

MISSING IN ACTION

1914 -1919

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Derbyshire's 1914 – 1919 Roll of Honour

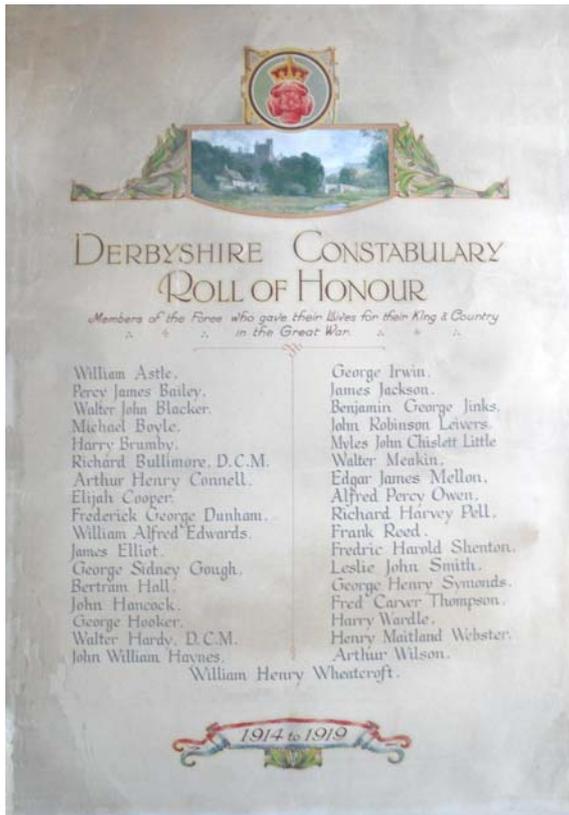
I have already explained in an earlier chapter that the force consisted of a large number of ex service men. At times of crisis in Britain these former soldiers were duty bound to re-join their regiments and the Chief Constable had no option but to accept their resignation and release them. Prior to 1900 these instances were few and far between, with just a few recalled to the South African conflicts against the Zulus in 1878 & the Boers in 1899. All these men recalled to the colours returned to continue their Police duties except one.

Pc 204 George Melbourne of Belper, was single when he left the army to join the force as a 23 year old on 5th October 1899. The constable had no time to be trained as nine days later he was recalled to join his regiment due to the onset of the Boer War. On 23rd November the same year, Private 5935 of the 3rd Btn¹ Grenadier Guards was killed in action at Belmont, South Africa. His father, the Caretaker at the Belper Public Hall, was informed he was seriously injured but when he sent a letter to him it was returned marked 'deceased'.²

Britain's early wars were quite minor and relatively short and whilst numbers of men who joined up to fight in these actions failed to return, death on an industrial scale, was not seen until the Great War of 1914 – 1918, also known as the First World War. During this time all of the police forces throughout Great Britain including County and Borough Forces were under considerable strain having had members called up to serve in the Army & Navy. At the outbreak of this conflict those Policemen who were still members of the Reserve Military Forces were called up immediately, most leaving in August 1914. The Government had passed legislation during the Boer War to allow officers dependants, whether they were wives / children or elderly parents to be given a small allowance and the police force was expected to contribute to this. Whilst officers had to resign on being called up they were expected to return to their former positions and ranks when the conflict had ended. In the first month of the war 35 County Police Officers were called up, 33 to the Army and 2 for the Navy³. At the same time a number of former / retired officers and respectable members of the public were recruited into the Police First Reserve or the Special Constabulary to help fill the vacant places.



The 'Silver War Badge' introduced in September 1916 to identify those men who had been invalided out of the military. In 1918 permission was granted to those County constables entitled to this badge to wear it on their right upper arm, sergeants wore it on the right cuff.



Pals Battalion when required)⁵ So many in fact that in September an order was circulated informing officers that no more would be allowed to volunteer due to staff shortages⁶.

After almost two and a half years of war, with an authorised establishment of 436, the force had over a third of its strength serving in the military although by this time twenty Derbyshire police officers would not be returning home having been killed in action.

The war ground on, there were not enough volunteers to take the place of the hundreds of thousands of service men being wounded, maimed or killed. In view of this, for the first time in modern British history, conscription was introduced requiring fit and able bodied men to join up. Certain trades and occupations were initially exempt, the police were not⁷. All Chief Constables were pressured into releasing more and more officers to join the military with the call up age being steadily increased so that in 1918 certificates of exemption were required from Policemen who were above the age of 51⁸. By now volunteers were not called for, the Chief Constable decided which of his men would join the war effort. Their places were taken by appointing medically discharged ex-

Within a few days of war being declared at least three officers were dismissed for being absent without leave from their stations. These had possibly enlisted without the Chief Constables permission⁴.

Optimists had hoped the war would be over by Christmas but as the fighting dragged on and stagnated more men were required for the trenches. The following year the Country called out for more volunteers and serving policemen, with the Chief Constables permission, were allowed to join up. These 76 men even received a good work notation in their personal record for volunteering. By the end of 1915 seven former officers had been killed with 10 being wounded and 3 being invalided out suffering from frost bite and the like. An astonishing 206 further policemen signed up to the 'Lord Derby's Recruiting Scheme' (local men who registered an interest in joining a



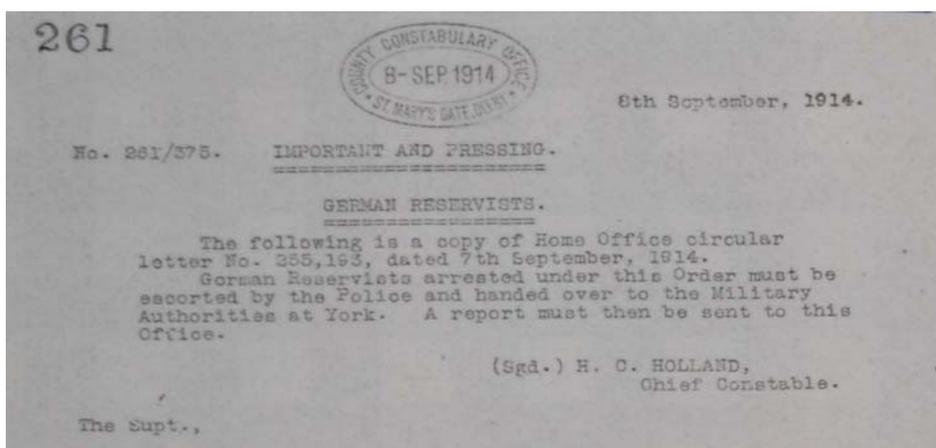
servicemen although by 1918 a number of these had been dismissed or forced to resign as they were not of the highest quality⁹.

Hostilities ceased at 11am on November 11th 1918 although the war did not technically end until the signing of the Versailles Peace Treaty on 28th June the following year. As a result of this conflict a total of 191 Derbyshire police officers served in the armed forces with a few becoming prisoners of war and a total of 33 being killed in action or dying as a result of wounds received.

In 1919 Chief Constable Major Anley organised a subscription to honour and remember those members of the force who died serving in His Majesties Armed Forces during the war. A memorial tablet with the names of those officers who gave their lives for their country was to be produced and displayed at force headquarters with a small certificate to be printed and sold to relatives and members of the force who wanted one. It took almost 12 years, but as a result a plaque was produced dedicated to the memory of 35 officers. It also included a further two members who had died through illness whilst serving in the military. The memorial consisted of a wooden laurel wreath crowned with the county constabulary badge enclosing the carved names of the men and relieved in gold leaf. It was displayed in the entrance hall at the County Police HQ at Iron Gate, Derby¹⁰. At its unveiling by the Duke of Devonshire on Wednesday April 30th 1930 over 100 members of the force along with several relatives of the fallen men were present. The dedication ceremony was carried out by the vicar of All Saints Church, Derby with the 'Last Post' and 'Reveille' being played by a bugler from the Normanton Barracks¹¹.

In 1948 the wooden memorial was sympathetically altered with the names of a further nine men killed during the Second World War being added. The new addition was unveiled by Alderman C F White on September 5th the same year¹². Since then it has moved around the County with its current resting place being in the entrance to The Old Hall at Butterley Police Headquarters, Ripley.

All four Police Forces in the County of Derbyshire, which included the Borough's of Derby, Chesterfield and Glossop provided manpower for the great conflict. From these a further 14¹³ former officers would not return, their names being remembered at Police Headquarters and Chesterfield.



Chief Constables Order shortly after the outbreak of war detailing how to deal with German Reservists.

The First to Make the Ultimate Sacrifice

**1st Class Constable 266, George Irwin,
Served in Derbyshire Constabulary 1st December 1909 – 4th August 1914.**

George was a native of Castleblayney, Co Monaghan, Ireland¹⁴ and had been initially employed as a Footman. In March 1903, at the age of 21, he enlisted as a soldier in the 1st Battalion of the relatively new Irish Guards Regiment. After six years home service in the UK he left the army to begin a career in the Derbyshire Constabulary. When military personnel left the service they were placed on the reserve list for a set number of years and liable to be recalled to the colours at any time should their country need them. George was not the only police officer in this position, at the turn of the century ex-servicemen were the second highest profession to be recruited into the county police force beaten only by labourers.



Photo courtesy of Grant Shaw & Paul Milner, Ilkeston.

After receiving a months training in the Reserve at Derby he was sent to Long Eaton and later to Church Gresley, Swadlincote¹⁵ where he was living when he married Agnes¹⁶.

Whilst stationed at Ilkeston, and shortly after recovering from pleurisy, 1st Class Constable Irwin was one of 1,300 men called up from the reserve to rejoin the Irish Guards. He had no choice but to resign from the force, with the Chief Constables permission, on 4th August 1914 and rejoin the Irish Guards at Wellington Barracks with the service number 1623. The Battalion was inspected by their Regimental Colonel Lord Roberts on the 11th August and arrived in France two days later, being sent to a concentration area 40 miles south of Mons.

Almost immediately a German offensive on the Mons forced the British Expeditionary Force to retreat southwards although this was referred to by veterans as a retirement. The 1st Battalion was used as a rearguard for the 200 mile retreat when on one day it suffered over 100 casualties with its commanding officer killed.

Georges' war was extremely short, by the 11th September 1914 the German advance had been halted just east of Paris and the Battle of Marne was well underway. Sergeant Irwin died of wounds received on this day, his widow being informed whilst staying with her parents at 33 Hastings Road, Swadlincote.

By the time the First World War ended in 1918 George, who is commemorated on the La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial, France, was one of the 2,235 non commissioned officers and other ranks killed serving in the Irish Guards. He is also remembered locally on the War Memorial on Ilkeston Market Place.

3rd Class Constable 124, William Astle was a member of the County Force between 24th December 1913 until resigning on being recalled to the colours on 4th August 1914 whilst serving at Buxton. William was a native of Derby and had joined the 2nd Coy, 1st Batn. Grenadier Guards as service number 15196 on 27th March 1911 leaving three days before being appointed to the Derbyshire police at the age of 22. Within a year the 5' 11" tall officer was recalled to the 2nd Battalion of his regiment.



Private Astle mobilised at Chelsea and sailed to Le Harve on 15th August. He served just over a month being killed in action on the Marne in France sometime between 14th - 16th September 1914. The 3,700 men with no known grave killed in the three month battle are commemorated at the La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial, France.

1st Class Constable 319, John Robinson Leivers had served in the County force between 1st November 1912 before being called up on 3rd August 1914. He was born in Long Eaton, the son of James Leivers of 34 Lower Brook Street, Long Eaton and had trained as a Lace-hand before serving for nine years in the Royal Navy. On joining the police he was stationed at Buxton and if the world had stayed at peace his service in the Royal Navy Reserve would have expired in October 1917. However war broke out and now aged 27 years he was recalled to the Royal Navy as Able Seaman 229452 Leivers. Two months later he was one of the 497 hands who lost their lives whilst serving on board HMS Hawke, a cruiser launched in 1891, when she was sunk by a German submarine, U 9, on 15th October 1914. The ship had been on patrol in the North Sea with her sister ship HMS Theseus when disaster struck. U9 had fired her first torpedo at Theseus but it missed and struck Hawke. Only 70 of her total of 594 officers and crewmen were saved. HMS Hawke was the fourth ship sunk by this U-boat since the commencement of hostilities which went on to sink a further 13 ships before being retired to a training squadron and being scrapped after the war. John's watery grave is commemorated on Panel 2 of the Portsmouth Naval Memorial and also at the War Memorial in the Town Hall at Long Eaton.

Merit Class Constable 176, James Elliot served in the Constabulary from 27th December 1907 to 4th August 1914. A native of Jedburgh and ploughman by trade James had joined the 2nd Btn Scots Guards on 7th December 1904 serving exactly 3 years before being appointed a Constable in Derbyshire. The 6' tall 23 year old single Scotsman was initially sent to Buxton but later looked after Etwall, South Normanton and Fairfield. It was whilst in the last town that on Christmas Eve 1913 he was reprimanded by the Chief Constable and transferred to the small village of Ockbrook near Spondon for quarrelling with members of the public in the street after drinking in a public house with them. As an army reservist he was recalled to his regiment on mobilisation. The force was informed in a War Office report of 1915 that he would not be returning as he was presumed killed in November 1914 at the battle of Mons although it was more than likely at the Battle of Ypres on 11th November 1914. James's death is commemorated on Panel 11 at the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial in Belgium.



1st Class Constable 404, Elijah Cooper. A member of the Derbyshire Constabulary from 13th March 1911 until being recalled to his Regiment on 4th August 1914. Elijah was born in Hanley, Stoke on Trent, the son of John a Staffordshire Police Sergeant. At the time of his death his wife, Ella whom he had married shortly after joining the police, was living at 3 Pleasant View, Starkholmes, Matlock. This town was his first station before being transferred to Long Eaton in late 1912. Elijah was a Porter prior to joining the Grenadier Guards and followed in his fathers footsteps by joining a neighbouring constabulary at the



age of 21. During his police service he suffered from the cold weather in the north Derbyshire town and was disciplined a number of times for missing points. He did however receive a commendation for the smart arrest of a burglar wanted at Derby. At the outbreak of war Elijah was called up to rejoin his Regiment, 2nd Bn Grenadier Guards. Private 13571 Cooper is recorded as dying of wounds received in action at the Battle of Ypres on 2nd November 1914 and is remembered on Panel 9 & 11 at the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial in Belgium and the War Memorial at Pic Tor, Matlock..

Merit Class Constable 377, George Henry Symonds. An ex Guardsman George was appointed to the Force aged 21 on 12th August 1907, leaving to rejoin the Colours on 4th August 1914. He spent his first months of the war in the 1st Bn Grenadier Guards at Warley Barracks before transferring to the 2nd Bn and travelling to France in early September. From letters home it would appear that on his arrival on the continent he went straight into action. George was a Chesterfield lad having spent his youth in Brimington and the first to be killed from the village. It took almost a month to officially notify his wife, Beatrice, living at 79 Mansfield Road, Hasland, of the sad news. At that time the report only said that he had been "Killed or died of wounds". His death was all the more tragic as he never knew his daughter, having been born the day before he died¹⁷. During his seven years police service



Constable Symonds had been stationed in a number of locations throughout mid and north Derbyshire including Ilkeston, Hasland and Shirebrook. At the time of mobilisation he was serving at Sheepbridge. His name is commemorated on Panel 9 & 11 at the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial in Belgium

1st Class Constable 95, George Sidney Gough. Served from 1st December 1908 until being mobilised 4th August 1915. George was a native of Derby and had served in the 1st Bn Grenadier Guards between 11th January 1905 and leaving to join the Derbyshire police in late November 1908. The 24 year old single man joined the Constabulary and, after training, was posted to Long Eaton and later served at Newbold Moor, Buxton, Ilkeston, where he met and married his wife Violet in 1910, and Doveridge. In 1913 whilst working in this northern town he was given a good report for tracing and arresting a man for stealing a bicycle and watch. Over the years he was fined for minor infringements of Police Regulation such as coming on duty late and smoking on duty, however five months before war broke out he got into trouble for missing a point and then telling lies to his sergeant. For this misdemeanour he received the ultimate punishment of being fined 10/- and transferred at his own expense to Litton. As an Army reservist, Private 11928 Gough was mobilised in August 1914 and sent with the 1st Bn Grenadier Guards to France.

Reports on his service record show he was killed in action 16th May 1915. He is commemorated on Panel 2, Le Touret Memorial at the Pas de Calais, France¹⁸.

1st Class Constable 299, Arthur Henry Connell.



Appointed to the Derbyshire Constabulary a month before his 30th birthday on 15th May 1911 and resigned to join the Army as a volunteer on 15th May 1915. Arthur was born in Templemore, Ireland and appears to have been of an adventurous disposition. He had served in the South Africa(n) Constabulary during the time of the Boer uprising and later worked as an engineer for the Canadian Pacific Railway Co, Calgary. By 1911 he had returned to Britain and joined the County Police initially being stationed at Buxton. It was here that he was commended for detecting gambling in a Bakewell public house. As a veteran of the African War¹⁹ Pc Connell was one of the first officers to be allowed by the Chief Constable to volunteer and join the army. As a result he enlisted in the 7th Btn, North Staffordshire Regiment sailing to the ill fated Gallipoli landing in July. Lance Corporal 17541 Connell was killed in action against the Turks on 7th January 1916 whilst his Division was being evacuated from the Cape Helles bridgehead on the Dardanelles. His name is remembered on the Helles Memorial Addenda Panel.

1st Class Constable 265, William Alfred Edwards.



A native of Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire, the single, Midland Railway Company goods porter became a member of the Derbyshire Force at the age of 23 years on 1st October 1913. After his initial training at Derby Police HQ he was stationed at Wirksworth. He resigned whilst serving at Matlock Bath on volunteering to join the army on 19th May 1915. He enlisted into the 16th Btn (Chatsworth Rifles) Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby) Regt whilst it halted at Buxton before moving on to recruit in Sheffield. Once it had completed its training at Whitley, the Battalion sailed to Le Harve in France, the following year and moved straight away to a concentration area at Blaringhem. Sergeant 26366 Edwards had only been in France for a few days when he died on 26th April 1916. He was subsequently interred in the Le Touret Military Cemetery, Richebourg-L'Avoue, France. Memorial Ref III. E. 30.

3rd Class Constable 195, Walter Meakin. A Married man, he was appointed at the age of 26, as Constable on 8th August 1914, leaving to join the army 31st May 1915. Walter was born in Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire and worked as a banksman²⁰ in a local colliery. At some time he had also been a member of the Territorial Army for four years although he was not a Reservist. After serving one month at Staveley he was transferred to Buxton to cover for an officer who had already been called up. In 1915 he, like his other police colleagues was granted the Chief Constables permission to volunteer for military service and enlisted in the 16th Btn (Chatsworth Rifles) Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby) Regiment. Service No. 26738 Corporal Meakin of 'D' Company was killed in action in France on June 4th 1916. A letter written by a friend, Corporal Adams explained to a member of the family. "He, together with a party of bombers, went 'over the top' to visit the German trenches at about 10:30 pm on the 3rd. Up to the present time nothing has been heard of him. It is feared he has been killed". He went on to say that Walter had been a good friend of

his since arriving in France and was well liked by all ranks.²¹ He is remembered on the War Memorial at Sutton in Ashfield and Panel 87 to 89. Loos Memorial.

1st Class Constable 168, Myles John Chislett Little. Myles served as a Derbyshire Police Officer from 11th March 1911 until being recalled to the colours on 4th August 1914 whilst stationed at Long Eaton. He was born on July 27th 1885, a native of Askrigg in North Yorkshire, his parents later moving to Four Oaks Common, Sutton Coldfield. He had earlier served in the North Staffordshire Regiment, the single man leaving to join the police, and as a 5 year Reservist had to re-join his regiment when war was declared. By this time he had married Louisa May and had at least one son. He appears to have made a good impression on his Superintendent whilst in the Police, as just prior to being called up, he was to be transferred to his office, possibly as a Clerk, his earlier profession. The move however never took place due to the outbreak war. Sergeant, Little, Service No. 7443, "C" Coy. 1st Btn. North Staffordshire Regiment was aged 33 when he was killed in action on September 5th 1916 during the Somme Offensive, possibly at the Battle of Guillemont. He is named on the Memorial VI. I. 10. Delville Wood Cemetery, Longueval, France and also in his home town of Long Eaton.²²As a tragic post script Constable Little's son Cyril, also gave his life whilst serving his country as a soldier in the Second World War²³.

2nd Class Constable 342, Arthur Wilson, served the Force from 3rd October 1913 until enlisting on 31st May 1915. Arthur was a Lincolnshire man being born at Sutton Bridge and educated at Wisbech Grammar School, where he had an exhibition scholarship for three years. He joined the Derbyshire Constabulary three years prior to his death and all his service had been spent in the offices, first at Headquarters, then at Ilkeston, and just prior to enlisting at Alfreton, where he was the divisional clerk to Supt. Fennel. Just four days after he was married he travelled to Buxton to join the Chatsworth Rifles on the 7th of June 1915. After training in England he went to France in the following March, and had been abroad about seven months. His clerical experience in the Police Force served him well in the Army for promotion came in the first weeks and he rapidly reached the rank of Company Quartermaster Sergeant in the Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derbys Regt) Mrs Wilson received the first intimation of her husband's death from her sister, who lived at Buxton, and whose husband was also in the Army. Capt Cooke, the deceased superior officer, writing to a fellow officer (Capt Stone) in the same regiment, intimated that he was sorry to say that his Company Quartermaster Sergeant was knocked over and finished as he was returning from the trenches, and that he was by far the best man of his rank and a jolly sort thoroughly liked. Capt Stone mentioned his brother officer's loss to his own sergeant and he chanced to be Mrs Wilson's sister's husband. He appears to have been killed on the 7th September (1916). A few days later Mrs Wilson's worst fears were realised upon the receipt of the following letter from Captain Cooke:- "It is with great regret that I have to inform you of the death of your husband. I know it is a tremendous blow, but it may be some small consolation to you to know that he died when on duty returning from the trenches. He has been buried in a cemetery near the line and a cross with his name and regiment will be erected on the spot. I have not been able to trace all his personal belongings but will do what I can to find them and they will be sent to you through the usual channels". Quartermaster Sergeant 26947 Wilson is commemorated at the Mesnil Communal Cemetery Extension.



3rd Class Constable 95, Fred Carver Thompson was appointed to the Derbyshire Constabulary at the age of 20 years²⁴ on August 12th 1914. He was trained as a Lace Threader working for a period of four years at A Tunnicliffe Lace Mill, Long Eaton, on the Derbyshire / Nottinghamshire border, his parents living at 11 Springfield Avenue. Once trained in the reserve at Police HQ he was sent to Alfreton. Within 9 months and after permission had been granted by the Chief Constable he volunteered to join the army, leaving the force on May 31st 1915. He served as Private 24085 Thompson in the 4th Btn Grenadier Guards and met his death on the Somme, September 12th 1916. His name lives on at the 1914-18 War Memorial plaque at St Giles' Church Sandiacre and Plot I. D. 25. Combles Communal Cemetery Extension, Memorial, France.

3rd Class Constable 454, Benjamin George Jinks. Benjamin was born in Gretton,



Northamptonshire, and at the time of his death his mother, Mary Ann Jinks, was living at The Nook in the town. He joined the County Constabulary on August 14th 1914 at the age of 22 years²⁵ and was initially sent to Ashbourne. Two months later he was supposed to move to Roston but instead went to Hulland Ward. In 1910, prior to joining the Police, he had been employed as a Car Conductor & Cleaner working at the Burton & Ashby Light Railway and living with his brother, an electric tram car driver, at Hill Street Swadlincote²⁶. On February 28th 1915 he was one of the very first County Constables to be allowed to resign in order to enlist into the army. He travelled to Northamptonshire and enlisted into the 3rd Btn Grenadier

Guards at Duston, travelling to France in August²⁷. Private 23209 Jinks was killed in action during the Battle of the Somme sometime between 14th – 17th September 1916. The Battalion had moved forward on the evening of the 14th towards the village of Flers when the men went into action at 6:30am the following day. Whilst fighting their way towards the German second line trench system, units taking part in the action became mixed up. The ground was held until a German counter attack a day later forced the troops to withdraw. Not surprisingly his date of death is unknown and he has no known grave, being remembered on Face 8 D of the Guards Memorial Thiepval, France and War Memorials at Gretton, Northamptonshire & Hulland in Derbyshire.

1st Class Constable 400, Leslie John Smith, Whilst he was a native of Aldershot, Hampshire, at the time of his appointment into the Derbyshire Constabulary on March 1st 1913 the, 20 years old²⁸ baker was living in Normanton, Derby. The young constable spent his first 6 months stationed in the small lead mining village of Castleton before moving to Whittington Moor, near Chesterfield. Constable Smith's duties didn't always go smoothly as a few days before Christmas he was caught out by his sergeant for missing two points and committed the ultimate sin by covering it up by making a false entry in his journal. For this misdemeanour he was reprimanded. He was serving at Edale in the Peak District when he was given permission and allowed to resign to enlist as Private 23596 into the 3rd Btn Grenadier Guards on March 31st 1915. The Guards Division were involved in the assault on Lesboeufs during the Somme Offensive and sometime between 14th - 17th September 1916 Private Smith was killed in action. He is remembered at V. H. 8. The Guards' Cemetery, Lesboeufs, near Albert, France.

1st Class Constable 383, William Henry Wheatcroft. A native of Burton upon Trent, this single man joined the force aged 25 years on February 1st 1912²⁹ after previously serving in the Grenadier Guards, his character recorded as exemplary. In the summer of 1913 whilst William was stationed at Buxton he received a commendation for being observant on duty, leading to the arrest of a travelling thief. After only four months working at Higham he was recalled to the colours on August 4th 1914. As Private 11276 of the 3rd Btn Grenadier Guards he became the third Derbyshire officer killed in action between 14th – 17th September 1916. At the time of his death his widow, Sarah³⁰, and young child were living at Kilburn, near Belper. Mrs Wheatcroft was informed in a letter from her husbands platoon commander that he was killed and buried



near Ginchy in France. At the same time she also received correspondence from his old Police Superintendent Mr Fennell to say William was a man in whom he had every confidence and his death was deeply regretted by all his comrades in the force.³¹ He is remembered at Pier and Face 8 D Thiepval Memorial France and the war memorial at Denby Village (St Mary the Virgin Parish Church) Derbyshire.

2nd Class Constable 463, Bertram Hall. A native of Smeeton, this 21 year old miner was appointed to the Derbyshire Constabulary on August 17th 1914 having been recommended by J A Howes-Smithby & Others from Eckington. During his brief service in the force he served at Litton, Gresley Common and had recently been transferred to Chaddesden when he was given permission to resign and enlist into the army on November 30th 1915. Private Hall 24935 of the 4th Btn Grenadier Guards was killed in action on the first day of the Battle of Morval, Sept 25th 1916. He is remembered at Pier and Face 8 D. Thiepval Memorial and also named on the War Memorial at Killamarsh near Sheffield.



Photo courtesy of Barbara & Barry Cawkwell via Killamarsh Heritage Society.

1st Class Constable 335, Richard Harvey Pell. 22 year old Richard, a native of Ashley, Market Harlow, Northamptonshire³² initially trained as a gardener and worked at Radbourne Hall, near Derby before joining the force on January 1st 1910. His first station was at Hayfield, near Glossop and over a four year period moved to Calver, Bolsover, Chaddesden and ended up at Roston near Ashbourne. Whilst at Chaddesden he was commended for the smart arrest of two motor car thieves. He was one of the very first non-Reservist officers to volunteer for military service, leaving the police to join the army on November 30th 1914 as Private 4th Btn Grenadier Guards. Almost two years later it was reported in the local press³³ that recently promoted Lance Corporal Pell had seen a considerable amount of action in France and had sustained 22 wounds whilst taking part in the Somme Offensive including fractured arm, leg and ribs. He was taken to Rouen and evacuated to Cardiff Hospital where he died as a result of the wounds received in action on September 28th 1916. He is remembered at EB. 36. Cardiff (Cathays) Cemetery and also Snelston, Nr Ashbourne, War Memorial.

Merit Class Constable 144, George (Paul) Hooker. 26 years old George, a native of Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, had been employed as a shunter by the G. C. Railway Company when he was appointed as a 3rd Class Constable in the Derbyshire Constabulary on 1st February 1904. After a months instruction and training with the reserve at Derby he was posted to Matlock Bath. As was normal in those days a reasonably young single officer would be moved around the county every few months. He had shown great courage whilst stationed at Brimington in 1907 when he risked his life to save a man who had tried to commit suicide by throwing himself in front of a train. For this the 1st Class Constable had received 2 years good service pay. He was to show further courage in 1912 when he arrested a dangerous lunatic at Ashopton. Early the following year whilst George was stationed and lodging at Wood Lane House, Bamford he was involved in a serious cycling accident which fractured his leg, causing him to be on sick leave for nearly 3 months. In May that year he was transferred, just for the summer months, as a local constable to Haddon Hall near Bakewell. In this station he would have been under the control of the owner of the hall with a large proportion of his duties being similar to a Game Keeper. However 1913 appears to have been a painful year for him as the 5' 10" officer was cautioned for being in possession of a revolver, and moved. The reason this disciplinary offence came to light was that he had accidentally shot himself in the hand. Luckily the wound was not a serious one. The Merit Class Constable volunteered to join the Army on 10th May 1915 eventually serving in France with the 16th Battalion Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby Regt.) Service No.25849 Hooker rose to the rank of sergeant although he was never to return, being killed in action on the Somme on 13th November 1916. A contemporary newspaper report stated that, Sergt. Hooker of the Sherwood Foresters, formally a constable in the Bakewell division, had been killed in action. At the time he was rescuing a wounded comrade when he was shot by a sniper³⁴. Between September and the end of November the Regiment lost 146 men killed in action. The Somme Offensive, lasting almost four & half months, ended five days later with the onset of poor weather (snow) Over that time the Allies had gained only 8 miles with an estimated 420,000 British casualties. George was the longest serving County Policeman to be killed in action and is commemorated at Pier and Face 10 C 10 D and 11 A. Thiepval Memorial, France.

3rd Class Constable 481, Percy James Bailey, a native of South Normanton his parents Joseph and Annie Jane Bailey, lived at Victoria House in the village. Percy initially trained as a Clerk and worked at the local Gas Works before, at the age of 25, joining his father and brother³⁵ in the Derbyshire Constabulary on September 3rd 1914³⁶. Whilst stationed at Chapel-en-le-Frith he was one of the first Police officers to be allowed to resign on February 9th 1915 after volunteering for military service. It would appear



he enlisted in the nearest military unit to where he was stationed, the 16th Btn. Manchester Regiment. He began his infantry training at Belton Park, Grantham and the following year he moved to Larkhill Camp, Salisbury where he excelled in drill becoming an instructor. Although the Battalion went to war on 6th November 1915, sailing to Boulogne and then marching to the front where they were to see action in the Somme Offensive Percy was drafted in January the following year³⁷. As Company Sergeant Major Bailey, Service No. 7424 serving in D Company he was killed in action on April 23rd 1917. Two of his brothers also



served in the armed forces, David being invalided home with rheumatism and Sidney who was to win a Military Medal for conspicuous gallantry. Percy's grave is No. 39 at the Cherisy Road East Cemetery, Heninel.

3rd Class Constable 450, John William Haynes. John was born in Pleaseley, near



Mansfield, and like many men in the area went to work in a local coal mine. In the last month of 1912, at the age of 20, he joined the Derbyshire Constabulary as Pc 136 serving for a month in the reserve before having to resign through a hearing defect³⁸. John's hearing loss was obviously temporary as with the outbreak of war he re-applied to join the police force and was appointed on August 7th 1914. The single man was initially sent to Sheepbridge although four months later he was moved to an isolated station at Kinder in the far north of the county. Perhaps a quiet and lonely post was not for this constable because he was allowed to resign on 10th May 1915 to enlist into the 16th Btn Sherwood

Foresters (Notts & Derby Regt) Private Haynes, Service No. 25880, trained in England and left with his Regiment for France in March 1916 later becoming a member of the Military Police in his Regt. Lance Corporal³⁹ Haynes was killed when a shell landed next to a dugout he was resting in on June 28th 1917⁴⁰. A memorial service was later held for him at the Pleasley Wesleyan Church and is remembered at Grave/Memorial I L 18, Brandhoek Military Cemetery, Belgium.

1st Class Constable 283, Alfred Percy Owen. A native of Radbourne near Derby,



Alfred worked on a farm after leaving school. He was single and lodging at Ivy Cottage, Etwall when, at the age of 27 years⁴¹, he was appointed to the Derbyshire Constabulary on 16th January 1913. He married Violet within 6 months of becoming a policeman. Alfred was an Army reservist having been a soldier in the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers between 5th Nov 1904 – 12 Nov 1912, his conduct being recorded as exemplary. If the war had not intervened his time in the reserve would have ended on the 4th Nov 1916. Within a few months

of joining the police he was commended for a good capture of a thief and later being very observant on his beat. On the outbreak of war and whilst stationed at Ilkeston, he was recalled to join his regiment on August 4th 1914. Whilst serving in the 2nd Battalion of his old Regiment he was reported as missing in action, presumed killed on 30th June 1917. On confirmation of his death his widow received a small weekly pension from the military but under Police regulations she was not entitled to the same from the force. 39 years after Alfred's death these regulations changed, police widows were allowed a pension and as Violet had never re-married she received a further weekly police pension of £1 / 2s / 8d to top up her War Widows pension of £1 / 15s. (The only possible entry on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is Private 1009 Percy Alfred Owen of the Royal Fusiliers who died April 9th 1917 and remembered on Bay 3 on the Arras Memorial)



1st Class Constable 430, Walter John Blacker. Walter was born in Swaffham, Norfolk and came to work as a Game Keeper on an estate near Matlock. On the recommendation of the local Police Superintendent, Mr Clarke, he was appointed a constable in the force on April 1st 1912. He spent the first 3 years of his service based in South Normanton, near Alfreton before being transferred to Dore. He didn't stay in this village for very long as he was allowed to resign on May 14th 1915 on enlisting as a gunner in the Royal Field Artillery with the Service No. L/19916. These guns were horse drawn and would have been used very close to where the action was taking place. He rose to the rank of sergeant in "C" Battery, 161st (Yorkshire) Brigade and died, aged 24, on August 6th 1917, of wounds received in action. He is buried in grave A11, Adinkerke Military Cemetery.

3rd Class Constable 450, John Hancock. John was a coal miner, born in Measham on the Derbyshire, Leicestershire border. He had served for 3 years in the 1st Btn, Coldstream Guards with the Regimental number of 9164 prior to joining the County Constabulary on July 4th 1914. His Army character was classed as 'Very Good'. Within a month of joining, and before being allocated to a station, the single, 22 year old, was recalled to join his Regiment on mobilisation⁴². Whilst on home leave in 1915 he married Mary E Weston at Blaby, Leicestershire⁴³. Lance Sergeant Hancock of the 2nd Btn died of wounds on 24th Sept 1917 during the Battle of Passchendaele, and is buried in grave VIII D 12, at the Dozinghem Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. During the war the 2nd Battalion, Coldstream Guards, lost a total of 3352 other ranks.



2nd Class Constable 472, Harry Wardle. Harry was born in Langley Mill near Heanor and, like many of his friends, became a coal miner on leaving school. At the age of 24 years this single man joined the Derbyshire Constabulary on September 1st 1914⁴⁴. He was initially sent to South Normanton near Alfreton. In April the following year he was fined half a crown by the Chief Constable when he didn't return to his station soon enough after a period of leave. Shortly after this he was transferred to Winster. On March 31st 1916 Harry was given permission to resign from the force on volunteering to join the Army. He enlisted a couple of days later in the Royal Garrison Artillery, 154th Heavy Battery with the service no. 353883. Acting Bombardier Wardle died of wounds received in action on September 26th 1917 and buried in grave I C 3, Outtersteene Communal Cemetery Extension, Bailleul, France.



Merit Class Constable 387, Michael Boyle. Michael was an Irishman born in Toomore, County Mayo in about 1885 and arrived in Derbyshire as a Farm Labourer. He was appointed a 3rd Class Constable in the County Constabulary on January 6th 1908 being sent to Heanor shortly after being trained. He was kept busy in this town dealing with drunks, driving licence offences and dangerous bicycle riders to name just a few instances⁴⁵. In December 1912 he was moved to Staveley near Chesterfield and continued detecting crime. Within a year he was commended by his Superintendent for a good arrest of a thief and the recovery of stolen property. He volunteered to join the Army December 10th 1915 and enlisted into the 1st Btn Royal Irish Rifles with the Regimental number 10913. After military training he was sent to join his Regiment in France. This formation took part in a number the famous battles of The Somme and Passchendaele fighting in appalling conditions. As a result by the end of summer 1917 it had lost two Colonels and a large proportion of its men. Sergeant Boyle died on November 19th 1917, from wounds received in action. His grave is IX. F. 5. at Nine Elms British Cemetery,



2nd Class Constable 448, Frederick George Dunham. Fred was a native of Skillingthorpe, a Railway Servant and single, employed by the G. C. Railway Company, when he joined the Derbyshire Police aged 21 years⁴⁶ on June 2nd 1913 whilst living at Old Hall, Upper Langwith near Mansfield. For the first year of his service he was stationed at Spondon, on the outskirts of Derby, where he dealt with a number of incidents including a lady's attempted suicide by drinking chloroform and quite a high profile alleged offence of dangerous driving and assault by Captain Drury-Lowe's chauffeur on a girl on Nottingham Road⁴⁷. In July 1914 he was transferred to the spa town of Buxton where he was serving when he was permitted to resign from the force on May 31st 1915 to enlist into the 2/6th Btn Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby Regiment) The Battalion served in Ireland during 1916 helping to quell the uprising and embarked from Fovant on 12th January 1917 arriving at Boulogne, France on February 25th. Corporal Dunham (Service No. 26776) was killed in action on 30th November 1917. His name is remembered on Panel 8. Cambrai Memorial, Louverval.

1st Class Constable 403, Henry Maitland Webster. Henry was born in Parwich, Derbyshire, and trained as a Sawyer⁴⁸ before joining the Grenadier Guards. On March 13th 1911, at the age of 26, the single man was appointed a Constable in the County Police⁴⁹ and was sent to Castleton where he stayed for 5 months before transferring to Dronfield. In 1913 whilst on an escort duty to Derby Gaol he was in trouble for losing his prisoners property. He was cautioned by the Chief Constable and had to make good the loss to the prisoner. As an Army Reservist he was recalled to the colours on mobilisation on August 4th 1914. He died of wounds received in action on December 8th 1917. Lance Sergeant (Regimental No. No.11238) is buried in grave ref XXXI. B. 6. Etaples Military Cemetery.

Merit Class Constable 249, Walter Hardy D.C.M. Walter, the only son of Thomas Treadgold Hardy, of Queen St., Bottesford, Nottingham,⁵⁰



was a Waggoner⁵¹ before joining the Derbyshire Constabulary on July 16th 1908 at the age of 21 years⁵². He was initially posted to Ilkeston, moving to Chaddesden in 1912 where he was commended for the capture of bicycle thieves. On May 31st 1915, whilst stationed at Bolsover, Chesterfield, he was given permission to resign having enlisted into the 16th Btn, (Sherwood Foresters) Notts & Derbys Rgt. In 1917 Sergeant 26867 Hardy was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. 'During an attack upon enemy trenches he was the first man in his platoon to reach them, and promptly bombed two dug-outs. Later in the day, when his officer became a casualty, he showed great gallantry and ability in commanding his platoon, under

heavy shell and rifle fire. In addition to this, he acted as company sergeant-major for five days, and rendered most valuable services to his commander under trying circumstances., setting a splendid example of coolness, cheerful spirits, and untiring energy to his men⁵³. As a soldier serving in the Fifth Army Walter was killed in action on 21st March 1918⁵⁴ when, as a result of overwhelming numbers, the Allies were pushed back over the former Somme battlefields⁵⁵. He is remembered on Panel 52 to 54. Pozieres Memorial.

3rd Class Constable 404, Frank Reed⁵⁶. Frank worked at Long Eaton as a railway shunter on the Midland Railway when, at the age of almost 21 yrs, he was appointed a constable on August 12th 1914. After being stationed at Ilkeston he was transferred to the North Derbyshire town of Charlesworth just before Christmas. As he had not long joined the force when volunteers were called for to join the army on May 10th 1915 he gained a favourable record from the Chief Constable by enlisting into the 16th Btn, (Sherwood Foresters) Notts & Derbys Rgt. Sergeant 25881 Reed was never to return to his previous occupation as he was taken prisoner by the Germans in the previously mentioned action over the old Somme battlefields. The county force were aware that he had been taken prisoner but as he had not made contact with them by March 1919 a constable was detailed to make enquiries at his parents address at Matlock Road, Ambergate. He was informed that 24 year old Frank had been wounded and taken prisoner on March 24th 1918 but had subsequently died of his injuries a month later on April 24th⁵⁷. His captors had provided a list shortly after his death indicating that the owner of the pay book had died in a military hospital⁵⁸. He is buried in grave Ref No. V. B. 12. Valenciennes (St Roch) Communal Cemetery⁵⁹.

Merit Class Constable 353, Richard Bullimore D.C.M. The 23 years old Richard joined the County Police on December 16th 1907, having previously served in the Northumberland Fusiliers for six years. He was sent to Clay Cross but resigned at his own request within a month. He rejoined on March 16th 1908 and moved quickly on to Bakewell before settling for two years at Winster⁶⁰. Considering his later exploits he suffered severe reactions to insects as on at least two possibly three occasions during his service he was to have a total of 22 days sick leave for bites or stings. It was whilst policing a farm sale in March 1910 that he was plied with drink before being discovered by his senior officer to be drunk on duty. He suffered the usual punishment for this misdemeanour by being fined 10/- and transferred to Fairfield. Early in 1913 saw the constable now stationed at Little Eaton when he blotted his copybook again, this time by missing a conference point. On this occasion he was fined half a crown and subsequently moved to Long Eaton where he was serving

when on May 31st 1915 he enlisted into the 16th Btn. Sherwood Foresters. His earlier military service helped him rise to the rank of Company Sergeant Major. One of four brothers serving in the army, one of whom, Pte Walter Bullimore, dying in 1916⁶¹. Richard was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal in 1917. During an enemy attack on British trenches 'he organised and helped to man a rifle post in full view of the enemy and under hostile rifle and machine gun fire, thereby preventing a number a number of the enemy, who were sheltering in shell holes and hedges, from regaining their trenches. He killed five of the enemy himself, and by his initiative and determination brought about the capture of fourteen prisoners'⁶². This citation shows how courageous this man was but fate eventually caught him out. Company Serjeant Major 26733 Bullimore was the 3rd Derbyshire Police officer to not return home from fighting on the old Somme battle fields as he was killed in action on April 26th 1918 and is remembered at the Pozieres Memorial, Panel 52 to 54.

1st Class Constable 305, Edgar James Mellon⁶³. A Sheffield man by birth, Edgar had been trained as a clerk and served in the North Staffordshire Regiment before joining the Derbyshire Constabulary on May 1st 1909. His earlier military career had taken him to South Africa⁶⁴ where he was fighting the Boers. For this he was awarded a campaign medal for this conflict. After police training the single 26 year old was first sent to Beighton and then spent a year and a half at Buxton before transferring to Ilkeston. He had served almost 2 years at Bakewell when he was recalled to his old regiment on mobilisation on August 4th 1914. After being wounded twice Company Quarter Master Sergeant 45393 Mellon was now serving in the 2nd Home Service Btn, West Yorkshire Regiment and attached to No. 8 Officers' Cadet Btn⁶⁵ at Litchfield. He was unfit for arduous military service due to his injuries and as such, in March 1918, the force began negotiations to have him discharged and re-appointed to the force in his old position as Superintendent's clerk. As the military lost this initial application the Acting Chief Constable, Mr Faulkner, sent a further letter on May 18th asking if they would expedite his early release as they were short of Superintendent's clerks owing to the enlistment of further members of the force. He was never to return as at the end of May Mr Faulkner was informed he died at Litchfield Military Hospital on May 16th 1918 after an operation for appendicitis. He left a widow, Jessie and three children living at Ashford near Bakewell. Edgar was buried in Whittington (St Giles) churchyard.

3rd Class Constable 474, Harry Brumby was a native of Edensor, Derbyshire, the son of William and Emma Brumby, of Pilsley, Bakewell, his occupation was shown as a Butcher when he joined the force aged 20yrs on September 1st 1914⁶⁶. Harry was initially sent to Ashbourne in November to cover for another officer but only stayed there a month before moving on to a more permanent position in the nearby village of Roston on the County border with Staffordshire. In the spring of the following year Constable Brumby had shown he was a good police officer by receiving a commendation from the Chief Constable for a good detection and arrest of a hay thief in the village. He was a very public spirited man, having joined the police after a number of Reservist officers had been called up at the beginning of the war. As soon as volunteers for the armed forces were called for he was there again. With the chiefs permission he was allowed to resign on June 30th 1915 to enlist at Chesterfield into the 1st / 6th Btn Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment). At the age of 24 yrs Lance Corporal 241493 Brumby died of wounds received in action on May 18th 1918 He is buried in Plot I. Row E. Grave 40. Pernes British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France⁶⁷.and the memorial inside St Peter's Chapel, Endsor.

3rd Class Constable 189, Frederic Harold Shenton, the son of Thomas and Emma, was a native of Derby, his occupation a cycle repairer and in 1901 was living at 1 Bramble Street, St Werburgh, Derby. Shortly after appointment to the force on September 8th 1914 he was temporarily posted to Buxton but resigned with the Chief Constables permission to join the Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derbys) Regt⁶⁸. on May 31st 1915. Almost a year later, whilst on home leave, he married Rose Ashcroft⁶⁹ who was living at 54 Gerard Street, Derby, in 1917 they were to have a son, Ronald⁷⁰. By 1918 Lance Serjeant 31940 Shenton was serving in the 3rd Btn. York & Lancashire Regiment when possibly as a result of an accidental injury received on or about March 23rd 1918 he was transported back to England on Hospital Ship 'Newhaven'. He died on June 25th 1918 and is buried in a grave (Memorial Ref. 3534). At DERBY (UTTOXETER ROAD) CEMETERY and possibly commemorated on a war memorial at Buxton.



1st Class Constable 417, James Jackson was born in 1889 at Ripley, this Collier was appointed to the force March 15th 1911. Stationed at Chapel-en-le-Frith and Bolsover. Whilst working at Smalley he resigned on volunteering to join Army on 31/05/1915, eventually serving in the 1/1st Derbyshire Yeomanry⁷¹. Died of Pneumonia 07/02/1919. Noted as War Casualty. CWGC = Private. Service No. 76812. Memorial Ref. I. G. 6. TARANTO TOWN CEMETERY EXTENSION Italy and also at the War Memorial Ripley.



Confusion & the fog of war.



Samuel Inkle Hill was a native of Hepthorne Lane, North Wingfield, a miner by trade and joined the force in late August 1914 as Pc 413 taking the place of an officer who had been recalled to the colours. He served at Belper and Alfreton but resigned at his own request in December 1915⁷². He enlisted into the Notts & Derbys Regt in February 1916, later transferring to the Machine Gun Corps. He was officially reported missing in early August 1917 with his parents fearing the worst just as all other family members of those mentioned above. However a month and a half later their fears were calmed when the Germans notified the British Government that the 22 years old had been taken prisoner by them. His father Jas Hill received a letter from Sam in late September informing him he was safe and well in an internment camp in Germany.

The Missing Officer

It is interesting and surprising to note that one officer is missing from the list and even more so when you consider that he had returned to the County Constabulary in 1917 after having been invalided out of the army whilst fighting in France.

George Lionel Hann was a native of Belper and worked at the railway station as a porter following in his family's footsteps, his father being a railway foreman at Goods Yard. At the age of 23 George joined the Derbyshire Constabulary as 3rd Class Constable 460 shortly after the outbreak of the war on August 17th 1914. It was policy not to allow a newly appointed officer to serve in their home town so he was moved



to Buxton. Whilst working there he received a favourable record from his superintendent for detecting a breach of a military closing order at a public house. All public houses in the County had to close at 9:00pm for the duration of the war to prevent soldiers and home front war-workers from getting too drunk.

On June 30th 1915 a very recently married Constable Hann⁷³ was given permission to resign in order to join the newly formed 18th Battalion Kings Royal Rifle Regiment and enlisting at Buxton 6 days later. The Battalion organised and trained in England moving between Aldershot & Witkey throughout the rest of the year before being sent to France landing at Le Harve on May 3rd 1916. Just over a year later he was invalided out of the army on medical grounds. He was transferred into the Army Reserve as Class W, with heart trouble and acute rheumatism. Under this section he was classed as being more suitable to serve his Country in a civil rather than a military capacity.

However although George had been invalided out of the army he could be recalled to his Regiment if required.

On his discharge from the army in 1917 he re-joined the police as 1st Class Constable 335 being sent to Long Eaton on the Derbyshire / Nottinghamshire border. Another serving officer to be discharged from the army was Superintendent Clarke's son Willis. He received injuries in action and was unfit for further military service. This young constable re-joined the police force in 1916, his war wounds proving no obstacle because he rose through the ranks to become a Superintendent 10 years later and Derbyshire's Chief Constable in the 1950's.

For whatever reason, Constable Hann resigned from the police force at the end of March 1918 and re-joined his old Regiment 22 days later. His wife Eliza was left at Belper to stay with his sister on Foundry Lane.



Private C/6207 George Lionel Hann was killed in action fighting in Gheluwe, Ypres, on Thursday 3rd October 1918 and was buried in the Perth Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium. His name is also inscribed on the monument in the War Memorial Garden at Belper.

Given that a man who died of pneumonia in 1919 and another of appendicitis are recorded on the Derbyshire Constabulary Roll of Honour why wasn't this mans name also included? The only explanation I can think of is the comment made on his personal record which states 'Resigned on request'⁷⁴ There is no indication on his second resignation that he had either been recalled to the Army Reserve or that he had been given permission to re-join his regiment in 1918. It appears that he had resigned from the force, not intending to return and therefore was not considered 'a member of the force' at the time of his death.

Casualty Form—Active Service.

Army Form B. 103. Regimental Number.....

Rank..... Surname..... Christian Name.....

Religion..... Age on Enlistment..... years..... months

Enlisted (a)..... Terms of Service (a)..... Service reckons from (a).....

Date of promotion to present rank..... Date of appointment to lance rank.....

Extended..... Re-engaged..... Qualification (b).....

Occupation..... or Corps Trade and Rate..... Signature of Officer.....

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B.213, Army Form A.36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B.213, Army Form A.36, or other official documents
Date	From whom received				
				15 SEP	
				15 SEP	
14/9/18	G.O.5/IRRC	Posted to B.E.F. France	Sheerness	14.9.18	Lieut. for G.O.5/IRRC.
28.9.18	IRB K.R.R.	Applied and posted to			X

(a) In the case of a man who has been recalled to the Army Reserve, or enlisted in Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.
(b) Signaller, S.F.

(P.T.O.)

Army form held in the National Archives giving details of George's service and just prior to his death.