

The First World War in Shetland

The Fighting Forces



Shetland Companies, Gordon Highlanders on parade

1914 - 1918

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Outbreak of War

2nd August 1914

All Shetland R.N.R. called out and ordered to report to Headquarters. This created a sensation in Shetland as nearly every district held a quota of Reservemen.

3rd August 1914

Men belonging to the Shetland Companies of the Gordon Highlanders (Territorial Forces) called out for special duty in Lerwick. 'A' Company ordered to report at 3pm on the next day and to take their kit and equipment with them.

R.N.R.—Royal Navy Reserve

The R.N.R provided a pool of experienced seamen for use during times of war and was made up of experienced seamen. Men signed up to the R.N.R as a way of making additional money as they were paid a yearly fee for attending a couple of weeks training a year.

4th August 1914

Britain declares war on Germany

5th August 1914

'B' Company called out.

6th August 1914

Lieutenant-Colonel H.C. Evans, R.M.L.I arrives in Lerwick to assume command of troops in Shetland.

7th August 1914

New naval force to be known as the 'Shetland Section, R.N.R.'



Shetland Section, Royal Naval Reserve

“during these eventful days, the town resembled a small armed camp. R.N.R men arrived in their hundreds, and the unwanted and significant sight of so many naval blue and khaki uniforms brought vividly home to the people the first impressions of war”

Joining Up - Volunteers

Winter 1914-15

Large numbers of young men enlist with county boys mainly joining the R.N.R and town boys entering the ranks of the local Territorial Gordon Highlanders

February 1915

By now over 1,500 men had enlisted in the Shetland Section, R.N.R. Detachments of the Territorials, which had also increased their numbers, were sent to be cable guards in various places in the islands.

Many men also served with the Merchant Navy.



Cable Guards at Sandwick

T.A. - Territorial Army

The Territorial's were established in 1908 . Young men volunteered and received military training for a few days a year in the knowledge that in the event of a war, they would become regular full time soldiers. It was mainly Lerwick men who joined and they were paid an annual retainer.

1,500 men in R.N.R
3,000 men in Merchant Navy
1,000 men in Army
(approximately)

7th Volunteer Battalion, The Gordon Highlanders was recognised as two companies of the 4th (Aberdeen) Battalion. After a while these two companies were to be called 'The Shetland Companies, The Gordon Highlanders'. Each company consisted of 3 officers and 117 men. Later in the war the War Office appointed a Major Commandant to take command of the two companies.



'Shetland Company'

January 1915

Both local newspapers started publishing lists of servicemen 'Shetland's Roll of Honour'.

April 1915

"most country districts in Shetland are now pretty well depopulated of eligible men"

Joining Up—Conscription

‘the compulsory enlistment of people in some sort of national service, most often military service’

National Registration implemented in July 1915 — men and women aged 18-41 have to register and provide details of their occupations and skills.

‘Starred Jobs’ allocated—these are jobs that require men to stay at home to carry out.

‘Derby Scheme’ followed—this required all men aged 18-41 to attest their willingness to serve.

Position of the R.N.R changed on 19th November 1915 due to the threat of invasion decreasing. The Navy needed men and future recruits would now be eligible for service out with Shetland.

January 1916 Conscription Begins

Captain Laurenson of the Gordon Highlanders appointed Recruiting Officer

All single men aged 19-41 ordered to report for duty by 2nd March 1916 or they would be conscripted.

By May 1916 all married men are included into conscription and men in the R.N.R who were still stationed within Shetland told to volunteer for service out with the isle, or be discharged and therefore eligible for conscription.

In October 1916 fishermen are removed from the ‘starred occupations’ list—although the Navy made it clear they didn’t want them to join the Army as they would make better Naval men.

Conscientious Objector

A teacher in Unst was sacked and spent 100 days in Wormwood Scrubs before being sentenced to 12 months hard labour in a Glasgow prison.

A **conscientious objector (CO)** is an "individual who has claimed the right to refuse to perform military service" on the grounds of freedom of thought, conscience, and/or religion"

Tribunals

Local authorities appointed tribunals to hear appeals—Lerwick Town Council found it hard to find willing people to serve on these tribunals.

Tom Sandison was chairman of the North Isles tribunal, "I don’t like the job, but one does not like to shirk the duty because it is disagreeable".

The work was unpleasant because everyone knew each other. The first meeting lasted 9 1/2 hours and dealt with 120 applicants.

Sandison wrote, "that these applicants for exemption were really and truly the ‘outwales’, the ‘tailings’, the physically unfit and not shirkers, was very apparent to anyone who saw them alongside the gun’s crew of R.N.R men stationed here.... Every fit man who could by any means get away from his family or occupation had already joined some branch of serve".

Volunteers and Conscripts are not treated significantly differently in the Army, and in Shetland were all spoken about in heroic terms.

Leaving Shetland 1914—1915

1914

23 members of the old R.N.R leave on the *SS St Rognvald* en route for Portsmouth.

“in physique, training and ability these men were second to none” and “got a send off worthy of the occasion”

1915

Men begin to leave for naval depots and training camps.

On 1st May 1915, 56 men left on *SS Magnus* en route to Chatham.

13th June 1915

240 Territorial's leave onboard *SS Cambria*, the first time that a troopship had come to Shetland for the purpose of taking armed men away to war.

Half the men joined the 2nd Provisional Battalion at Fort Matilda, Greenock and provided guard duties at shipyards and munitions factories. Those who had volunteered to go overseas, about 90 men, were landed in Thurso and continued by train to Scone to become the 'Shetland Companies, 7th Gordon Highlanders'. About 40 of these men went to France later that year and others joined them early in 1916 to join the 153rd Brigade of the 51st Highland Division.



Troopship *SS Cambria* leaving Lerwick

July 1915

Another detachment of around 200 men of the Shetland Section, R.N.R leave on the troopship *SS Vienna*.

“So from summer 1915 onward, Shetland soldiers and sailors participated actively in the war”

“there is scarcely a battle which takes place by sea or land where the British are engaged, but some Shetlander is there to ‘do his bit’”

**Leaving Shetland
1915—1918**



Soldiers of the Shetland Companies Gordon Highlanders at a camp in Scotland

Complaints in Shetland that too many men were being 'combed out' from agriculture to the detriment of the economy.

30th June 1916

200 Royal Naval Reservists leave for Chatham and Plymouth

2nd July

100 men leave for Plymouth

19th July

200 leave

26th November

100 leave



Naval men outside Cunningsburgh radio hut., 1918

The Shetland News

Praised the Reservists
"High
courage and determination
which distinguished their
Viking forefathers"

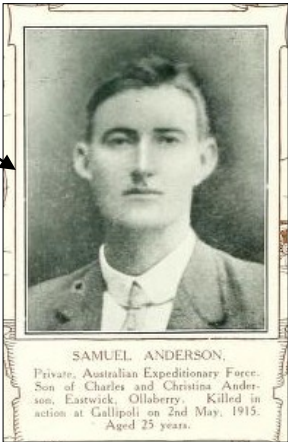
Campaigns and Casualties 1915

German submarine campaign against Britain.
Germany's fleet of U-boats were the greatest threat to Allied ships. U-boats patrolled the North Atlantic, the waters around Britain and the Mediterranean Sea on the lookout for Merchant ships. They were armed with a deck gun and torpedoes.

U-boats
Germany had a fleet of *Unterseebooten* (undersea boats)
Britain called these submarines. U-boats.

Battle of Dogger Bank
Casualties: Germany 954 killed and 80 wounded, Britain 13 killed and 32 wounded
24th January 1915—clash between British Home Fleet and Germany's High Seas Fleet at the Dogger Bank shoals in the middle of the North Sea. This battle boosted British morale and worried the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, who issued an order stating that all further risks to surface vessels were to be avoided.

April 1915
Gallipoli campaign started and reports of casualties became more frequent.
By the time the Allies withdrew at the end of 1915 more than 40,000 Allied soldiers and 60,000 Ottoman soldiers died.



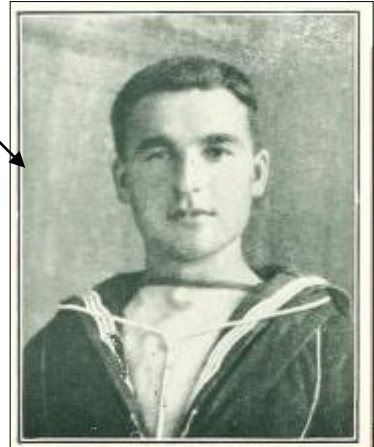
From this point on numbers increased and soon there were Shetland men in every branch of the Army and every theatre of war; France and Flanders, Gallipoli (European part of Turkey), Mesopotamia, Egypt, Salonika (Greece) and afterwards, in Russia and Italy.
There were also Shetland men on duty in British war vessels on every sea and merchant seamen on all the ocean highways. Many R.N.R. men also served on Merchant Navy ships as gunners.
A number of Shetland men also rendered valuable service as officers in the Royal Air Force.



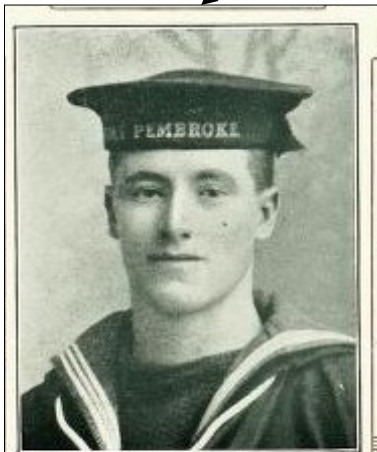
**Campaigns and Casualties
1915**

8th August 1915

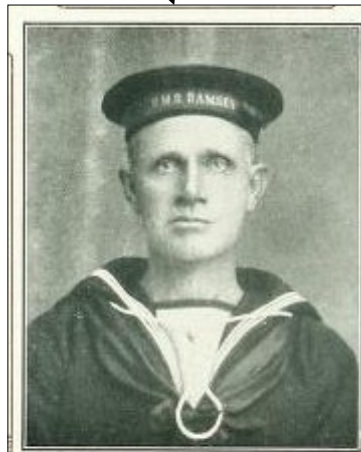
HMS *Ramsey* sunk by German Fleet auxiliary steamer *Meteor*. 14 Shetland men involved, 8 were killed with 4 of the dead coming from Whalsay.



WILLIAM JOHN HUTCHISON,
R.N.R., H.M.S. "Ramsey." Son of
James Hutchison, Cready Knowe, Whal-
say. Lost by enemy action on Aug. 8,
1915, in the North Sea. Aged 25 years.



JOHN ARTHUR FULLERTON,
Seaman, R.N.R., H.M.S. "Ramsey."
Husband of Jessie J. Goodlad, Road-
side, Hamnavoe, Burra Isle. Killed
in action in the North Sea, August 8,
1915. Aged 27 years.



ANDREW FRASER,
Seaman, H.M.S. "Ramsey." Hus-
band of Elizabeth Fraser, Roadside,
Setter, Walls. Lost at sea by the
sinking of his ship, August 8, 1915.
Aged 43 years.

9th August 1915

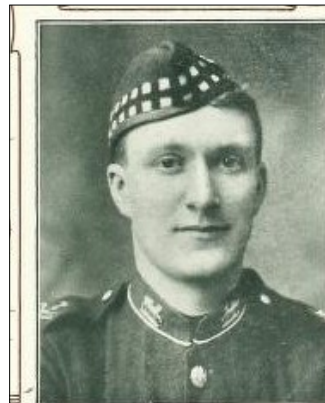
The German steamer *Meteor* then headed for Zeebrugge but was scuttled when it saw the British Navy catching up with it.

In November 1915 the 'Shetland Times' began recording 'Shetland's Fallen Heroes'.

By the end of 1915 about 50 Shetlanders had been killed.



LAURENCE JAMIESON,
A.B., "Nelson" Battalion, Royal
Naval Division. Son of Mrs Catherine
Jamieson, Widow's Homes, Lerwick.
Killed by machine-gun fire at the Dar-
danelles, on 13th July, 1915. Aged 22



PETER TAIT PETRIE,
Sergeant, 8th Black Watch. Son of
Joan and James Petrie, 4 Church Lane,
Lerwick. Killed in action in the Battle
of Loos on Sept. 25, 1915. Aged 34.

Winter 1915

First draft of the Territorial's crossed to France and were in the trenches some weeks before Christmas.

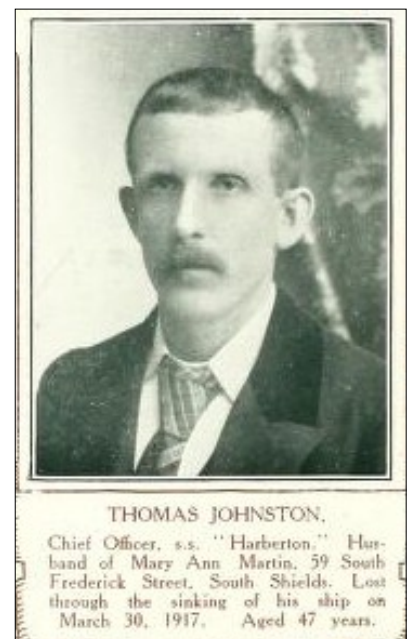
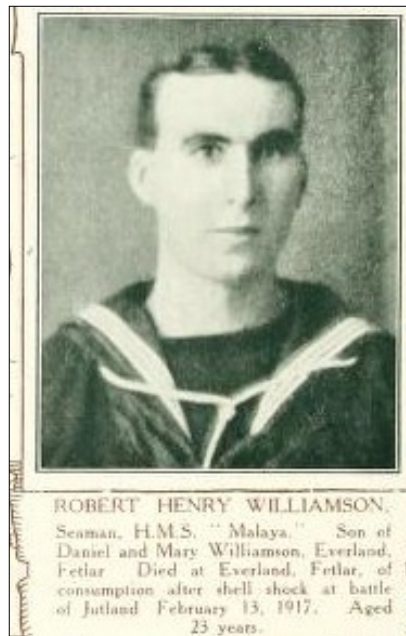
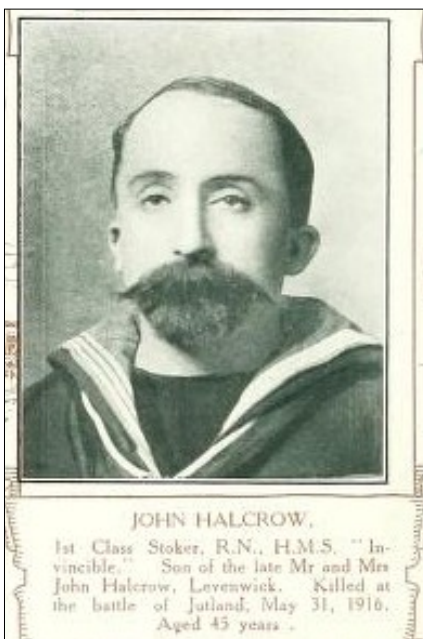
**Campaigns and Casualties
1916**

Battle of Jutland

The German navy sailed into the North Sea at the end of May 1916. They planned to attack merchant ships in order to try and lure the British fleet into a trap. They wanted to destroy British warships and then escape back to Germany.

But the British had learned of the plan and were prepared for Battle. The two fleets met near Denmark and a total of about 250 battleships, battle cruisers, cruisers, destroyers and other ships met in battle. Both sides lost ships and thousands of men and there was ultimately no clear winner.

The German fleet retreated to their home ports and never challenged the blockade again. Instead they began to build more submarines. The British fleet continued patrolling the North Sea and escorting merchant ships.



**Campaigns and Casualties
1916**

Battle of The Somme

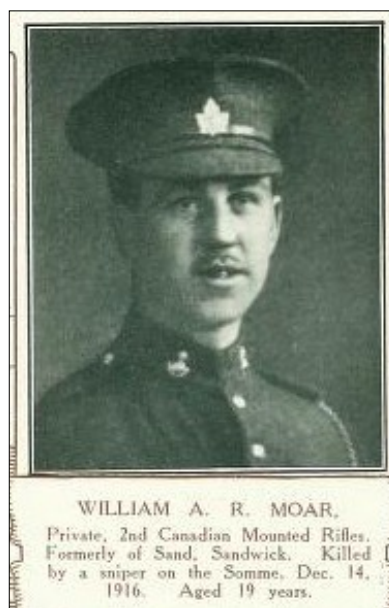
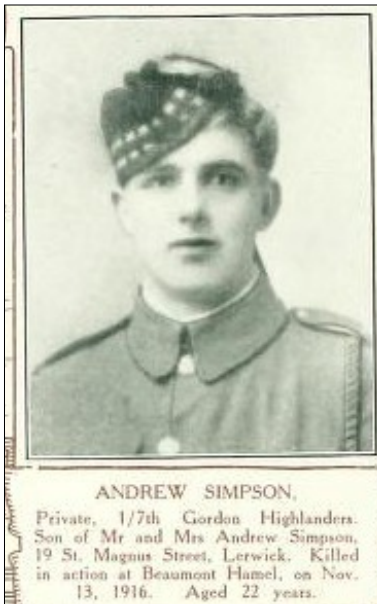
Casualties: Germany 680,000, British 419,654 (125,000 killed), French 204,000

The Battle of The Somme lasted from 1 July to 18 November 1916.

The single greatest loss of life during any one time for Shetlanders came at the Battle of Ancre — 19 were killed and 22 wounded. The news took nearly a fortnight to reach Lerwick and came as a great shock. This loss occurred during the Battle of the Somme at Pozieries Ridge near the River Ancre. The loss of Shetlanders came at Beaumont Hamel and led to the ‘Shetland Companies’ being broken up due to the amount of men lost and the remaining survivors joined the 7th Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders.

This 1st draft from ‘Shetland Companies’ was attached to the 51st Highland (Territorial) Division which earned undying fame at the Battle of Beaumont Hamel. The “Famous 51st” was respected and dreaded by the German Army and emerged from the war with a glory all its own and a record of achievement, service and sacrifice unequalled by any other division in the British Army.

Shetland has every reason to be proud of the fact that its sons served in the ranks of what was perhaps the most famous fighting division, allied or enemy, that took part in the Great War.



**Campaigns and Casualties
1917**

Battle of Arras

9th April—16 May Casualties: British 160,000
German: 120,000

The British tried to force the Germans to withdraw troops from the River Aisne area. They made significant gains on the first day but then made little progress and were unable to effect a breakthrough and the battle ended in stalemate.

Many Shetland men died in this battle, the 1917 end of year report in the Shetland Times said, "Shetland has responded most nobly to the call; but she is paying the price"



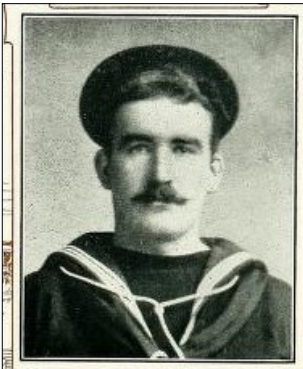
KARL MANSON,
Private, 15th Seaforth Highlanders. Second son of Thomas Manson, Shetland News, Lerwick. Killed in action at battle of Arras, April 9, 1917. Aged 19 years.



JAMES INKSTER
Private, Gordon Highlanders. Son of Mr and Mrs Jas. Inkster, King Harald Street, Lerwick. Killed in action in Arras battle, April 23, 1917. Aged 28 years.



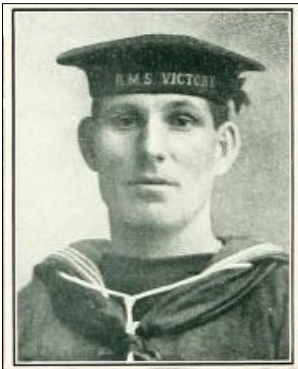
HENRY J. ANDERSON,
Scaman, R.N.R., H.M.S. "Dundee." Husband of Ann Jane Anderson, Bonnybrae, Ullsta, Yell. Killed in action, March 16, 1917. Aged 36 years.



HENRY ANDERSON,
Seaman, R.N.R., H.M.S. "Dundee." Son of Robt. and Barbara Anderson, Huxter, Whalsay. Killed in action, March 16, 1917. Aged 26 years.



MAGNUS JOHN ANDERSON,
Seaman, R.N.R., H.M.S. "Dundee." Son of Thomas E. and Mary A. Anderson, Cullivoe, North Yell. Killed while boarding disguised German raider, March 16, 1917. Aged 31 years.



ROBERT JOHN ANDERSON,
Seaman, R.N.R., H.M.S. "Dundee." Son of Mrs Janet Anderson, 86 Commercial Street, Lerwick. Killed in action in the North Sea on March 16, 1917. Aged 35 years.

Friday March 16

The German raider *Leopard* was sunk in the North Sea near the Faeroes by armoured cruiser *Achilles* and armed boarding steamer *Dundee*. The *Leopard* went down with all hands including the boarding party from the *Dundee*. This included the four Shetland men above. Shetland men often made up the crew of boarding parties because of their excellent seamanship skills.

"I very much regret the loss of the gallant boat's crew of volunteers, who undoubtedly perished with the raider. The boarding parties from the patrol squadron have, throughout the war, displayed the greatest skill and fearlessness in carrying out their hazardous work in all weathers"

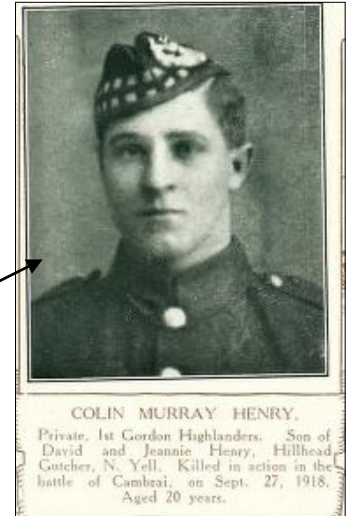
In a letter from the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet to the Admiralty.

Campaigns and Casualties 1917/1918

Battle of Cambria

20 November—6 December 1917 Casualties: British 45,000, German 50,000

This battle marked the first massed use of tanks in the war. 476 Allied tanks launched a surprise attack and made major advances along the front. However, many tanks became bogged down in the mud or broke down and the fighting continued into December with the Germans launching a series of counterattacks.



1918—The Last Great Battles

Casualties: Germany 348,000 British 236,000 French 92,000

In the spring of 1918 the Germans launched a major attack along the Hindenburg Line. German soldiers outnumbered the Allies and the Allies had to retreat. By June the Germans had to halt their advance due to lack of supplies and in July the Allies attacked back, aided by large numbers of American troops. The period that followed is called 'The 100 Days Offensive'. The Germans were defeated at the Second Battle of the Marne in July, and again at the Battle of Amiens and the Second Battle of the Somme in August. The Germans retreated and the Allies broke through their defences. The German Army began to collapse with many men surrendering. The end of the war was in sight.

Many Shetland soldiers fell during the Great German Onset before 'a series of brilliant British victories, which, between August 8th and the date of the Armistice, crumpled up the German armies with dramatic and unexpected suddenness'

Of the 197 Shetland Territorials who originally volunteered for overseas service, 21% did not survive.

"there is probably not a cemetery near the battle grounds of any one of the many theatres of war that does not contain all that remains of some Shetland soldiers"

"Overall Shetlanders felt that they had 'done their bit' for the war effort and this idea became fixed in local consciousness, affirming pride in their contribution and island identity"

Campaigns - War at Sea

The majority of Shetland men chose to serve afloat. This was natural, due to living in a community where a love of the sea is inherent.

Approximately 1,560 men joined the R.N.R. And 3,000 men served in the Merchant Navy. The Reservemen were drafted to various war vessels; fighting ships, patrol, boarding, anti u-boat or escort craft and Merchant ships.

Eventually only 350 older Reservemen were left in Shetland and they took on patrol and look-out duty in the islands.

While R.N.R and M.N. Men served everywhere around the world, deaths in action were mainly in the UK & Ireland; the Channel and the North Sea.

Shetlanders were singled out for duty in the Navy because of their early sea training and natural abilities. They were chosen to crew the small boats sent from British patrol craft to board enemy or suspected vessels.

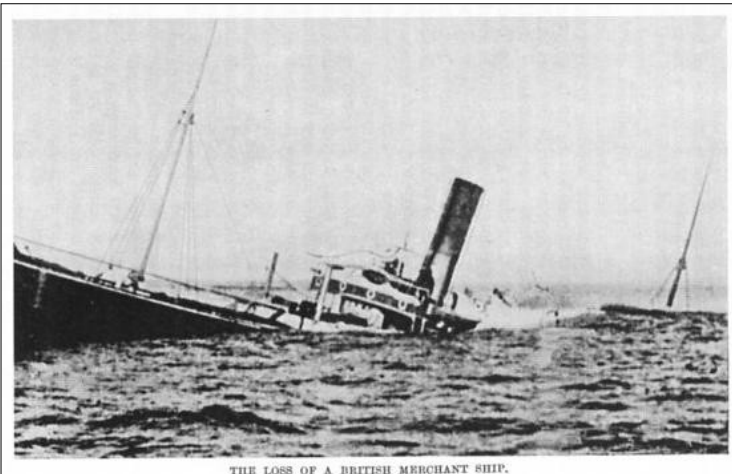
“few naval engagements took place without some Shetland men involved and relatively few steamers were sunk that did not include at least one Shetlander”

In all the biggest naval fights of the war; Dogger Bank, Coronel, Falklands, Jutland and Zeebrugge, the Shetland Reservemen played an honourable part.

Many Shetlanders reached commissioned rank both in the Navy and the Merchant Navy.

Merchant Seamen

They were at the greatest risk of death and injury. This was mainly because of ruthless submarine warfare.



Other Casualties

Illness and diseases caused by poor standards of living caused many deaths. Shetland men died around the world of; pneumonia, pleurisy, meningitis, black water fever, dysentery, uremic coma, influenza, measles, tuberculosis, emphysema, typhoid fever and others.

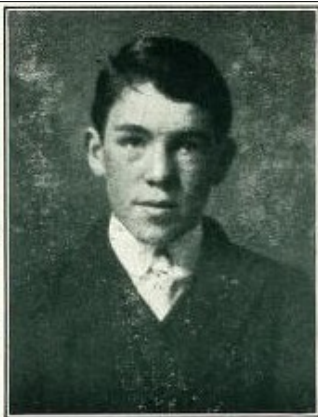
The Eunson family of Lerwick lost two sons in 1915, serving on different ships, who both died of meningitis.



STEWART EUNSON,
Seaman, R.N.R., H.M.S. "Vernon."
Son of Stewart and Mary Eunson,
Leogh, Fair Isle. Died of meningitis
in R.N. Hospital, Haslar, December
17, 1915. Aged 24 years.

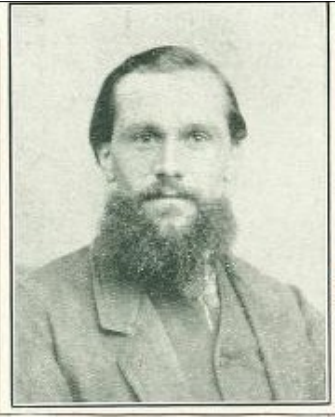
ROBERT EUNSON,
Seaman, R.N.R., H.M.S. "Excellent."
Son of Stewart and Mary Eunson,
Leogh Fair Isle. Died of meningitis
in R.N. Hospital, Haslar, October 3,
1915. Aged 18 years.

Men also died while being held as prisoners of war.



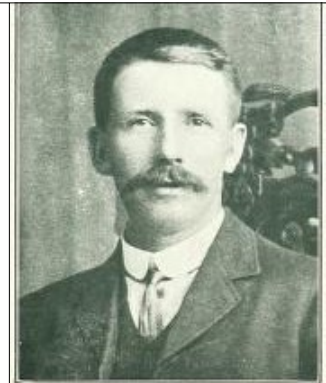
JAMES CHARLES NICOLSON,
Private, Cameron Highlanders. Son
of Samuel and the late Jessie Nicol-
son, Gardie, Bressay. Died of measles
at Inverness, January 31, 1915. Aged
16 years.

Youngest to die in service



MAGNUS MOFFAT,
Seaman, R.N.R. Husband of Jane
Moffat, Nounsborough, Bixter. Died
in the Gilbert Bain Hospital, Lerwick,
May 11, 1918. Aged 73 years.

Oldest to die in service



WILLIAM SLATER,
A.B., s.s. "In-eraw." Son of John
and Barbara Slater Burland, Trondra,
by Scalloway. Died at Charlottenburg,
Germany, April 29, 1915, while a
prisoner of war. Aged 33 years.



JAMES JOHN IRVINE,
Seaman, H.M.S. "Ascot." Husband
of Elizabeth Irvine, Union Street,
Lerwick. Lost off Newcastle, on 10th
November, 1918. Aged 24 years.

HMS Ascot, a paddle mine sweeper, was torpedoed off the Farne Islands on 10th November 1918 and was the last Royal Navy ship lost in the war.

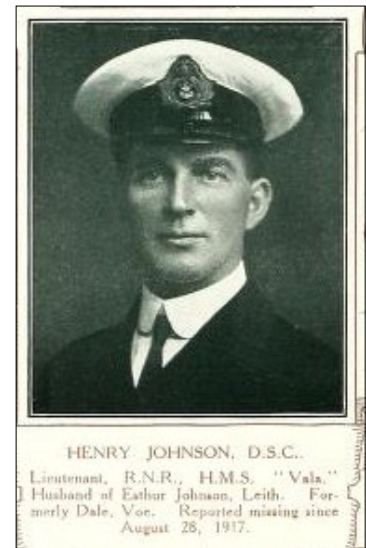
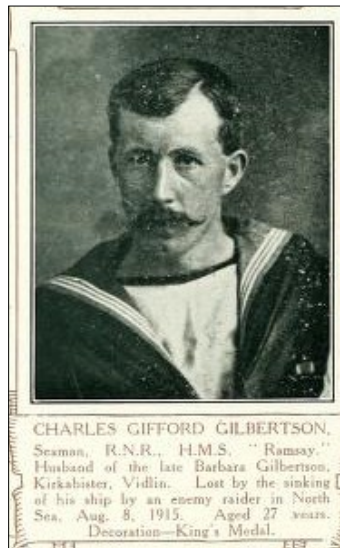
Awards

Various campaign medals and gallantry awards were made after the end of the war.

Decorations won by Shetlanders include the V.C., the Albert Medal (first-class), the D.S.O., M.C., D.S.C., D.S.M. D.S.M., M.M., M.S.M and also decorations from Britain's Allies France and Belgium such as the Croix du Guerre.

However it was said that “without doubt” the awards presented were “not in proportion to the number of deeds which warranted official recognition”.

- V.C. Victoria Cross
- D.S.O. Distinguished Service Order
- D.S.C. Distinguished Service Cross
- M.C. Military Cross
- D.C.M. Distinguished Conduct Medal
- D.S.M. Distinguished Service Medal
- M.M. Military Medal
- M.S.M. Meritorious Service Medal



Many Shetlanders were also ‘Mentioned in Dispatches’.

These three simple words were a commendation of an act of gallantry and were often all that was officially related of individual exploits.

Shetland Gun-Layers were honoured for ‘determined and successful engagements with German submarines when the odds were heavily against them’.

A statement made by Sherriff Menzies O.B.E. On the “men who went forth from Shetland during the years of the Great War to fight for their country’s cause, for Democracy, Freedom and Justice’ said at the civic reception to welcome home the returned service men in the T.A. Hall in Lerwick on the 13th August, 1919. He went on to refer to the War Office’s demands for more men during the war, “when an official visited Lerwick the figures of men in service were gone into, and it was found that in regard to the number of men who had gone forth to service King and Country, Shetland was very nearly at the top”.

Peace and Aftermath of War

Armistice

9th November 1918

A group of high-ranking German officials met with British and French officers in a railway carriage in the Forest of Compiègne in north-east France. They were handed documents giving the German Government three days to surrender.

11th November 1918

Germany signed the document in the early hours of the morning. It was agreed that the war would stop six hours later, at eleven o'clock.

'the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month'

For then next six hours guns were still being fired and men were still being killed along the Western Front.

At eleven o'clock the guns fell silent.

'The war to end all wars was finally over'

Peace Treaties

28th June 1919

All the countries involved in the war signed peace treaties.

Germany signed 'The Treaty of Versailles', limiting their army and making them pay for damage caused by the war.

Austria-Hungary signed treaties splitting up its empire, creating Austria and Hungary. Two more new countries were formed, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia and this changed the map of Europe.

After the armistice Germany's fleet of warships sailed to the British Naval Base at Scapa Flow in Orkney. On the 21st June 1919, afraid he would have to hand over his ships to the British, the German commander ordered the fleet to be scuttled (sunk).

52 ships were sent to the bottom of the sea.



Personal Experiences

Home on Leave

When asked about the trenches, Private James Gray 'laughed and remarked, "I could not tell you how bad they are" but added, the soldiers "are always cheery with it all and keep their hearts up wonderfully".

Laurence Williamson described the Battle of the Falklands 'as "a very exciting experience" which he is not likely to forget'.

Letters Home

"everybody has some vague idea of what actual war is like, but it is quite different from our imaginings" - Rev. Campbell, fought at Gallipoli.

From a wounded soldier, "it is hell all over, seeing your chums being killed... When I was wounded and crawled over a mile... Over a foot of mud... Dead men, dying men moaning..."

W.H. Jamieson, New Zealand Expeditionary Force, described shrapnel as being like "rain falling on the surface of a pond".

From a Nurse

Martha Aitken served at the 7th Casualty Clearing Station.

"Oh! The mud, oceans of it! The trenches are full of water and now I know what the poor men have to put up with"

"Hell could not be worse"

"Ghastly tales of the cruelties of the Germans to our poor wounded and helpless men"

"every man who can fight should be here to avenge the fallen"

Diary entries

James Pottinger described the Ancre advance as being a "fearful experience" with "most sickening sights" and like "Hell let loose".

"It is all right to stay at home and fill the papers with patriotic paragraphs, but really war should be reserved to fiends who are in the last stages of insanity"

Lance Corporal Thomas Hardy.

Robert Greig was a reporter for the 'Shetland Times' and served in the Seaforth and Cameron Highlanders. His writings aimed "to set before you the soldier, not the man he appears to be today, but the man you never saw and never knew, who lived like an animal and died like an angel".

War Poetry

John Moar served at Gallipoli and complained that the Navy and indeed Shetlanders were being overlooked

“You read in your papers of the deeds that are done
Of the brave sons of England with their bayonets and gun.
But no mention is made of your brave Shetland Jacks,
Who are helping your Tommies, your Paddies, your Macs.”

Ben Morrison fought and was wounded in Palestine. He wrote poems while in hospital, at Alexandria, Palestine, Port Said and on the ‘high seas’.

“Sodden and wet
The parapet
Was carved and wrecked by wraths of deadly shell
Once strong defence, lay broken, tumbled wire-
All frail against the wall of steel and fire
That turned, with fury, ‘No Man’s Land’ to Hell”.

Morrison also wrote about the women at home thinking about the soldiers,

The Knitter’s Song

“Plain and purl, purl and plain
Whining shrapnel, gas-clouds thick curl,
Bullets like valve-oozed steam,
Bayonets flashing with sun-lit gleam,
Fields, once verdant, a blood-dyed stream,
Death-dealing missiles swiftly hurl,
Plain and purl, purl and plain”.

Knittin’ Fur Da Boys

“Courage rins trou every vein,
Honour dey will aye retain,
On dir names sall rest no stain
Whether woe, or weal!”

War Poetry

John (Jack) Peterson served in the Seaforth Highlanders and was wounded in action. He published 'Roads and Ditches' under the pseudonym 'Private Pat' and dedicated it to his dead or maimed comrades. Some of his poems refer to his Shetland homeland;

“Now dreams, an isle
Of purple peaks,
Set where the sun
Red slumber seeks;
Where summer-night
Like dusky rim
Encircling creeps
Slow, soft and dim”

Mostly though he described the trenches; the sights, sounds, the despair, terror and courage of the soldiers, and the futility and madness of war

“And when your heart is broken,
And you care not if you die
You'll keep on carrying on
Till self-pity makes you cry

Till you take the man who loved you
And rake him through the mud
And scoop a shallow hollow
With your hands all smeared with blood

And throw him in and leave him:
And you'll laugh for—God knows why!
And you'll keep on carrying on
(Or God loves you, and you die)”

War Poetry

Shetland Heroes

**“Silent ye lie in distant lands and seas,
Heroes, whose names we trace with love and pride;
Endless our debt to you, who fought and died,
That we might taste the sweets of life and ease.**

**Long shall the voice of fame your deeds recall,
And glory gild your names on storied page,
Noble and brave as in the sea-kings’ age,
Defenders of fair freedom for us all.**

**High on the shining scroll of bright renown,
Emblazoned in the work wrought by your hands,
Refulgent now the name of Shetland stands,
On through long ages to be handed down:**

**Ever shall thoughts of your victorious strife
Stir Shetland’s sons to greater, grander life”**

From ‘Roll of Honour and Roll of Service’

Written by J.J. Haldane Burgess

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