

The Middlesbrough **Roll of Honour of the Great War** **Names “U”**

Compiled by Robert Coulson (1952 – 2008)

In the years 1914-1918 thousands of Middlesbrough men and women served their country in a time of hardship, stress and suffering both for the troops on the battlefronts and those left at home.

After the Armistice in November of 1918 handsome memorial tablets and plaques recalling the fallen were erected in the works, shops and churches of the Middlesbrough area.

At this time a committee was formed to consider the question of a war memorial for the town as a whole to remember the citizens who had laid down their lives.

In the words of the committee,

“We recognise the splendid sacrifice made by our men and we desire that our children and our children’s’ children should hear the story and share in the inspiration which such sacrifice will always give”.

The response of the townspeople resulted in the fine cenotaph of Aberdeen granite and the wall of Portland stone containing the bronze panels with the names of the fallen that we see today at the entrance to Albert Park.

The memorial works were completed at a cost of approximately £17,000 and the people of the town attended in their thousands for the dedication and unveiling ceremony which took place on November 11th 1922.

This roll of honour contains close to 3500 names of the fallen who are remembered on the memorial and also those whose names were put forward by their families after the unveiling ceremony.

I felt it fitting that as the centenary of the onset of the Great War approaches I should try and add a little information on those remembered and the actions in which they laid down their lives.

I would just add that much as I regret it, details on some of these brave people is not available due to the passage of time but their names will still appear in the text as they do on the memorial panels.

Finally just a few points to consider,

It will be noticed that on some of the entries no Middlesbrough connection may be obvious, indeed the person appears to have come from well outside the area or even the country.

It must be remembered that it was the townspeople who put the names forward for inclusion and as an example a relation who stayed with the family in the town occasionally, could well appear after his family took the trouble to forward the name.

Middlesbrough was a thriving centre of industry at the time and a person may well have been employed in the town before hostilities and had their name included by workmates.

Serving under an alias is also quite common and although sometimes used to cover criminal activity, was normally just a person keen to serve but underage and using another identity.

Also a mother who had taken another man's name might have offspring who preferred to serve using their natural father's name.

Double entries for the same name also appear quite a few times, for example, Samuel Alder and S Alder.

I believe they are one and the same person named twice as a result of a large family with different branches putting the name forward twice.

The person will appear in the listing as named on the memorial with any variations in spelling and second names being included in the text.

It will be noticed that some entries begin "I believe this to be".

These are people who to the best of my judgement are those named but can not be 100% certain. They are included with the best intentions and if a mistake is made I make my apologies in advance.

Robert Henry Coulson died on 8 November 2008. His papers were donated to the Green Howards Museum in Richmond, and the work below comes from these papers.

Names on the Middlesbrough War Memorial

Unthank, Ralph.

Ralph Unthank was born in Middlesbrough where he enlisted into the 8th battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment.

Private Unthank was killed in fighting during the Battle of Loos on September 26th 1915 at the age of 20.

The son of John William and Emily Jane Unthank of 24 Rockcliffe Street in Middlesbrough his name appears on the Loos Memorial at Dud Corner Cemetery on the Lens to Bethune road.

Usher, Ernest.

James Ernest Usher was Middlesbrough born and originally with the Yorkshire Regiment before transferring to the 8th battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers.

Private Usher died aged 22 on December 28th 1916 and today lies in Hem Communal Cemetery situated one mile from Doullens on the Somme.

Usher, John.

I believe this to be John Robert Usher who was born and enlisted in Sunderland for service with the 10th battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment.

Private Usher was killed in actions in the Arras sector on August 10th 1916 aged 30.

His grave can be visited today in the Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery one miles west of Arras town centre.

Urwin, J G.