

Your War Memorial

The obvious place to start your research is with the war memorial itself. After the First World War almost every community in the country erected a war memorial. They varied from a simple plaque in the church or familiar cross on the green to elaborate monuments like Lutyens' arch in Leicester or even a War Memorial Hospital. The motives which inspired these memorials are now in themselves an important area of study.

Small communities sometimes included not only the names of the fallen but also details of their Regiment (and most usefully battalion) or ship and date of death. In such cases the researcher's task is much easier. In larger towns, the sheer number of names meant that no indication of Regiment or even the service was given.



Records kept by those compiling the names for the memorial seldom survive but when they do, afford an interesting insight in to the thought processes behind the selection process. The decision as to where a name was recorded seems to have been fairly arbitrary. At Croft, the war memorial was erected by the Croft Ex-Servicemen's Association [later the British Legion] in 1921, and only handed over to the Parish Council in 1928. A contemporary manuscript list of names of all in the village who had served in the Forces during the First World War is held at the Record Office. It is far longer than the roll of honour which was eventually put up in the local chapel. One man who died, although born in Croft, was subsequently excluded from all the memorials because he had moved to Huncote. Many of the names were confused. For instance, the man who appears as Wallis Wilson on the roll of honour, was correctly Arthur Wallis Wilson and appears in official records under the latter name, although sometimes as 'Wallace'. Such errors can cause a lot of confusion.

In some communities, the decision was made to record the names not simply of the war dead but of all who had served in the forces during the war in a 'roll of honour'. At Croft, the roll of honour which helpfully also indicated whether a man was wounded or a prisoner of war, has since been lost, and the only evidence left is a small

photograph of the roll which was deposited at the Record Office some years ago. Those who enjoy their research may wish to extend their work to include all those who served!

It is the aim of this project to record details of all the war memorials in a parish. This should include not only the main war memorial but also any memorials located in chapels, schools or factories. Local knowledge will play a vital role in locating some of the lesser known memorials.

- Between 1998 and 2000 a project was carried out by the Public Monument and Sculpture Association to collect notes and photographs relating to all monuments and sculptures in Leicestershire and Rutland. As part of this, surveys of most parish war memorials were carried out, although names on the memorial were not necessarily recorded. The working files for each parish surveyed, are held at the Record Office under the reference **DE6427**. Many of the files contain extracts from contemporary newspapers which record the unveiling ceremony and in some cases details of fund raising activities. These files are a useful starting point for anyone researching their local memorial.
- Details relating to the erection and maintenance of the First and Second World War Memorials are likely to be found by searching through the relevant parish council minutes. In many cases these are now held at the Record Office.
- Local newspapers, available at the Record Office on microfilm, may well contain reports about the dedication of a war memorial and the artists who carried out the work.
- In a few cases, papers relating to the design and erection of a war memorial have been deposited at the Record Office. It is worth checking to see if anything has been deposited for your parish.
- Parish church archives held at the Record Office may contain faculties for any memorials erected inside the church.
- Details of monuments erected post-1945 may be more difficult to locate but local newspapers are the most helpful source. An index of local newspapers, begun c1980, is available at the Record Office.



War Memorial
Clock tower,
Coalville

The Names on the Memorial

When researching the names of the dead on the War Memorial, the first step should be to locate details of the individual amongst the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. These are available online at www.cwgc.org and include burials of casualties at home and abroad for both World Wars as well as some other twentieth century conflicts. The database is searchable by name and records for each casualty, details of name, initials, nationality, rank, regiment, unit, date of death, service number and the cemetery or memorial where he/she is recorded. It is possible to print off a commemorative certificate with a colour photograph of the appropriate cemetery or memorial.

Advice for visitors to the cemetery, including information about its



location and historical background as well as any grave references, are also useful to keep with the record of the casualty and can be downloaded from the same website.

The greatest problem in finding the correct record

for an individual can be the large number of servicemen with the same name and initials. This is where a knowledge of the Regiment and particularly in the case of other ranks, the service number, can make life a lot easier. A date of death can also narrow down the search. In some cases, the inscription on a gravestone such as '... the beloved son of x and y of Coalville, Leicestershire' can help with identifying the correct man. However, many entries – particularly for those who have no known grave and appear only on memorials- offer no such help.

In cases of difficulty, it can help to consult a database known as 'Soldiers who Died in the Great War'. This is available online through the Family History website www.ancestry.co.uk [free if accessed through Leicestershire Libraries or the Record Office] and also in CD format at the Record Office. This database was originally compiled by HMSO in 1921 and represented an

alphabetical list of casualties by battalion for each Regiment. Although this duplicates much of the information available at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, it also gives the soldier's place of enlistment and birthplace. As both these fields are searchable, it is possible to produce a list of all casualties born in a certain parish. In this way it was possible to find three men born in the parish of Croft who were absent from any local memorial because their families had subsequently moved.

A similar database for the Second World War entitled Army Roll of Honour 1939-1945 is available at the Record Office in CD format. This is less helpful because it only gives the county as the birthplace and place of residence. In both databases, beware of potential misspellings of names. In the case of Lance Corporal Reginald Collis, he appeared in the Army Roll under the name Cullis. Again, details of Regiment and date of death will help to clarify such confusion.

A Roll of Honour for the men of Leicester and Leicestershire who died on or as a result of active service in the First World War is held at the Record Office. The Roll lists men who served in the Royal Navy by ship, Royal Marines and then the Leicestershire Regiment by battalion, followed by other Leicestershire units and other regiments and corps of the British and other armies. Details include names, number and rank, date of death (including whether 'killed in action' or 'died of wounds') and the theatre of war. There are of course many omissions and the lack of an overall index can make it difficult to find a name without knowing the Regiment or ship.

Also available is a Roll of Honour for the Leicestershire Regiment which lists names and date of death for soldiers who died in the Sudan, 1924, Palestine, 1938-1939; the Second World War, 1939-1945[arranged by theatre of war]; Korea, 1951-1952 and Cyprus, 1956-1958.

In addition, a Civilian Roll of Honour for the Second War, lists all civilians in the City and County of Leicester who died as a result of enemy action.

Newspaper Sources

Whilst it is the primary aim of this project to create a county-wide database containing details of all persons named on war memorials, a secondary objective is to find out as much as possible about each of the casualties. Further details and if you are lucky, a photograph, may have been published in a contemporary newspaper. Copies of local newspapers for the First and Second World War are available on microfilm at the Record Office. As there is no index, searching can be a lengthy process.

At the beginning of the First World War and until early 1917, it was the practice of The Illustrated Leicester Chronicle to publish regular rolls of honour which showed a photograph of recent casualties and brief details, presumably submitted by the family. Although it is advisable to search from the date of death onwards, in most cases, death seems to have been reported at least a month after the event and sometimes far later. When part of the Leicestershire Regiment was involved in a particular battle, there is often extensive coverage and long lists of casualties amongst 'The Leicesters'. Details of some casualties were of course never published by relatives.

From 1917, it is wiser to rely on the briefer rolls of honour which appear in The Leicester Mercury.

Sometimes more intimate details and memorial notices appeared in papers published in a specific area of the county, such as The Hinckley Times, Market Harborough Advertiser and Coalville Times. Check at the Record Office for the appropriate paper for your local community. Copies may also be available at your local library.

al Heroes.



Pte. C. H. Harris, Leicestershire Regt., killed Sept. 27. His widow resides at Loughborough.



Pte. Albert Cave, Grenadier Guards, killed Sept. 28th. His parents live at Markfield.



Lee-Cpl. Walter Smith, Leicestershire Regt., killed in action. His parents live at Highfield-st., Anstey.



Pte. A. H. Milne, Leicestershire Regt., killed Sept. 25th. Parents' home, Peter's Field, Croft.

In the case of the Second World War, it is harder to find details of casualties and the far flung nature of the war seems to have meant that news was reported more slowly. Not surprisingly, news of casualties amongst prisoners of war in the Far East seems to have reached families only towards the end of the war. Again, a search of The Leicester Mercury and appropriate local paper is most likely to yield results.

If you decide to extend your research to include members of the community who survived the war, a rich harvest of material relating to reports of the wounded, gallantry awards and repatriated prisoners of war is to be found in the pages of contemporary newspapers. All will contribute to a much fuller account of the wartime experiences of servicemen and women from your community.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2nd, 1945

5

Britons Freed From Japs, Countesthorpe Wife's Joy

THE name of Sergeant George Shardlow, of "Wigston-court, Eastharp, Leicester," has been telegraphed through as one of the 23 Britons freed from the Japanese by Americans in Eastern Luzon.

Informed by the "Leicester Mercury" yesterday, Mrs. George Shardlow, of 40, Wigston-street, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire, believes this to be her husband.

The first news of him for eleven months naturally came as a great shock.

"George is free!" she gasped to a neighbour, and, temporarily overcome, relapsed into a chair, to digest the fact that she would no longer have to wait until defeat of Japan before seeing her husband again.

A post-card received at the beginning of last year told her that he was still safe and well in Japanese hands. He was then in Thailand.

Sergt. Shardlow (Manchester Regiment) was captured at Singapore. Only a short leave was granted to him on his return from Dunkirk before he was posted to the Far East.

Daughter's Excitement

To-day his five-year-old daughter, Georgina, who has been ill with measles, was hopping about with excitement, wanting to get Daddy's shirts out in anticipation of his homecoming.

But Georgina won't remember her soldier father. She was only nine months old when he last said goodbye.

Sergt. Shardlow's mother lives at Folkestone, and he has five brothers serving abroad. Before being called up he was employed at the Austin Motor Works, Birmingham.

Prison Camp Britons Hear Good News

Gunner John Allan, the British sailor, who was one of 23 Britons freed to-day, praised the American doctors who, with drugs and equipment from the Red Cross, worked "miracles" among the prisoners (says a cable from Luzon to-day).

He and the other Britons were told that a British Pacific Fleet had now arrived in this area, and was ready for action against the Japanese.

Joyful cries greeted this news, said Allan. "I only hope that our mates still in Jap hands get this news somehow."

MELTON V.C. GIVEN CIVIC RECEPTION

JUST a week after his homecoming Private Richard Burton, V.C., was last night given a civic reception and dinner arranged by the Town Wardens of Melton Mowbray, at the Corn Exchange, specially decorated for the occasion.

Private Burton sat on the platform with the civic heads of the town, the M.P. for Melton (Sir Lindsay Everard). The senior town warden (Mr. William Harwood) presided.

Private Burton handed the Salute the Soldier Week plaque to the chairman of the Urban District Council (Mr. T. R. Stockdale) and to the clerk of Melton and Belvoir R.D.C. (Mr. A. P. Marsh), who deputised for the chairman of that Council (Mr. J. F. Montague), who was prevented from attending through weather conditions.

The warmth of the cheers that greeted Private Burton brought a blush to his cheeks. "I can't say a lot, but thank you" was the extent of his speech.

You will soon be too late for a Special

Bailey Sale Bargain

Time Marches On.

REMEMBER CASH HOMES ARE HAPPY HOMES.

27-29, HIGH STREET	RE-CONDITIONED GOODS AT 8-9, CHURCH GATE
CHINA CABINET in walnut. Complete with plate-glass shelves, now treated. 19 Gns.	Selection of odd Dining Tables, extending leaf, of extra good quality. £13/10
Exceptionally fine 3-piece Suite in moquette, comprising settee and 2 sofas. Perfect condition. Ultra modern. £45 ... 35 Gns.	Wide Chest of Drawers in oak and mahogany. From £6
Bedroom Suite, comprising 4T. robe and single mirrored dressing table. Re-conditioned as new. Finished Jacobean. £33	Upholsteries in Linen, in sensible colours and pre-war quality. Come early for these.
Dining Set in medium oak, comprising 4T. chairs, 2 ...	Walnut Finns by Jaskan, in tip-top condition, sleek action, iron frame. 35 Gns.
	3-piece Suite in upstart moquette, 4 1/2 x 6 1/2 springs, in green. 35 Gns.
	Dark oak Bedroom Suite, double chair-robe, dressing table, single ...

Sources at the Record Office

The First World War

Included amongst the records of the Leicestershire Regiment held at the Record Office, are the war diaries of most of the battalions [ref **22D63/130-145**] with much associated material such as trench maps, brigade and divisional orders and training instructions, 1914- 1919 .

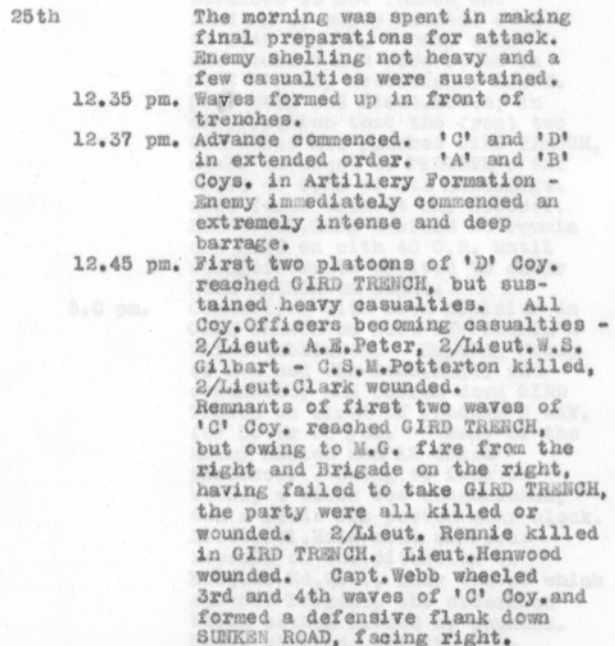
The war diary was a daily record of operations, intelligence reports and other events kept by a junior officer for each battalion. Usually one copy was sent to the War Office and the other copy kept by the Regiment. If a casualty was serving in the Leicestershire Regiment, it can be useful to discover the background to a soldier's death. Sadly, although Officers are often named, names of private soldiers are seldom included. Single casualties from sniping or shells are often just reduced to tables of statistics for daily losses amongst 'other ranks'. When, however, the battalion is involved in a major offensive, the hour by hour reports of troop movements can afford a very graphic and moving insight in to the circumstances of a soldier's death.

War Diary Sep 1916

If you wish to carry out the same research for soldiers from other Regiments, it will be necessary to visit The National Archives in London where the War Office copies are stored [under the reference **WO95**] or locate the Regimental copy. In many cases these will be held by the Regimental Museum rather than the Record Office.

Other sources available at the Record Office include complete rolls for the 1st and 2nd

Battalions of the Leicestershire Regiment in 1914 [ref **22D63/150**]. There are also some interesting survivals amongst private papers such as a complete roll by



25th The morning was spent in making final preparations for attack. Enemy shelling not heavy and a few casualties were sustained.

12.35 pm. Waves formed up in front of trenches.

12.37 pm. Advance commenced. 'C' and 'D' in extended order. 'A' and 'B' Coys. in Artillery Formation - Enemy immediately commenced an extremely intense and deep barrage.

12.45 pm. First two platoons of 'D' Coy. reached GIRD TRENCH, but sustained heavy casualties. All Coy. Officers becoming casualties - 2/Lieut. A.E.Peter, 2/Lieut. W.S. Gilbert - C.S.M. Potterton killed, 2/Lieut. Clark wounded. Remnants of first two waves of 'C' Coy. reached GIRD TRENCH, but owing to M.G. fire from the right and Brigade on the right, having failed to take GIRD TRENCH, the party were all killed or wounded. 2/Lieut. Rennie killed in GIRD TRENCH. Lieut. Henwood wounded. Capt. Webb wheeled 3rd and 4th waves of 'C' Coy. and formed a defensive flank down SUNKEN ROAD, facing right.

company of the 2/5th Battalion amongst the papers of Colonel E Clive Atkins, which includes notes on the subsequent fate of individuals [ref **DE6007/326**].

If you decide to extend your research to those who served in the Forces and survived, a useful list of Prisoners of War from Leicestershire and Rutland is to be found amongst the papers of the Leicestershire and Rutland Prisoner of War Committee [ref **DE633/84**]. This list provides the names, Regiments, numbers and home addresses of many of the soldiers receiving parcels from the Committee. In this way it is possible to find details of 'local pals' who joined up together and suffered the same fate. However, as some of the regiments refused to work with the Committee, it is not a complete list of prisoners.

			MACHINE	GUN	CORP'S
*	Cobbin,	T.H.O.			
2431.	Brown,	G.A.	Ptd	119972,	11, Nether St.; Harby, Nr Mkt; Harbore
959,	Baker,	E.H.	"	124672,	Midland Cafe, Notts Rd; Loughborough.
398,	Branstone,	G.L.	"	53240,	Stockerstone, Uppingham.
2166,	Brooks,	O.A.	"	7114.	55, Eggington St; Leicester.
*	Buzzard,	P.			
1400,	Chamberlain,	W.M.	"	142043,	12, Mill View, Hinckley.
1575,	Clarke,	A.S.	"	26701,	32, Upperton Rd; Leicester.
1515,	Clarke,	E.	L/Sp.	44855.	Station Rd, Glenfield.
2091,	Clayton,	A.R.	Pto.	127603,	84, Gwendolen Rd; Leicester
2373,	Copper,	A.	"	127090	Ravenstone Rd. Ibstock.
2652,	Cooper,	A.	"	136120,	11, Ashley Rd; Markfield.
1772,	Cramp,	A.	"	202596.	42b, Woodgate, Leicester.
1594,	East,	S.	"	34941,	49, Berners St; Leicester.
1490	Ferrier.	D.	"	201899,	18, Uppingham Rd; Leicester.
*	Goadby,	A.W.	"		
665,	Grace,	E.	"	37461	43 Burgess St. Wigston Magna.
532,	Grant,	B.	"	102261.	C/o Mrs Saunt, Lubbanham.
372,	Green,	F,	Cpl	20857	133, Overton Rd. Leicester.
1802	Green	G.	Pte	40312	47, Nether St; Leicester.

Prisoners of war, 1918

Second World War

Predictably, there are fewer sources available at the Record Office for the Second World War. However, odd survivals can shed some light on the experience of an individual. A photocopy of a roll of the Officers and men of the 1st Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment who were captured in Singapore [ref P143], is a particularly poignant record of the fate of many prisoners forced to work on the Burma-Thailand Railway 1942-1944. There are many other documents relating to the Second World War amongst the records of the Leicestershire Regiment and details of Record Office holdings can be viewed at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a

Post 1945 Conflicts

A major aim of this project is to collect names of all casualties who have died serving their country since 1945, whose names do not appear on any memorial. In this, local knowledge will play a vital role. Again, there is little at the Record Office to help, apart from

local newspapers. On the open shelves in the searchroom, there is a memorial book for men of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment who died in Korea 1951-1952 and Cyprus, 1956-1958 but this gives only details of name, number and date of death. More detail concerning casualties in the Korean War may be found in the 'In Memoriam Book' published by the British Legion, also available at the Record Office.

4858478	Pte J. Collins	X	M.	Alor Star 14.12.42
4858346	Pte S. Conroy	X	M.	Singapore Island 12.2.42.
4798634	Pte H. Corino	X	M.do.....
4859849	Pte R. Cook	✓	LtR.	To Hosp Singapore 3.10.42.
4859983	Pte W. Cooper	✓	CHA. =	
4860114	Pte E. Cooper	✓	Lt S.	11. Ind Div.
4857496	Pte E. Cooper	✓	CHA.	
4858173	Pte G. Cooper	✓	Lt M.	Believed evacuated 1.2.42. (Invalid)
4855317	Pte G. Cooper	X	M.	Singapore Island 12.2.42.
4857905	Pte S. Cooper	✓	S.	Southern Area. Proceeded Formosa 16.8.42.
5048377	Pte A. Cope	X	M.	Singapore Island 12.2.42.
4856966	Pte E. Cordell	✓	CHA.	
4857541	Pte F. Cordell	X	M.	Singapore Island 12.2.42.
5494966	Pte E. Cork	X	M.do.....
4121186	Pte M. Corrigan	X	K.	Gurun 14.12.41.
4863288	L/c L. Corton	X	D.	Changi 8.7.42. (Dysentery)
4859847	Pte A. Cottrell	✓	CHA. =	
4858275	Pte H. Cotterell	X	OVS.	Formosa 16.8.42.
4860146	Pte F. Coupland	X	CHA.	D CHUNRAI 6.10.42 Nm 607.
4858275	Pte H. Cotterell	X	OVS.	

Extracts from a nominal roll of the 1st Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment, captured in Singapore, 1942

All personnel marked with an asterisk * proceeded from Changi on 25.10.42 by rail in goods wagons 31 men to a wagon. Only as much kit as could be carried on the man taken. All kit in wagons with men. Considerable amount of Red Cross stores left behind. Arrived at BNA PONG Thailand 23.10.42. Food on journey inadequate. Hardship only saved, bt Red Cross stores carried on the man. Latrine arrangements Nil. Stayed in Ban pong Camp 29 & 30.10.42. Departed for staging camp 40 Km. in transport 31.10.42. Approx 30 men with kit to a truck. Stayed nithg 31.10.42 in staging camp. Conditions deplorable from hygiene point of view. Accommodation inadequate. 1.11.42. moved by march route to river crossed ferry to No. 2. P.O.W. Camp across country Distance 5 or 6 Km.

System

P/C Code or Cypher

Across

Write

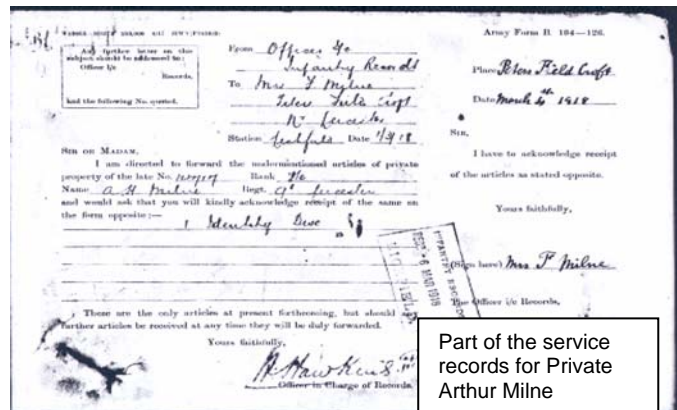
TO:

Internet Sources

First World War

The National Archives in Kew holds a large variety of records relating to servicemen in the First World War. Many of its records are now available online and it is worth checking the online

catalogue before planning a visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk]. As previously stated, copies of Regimental war diaries are held there under the reference **WO95** but few are as yet available online.



The vast majority of the seven million or so who served in the Forces during the First World War, served in the British Army. Service papers for some of these soldiers are available online through the www.ancestry.co.uk website [free if accessed through Leicestershire Libraries or at the Record Office] under *British Army WW1 Service records 1914-1920* [**WO363**] and *Pension records 1914-1920* [**WO364**]. The records are not complete because about sixty percent of the collection was destroyed during the Blitz. The service records relate generally to those who were killed in action or died of wounds without being awarded a pension. All records in this series up to the letter 'N' are now available online and the remainder are due to be uploaded in 2009. The surviving 'pension records' had [luckily] been removed for consultation by the Ministry of Pensions and so escaped destruction. These relate to men who received pensions in respect of wounds or illness contracted during military service and are now all available online. Both series need to be searched when looking for a soldier. A full set of service papers will include an attestation record with details of physical description and next of kin and a full account of military service including promotions, postings and medical history. In the case of Private Arthur Milne of Croft who died on the Somme, there is also in addition to the above papers, the letter to his next of kin which accompanied his surviving personal belongings – one identity disc.

The service records for most British Army Officers are available at the National Archives, although not online. [Those for the Royal Army Medical Corps are unfortunately missing.] Files for 140,000 officers who resigned their commission before 1921 are available under the reference **WO339** but have been 'weeded' so contain mostly records concerning claims for pensions and allowances. The service records of almost 78,000 Territorial Army Officers including those holding a temporary commission are available under **WO374** and have again been 'weeded' in a similar fashion.

Finding records of service for Naval men is more difficult. Registers of seamen's service [**ADM139** and **ADM188**], 1853-1923 are held at the National Archives and are available online [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline] but there is a fee of £3.50 payable for each image. The 60,000 records reveal a description and background of each sailor, with details of character, ability, medical history and ships. Similarly, service records for warrant officers who joined the Navy up to 1931 and commissioned officers who joined up to 1917 [**ADM 196**] have been digitised and are available through the same website. Recently 40,000 service records of Royal Naval Volunteers from **ADM337** have also been made available online.

Service records for RAF Officers, 1918-1922 [**AIR76**] and RAF other ranks, 1918-1924 [**AIR79**] are held at the National Archives and can be consulted in the Open Reading Room there but are not available online.

Every serviceman was entitled to at least two medals – the British War and Victory medals – and their names should appear on the World War One Medal Index Cards held at the National Archives. These are now available online at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/medals but as there is a search fee of £2 per card, it is best to access the database via www.ancestry.co.uk at Leicestershire Libraries or the Record Office where there is no charge. The usual difficulties will be encountered in identifying the correct person- particularly when the surname is a popular one- but each card will record a recipient's name, rank, number and unit with qualifying dates and entitlement for medals. There may be a note in the case of fallen soldiers that the parents or relatives have applied for the medals posthumously.

In the case of a serviceman who has earned a gallantry award such as the Distinguished Conduct Medal or the 'Croix de Guerre' bestowed by the French Republic or Belgium, details will have been published initially in the London Gazette and subsequently in the local press. The London Gazette is searchable online and free of charge at www.gazettes-online.co.uk. Remember to be flexible in your search and spelling. A serviceman may appear with his full name or his initials. Private Sydney Bolesworth of Hinckley [7832 1st Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment] had details of his DCM published on 14th Jan. 1916 and his 'Croix de Guerre' on 24th Feb. 1916 by which time he was in the 3rd Battalion. Full details of his actions in winning the DCM were published in the Gazette for 10 Mar. 1916.

7832 Private S. Bolesworth, 1st Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment.

For conspicuous gallantry. He was in charge of a picket, and was wounded by a shell in both legs and severely bruised by falling timber. He stuck to his post until relieved, collapsing after reporting to his Company Commander.

Second World War and Post 1945 Conflicts

Although there is far less material available for the Second World War and later conflicts, it is worth checking The British Legion's website at www.roll-of-honour.com. This contains databases for several conflicts. Most can be searched only by name and Regiment but in some cases as in the Palestine conflict, it is possible to search the complete alphabetical list of 873 casualties. It may be possible to identify local casualties when family details include the names of parents in Leicestershire as in the case of Joseph Ainsworth of Wigston. Only in exceptional cases like the database for the 1982 Falklands War, can the database be searched by place of residence.

Campaign: — 1914-15 Star			(A) Where decoration was earned.
			(B) Present situation.
	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.
(A)	TAYLOR	RA.S.C.	
(B)	GARTH Smithson	Private	
Action taken			
1915. Star } 14.1.16. 5.12.16. 8.2/8/17.			
Decorated at War: France 24.12.15			
Qualifying date			
Enlistment: 14.1.16. 5.12.16. 8.2/8/17			

Medal card for Lieutenant Garth Taylor of Smeeton Westerby

Biographical Research

Historians are showing increasing interest in the biographical background of men – and women - who died on active service. In many cases, local contacts within the community will be the most valuable source for photographs and memorabilia. Surviving family may retain records and be able to contribute valuable information for each casualty's record.

Sometimes records can emerge from surprising sources. The bell tower at Croft Parish Church contains two memorial cards which record the muffled peels rung in honour of two local lads, both former choirboys and bell ringers, who died at the end of the Second World War. Each bears a photograph of the fallen.



Such records can be supplemented with further biographical details researched at the Record Office. Census returns, held at the Record Office on microfilm, for 1901 and 1891 [and even earlier!] can provide valuable information about the family background of the serviceman. In some cases it will be possible to see when a family migrated into the area, since census information includes year and place of birth. Details about occupation of the parents and siblings may put the life which you are

researching into context. The 1911 census which is now available online [for a fee] at www.1911census.co.uk, offers yet more information concerning a soldier/sailor and his life within the community.

Parish records like Baptism and Marriage Registers, held at the Record Office, will also be a useful source for details of marriages and children. In the case of Aubrey Girdler whose name appears

on the First World War memorial at Croft, it was at first difficult to understand why he was there. He was born in Brixton and enlisted in Clipstone, Notts.. Only the fact that he was a sapper with the 199th Quarrying Company of the Royal Engineers seemed to suggest a link with Croft. In fact, an entry in the parish marriage register for 1909 shows that Girdler married a local girl and the baptism register for 1915 records the baptism of their only child.

Another useful source to be found at the Record Office are Absent Voters Lists [ref CC/C/1] for the period 1918 to 1939. As the name suggests, these record the names of those in each parish, within each parliamentary division, who are qualified to vote but absent at the time of compiling the electoral register. As well as the name of the elector and address of the premises which qualifies them for the vote, details of 'Description of Service, Ship, Regiment, Number, Rank, Rating etc or recorded address' can be a valuable source of information for servicemen.

Towards the end of the Second World War on 31st January 1945, two electoral registers known as the Civilian Register and the Service Register were compiled for each Parliamentary Division. Since the Service Register contains only the qualifying address and an indication of whether the voter was a serviceman, sailor or war worker it is far less useful than the earlier registers.

639	Taylor, John Lewis	Portland street	186131 Dvr., D Howitzer Bty., 121st Brigade	639
640	Tibbles, Shirley	Narborough lane	18992 Pte., 32nd Coy., Lab. Corps	640
641	Toone, Leslie John	Near Church	A.B. BZ4246, H.M.S. "Victory," I., R.N.V.R.	641
642	Watson, Frederick	Littlethorpe	377459 Pte., R.F.A.	642
643	Watts, Bertram	Croft road	68342, Pte., R.D.C.	643
644	Wapples, William Thomas	Do.	25010 Pte., 1/4th Leicesters	644
645	Wapples, Frank	Do.	57567 Pte., 11th West Yorks.	645
646	Warren, William Thomas	Top of Village	23133 Pte., 1/6th South Staffords	646
647	Wells, Arthur Herbert	Portland street	T/12573 A/C.S.M., Det. 1st Aux. Horse Coy., A.S.C.	647
648	Wells, Leonard	Do.	34523 Pte., 1st Leicesters	648
649	White, Arthur Harold	Coal lane	51351 Pte., North Staffords	649
650	White, Thomas William	Do.	51788 Pte., Res. Garr. Batt., K.O.Y.L.I.	650

Absent voters List for
Cosby, 1918

'The Green Tiger' the newsletter of the Leicestershire Regiment was published intermittently between 1905 and 1914 and 1918 and 1964 and is a useful source for activities of the Regiment, including

news of promotions and sporting achievements, particularly in peacetime. There are also rolls of honour for the Second World War. A partial name index is available at the Record Office.

There is too little space here to do justice to all the sources available at the Record Office. Above all, it is important to remember that the staff in the searchrooms are ready and willing to help and advise!



A headstone in Croft cemetery records the death of Percy Cockerell on the Somme in 1916 alongside details of his parents. His is amongst the 72,000 names recorded on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing on the Somme, in France.

Further Reading

For fuller details of sources at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, for men and women involved in the two World Wars see **World War Ancestry. The Record Office's User Guide No 1**, by Robin Jenkins, which is due to be published in April 2009 and will be available for purchase.

Several other useful guides are available for consultation at the Record Office including:

- **Army Records. A Guide for Family Historians**, by William Spencer, published by The National Archives, 2008
- **First World War Army Service Records. A Guide for Family Historians**, by William Spencer, published by The National Archives, 2008
- **Air Force Records. A Guide for Family Historians**, by William Spencer, published by The National Archives, 2008

Amongst others, the following are good examples of recent publications which have resulted from research in to the names on local war memorials:

- **Lost Lives. The War Dead of Countesthorpe, Kilby, Peatling Magna, Peatling Parva and Shearsby, 1914-1918 and 1939-1945**, by Henrietta Schultka, published 2007
- **Soldiers of Shepshed Remembered, 1914-1918**, by Russel Fisher, published 2008
- **Wigston At War**, by Pamela Ward, published 2003

The grave of Sergeant Roy Saunders RAFVR, Bardonia Hill Parish Church

