

Chapter 4 Stevington at Arms

Stevingtonians rallied to the Cause And served, some died, in both World Wars

Life in our Village would have been very different had not our lives and liberties been defended when the need arose. No book on Stevington would be complete without recording the contribution made by its sons and daughters in the defence of their country in two World Wars. In the *Village History* we included photographs of eight of the eleven soldiers who died in the Great War of 1914 - 1918. The pictures reproduced here are of some who survived both Wars.

During the First World War the much respected headmaster of Stevington School, Harry "Daddy" Read, maintained close contact by correspondence with his former pupils serving in the Armed Forces. By the end of the War he had collected together his photographs of them and written down details of their service. This material was fortunately preserved and passed by Paul Middleton to the County Archive and Records Office.

From these photographs one can see the pride with which the servicemen donned the "dress" uniforms of their respective regiments and corps and also imagine that many a mantelpiece and sideboard in the Village carried such a reminder while the servicemen were fighting in the various theatres of war.

Stevingtonians were represented in all branches of the Armed Forces, including the Women's Services and, during the Second World War, in Home Defence. Their military deployment stretched from the trenches of Flanders to the jungles of Malaya, from the deserts of North Africa to the plains of the Sudan and East Africa, and from the skies over Europe to the waters of the Atlantic. The total commitment in all theatres in the 20th Century was well over 100. Some 17 died and a number of others suffered severe physical and mental injury in the field and as prisoners of war.



- 163** Sgt Arthur William Bartram MM and Bar, Royal Engineers. He served in France in the Great War with the East Anglian Royal Engineers and was the most highly decorated of the Village's servicemen.
- 164** Able Seaman George Seamarks, Royal Navy. A member of the Royal Naval Reserve, he served in *HMS Doris* in France and Malta.
- 165** 1st Air Mechanic Victor A Harding, Royal Flying Corps (12 Sqn RFC). He served on the Western Front 1915-18..
- 166** Gunner George Swain, Royal Artillery, was called up for service in 1939 but following a serious motor accident he was invalided into civilian life and served in the Home Guard.
- 167** Driver Walter J D Cox, Royal Army Service Corps. He served in Egypt in 1916, and later served in France with HQ Coy 60 Division Train.
- 168** Flt Sgt (Engineer) Rex Cox, Royal Air Force. He served in North Africa supporting the 8th Army and later in 1943 in Italy. By 1945 he had joined Transport Command, based in the Canal Zone, Egypt.
- 169** Bombardier Victor Ruffhead, Royal Horse Artillery. He was a regular soldier who in 1914 was serving in India.
- 170** Corporal James R Ruffhead, Royal Army Veterinary Corps. Volunteered for service in 1914 and served in Salonika and Egypt in 1916. He later moved to Gaza in Palestine before returning to Britain in 1919.
- 171** Sapper (Driver) Frank Harding, East Anglian Royal Engineers.
- 172** Tpr Walter Warwick. He served in the 1st Bedfordshire Yeomanry.
- 173** Tpr William H Bowyer, The Bedfordshire Lancers. He volunteered for service in 1914 and saw action in the Middle East, taking part in the Battle of Gaza. He was twice wounded in 1917.
- 174** Able Seaman George J Jeffries (1897-1969). He served in the Royal Navy, 1914-18, as a stoker in *HMS Diadam* and *HMS Holy Oak*. He saw action at the battle of Jutland.
- 175** Sgt James Cox, The Royal Norfolk Regiment. He was severely injured and hospitalized for nearly two years 1916-17.
- 176** Drummer Joseph George Cowley, The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment. He served in Ireland, India and the Far East, and completed his career after the Second World War retiring with the rank of Major.
- 177** Sgt Arthur Stanbridge enlisted in The East Surrey Regiment in 1917 and served in Flanders, where he was slightly gassed, and later in Germany. In 1919 he volunteered for operations to aid the White Russians.
- 178** Signaller Sydney C Glidle 2/5th Bn The Bedfordshire Regiment. Served in France in 1916 when he was captured and remained a prisoner of war until 1918.
- 179** Pte Philip Cox, 3rd Bn The Bedfordshire Regiment. Served in Egypt and later in India in 1916.
- 180** (*left*) Pte Frank W Hulett, 1st Bn The Bedfordshire Regiment. Served in Egypt in 1916. (*right*) L Cpl Fred G (Ted) Hulett, Provost Corps 68 Provost Bn. He served in France in 1916 and was captured and held as a prisoner of war.



163 Sgt Arthur
William Bartram



164 Able Seaman
George Seamarks



165 1st Air
Mechanic Victor
A Harding



166 Gunner
George



167 Driver
Walter J D Cox



168 Flt Sgt
(Engineer) Rex Cox



169 Bombardier
Victor Ruffhead



170 Corporal
James R
Ruffhead



171 Sapper (Driver)
Frank Harding



172 Tpr Walter
Warwick

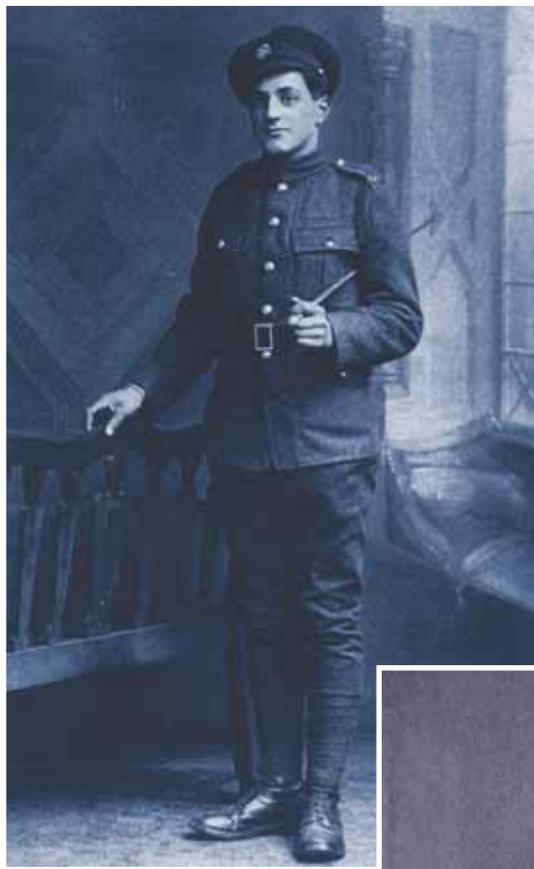
173 Tpr William
H Bowyer



174 Able Seaman
George J Jeff



175 Sgt James Cox



176 Drummer Joseph George Cowley



177 Sgt Arthur Stanbridge



178 Signalman Sydney C G



179 Private Philip Cox



180 Private Frank W Hulett and L Cpl Fred G (Ted) Hulett