

OLD DUNSTONIAN R.F.C.

Roll of Honour 1914-1918

FORENAME(S)	SURNAME	RANK	AWARD	REGIMENT	DIED	AGE
Harrison Kingsley	Allport	2 nd Lieutenant		4 th (Res Btn) Argyll+Suth'd Highlanders	21.08.1916	24
William Herbert	Arkcoll	Private		Machine Gun Corps	25.11.1918	32
Percy Stanley Goodwin	Barnett	Private		1/20 th London Regiment	25.09.1915	18
James Ernest Kirkham	Bell	Lieutenant		8 th Border Regiment	05.08.1916	20
Robertio Charles Rudolph	Bennett	Lieutenant	MC	20 th London Regiment	24.08.1918	31
Douglas Martin	Birdseye	2 nd Lieutenant		8 th Sth Staffordshire Regiment	10.02.1917	20
Charles Leslie	Booth	Private		1/20 th London Regiment	26.09.1915	18
Stephen Charles	Carter	2 nd Lieutenant		7 th Royal West Kent Regiment	18.11.1916	21
Clifford Thomas	Davies	2 nd Lieutenant		10 th Royal West Kent Regiment	07.06.1917	23
Frederic Ernest	Debenham	Lance Corporal		1/20 th London Regiment	26.09.1915	21
Sydney Arthur	French	Captain		7 th Royal West Kent Regiment	20.03.1918	26
Gordon Arthur	Gifford	Lieutenant		Loyal North Lancashire Regiment	10.07.1917	27
Henry William	Gifford	Captain		3 rd (Res Btn) Loyal North Lancs Regiment	15.07.1916	27
Herbert Robert Withom	Gooding	2 nd Lieutenant		5 th London Regiment	13.05.1915	21
Walter Elmslie	Hawkins	Lieutenant		8 th Gloucestershire Regiment	08.06.1917	26
Joseph Arnold	Hawkridge	2 nd Lieutenant		15 th (Reserve Battalion) Royal Fusiliers	06.11.1916	20
John Hartland	Heap	Private		1/20 th London Regiment	25.09.1915	20
Walter Reginald	Hinton	2 nd Lieutenant		2 nd Border Regiment	14.07.1916	25
Laurence Walter	Howcroft	Lieutenant		1/2 nd Hampshire Regiment	20.11.1917	25
Frank George	Innes	Private		14 th London Regiment	13.11.1914	18
Arthur Doughty	Kimberley	Private		73 rd Company Machine Gun Corps	11.04.1917	28
Maurice	Lane	Captain	MC, MM	2/20 th London Regiment	29.12.1917	27
Archibald Richard	Leese	Private		16 th Btn, Canadian Infantry (Manitoba Reg't)	18.05.1915	29
John Ommanney	McCarogher	Private		1/14 th London Regiment	01.11.1914	19

Charles Ibbetson	Mortleman	2 nd Lieutenant		4 th London Regiment	09.09.1916	27
Ethelburt Horatio	Nelson	2 nd Lieutenant		4 th Royal West Surrey Regiment	18.11.1916	31
Edward Charles Maxwell	Palmer	2 nd Lieutenant		13 th Royal Fusiliers	23.04.1917	23
Henry Charles	Panter	Gunner		104 th Brigade Royal Field Artillery	06.07.1917	21
Ernest William	Riminton	Private		5 th London Regiment	30.04.1915	23
Jack Bamber	Roake	Gunner		56 th Div Ammunition Column, Royal Field Art'y	23.07.1917	22
Walter Urquhart	Ross	Captain		Royal West Kent Regiment	22.02.1916	31
Stuart Fowden	Trotter	Lieutenant		Canadian Infantry (attached Royal Flying Corps)	06.07.1917	31
Ernest	Walker	Gunner		290 th Siege Battery Royal Garrison Artillery	20.07.1917	34
John George	Wallace	Lieutenant		38 th Btn, Canadian Expeditionary Force	18.11.1916	32
George Primrose	Weston	Captain	MC	1/20 th London Regiment	01.10.1916	20
David	Wilson	Private		2/5 th London Regiment	01.11.1917	23
Charles Frederick	Wormull	Lieutenant		Royal Flying Corps	05.10.1917	22

“G” Company, 20th London Regiment

The origins of this unit lay in the early years of the 20th century, when the Boer War caused an outburst of enthusiasm for military training. St. Dunstan's College was organised into the 'Battalion' and the whole School paraded regularly for drill. At first there was a lack of interest in some quarters, but the training improved and, encouraged by the appointment of a drill instructor, the 'Corps' became a popular part of the curriculum. By 1911 the contingent was considered proficient enough to become part of the Junior Division of the Officers' Training Corps.

The 'Corps' was originally commanded by Captain F C Bentley who, in addition to teaching at the College was an officer in the Territorial Force. His unit was the 20th London Regiment (Blackheath & Woolwich) which was based at Holly Hedge House in Blackheath. When the unit was formed in 1908 he began to recruit Old Dunstonians to serve in “G” Company. When the War began “G” Company was nearly at full strength and within a few days it was oversubscribed with volunteers, some 150 Old Boys passing in to it. After a period of training at Hatfield, “G” Company personnel were transferred to “B” Company but were kept together in 7 and 8 Platoons.

When the unit went to France in March 1915 the Old Dunstonian Platoons went with it, and this is the only recorded example of a single unit of Old Boys from one school serving overseas together. The Platoons went through fighting at Festubet and Givenchy with only light casualties, but on 25 September 1915 the unit attacked Loos as part of the 47th (London) Division and were almost destroyed. During the initial attack the Platoons led the attack through Loos village, and had further casualties in the following days of fighting as the Germans counter attacked. Most of the survivors were of officer standard and were commissioned into other units, and by the end of 1915 “G” Company had lost its unique Old Dunstonian character.

During WW1, 977 Old Dunstonians were in uniform of which 227 were killed or died. Of this number 37 were members of the Old Dunstonian RFC and are listed in the Roll of Honour above. Critiques and citations for three of those who were killed are listed below.

Robertio Charles Rudolph Bennett MC

An early volunteer for the Old Dunstonian Company of the 20th London Regiment, he went to France with the unit as a Private in March 1915. He took part in the battles of Festubert and Givenchy, and was present at the Battle of Loos on 25 September 1915. The 1/20th London Regiment was part of the 141st Brigade and was in the second wave of the British attack, which began at 6.00a.m. after gas was released onto the German lines. The Battalion took its first objective, the “garden-city” and pushed on to the Chalk Pit; although it had taken most of the objectives assigned to it, heavy casualties had been incurred and Bennett was one of the many Old Dunstonians who were wounded. He was invalided home with a gunshot wound in the left shoulder after initial treatment at Rouen. On recovering he joined the Inns of Court OTC as a Lance Corporal on 29 November 1915. After serving in the 1st and 6th Companies of the unit he transferred to the 14th Officer Cadet Battalion and was finally commissioned into the 20th London Regiment as Second Lieutenant, dated 19 December 1916.

Bennett returned to France and served with the 20th for some time, being wounded for a second time and advancing to Lieutenant on 19 June 1918. In addition, he was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry in the summer of 1918, and the citation appeared in the London Gazette of 7 November 1918: “For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He led his company under heavy artillery and machine-gun fire with marked ability and courage, and maintained the spirit and determination of his men under very trying circumstances by his fine example”.

He took part in the British offensives of August 1918 and was killed in action on 24 August 1918. He has no known grave and his name is commemorated on Panel Ten of the Vis-en-Artois Memorial, France.

Maurice Lane MC, MM

He was one of the first to volunteer for the Old Dunstonian Company of the 20th London Regiment, joining it on 1 October 1909. On the outbreak of War in August 1914 he was a Sergeant in the 20th London Regiment and volunteered for overseas duty at once. He went to France with the unit in March 1915 and was Sergeant of a platoon of Old Dunstonians. He played a notable part in the attack on Loos during the advance of the 47th (London) Division. The Battalion had as its objective the German second line which ran from Loos Cemetery to the Lens-Bethune Road. Lane was at the head of his platoon in the charge through the village of Loos, and was recommended in very strong terms by his company commander. For his bravery he was commissioned in the field (London Gazette 12 November 1915) and was posted back to his old unit as an officer. He was also recommended for a gallantry award and eventually received the Military Medal (London Gazette 14 September 1916); shortly afterwards he was also mentioned in despatches.

After the Loos attack he was accidentally injured on duty but continued to serve with his unit at the front. He was later posted to the 2nd Battalion of the 20th London Regiment accompanying it to Salonika in November 1916. He served in this theatre for seven months leading many difficult and dangerous patrols against the Bulgarian lines. The Battalion was later transferred to Egypt, arriving at Alexandria on 19 June 1917. Lane was promoted to Lieutenant on 1 July following and took part in the advance into Palestine in the latter part of the year. He was promoted to Captain on 22 November 1917 and given command of a company which he led in the operations which resulted in the fall of Jerusalem. During this fighting he was killed in action at El Bixeh on 29 December 1917, and is buried in Jerusalem War Cemetery.

For his bravery he was awarded the Military Cross posthumously (London Gazette 26 March 1918). His citation read: “For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. During the assault he led his company on the right flank with great courage and ability. By his fine determination and skilful leadership his men were enabled to repulse a strong counter attack launched against his exposed flank”.

George Primrose Weston MC

He joined the Old Dunstonian Company of the 20th London Regiment in September 1914 aged just 18. After training at Hatfield he accompanied the Battalion to France in March 1915, and soon afterwards was selected for a commission. He was promoted from Private directly to Second Lieutenant on 24 May 1915. He took part in the battles of Festubert and Givenchy and was present at the attack on Loos on 25 September 1915, being one of the Old Boys not killed or wounded during this fighting. He remained with the 1/20th Regiment into 1916 and during the year distinguished himself in a number of actions. He was promoted to Captain on 24 May 1916, missing service as Lieutenant, and was awarded the Military Cross (London Gazette 24 June 1916). His citation read: "For conspicuous gallantry as bombing officer. He kept up the supply of bombs under heavy artillery fire. Later he made a very successful reconnaissance of the enemy trenches, and finally led an attack which drove them out".

On 1 October 1916 the unit took part in an attack on Eaucourt l'Abbaye; three battalions were involved, with the 20th London in the centre of the advance. The attack was successful at first but was then held up by machine gun fire from the grounds of the Abbey. Two tanks came up and silenced the opposition and the unit fought its way through the village and established a new line to the north of it. During this fighting Weston was killed; he has no known grave, and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial in France.