

The Earth Museum World War 1 Field Trip: Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Gosport

Lesson Plan 3

Research Tour – Discovering and Remembering Personal Stories

Gosport was a significant seaport and Naval depot throughout the C20th – many government factories and installations were based here, as well as Haslar Naval Hospital (2,000 beds).



Most servicemen buried here are Royal Navy and Royal Marines from both World Wars who were injured overseas and brought back to the Hospital. In total there are:

772 World War 1 graves

611 World War 2 graves

Among them are also many local people who lived and worked here in the various depots and in port; others belonging to the No 5 Squadron Royal Flying Corps based at Gosport before outbreak of WW1 and the No 17 Group Royal Air Force and Royal Navy Light Coastal Forces in WW2.

We are going to take a tour of some of these (primarily WW1) personal stories and remember lives cut short to reflect on how it was not just in the battlefields that people lost their lives.

We shall stop at each of the following graves, discover the personal stories they represent using QR codes and take photographs for our records.

SECTION B:

Joseph Emile Foque

Belgian Army Soldier

Born 31st October 1888 at Heindonk, a village near Antwerp in Belgium

Enlisted in the army 1st January 1909

Died 9th February 1915

Burial: B.18.8

Belgium was ill-prepared for the German invasions that took place in August 1914 as they advanced towards Paris. The army had 102 machine guns and no heavy artillery. Nevertheless, a number of significant delaying actions were fought by the Belgian army during 1914, buying time for Allied troops to arrive in the area. The German 'race to the sea' was stopped by outnumbered Belgian forces at the Battle of Yser. We do not know how Joseph Emile ended up at Haslar but he is likely to have been one of 25,000 wounded Belgian soldiers who were treated in hospitals in Britain during World War 1. It is estimated that about 250,000 Belgian people sought refuge in Britain during the period 1914-18.

Edward Hart

Rigger HM Dockyard, Portsmouth

Died 22nd October 1915

Aged 47 years old.

Burial: B17.5.

There were many activities in the dockyard at Portsmouth that were dangerous during WW1 and led to lives lost away from the front line. On Thursday 21st October 1915, the tug, *Grappler*, was out salvaging gear from a sunken trawler, *Erin II*, that had been carrying out minesweeping duties in the English Channel when it had been hit by a mine and was sunk with the death of 6 men. *Grappler* was also hit by a mine and damaged. Four men were killed, including Edward Hart.

SECTION C

L. Domingos

Soldier in the Portuguese Army.

Died 31st March 1918

Burial: C.33.7

Approximately 12,000 Portuguese troops died during World War 1. Portugal entered the war in 1916 on the side of the Allies. In 1917, a few Portuguese troops were sent to the New Forest to help sort out a timber shortage in collaboration with the Canadian Forestry Corps; and in the same year Portuguese troops fight as part of the British Expeditionary Force on the Western Front. German U-boats target Portuguese ships sending supplies to Britain. We do not know exactly how Domingos arrived at Haslar Hospital but, at some point, his soldier's journey brought him into contact with the British Royal Navy.

SECTION E

Thomas William Hickson, Petty Officer Stoker

Royal Australian Navy

Served on HMAS *Sydney*.

Died 9th November 1915.

Aged 35 years old.

Burial: E23.33

In October 1914, HMAS Sydney joined the escort of the first convoy delivering Australian and New Zealand soldiers to Egypt. By January 1915, the ship and its crew had arrived in Bermuda to join the North American and West Indies Station. Thomas Hickson was admitted to the Ship's sick bay from 15th – 20th July 1915 with 'aneurism abdominal aorta'. He was discharged to the Naval Hospital at Bermuda and on 4th October 1915 was listed to be invalided back to England. He arrived in England aboard HMS Berwick and admitted to the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar on 29th October 1915, where he died a few days later.

Ramfanalle Asteem Meah (Trimmer)**Gunny Meah Abdool Meah (Fireman)****Munsoozalle Abdool Mozid (Fireman)****Rossunallee Ameeroody (Oilman)**

Indian Merchant Service serving on SS Clan MacKenzie.

Died 5th March 1918.

Burials: E.30.9, 8, 11, 12.

Britain was completely dependent on the food and supplies that came from overseas to carry on during World War 1, especially from the Indian sub-continent. Brave Indian Merchant sailors ran the risk of German attack on a regular basis every time they sailed up the English Channel to the ports of Southampton and London. One such boat, the SS Clan MacKenzie, was torpedoed by a German U-Boat off St Catherine's Point on the Isle of Wight on 5th March 1918. 12 men were killed, including these men and John Alexander Henderson (Third Engineer). All are buried and remembered in this cemetery.

William James Salkeld

Donkeyman

Marine Mercatile Service, SS *Corton*

Died 23rd January 1918

Aged 38 years old

E.29.9.

The SS Corton was hit by German U-boat 90 on 22nd January 1918. The U-boat was commanded by Kapitanleutnant Walter Remy, who sank 32 ships during WW1 and damaged the Corton. William James Salkeld's role on board was to look after a small steam-engine, known as a donkey-engine, that was used to provide additional power on board ship in addition to the main engines. He did not survive Remy's attack.

C. H. Bowden

Royal Air Force.

Air Mechanic 3rd Class Royal Airforce Base, Calshot.

Born 23rd November 1899 at Ladywood in Warwickshire

Died 21st October 1918.

Aged 18 years old.

Burial: E.35.6

Bowden was a young motor fitter in Birmingham who enlisted as soon as he was 18 years old in 1917. He applied his engineering skills to boat seaplanes at Calshot for the rest of his short life. He died a month before his nineteenth birthday and less than one month before the war ended. It is unclear how he lost his life, whether of an illness or as a result of an accident.

Women's Royal Naval Service personnel (WW2)

Leading Wren Nellie Gregory, Women's Royal Naval Service. Died 23rd November 1940. 32 years old. E.55.13

Wren Rosa May Armstrong, WRNS. Died 23rd November 1940. 36 years old. E.55.11

Wren Vera Margaret Cowle, WRNS. Died 23rd November 1940. E.55.17

Wren Mona Violet Black, WRNS. Died 23rd November 1940. 23 years old. E.55.16

Wren Beryl Melita Northfield. WRNS. Died 23rd November 1940. 19 years old. E.55.10

Leading Wren Hilda Pearson. WRNS. Died 23rd November 1940. 26 years old. E.55.15

Wren Norah Kathleen Reynolds WRNS. Died 23rd November 1940. 23 years old. E.55.14

Wren Dorothy Margaret Wardell. WRNS. Died 23rd November 1940. 22 years old. E.55.12

On the 23rd November 1940, German planes made a heavy bombing raid over Portsmouth Harbour. The Women's Royal Naval Service used the building which is now the Glen Heathers Nursing Home in Lee-on-the-Solent as accommodation for personnel based at HMS Daedalus. A stray anti-aircraft shell fired from the ground in Gosport penetrated the roof and exploded in the dining room, killing 10 female personnel including the 8 buried here.

There are no graves here for women who were killed in World War 1. There was of course no bombing during World War 1, nevertheless women died in the line of duty at Haslar. A plaque in the Hospital grounds records the death of 14 nursing sisters and nurses serving in the Hospital and in fields of conflict (all of them young and unmarried):

Olive Rowlett

Grace Ainsworth



Caroline Edwards
Eliza Elvens
Mabel Grigson
Annette Prevost
Jennette Robbins
Anne Wilson
Margaret Baron
Evelyn Elliston
Margaret Evans
Mildred Feeney
Anstie Harvey
Bridget Lambarde

We will finish by reading The Veteran by Margaret Postgate-Cole and return to entrance via Submarine memorial if time

The Veteran by Margaret Postgate-Cole

We came upon him sitting in the sun,
Blinded by war, and left. And past the fence
There came young soldiers from the Hand and Flower,
Asking advice of his experience.

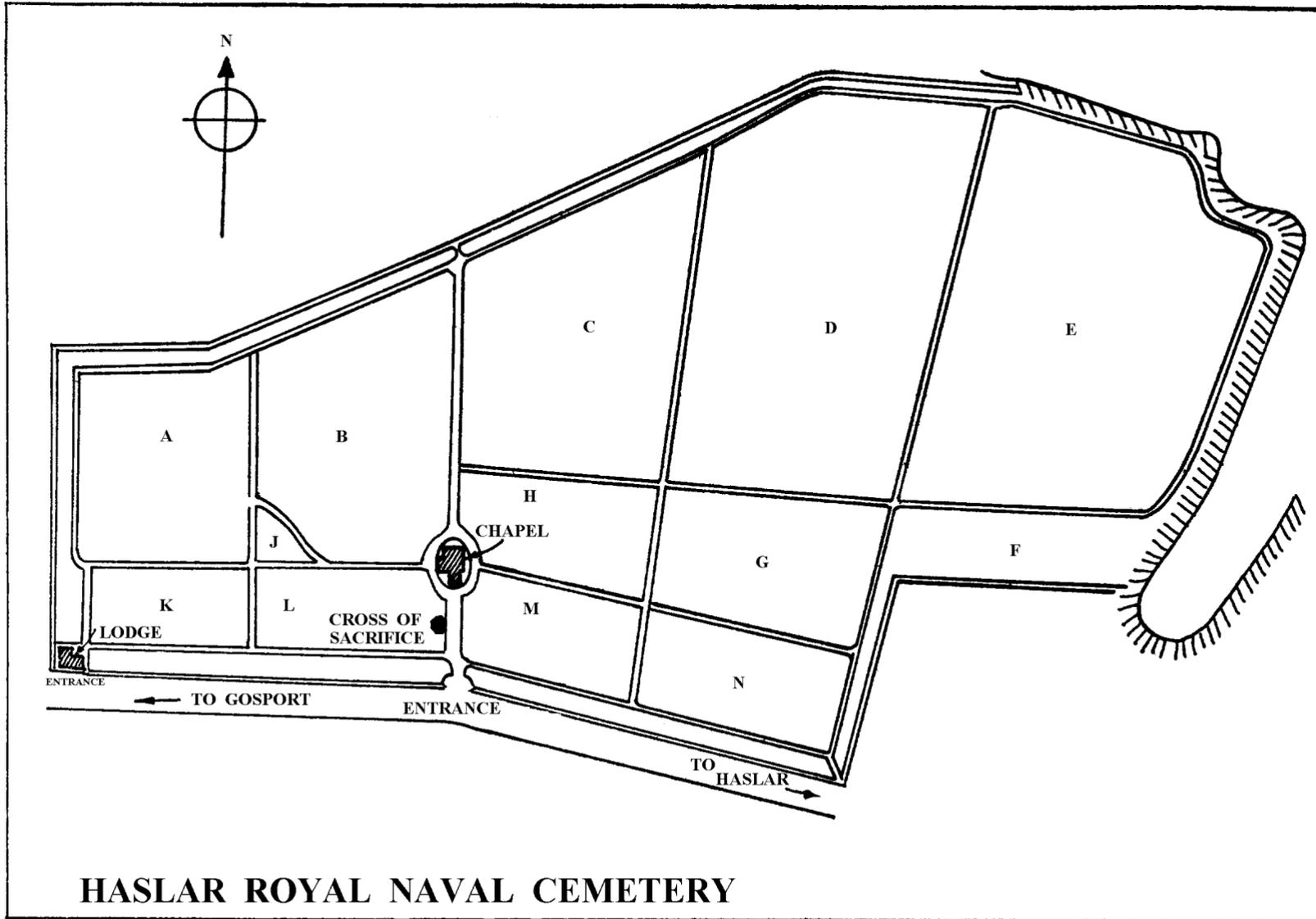
And he said this, and that, and told them tales
And all the nightmares of each empty head
Blew into the air; then, hearing us beside,
'Poor chaps, how'd they know what it's like?'
He said.

And we stood there, and watched him as he sat,
Turning his sockets where they went away,
Until it came to one of us to ask
'And you're – how old?'
'Nineteen, the third of May'.

(1916)



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HASLAR ROYAL NAVAL CEMETERY