

# The King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment)



## First World War 1914-1918

At the outbreak of the war in August 1914 the King's Own was made up of two Regular and two Territorial Battalions as well as a Special Reserve Battalion. By the end of the war it had expanded to 17 battalions, ten of which had seen active service. During the war over 44,000 men served with the Regiment, of whom nearly 7,000 died. Many more were injured and some died of their wounds after the war.

The 1st Battalion was mobilised on 4th August 1914 in Dover, where it was stationed. On the 23rd August the Battalion arrived in France on board the SS Saturnia and spent the rest of war on the Western Front. The 2nd Battalion was in India when war broke out. It was recalled to England and from January to November 1915 served on the Western Front. It was then moved to Salonika in Greece.

Both the 4th Battalion and 5th Battalion were mobilised in August and a large proportion of the officers and men volunteered for overseas service. They were used on home defence before leaving for the Western Front - the 5th Battalion in February 1915 and the 4th Battalion in May 1915. It was not until 1916 that the 55th (West Lancashire) Division was re-formed in France and these two battalions once again served side by side.

The Territorials were able to raise second and third line battalions in 1914 and 1915. On doing so the two original battalions were re-designated the 1/4th and 1/5th Battalions (TF - Territorial Force). Not all of the new second and third line units went overseas. Only the 2nd/5th Battalion - as part of the 170th Brigade of the 57th Division (TF) - went to the Western Front, on 5th February 1917.

The 3rd (Special Reserve) Battalion was mobilised in August 1914. During the war it processed thousands of trained men for Regular and Service Battalions overseas, including men returning from convalescence. The 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Battalions were raised from volunteers in 1914. These Battalions served on the Western Front, Eastern Europe and Iraq. The 11th Battalion was the last to be raised in June 1915. This was a 'Bantam Battalion' so-called because it accepted men below the official height requirement. It took many miners from the central Lancashire coal field. They served in France and Flanders from June 1916 to 1918.

Regimental history from <http://www.kingsownmuseum.com/ww1.htm>

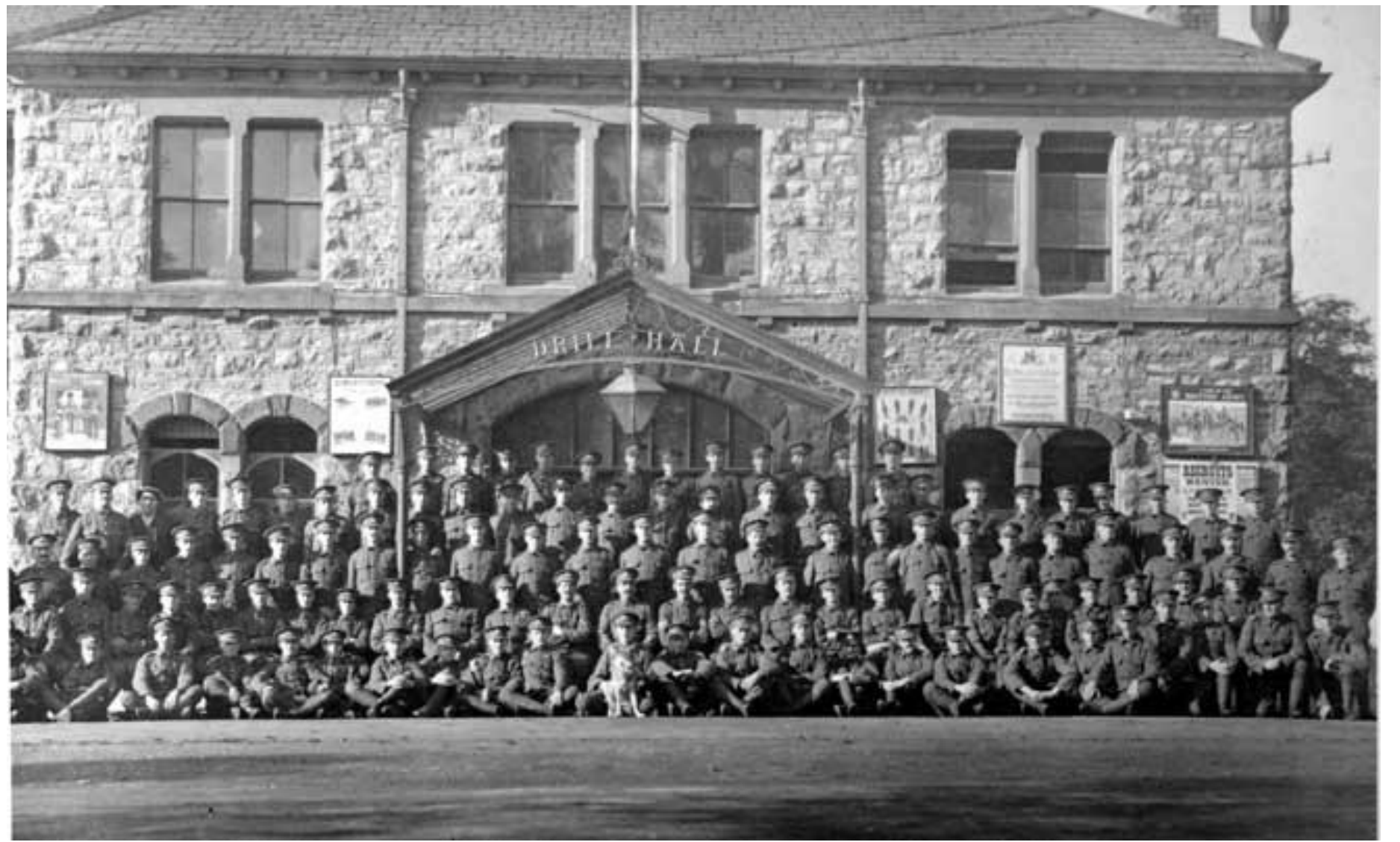
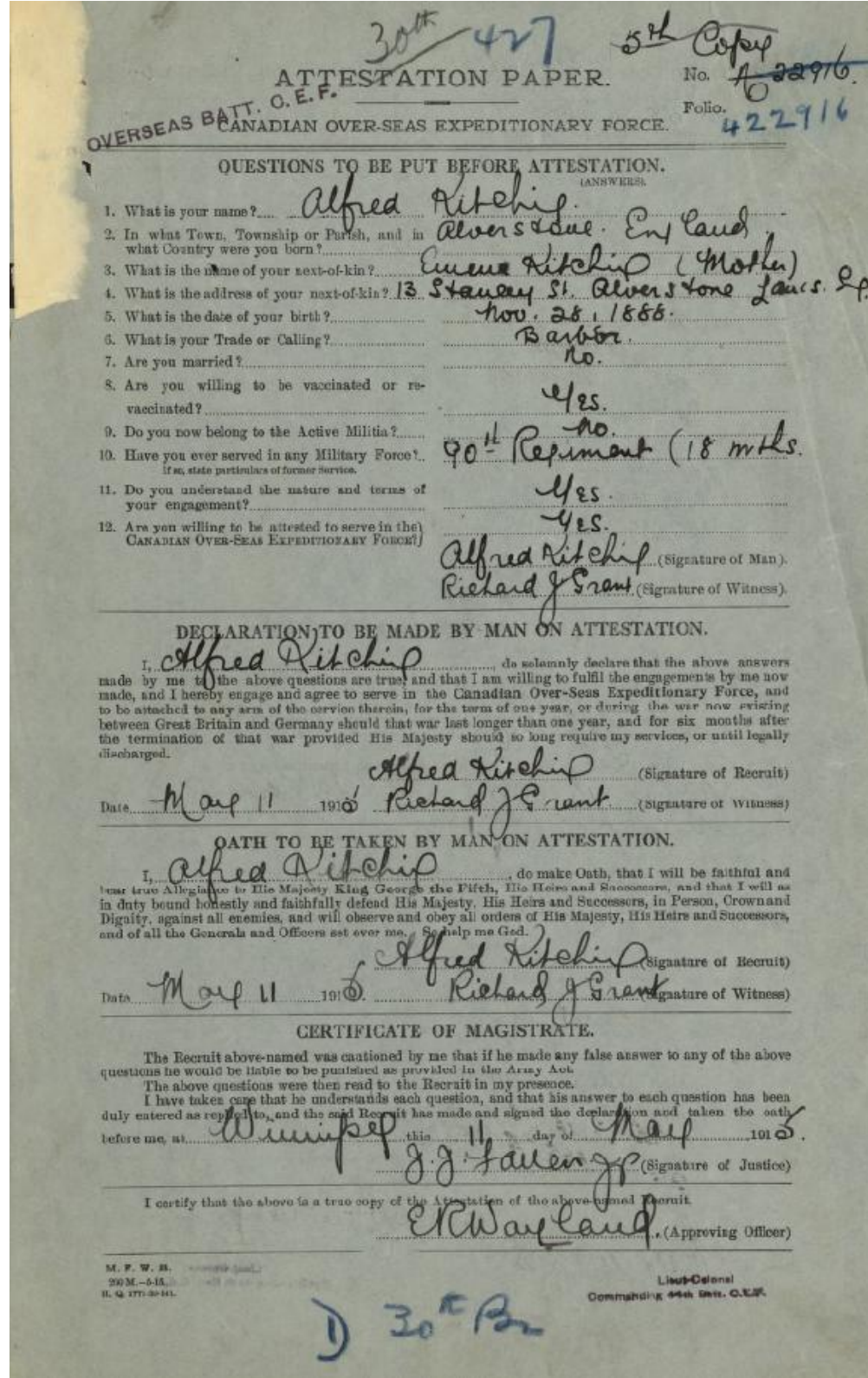
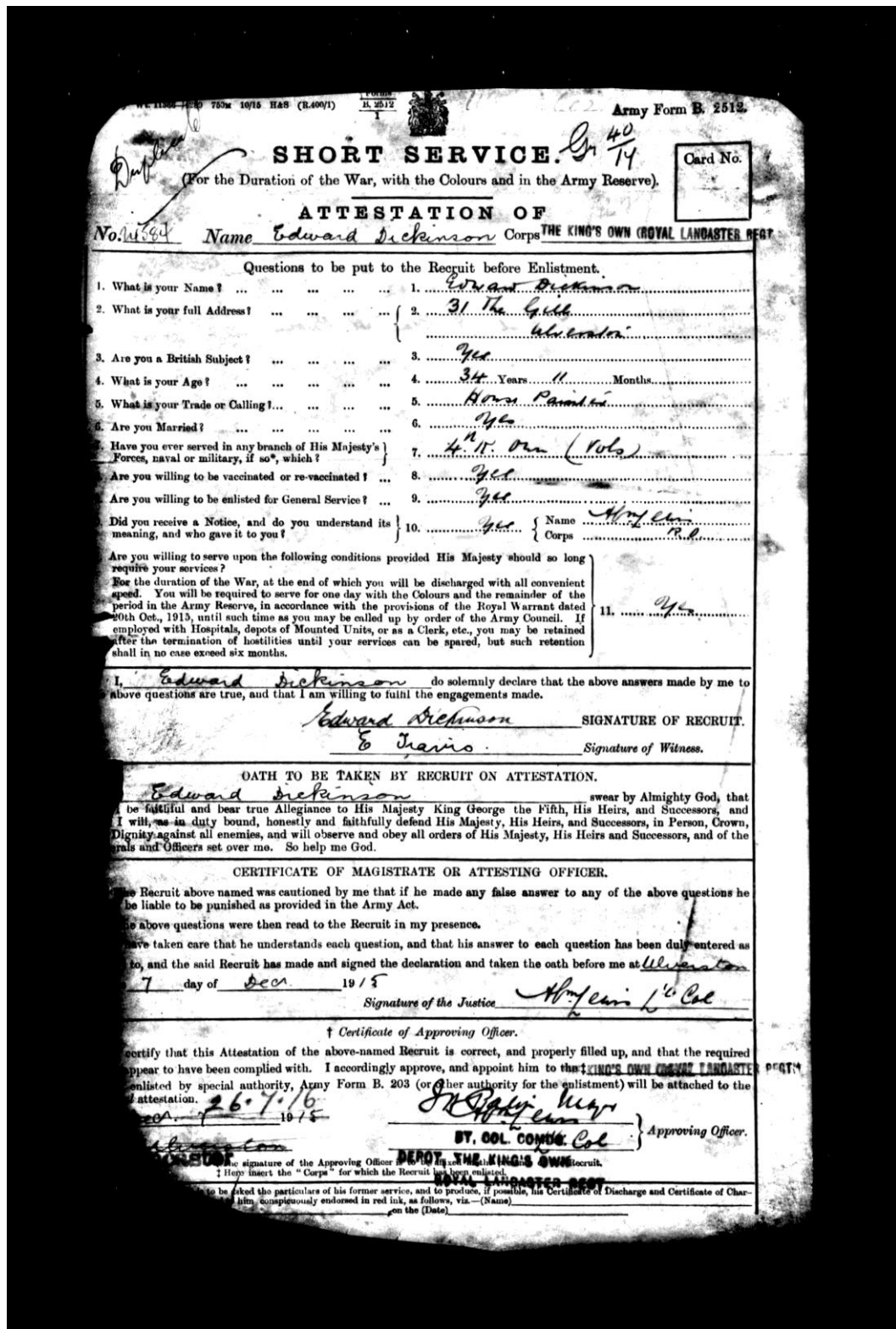
Of the 175 Ulverston fallen, 90 served with the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment). As untrained volunteers most Ulverston men would have been enlisted into this regiment, other volunteers with useful skills may have been directed to enlist in more specialist units such as the Royal Engineers depending on the current strength of the unit. Reservists may have chosen to return to their previous regiments.

Eight Ulverston men had recently emigrated to Canada and these men joined Canadian units and served alongside British and other commonwealth units in WW1.

Soldiers were sometimes required to move battalion or unit to strengthen others following heavy losses or when particular skills were required.

Soldiers with mining experience were much valued for their knowledge and skills and were utilised for digging and reinforcing trenches and dugouts and also to dig tunnels to lay mines beneath enemy positions such as at Messines Ridge in Belgium. Iron ore miners from the Furness peninsula found themselves seconded to these duties, the conditions they endured were cramped, harsh and extremely dangerous. When digging trenches soldiers risked being shot by snipers or bombed if spotted by the enemy from the ground or from the air.

During tunnelling operations roof falls were common due to the constant artillery bombardment with shelling destabilising the ground above. The miners also risked being discovered by German soldiers hearing the digging from their trenches and dugouts, the enemy could then try to dig under the tunnel to lay their own mine or break through directly into the British tunnel to attack the miners.



'A' company of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) outside their Headquarters at Ulverston Drill Hall 1914.



James Edward Porter of 31 Sunderland Terrace, Ulverston. James was wounded in action and medically discharged from the army. He died on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1916 aged 24 and is buried in Ulverston cemetery.

## WW1 Timeline:

### 1st/4th Battalion, King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment

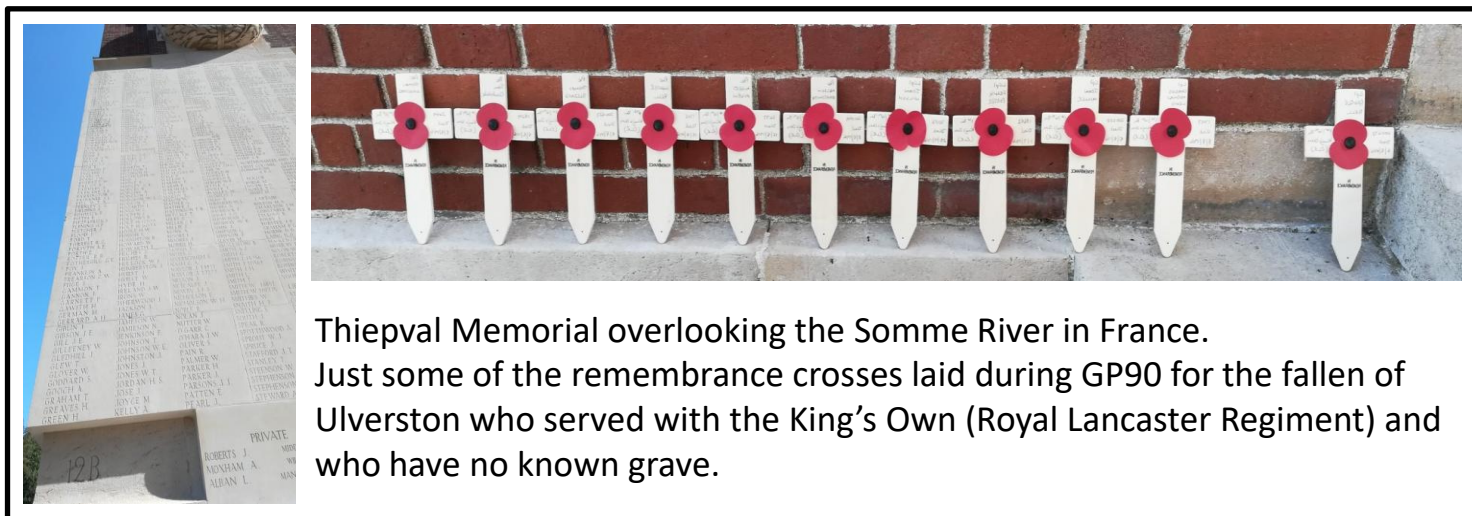
4 August 1914	Mobilised at Barrow in Furness
Winter 1914-1915	Stationed in Southern England
3rd May 1915	Arrived in France Landed at Boulogne. Joined 154th Infantry Brigade, 51st Infantry Division
15 June 1915	Battle of Festubert
7 January 1916	Joined 164th Infantry Brigade of 55th West Lancashire Division
8 August 1916	The Somme: Battle of Guillemont Attack on Trones Wood
11 September 1916	The Somme: Battle of Ginchy Attack on Delville Wood
27 September 1916	The Somme: Battle of Flers
28 September 1916	Attack near Mametz
23 December 1916	Raid on Cameroon Trench
9 June 1917	Raid on Ixend Trench
31 July 1917	3rd Battle of Ypres: Battle of Pilckem Ridge Attack on Wietje
20 September 1917	3rd Battle of Ypres: Battle of the Menin Road Ridge
November 1917	Battle of Cambrai
20 November 1917	Attack near Guillemont Farm
30 November 1917	Repulse of Counter attack near Ep�hy
March and April 1918	Retreat
9 - 11 April 1918	Battle of Estaires - First Defence of Givenchy
26 April 1918	Counter attack on Givenchy Craters
24 August 1918	Givenchy Craters
October and November 1918	Advance to Victory
4 November 1918	Battle of the Sambre - Advance on Ath
12 December 1918	Moved to Brussels
April 1919	Returned to England

5 men of Ulverston were lost in the same bombing raid at Locon in northern France on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1915, all were serving with the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Bn. King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment). 4 of the 5 men have no known grave.

14 men of Ulverston were lost on the Somme in France on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1916, all were serving with the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Bn. King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) and probably died within an hour, if not minutes, of each other under a heavy barrage of artillery. They included two brothers, Thomas and John, sons of Richard Cloudsdale of Oubas Hill, Ulverston. All 14 men have no known grave.

Five men of Ulverston were lost during the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, part of the Third Battle of Ypres, Belgium on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1917. Three men were serving with the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment), two with the 7<sup>th</sup> Bn. and one with the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Bn.. Two men were serving with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. Grenadier Guards. The three men serving with the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) have no known grave.

Four men of Ulverston were lost in the Battle of the Menin Road Ridge at Ypres on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1917. Three men were serving with the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Bn. and one with the 1<sup>st</sup> /5<sup>th</sup> Bn. King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) The three men serving with the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Bn. King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) have no known grave.



Thiepval Memorial overlooking the Somme River in France. Just some of the remembrance crosses laid during GP90 for the fallen of Ulverston who served with the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) and who have no known grave.

