol. Res.
Sgt	Thomas Brooksbank	1905	1944	W. Europe	Buried in Normandy
Pilot-Lt	R O D Brooksbank	1922	1944	Greece	SAAF
Signalman	Geoffrey Brooksbank	1923	1945	W. Europe	Buried in Germany
MajGen	George Alan Vasey	1895	1945	Cairns	Air crash
Sgt	Harold Fiddian Green	1911	1945	Birmingham	Stalag POW, Gorlitz

Table 2 – My Wife’s Relatives Who Gave Their Lives in WW1 and WW2

Rank	Name	Born	Died	Place of Death	Notes
Pte	Arthur George Prater	1893	1914	Nord	Killed in action
Pte	Charles Albert Prater	1881	1914	N. France	Killed in action
Rifleman	Alexander Prater	1892	1916	Loos	Killed in action
Pte	Arthur Prater	1890	1916	Somme	Died of wounds
Rifleman	George Prater	1879	1916	Ypres	Killed in action
Sgt	John Picton Herbert Prater	1891	1916	Nord	Killed in action
Pte	John Thomas Prater	1880	1917	Salonika	Killed in action
Sgt	Stephen Prater	1891	1917	Flanders	Killed in action
Gunner	William Harris Leaford	1895	1917	Ypres	Died of wounds
Cpl	Charles Leaford	1892	1918	Salonika	Dysentary
Plumber	Stanley Frederick Prater	1917	1941	Mediterranean	HMS Galatea
Stoker	Charles Victor James Leaford	1917	1942	Mediterranean	HMS Arethusa
Stoker	Cyril Francis Prater	1905	1942	SE Asia	HMS Yarra
Pte	Victor George Prater	1919	1943	Italy	Buried at Bari

Table 3 - Vivians Who Gave Their Lives in WW1 and WW2

Rank	Name	Born	Died	Place of Death	Notes
A Seaman	Francis Alfred Vivian	1894	1914	HMS Amphion	Hit mines
Lieut	Charles Sackville A Pelham	1887	1914	Ypres	Lord Worsley
Capt	William Geoffrey Vyvyan	1876	1914	Ypres	Career soldier
Sapper	George Alfred Vivian	NZ	1915	Egypt	Pneumonia
Lieut	Walter Drummond Vyvyan	1887	1915	St Eloi, Belgium	Career soldier
Lt Col	Charles Augustus Vivian	1874	1915	Ypres	Career soldier
Rifleman	Ernest Ralph Vivian	1887	1916	Somme	Killed in action
Pte	Frederick Charles Vivian	1893	1916	Nord	Died of wounds
Lieut	Gilbert Vivian	1892	1916	Calais	Died of wounds
Capt	Richard Trevor Vivian	1889	1916	Basra, Iraq	RAMC
Ldg Telegr	Reginald Claude Vivian	1896	1916	HMS Hampshire	Ship sunk
Capt	Beresford Haughton Vyvyan	1893	1917	Flanders	Died of wounds
Sapper	Reginald Vivian	1883	1917	Gaza	Malaria
Pte	Wilfred Bernard Vivian	1896	1917	Flanders	Killed in action
Pte	William Bassett Vivian	1898	1917	Bugle, Cornwall	At home
Stoker	Claude Vivian	1892	1918	HMS Tetrarch	Died of disease
Pte	Albert Henry Vivian	1898	1918	Nord	Killed in action
Bombardier	Frank Vivian	1879	1918	Nord	Died of wounds
Driver	Percy Vivian	1895	1918	Somme	Killed in action
Stoker	William John Vivian	1880	1918	HMS Eglantine	Died of disease
Gunner	Alan Joseph Vivian	1921	1941	Greece	Royal Artillery
A Seaman	Henry Warren Vivian	1917	1941	HMS Neptune	Hit mines
Pte	Edwin Wilfred Vivian	1908	1942	Egypt	Aussie
Pte	Harry Nicholas Vivian	1920	1942	Egypt	Aussie
A Seaman	Henry Robert Dunne Vivian	1918	1942	HMAS Perth	Sunk by Japanese
Sgt	Keith Bridgland Vivian	1920	1942	Australia	RAAF, accident
Sgt	Anthony William Vivian	1921	1942	Malta	RAF
Lieut	Arnold Guy Vivian	1915	1943	Padua, Italy	Gren. Guards
Steward	Byron Thomas Vivian	1913	1943	SS Iron Knight	Torpedoed
Pilot-F.O.	Sidney Richard Vivian	1917	1943	Germany	RAF
Pte	Richard Henry Vivian	1920	1943	Australia	Unknown
Capt	Guy Joseph Vivian	1911	1943	Middlesex	Died of wounds
Fusilier	Kenneth Charles S Vivian	1921	1943	Tunisia	Killed in action
Capt	William Graham Vivian	1914	1943	Tunisia	Killed in action
Capt	Claude Panton Vivian	1920	1944	Normandy	Royal Artillery
Bombardier	Francis Alexander Vivian	1915	1944	Normandy	Royal Artillery
Cpl	John Frank Vivian	1919	1944	Normandy	Killed in action
Pilot Officer	Jack Kenneth Vivian	-	1944	Calais	RCAF
Lieut	Graham St Aubyn Vivian	1922	1944	Ravenna, Italy	Royal Engineers
Capt	Frank Trevor Vivian	1921	1946	Andover	Air crash