Captain
William Geoffrey Walford

William Geoffrey Walford

Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers

The Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers is not the oldest regiment in the British Army; this honour goes to the Honourable Artillery Company (from 1296 but chartered in 1537), but Militia always takes precedence over Volunteers, although The Jersey Field Squadron (M) can trace its origins back to 1337.

The regiment is also unusual in having the word Royal appear twice in its name. It gained the first "Royal" in 1804 when it was known as the **Monmouth and Brecon Militia**. The second was acquired in 1877 when the regiment transferred from an infantry unit into a Special Reserve section of the expanding Royal Engineers.

The Royal Air Force

No. 62 Squadron was equipped with Bristol F.2b Fighters in 1917.

No. 62 Squadron of the Royal Flying Corps was established at Filton, Gloucestershire on 8 August 1916 from elements of No. 7 Training Squadron. The unit received Bristol F2B fighter aircraft in May 1917 and was deployed to France in January 1918 with operations commencing from the aerodrome at Serny in early 1918. The squadron operated as fighter-reconnaissance unit until disbanding on 31 July 1919. The first victory for the squadron was credited on 21 February 1918 near Armentières, Nord, France.[Nicknamed "The Cheery 62s," the unit had its first encounter with Manfred von Richthofen's Circus on 12 March 1918, resulting in at least two aviators killed, four captured, and one wounded. No. 62 Squadron was one of the last two Bristol F.2 Fighter squadrons to serve at the Western Front, the other being No. 88 Squadron. The aircraft of both squadrons often escorted de Havilland planes on bombing missions. By the end of the war, No. 62 Squadron was credited with 76 enemy aircraft destroyed and 85 driven out of control. Ten aces served in the unit, including future Air Vice-Marshal William Ernest Staton as well as George Everard Gibbons, Thomas L. Purdom, Geoffrey Forrest Hughes, Thomas Elliott, Charles Arnison, Ernest Morrow, William Norman Holmes, Hugh Claye and Douglas Savage.[5] The Squadron's victories came at a high price as 28 of its aviators were killed in action and three killed in accidents. In addition, 32 aviators became prisoners of war, 22 were wounded in action, and eleven sustained accidental injuries. This does not compare favourably with No. 88 Squadron, the last Bristol Fighter unit to reach the front. While that squadron was credited with 147 enemy aircraft destroyed, it only had two aviators killed, five wounded, and ten reported missing.

William Geoffrey Walford.

His parents were William Walford a Solicitor from Wolverhampton and Laura Cooke Kettle also from Wolverhampton.

Marriages Mar 1895 (>99%)

Kettle	Laura Cooke	Wolverhampton	6b	631
Walford	William	Wolverhampton	6b	631

His birth index states he was William Godfrey but every other record of him says he was Geoffrey.

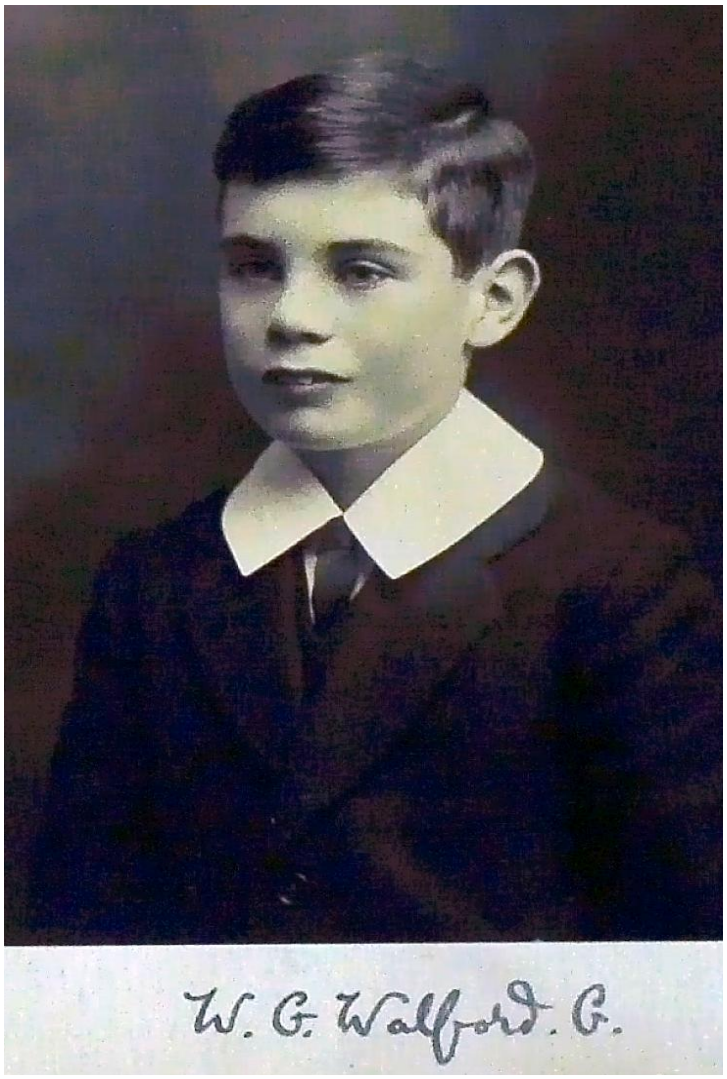
Births Mar 1896 (>99%)

Walford	William Godfrey	Walsall	6b	741

1901 census. They were living at the Old Rectory, Hammerwich. William's father was a Solicitor.

Name:	William G Walford
Age:	5
Estimated Birth Year:	abt 1896
Relation to Head:	Son (Child)
Gender:	Male
Father:	William Walford
Mother:	Lora C Walford
Birth Place:	Walsall, Staffordshire, England
Civil Parish:	Hammerwich
Ecclesiastical parish:	Hammerwich
County/Island:	Staffordshire

	Name	Age
Household Members:	William Walford	32
	Lora C Walford	36
	William G Walford	5
	John R C Walford	3
	Laura N Walford	2
	Frances E Walford	1
	Elizabeth P Walford	4/12
	Dorethea E Allen	20
	Mary Godwin	31
	Elizabeth Ann Beach	21
	Ethel H M Russell	25



1911 Census He was at Charterhouse School, Godalming, Surrey. His dates at Charterhouse were Oration Quarter (autumn term) 1909 to Summer Quarter 1914 and he was a boarder in Gownboys House.

First name(s)	William Geoffrey
Last name	Walford
Relationship	Boarders In The House And Boys
Sex	Male
Occupation	School
Age	15
Birth year	1896
Birth place	Staffs Walsall
Address	Charterhouse Godalming
Parish	Godalming Rural Godalming Rural Detached

1911 census his family were still at The Old Rectory Hammerwich.
Father

Name:	William Walford
Age in 1911:	43
Estimated Birth Year:	abt 1868
Relation to Head:	Head
Gender:	Male
Birth Place:	Notting Hill, Staffordshire
Civil Parish:	Hammerwich
County/Island:	Staffordshire
Country:	England
Street address:	The Old Rectory, Hammerwich Nr Lichfield
Marital Status:	Married
Occupation:	solicitor

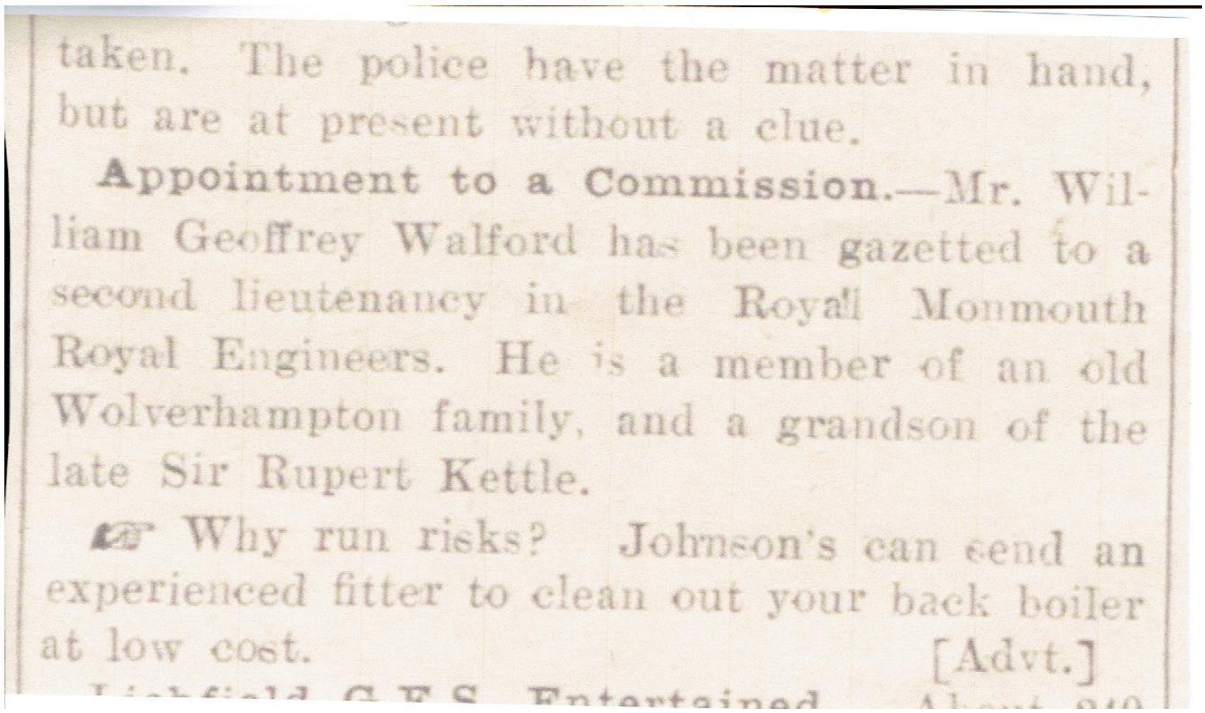
	Name	Age
Household Members:	William Walford	43
	Laura Cooke Walford	43
	Laura Mary Walford	12
	Frances Eleanor Walford	11
	Elizabeth Phoebe Walford	10
	Lucy Torfrida Walford	8
	Kathleen Rosamond Walford	7
	Arthur Selwood Walford	5
	Ethel Gee	25
	Ann Elizabeth Dixon	54
	Kate May Smith	17
	Emily Goodman Sharratt	23
	Amy Elizabeth Hickman	38

1911 They moved to Herefordshire. Below from Lucy Torfrida Walford's Biography. "We were used to the dog-cart but thrilled with awe when the doctor came in a car! We hovered around it - hoping he would give us a ride - lucky if he allowed us to climb in by the back doors and sit sideways facing one another, just as we did in our governess cart - when Mother drove us to dancing lessons in Lichfield. A ride in a motor-car was an event, but by 1911 we possessed a beautiful green Sunbeam car and it was in that that Father collected me, Phoebe and Kathleen from the station at Ross-on-Wye to take us to our new home at Glanmonnow in Herefordshire".

In early August (William) Geoffrey Walford went home to Glanmonnow in his O.T.C uniform he and 'Johnnie' had been at Charterhouse Camp. On 28th August 1914 it was reported that William Geoffrey Walford had been commissioned into the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (A local militia unit)

From the memoirs of Torfrida Walford "Geoffrey was commissioned to the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers in Monmouth, 8miles away. He proudly showed us his uniform from Hawkes - a glittering sword, spurs on highly polished riding boots, and his Second Lieutenant stars on his shoulders - and his R.M.R.E. badge on his cap. He practised drill and taught us to ‘form fours’, ‘attention’, and‘ present arms’ with home-made wooden rifles".

Lichfield Mercury 28th August 1914



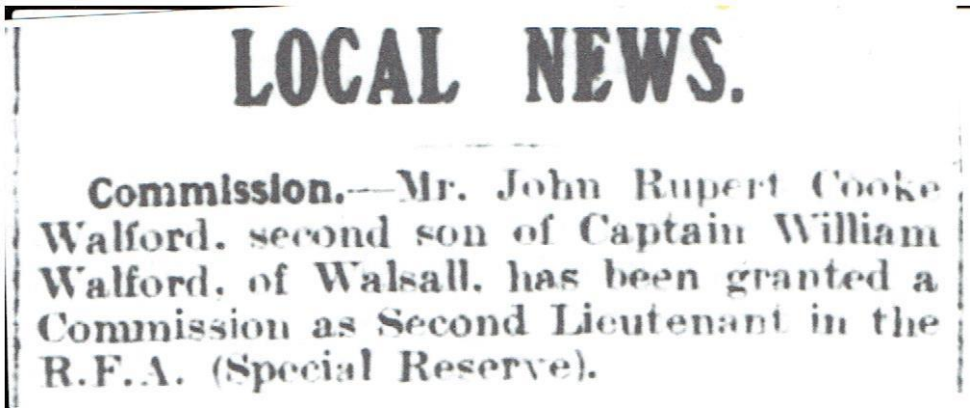
taken. The police have the matter in hand, but are at present without a clue.

Appointment to a Commission.—Mr. William Geoffrey Walford has been gazetted to a second lieutenancy in the Royal Monmouth Royal Engineers. He is a member of an old Wolverhampton family, and a grandson of the late Sir Rupert Kettle.

☞ Why run risks? Johnson's can send an experienced fitter to clean out your back boiler at low cost. [Advt.]

The Walsall Advertiser also reported in September 1915 that his brother had been commissioned into the RFA.

Walsall Advertiser 4th September 1915



LOCAL NEWS.

Commission.—Mr. John Rupert Cooke Walford, second son of Captain William Walford, of Walsall, has been granted a Commission as Second Lieutenant in the R.F.A. (Special Reserve).

William Geoffrey was commissioned into the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (RMRE) on 15th August 1914 (London Gazette).
24th May 1917 from Lieutenant to Temp. Captain Royal Engineers (Royal Mons)
3rd November 1917 promoted to Captain. Royal Engineers

" At last, in December 1914, it was Geoffrey's turn to say goodbye - before going to France with No.5 Company." (Torfrida Walford) No 5 Coy R.M.R.E did not go to France they were deployed to Egypt. However before arriving in France a telegram arrived with the family a few days later. "In hospital in Dover with scarlet fever." A letter followed telling us he was already at the "peeling stage over his hands and feet."

"Eventually he returned to Monmouth spending some weeks on leave. His condition proved to be not scarlet fever but a rare skin complaint suffered only by policemen and those exposed to intense COLD"
He took a long time to recover but eventually he went to France in1916.

Lt. Walford was attached to the 6th Siege Coy, R.M.R.E and on 27th May 1916 went with them to France.

No. 6 Siege Company in World War 1

from Low & Everett's history of the Regiment

Authorised 30th September, 1915. Embarked 27th May, 1916 for B.E.F.
This was the third of the war-time Siege Coys. which were raised and trained by O.C., R.M.R.E. at Monmouth.

This Company was not so fortunate as its predecessors in the circumstances in which it found itself overseas. The superlative type of man, who had enlisted in the early days of the war had by the end of 1915 become" in short supply." The company consisted largely of men who enlisted in 1915/16, plus a certain number of those who had already been overseas with the other companies, and had been evacuated either sick or wounded, and by this date were reaching the depot again after discharge from hospital.

Major David was brought home from France to take command shortly before the company went abroad. Captains Galloway and Elmslie (both of whom were previously wounded with No.4) were posted to it. When the Company landed in France in May, 1916 preparations for the Battle of the Somme (Ist July, 1916) were in full swing and it was immediately handed over to the Director of Works and employed in detachments on the L. of C. and bases from north of Calais to Etaples. These detachments worked directly under various Cs. R.E. (Works) but remained for administration under their Coy. Commander, who had set up his H.Q. at Etaples. The vast size of the Company on the increased establishment of eight officers and approximately 300 other ranks, made employment in this manner almost inevitable. The work consisted in the main of construction of new hutted camps, hospitals and base installations, e.g. ammunition depots. This was no doubt work of the greatest importance, but for a new Company just arrived from home, this breaking down into widely separated detachments was a misfortune. The Coy. lost cohesion and the company spirit - subaltern officers had too many masters - and the Coy. Commander and Coy. H.Q. more or less faded from the picture. The Company was employed under these conditions for some fifteen months.

Jobs for the semi-employed members of Coy. H.Q. were soon found. Major David was made O.C., R.E. Base Details (presumably by the Base Commandant) in addition to commanding his Coy. Captain Galloway (2 i/c) and Sgt. Butler (previously wounded with No.3 at Ypres and awarded the D.C.M. and subsequently killed in action with No.6) ran a school for Australian N.C.O.s and Sappers! Butler would give as good as he got! Galloway sadly remarks" It was not a great success, as we had to try to please three different authorities, pulling in three different directions." He also records that one of the detachment subalterns had to be relieved by another, as the former did not "get on" with the local C.R.E. !

During this time, there were many changes amongst the Coy. officers. David left in early 1917 to go back to No.4 as Coy. Commander. This was part of a considerable reshuffle of Coy. Commanders, caused by the retirement of Col. Morgan Lindsay and the return of Major Forestier-Walker to Monmouth to command the R.M.R.E. and the Depot, in his place. Elmslie was withdrawn to Monmouth to command the newly formed No.8 Army Troops Coy.

Galloway was promoted Major and given command of the Company, but he also inherited David's Base Details for a while. (Capt. C. F. Huth, was cross-posted from No.4 to replace Elmslie). Galloway realised that if the Company did not soon take a more active part in the war, it would eventually be incapable of doing so without a period of training and concentration as a unit. His requests for transfer to a Corps in the line were refused. No.4 Coy. had had a very long spell indeed in the line and suffered considerable casualties (see Chapter VII). Eventually a proposal that the Coy. should relieve No.4 was approved. On 6th September, 1917, the Coy. joined II Army and was sent to X Corps for work under its C.E. The Paschendaele operations had begun on July 31st.

The Company then settled down to the work of Corps Troops Engineers, under conditions of trench warfare. The familiar items are mentioned, O.P.s for Corps Artillery, roads in the Corps area, water supply, including sinking bore holes, etc.

In October, 1917, Huth was cross-posted to No.7 Army Troops Coy. to command, replacing Moore (who had been promoted Major and returned to No.1 in command). Lieut. E. T. Vachell was posted from Monmouth to replace Huth as 2 iJc and gazetted acting Captain. Vachell had been in Gallipoli with No.5 and had eventually reached England, sick after a very severe attack of dysentery.

After the New Year, 1918, the company was working on two separate tasks. One half Coy. was withdrawn to rear areas, erecting hutments. The other half Coy. remained on maintenance of roads and water supply installations in the forward areas. By a system of reliefs, the Coy. Commander was able to give all the troops a spell in the more comfortable, and less harassing conditions of the " back area."
In March, 1918 it was obvious that the German Offensive was coming, and although, as in the event, it seemed more likely to be delivered against the right or southern end of the British Line to the east of Peronne, all the Army Commanders began to look to their rear defences and to consider the preparation of new lines of resistance.

As in the case of No. 1 Siege Coy, the company soon found itself engaged on this work.

At the end of March, 1918, following on the deep penetration by the Germans in the south, the Company was moved to Camblain L' Abbe west of Vimy Ridge. It was employed on strengthening defences in this area from April 4th to 27th. During this time the Germans had attacked between La Bassee and Armentieres, making a maximum advance of some twelve miles on the front held by the Portuguese (Battle of the Lys). The Company was then moved round to Watten, north of St. Orner. A "backs to the wall" position was immediately put in hand as far west as the neighbourhood of St. Omer, to cover the northern Channel ports. The Company was part of a large force employed on this and was so employed until 7th September. The War Diary records that during this time the Company, or detachments thereof, was located in many places to the north of. St. Omer towards Dunkirk.

The Company appears now to have been in VII Corps and its work would be directed by the C.E. There were apparently several officers appointed to be C.R.E. this "sector" and that "area" in the defensive scheme. From the War Diary it appears that these officers largely by-passed the Coy. Commander and

detachments were often moved from one place to another without his knowledge, with a consequent break-down of Coy. administration. The diary is unhappy reading - order, counter-order, frustration and confusion are recorded, the unfortunate troops being the shuttlecock. Galloway records many strong protests to higher authority, but apparently with little result. During June and July, Galloway had been in hospital sick and Vachell had been acting as Coy. Commander. Finally, in July 1918, Galloway was medically boarded and evacuated to England. His recommendation that Vachell should be appointed Major to command the Company was not acted upon and a temporary officer, Captain Hunter, R.E. was brought in on August 13th and took over from Vachell who had been acting. It must be remembered that the Depot at Monmouth was now a Reserve Training Bn. R.E., with a somewhat different status. Strong action by Monmouth would probably have avoided this departure from what had so far been the rule that O.C. R.M.R.E. appointed Coy. Commanders.

August 8th, 1918, saw the start of the final Allied offensive "the Hundred Days." On 7th September the Coy. was transferred to XIX Corps-presumably still II Army, and reverted to the old duties of Corps Troops Engineers in the line. However, the British Army was now advancing. By 21st October, 1918, the Coy. was at Courtrai - which had been well within the German occupied area since 1914.

As they retired the Germans left behind them a formidable belt of demolitions just as they had done on the Somme in 1917. All were prepared beforehand with characteristic thoroughness.

In the advance the Divisional R.E. (i.e. Field Coys.) provided light bridges to take up to Field Artillery. There were often of the new "Inglis" pattern, which had recently been introduced. Corps and Army R.E. replaced and/or supplemented these by more permanent structures of a load-carrying capacity to meet most requirements of the period. These were generally constructed of steel R.S.J. stringers supported on timber cribs, trestles or pile piers.

The Company was almost exclusively employed on heavy bridging, until the Armistice. For its work on this task it received high praise. Hunter was awarded the M.C.

On 22nd October, Hunter went to hospital, sick, and once again Vachell was acting Coy. Commander. He was so acting when the Armistice was signed on 11th November, 1918. Hunter returned on 14th November, 1918. In December, 1918, the company was moved back to Hazebrouck but the tasks on which it was employed are not recorded. Doubtless, the process of " running down" soon began. It was disbanded in France on 6th June, 1919, and the cadre returned to Monmouth.

The Coy. suffered 19 fatal casualties. Captain W. G. Walford and Lt. M. A. Waterer, both transferred to the R.A.F. and both were killed while so serving.

Royal Air Force

Captain William Geoffrey Walford served with the B.E.F (British Expeditionary Force) R.M.R.E until 6th June 1918 when he joined the newly formed (formed 1st April 1918) Royal Air Force.
On 29th June 1918 he was sent to 204 training depot at Eastchurch Airfield in Kent on an Air Observer course followed by a period at the Wireless Technology school (this allowed communications with the ground).
He was appointed an 'Observer Officer' with 62 Squadron on 16th September 1918.
On 18th September he was at Garway home on leave with three days to go. He arrived at his squadron in France on 22nd Sept.

No 62 Squadron RAF, August-December 1918

The Squadron moved to Croisette, near St. Pol, on the 7th August, in preparation for the attack on the Arras front (the Amiens offensive). From this time, the Squadron commenced escorting bombing formations to objectives far beyond the lines, the aircraft escorted being DH4s and DH9s of the IX Brigade, usually 27, 49 or 107 Squadrons. Offensive patrols, however, still took place frequently. The bombing objectives were initially the Somme bridges, then reverted gradually from the third day to railway infrastructure. Escorts were stand off in nature with the single seat scout squadrons providing close escort. On 9th August two bombing missions were conducted, the second of these being elaborately organised; 62 Squadron provided an initial line patrol, the bombers from 27 & 49 Sqns (30 aircraft) had a close escort by 73 & 32 Sqns and top cover provided by line patrols of I Brigade (19, 22, 40 & 64 Sqns) the formations totalling 50 fighters in escort and 74 in top cover. All Squadrons were flying with all available aircraft. On 10 August the Squadron formed an escort of 40 fighters with 32 Sqn for 12 bombers of 27 & 49 Sqns on a mission against Péronne railway station. The formation was engaged by Fokkers and 56 Sqn joined in the action. Similar actions continued over the next few days. There were significant actions by the Squadron on 12th August with 3 EA claimed destroyed and 2 EA driven down OOC by Capt. W E Staton and Lt. L E Mitchell (2) Capt. L Campbell and Lt. W Hodgkinson (1), Lt. W K Swayze and Lt. W E Hall (2 OOC). Lt. A B Cort and Lt. J N Mitchell, were killed in this action.

There was further action on 22 August (Battle of Bapaume) when 15 aircraft of the Squadron provided escort to 27 Sqn on a raid on Cambrai railway yards. The patrol engaged a formation of ten enemy scouts (Fokker DVIIs and Pfalz). Capt. E T Morrow and Lt. L M Thompson shot down one EA but were then hit themselves. Capt. Morrow was injured and managed to fly home while Lt. Thompson controlled a fire and subsequently lifted his pilot clear of the burning aircraft. Capt. G E Gibbons and Lt. T Elliott brought down two other EA, Lt. R Schallaire and Lt. R Lowe brought down another and Capt. Staton and Lt. Mitchell another. Lt.s Blowes and Hind claimed 2 EA OOC, Lt.s Allday and Miller claimed 1 EA OOC. A total recorded of 5 EA destroyed and 3 OOC.

On 25 August the Squadron provided patrols over target airfields at Etreux and Mont d'Origny while 27, 49, 98, and 107 Sqns made up the bombing force with 32 and 43 Sqns in escort. This operation was against German bomber units in retaliation for a German night raid that destroyed 48 Sqn's Bristol fighters on the ground at Bertangles. On 29 August the Squadron was again escorting raids against railway stations at Cambrai and Valenciennes, the latter by 107 Sqn. A long range engagement took place with a Fokker formation. The official history notes that eight DH9's on this raid turned back with engine trouble. Lt.s J Appleby and J M Holling were injured.

Action intensified in September with claims of 11 EA destroyed, 8 EA OOC and 1 EA captured, however the Squadron suffered 7 KIA/KWF, 9 POW and 5 WIA. It was in this period that the improved Fokker DVII was appearing at the front and capable of outperforming British aircraft.

On 4 September as part of the 1st and 3rd Army offensive against the Drocourt-Queant Switch, IX Brigade day bomber squadrons attacked Valenciennes, Douai and Cambrai stations escorted by 32 and 62 Sqns; nine enemy aircraft were claimed destroyed with seven British losses among them Lt.s W K Swayze and W E Hall, who were taken prisoner. 62 Sqn claims included two Fokker D.VIIs destroyed & OOC N of Cambrai by Capt. Gibbons and Lt. Elliott, and a further Fokker D.VII driven down N of Cambrai by Capt. Staton and Lt. Mitchell, and possibly one by Lt.s Schallaire and Lowe.

On 24 September, again on escort duties, a patrol encountered a formation of 30 enemy scouts (Fokker DVIIs) over Cambrai. Lt. P S Manley and Sgt G F Hines engaged a number of EA shooting down two (RAF Com 26), Capt. Staton also claimed 1 EA OOC but was himself wounded (and returned to HE). Lt. N N Coope and Lt. H S Mantle were shot down and taken prisoner.

With the break down of the enemy's line South of Arras, the Squadron moved to Belle Vue, (Arras-Doullens Road), on 26th September. From Belle Vue escorts to Bombers were carried out, and occasionally an offensive patrol. Initially escorting 27 Sqn during the Battle of the Hindenburg Line 28-29th September.

On 9 October while providing a close escort for a bombing raid by 27 and 49 Sqns on Aulnoye Railway Junction, the squadron met several formations of EA; Capt. L Campbell and 2/Lt. W Hodgkinson claimed 1 Fokker DVII destroyed but were then themselves shot down and killed in action probably with Jasta Boelke (*Lt.n P Baumer).* Lt. J E Sitch and Lt. D S Fox were seen going down OOC SE of Cambrai and were taken prisoner. 2/Lt. W R Baskerville and 2/Lt. J McCallum and Lt. A W Blowes and 2/Lt. H S Hind each claimed an EA OOC. Capt. Richardson commented on this mission after the war as an example of a successful Bristol fighter escort against odds of 3 to 1 with the formation meeting three enemy formations and having to fight their way through and back 30 miles over the lines without the bombers being affected.

Immediately after the capture of Cambrai, the Squadron proceeded further on, to Marquion, 29th October 1918, (on Arras-Cambrai Road). Unsuitable weather prevented a great deal of work being carried out there, but on several occasions

D.H's of other squadrons were escorted to distant objectives, including Mons, Charleroi, and La Louviere. 4 November was the last day of major aerial fighting. The squadron suffered its final losses of the war that day. Two crews, Lt. F C D Scott and Lt. C Rigby and Lt. F Sumsion and Capt. W G Walford were shot down near Mons and killed in an action probably with Jasta 26.

4 - 10 Nov 1918- The last intense combat of WWI. The RAF claim 68 enemy aircraft for 60 losses.

From 'Flight' December 5th 1918

Casualties

Capt. DUNCAN RONALD GORDON MACKAY, 55th Squadron, R.A.F., late of 13th A. and S.H. and 19th R.F. (U.P.S.), who died on November 11th (a prisoner of war) in France, of wounds received while leading a raid the previous day, was the younger son of the late Duncan L. M. Mackay, I.C.S. (retired), and Mrs. Mackay, Burnt House, Speldhurst, Kent. His age was 23.

Capt. WILLIAM GEOFFREY WALFORD, R.M.R.E. and R.A.F., who was killed in action on November 4th, in aerial combat over the German lines, was the eldest son of Capt. William Walford, of Glanmonnow, Garway, Hereford.

Lieut. J. W. WARNER, R.A.F., reported missing on October 4th, now reported killed in action, aged 19, was the only son of Mr. and Mrs. C. Warner, of Thorparch, Yorkshire. He had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, and was officially credited with destroying eight enemy machines and shooting three others down out of control. He went to France last May with the squadron commanded by Col. Bishop, V.C., D.S.O., M.C., D.F.C.

Four Unlucky Airmen

By Terry Powell

On 4th November 1918 just seven days before the armistice, a Bristol F2b Fighter, number R E25B (2513) from 62 Squadron piloted by Lieutenant Lt. Francis Sumsion, the observer being Lieutenant William Geoffrey Walford was shot down over Belgium, somewhere south east of Mons by a German aircraft piloted by Lt. H. Lange of JA (squadron) 26. Both pilots were killed and were buried at Blaugies Communal Cemetery, Mons. Also shot down by the same German pilot was another F2b piloted by Lieutenant Francis Charles Dudley Scott, and observer Lieutenant Charles Rigby.

The latter two bodies were not recovered and are commemorated on the Arras Flying Services memorial. Arras, France.

Lieutenant F. Sumsion

Francis Sumsion was the son of Daniel and Sarah Sumsion, who lived at 6 Cerdin Avenue, Pontyclun, Glamorgan. He was aged 25 when he died and was in the 3rd Battalion, Welsh Regiment, prior to transferring to the RAF.

Lieutenant W.G.Walford

William Geoffrey Walford was the son of Capt. William Walford and Laura C.Walford of Glanmonnow, Garway, Hereford. He was aged 23 when he was killed and was with the Royal Engineers, 2nd Monmouthshires before transferring to the RAF.

Lieutenant C. Rigby

Charles Rigby was the son of E.J. Rigby who lived at 113 Beaconsfield Street, Deane Road, Bolton, and the late John Rigby. He was 20 at the time of his death. His regiment before joining the RAF was the Royal Fusiliers.

Lieutenant F. C. D. Scott

Francis Charles Dudley Scott was with the Durham Light Infantry before joining the RAF.

NB. No additional information is currently available.

Bristol F2b Fighter

It seems almost certain that Lt Helmut Lange of Jasta 26 shot them down. Helmut Lange (Jasta 26) was a German 'Ace' having shot down 7 aeroplanes. He was CO of Jagdstaffel 26 from 26th August 1918 until 12th September 1918. Jasta 26 were stationed at Lenz aerodrome from 13th October 1918 until 4th November 1918.

Pilots of Jasta 26 taken on 5 February 1918. L to r: VfwFritz Classen (11), father of Ltn Burchard, Uffz Erich Buder (14), Vzfw Santjer, Monteu (mechanic), OffzStv Otto Esswein (12), -?-, 2/Lt Cyril Ball, brother of Albert Ball VC, who had been shot down by Esswein, Ltn Dahm(2), Bruno Loerzer (44), Ltn Helmut Lange (7), Uffz Naubauer (1), Ltn Willy Etzold & Ltn Burchard. Note aircraft: a Fokker DV, used for converting to rotary engined Triplanes.

Jasta 26 with Helmut Lange (Centre with no hat on).

Jagdstaffel 26

Royal Prussian Jagdstaffel 26 was a World War I "hunting group" (i.e., fighter squadron) of the *Luftstreitkräfte*, which was the forerunner to the Luftwaffe. As one of the original German fighter squadrons, the unit would score 177 verified aerial victories, including four observation balloons destroyed. The jasta would pay a bloody price for its success: five pilots killed in action, nine wounded in action, and one prisoner of war.

Royal Prussian Jagdstaffel 26 was founded on 14 December 1916 at the FEA 9 training centre in Darmstadt. It mobilized on 20 January 1917. Its first war patrols followed a week later, and the first victory was scored on 25 February 1917. Just four days before, on 21 February, Jasta 26 had become part of Jagdgeschwader III, with Bruno Loerzer raised to its command. As part of JG III, Jasta 26 would battle to the end of the war. It would end the war as one of the top-scoring German fighter squadrons. It disbanded at FEA 5 at Hannover, Germany on 3 December 1918.[1]

By May 1918 the Jasta were flying the Fokker D. Vll

Jasta 26 most famous pilot was Hermann Goering. He shot down 4 enemy planes while with Jasta 26. He then commanded Jasta 27 and in WW2 became head of the Luftwaffe and a Reich Marshal.

The memoirs of (Lucy) Torfrida Walford which relate to her time in Glanmonnow, Garway are printed in full at the end of this booklet. It is a remarkable story of a comparatively wealthy young girl's view of the Great War and living in a rural community in Herefordshire.

From the memoirs of Lucy Torfrida Walford, (1902 -99).

Her home was a farm in Monmouthshire. Her two elder brothers and her father were called up. Her sister's best friend had been killed 'flying in Egypt'.

1915: We worked, we weeded, we grew vegetables. One day, I read about the gas attack on the Somme, lurid accounts of the awfulness of men choking to death. I could bear it no longer and uncontrollable tears engulfed me. I ran into the wood to sob my heart out. As I gained control I sat quietly and still as I watched a hen pheasant return to her nest. From then on the woods and trees were my comfort when the war strain overwhelmed, intruding in every home. The newly formed Women's Institute in the village made hospital boots and knitted socks and scarves and helmets. Fathers and sons were killed or missing.

1916: Geoffrey and Johnnie went to France.

1918 (at boarding school Sherbourne in Dorset): Halfway through the term Spanish flu hit the school. It rampaged over the whole world killing millions. Girls caught it by the hundred. The school lessons closed for two weeks. We were nursed in our beds. It must have been a nightmare for the staff, but we were too ill to care, lying tossing with fever and aching all over through hot and uncomfortable sleepless nights and days. We must not get up too soon: 'if you did you died'. Many did so, especially farmers to attend to their live-stock; farmers spared from the army but worn out with overwork and short rations, died alarmingly.

The school opened for lessons again on 11 November. Suddenly bells rang all over the school. A girl rushed breathless into the classroom. 'You are all to go to the Hall at once. 'So we trooped in. A hushed silence as Miss Mulliner walked in, a dignified figure in her black gown and hood. 'Girls.. the war is over. An armistice has been

signed this morning'. … We were deliriously happy. The boys would be home for the holidays.

A week later I was having a dancing lesson in the Hall and noticed someone peering through the glass door as if looking for someone. 'It's me she wants' I thought. A voice called 'Torfrida Walford, to go to Miss Mulliner's study at once'. I arrived to see my father and Frankie (sister) in the room, but no Miss Mulliner. My father kissed me. 'Your brother Geoffrey is killed'. Miss Mulliner entered. 'Dear child'.

A telegram had arrived on Armistice Day to say that Geoffrey was 'missing believed killed' and no further news had come. Not long after I received a parcel from Kitty (sister) containing black hair ribbons and an arm band. I knew the worst. Nothing seemed to matter any more.

The war was over. Britain would be a land fit for heroes. But where were the heroes? So few we knew came back home. Our world was empty. Memorials were put up all over the country, in every village lists and lists of the fallen.

THE LAST ARMISTICE DAY OF THE CENTURY
for William Geoffrey Walford, killed 4th November 1918 aged 22,
after four years in the war (1914 – 18)

Who shall be your rememberer now my mother is dead,
she who adored you so briefly and yet for so long?
In ninety-six years she never forgot you and kept
your photograph beside her and within her head.

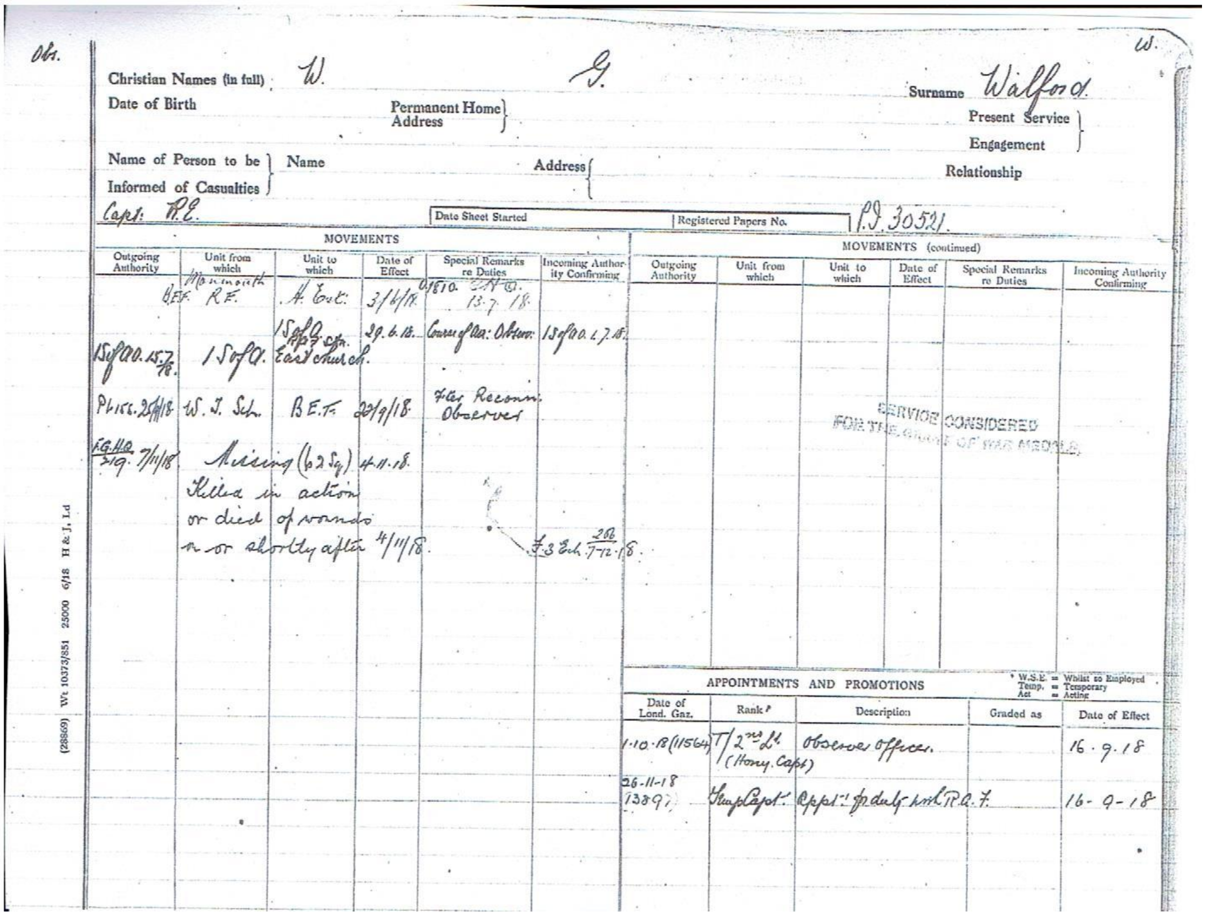
You were someone we knew and yet we never knew,
the almost-haloed one, the hero who died,
whose beauty emerges here and there in us
and yet the one we sensed we lacked and missed somehow.

I feel my mother's pain as I did when as a child
I heard her describe the things you used to say and
how peace brought the worst news in the world:
too late the eleventh hour for her, when you were killed

Now I am left alone as guardian of your presence.
When I am gone there will be none to maintain
our loss. Yet as my mother's love is absorbed
in me, her sorrow will form a lasting inheritance.

Poem by Tessa Ransford (Not Just Moonshine, Luath Press 2008)

Tessa Ransford is the daughter of Lucy Torfrida Walford (William Geoffrey Walford's sister)



Christian Names (in full) W. G. Surname Walford
Date of Birth
Permanent Home Address
Present Service Engagement
Name of Person to be Informed of Casualties — Name — Address — Relationship
Capt. R.E.
Date Sheet Started — Registered Papers No. P.S. 30521.

MOVEMENTS

Outgoing Authority	Unit from which	Unit to which	Date of Effect	Special Remarks re Duties	Incoming Authority Confirming
	B.E.F. Monmouth R.E.	H. Est.	3/6/18		
15 Sq.		15 Sq. Eastchurch	29.6.18	Course of Obs. Observer	
PLISC	W. S. Sch.	B.E.F.	20/9/18	For Recon. Observer	
	Missing (62 Sq) 4.11.18. Killed in action or died of wounds on or shortly after 4/11/18.				

SERVICE CONSIDERED FOR THE GRANT OF WAR MEDALS

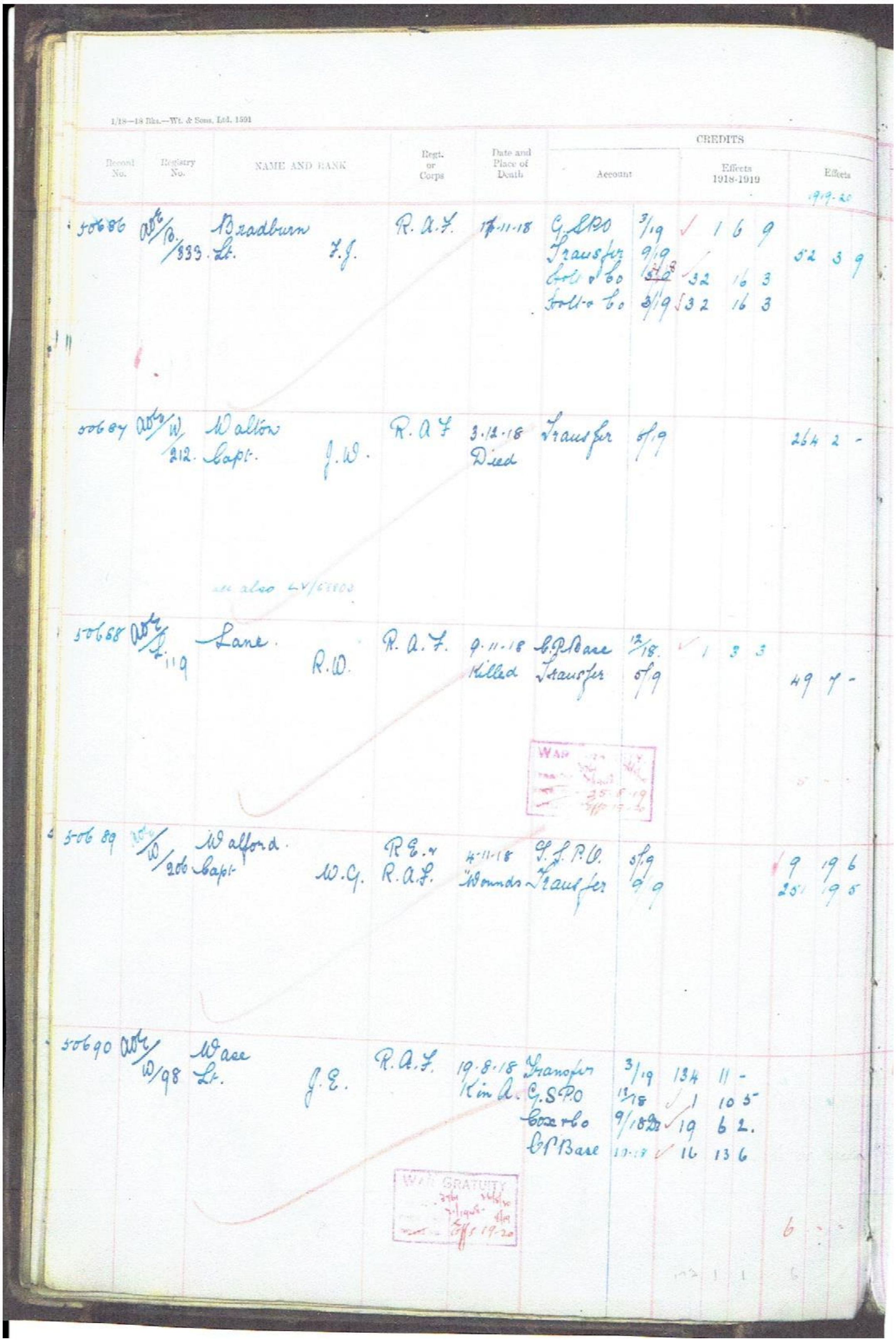
APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS

Date of Lond. Gaz.	Rank	Description	Graded as	Date of Effect
1.10.18 (11564)	T/2nd Lt. (Hony. Capt.)	Observer Officer.		16.9.18
26-11-18 (13897)	Temp. Capt.	Appt. for duty with R.A.F.		16-9-18

Service Record of William Geoffrey Walford in the RAF

Soldiers died in the Great War

Name:	W G Walford
Death Date:	4 Nov 1918
Rank:	Captain
Regiment:	Royal Engineers
Type of Casualty:	Killed in action
Comments:	And RMRE

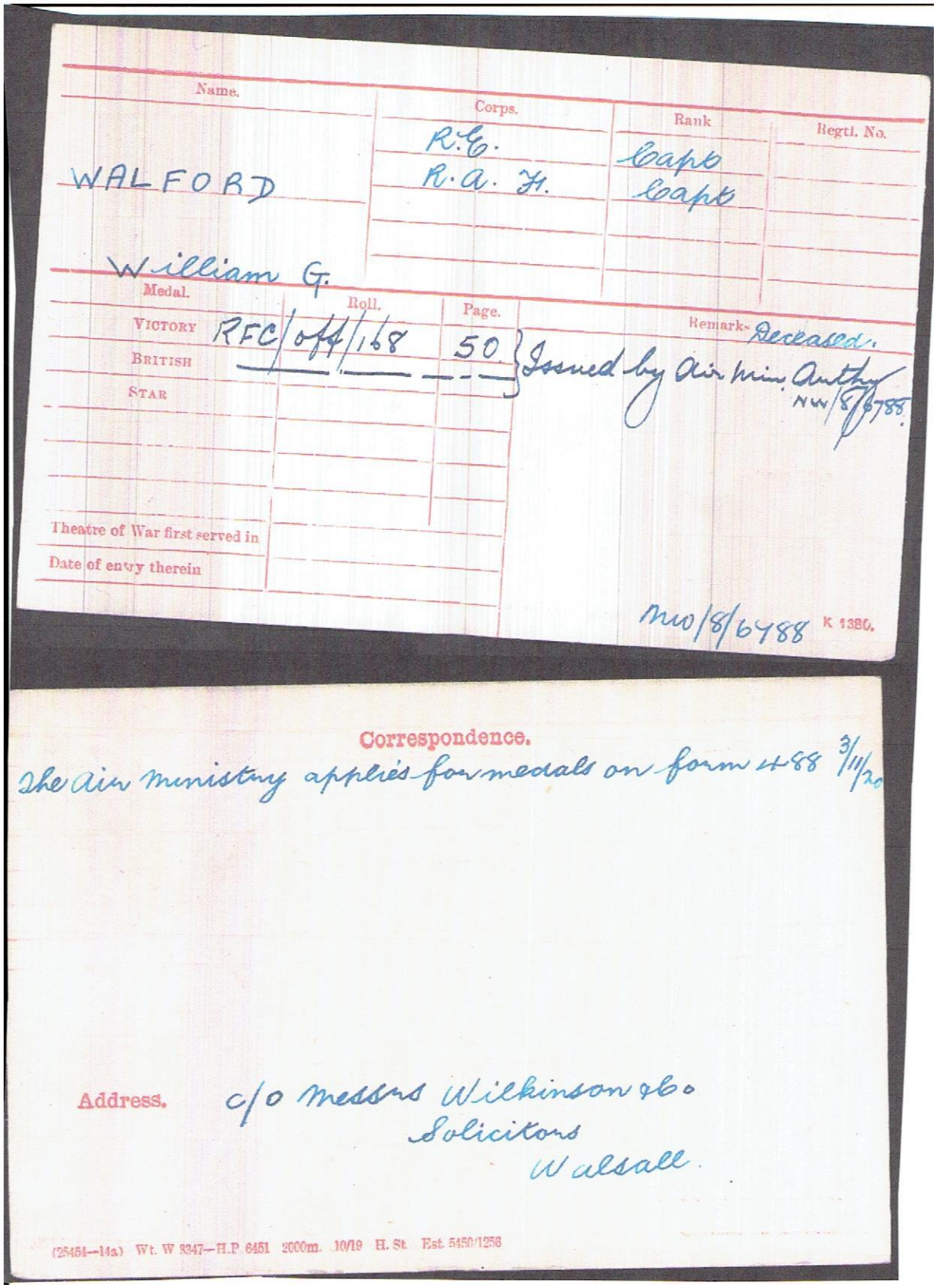


1/18—18 Bks.—Wt. & Sons, Ltd. 1591

Record No.	Registry No.	Name and Rank		Regt. or Corps	Date and Place of Death	Credits: Account		Effects 1918-1919	Effects 1919-20
50686	ADE/B/833	Bradburn Lt.	F.J.	R.A.F.	17.11.18	G.S.P.O Transfer Cox & Co Cox & Co	3/19 9/19 12/18 3/19	1 6 9 32 16 3 32 16 3	52 3 9
50687	ADE/W/212	Walton Capt.	J.W.	R.A.F.	3.12.18 Died	Transfer	5/19		264 2 -
		see also LV/68803							
50688	ADE/L/119	Lane	R.W.	R.A.F.	9.11.18 Killed	C.P. Base Transfer	12/18 5/19	1 3 3	49 7 -
50689	ADE/W/206	Walford Capt.	W.G.	R.E. & R.A.F.	4.11.18 Wounds	G.S.P.O. Transfer	5/19 9/19		9 19 6 251 19 5
50690	ADE/W/98	Ware Lt.	J.E.	R.A.F.	19.8.18 K in A.	Transfer G.S.P.O Cox & Co C.P. Base	3/19 12/18 9/18 10.18	134 11 - 1 10 5 19 6 2 16 13 6	

War Gratuity

RAF List of 'effects'



Name. WALFORD William G.

Corps. R.E. R.A.F.

Rank Capt Capt

Regtl. No.

Medal. VICTORY BRITISH STAR

Roll. RFC/off/168

Page. 50

Remarks. Deceased. Issued by Air Min. Authy NW/8/6788.

Theatre of War first served in

Date of entry therein

MW/8/6488 K 1380.

Correspondence.

The Air ministry applies for medals on form 488 3/11/20

Address. c/o messrs Wilkinson & Co Solicitors Walsall.

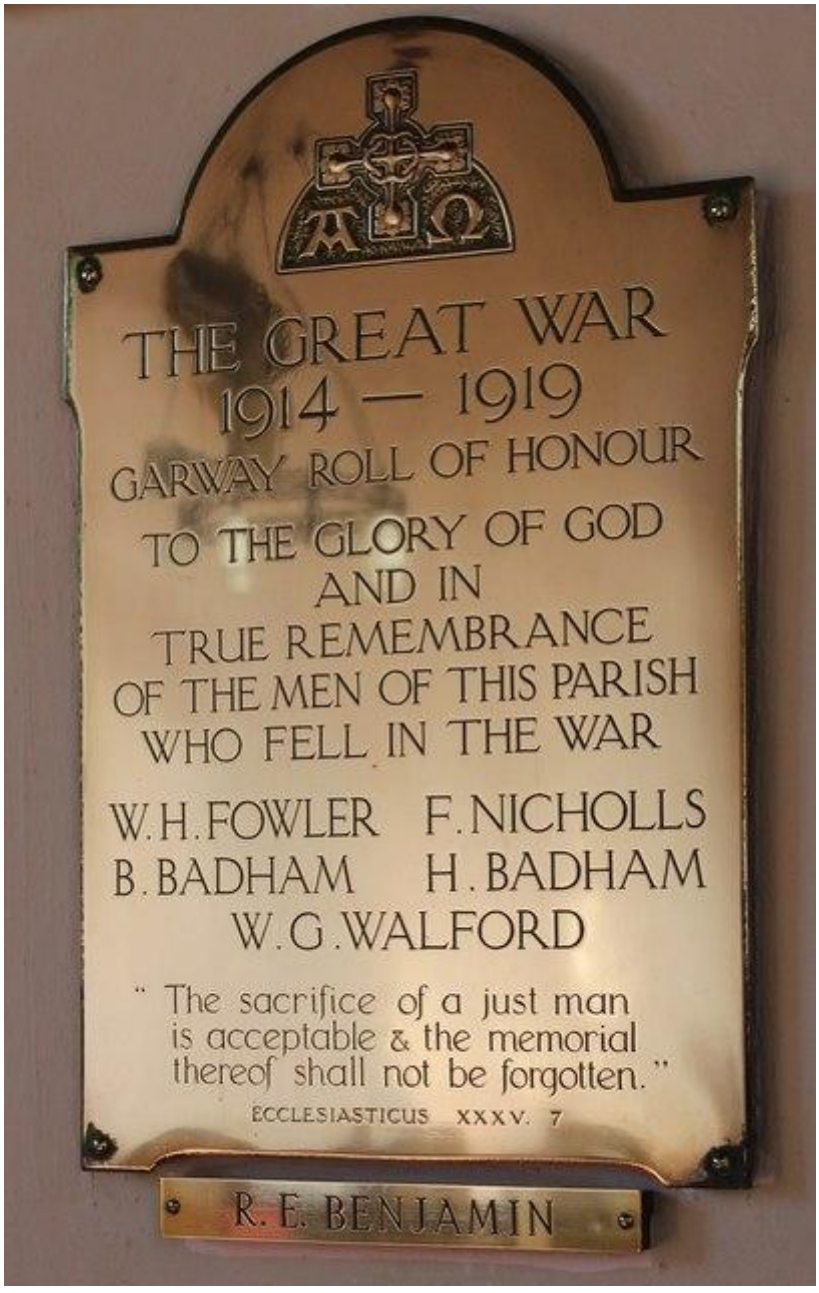
(25464—14a) Wt. W 3347—H.P. 6451 2000m. 10/19 H. St. Est. 5450/1256

William Geoffrey Walford medal card.

He was awarded

The British War Medal and the Victory Medal

The Memorial at Garway



Photograph by Bob Embleton

In Skenfrith Churchyard.

There is a separate hand-written Roll of Honour in a framed glass, listing the following names:

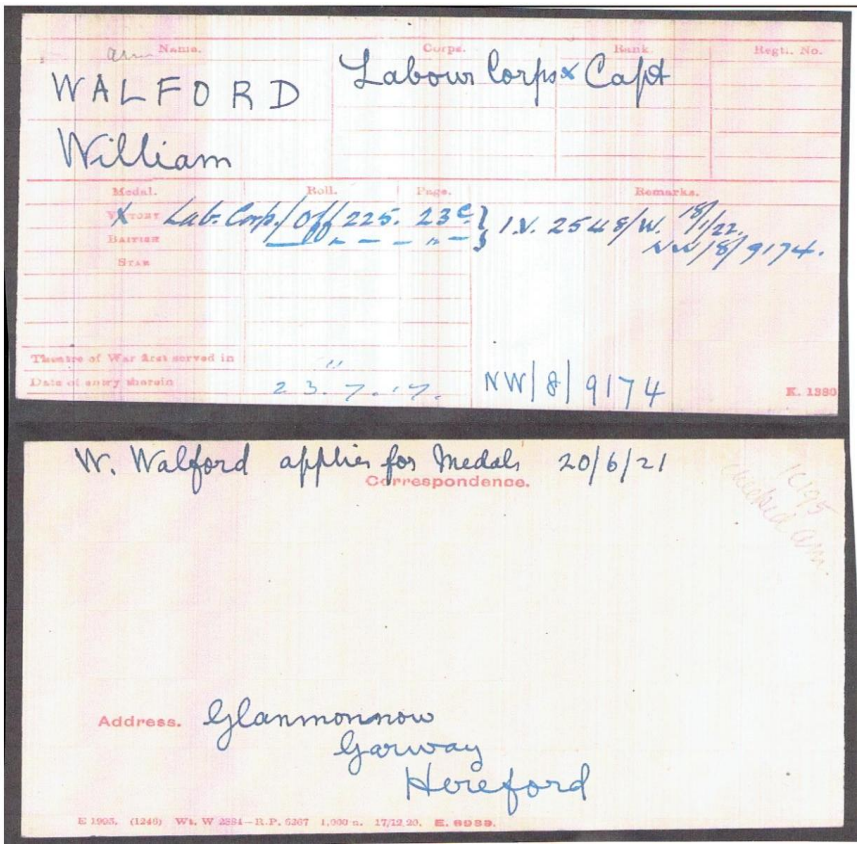
Roll of Honour

1914		**1916**	
W.G. WALFORD	Capt	D.G. POWELL	Private
W. RUSSELL	L.Corpl.	A.R. POWELL	"
R. BENJAMIN	Private	W. COOK	"
T.A. CLARKE	"	A. BEVAN	"
H. CLARKE	"	G. BADHAM	"
J. HARVEY	"	B. BADHAM	"
H.L. HEMMING	Pioneer	T. BENJAMIN	"
F.E. NICHOLLS	Private	J. BENJAMIN	"
P.R. NICHOLLS	Driver	W. CHARD	"
W.H. FOWLER	Private	C. PRITCHARD	"
H. MOORE	"	G. TAYLOR	"
R. MOORE	"	A. BADHAM	"
A. WEBB	"	A. SAYCE	"
W. HARRISON	"	E. BEACH	"
W.J. WHITLAM	"	**1917**	
1915		A. BENJAMIN	"
Wm. WALFORD	Capt	E. BENJAMIN	"
J.R.C. WALFORD	Lt	J. BACKHOUSE	"
E. BEACH	Private	**1918**	
J. BEACH	"	E. WILLIAMS	"
L. MOORE	L.Corpl	E. HEATH	"
W. HANDS	Private	A. HEMMING	"
S.E. JAMES	"		
A. BADHAM	"		
E. BENJAMIN	"		
G.H. SMITH	"		

(Information provided by Rosemary Lockie)


QUIN –
RENARD
CAPTAIN
W. G. WALFORD
ROYAL AIR FORCE
AND ROYAL MONMOUTHSHIRE R.E.
4TH NOVEMBER 1918 AGE 23
CHARTERHOUSE
DEO DANTE DEDI

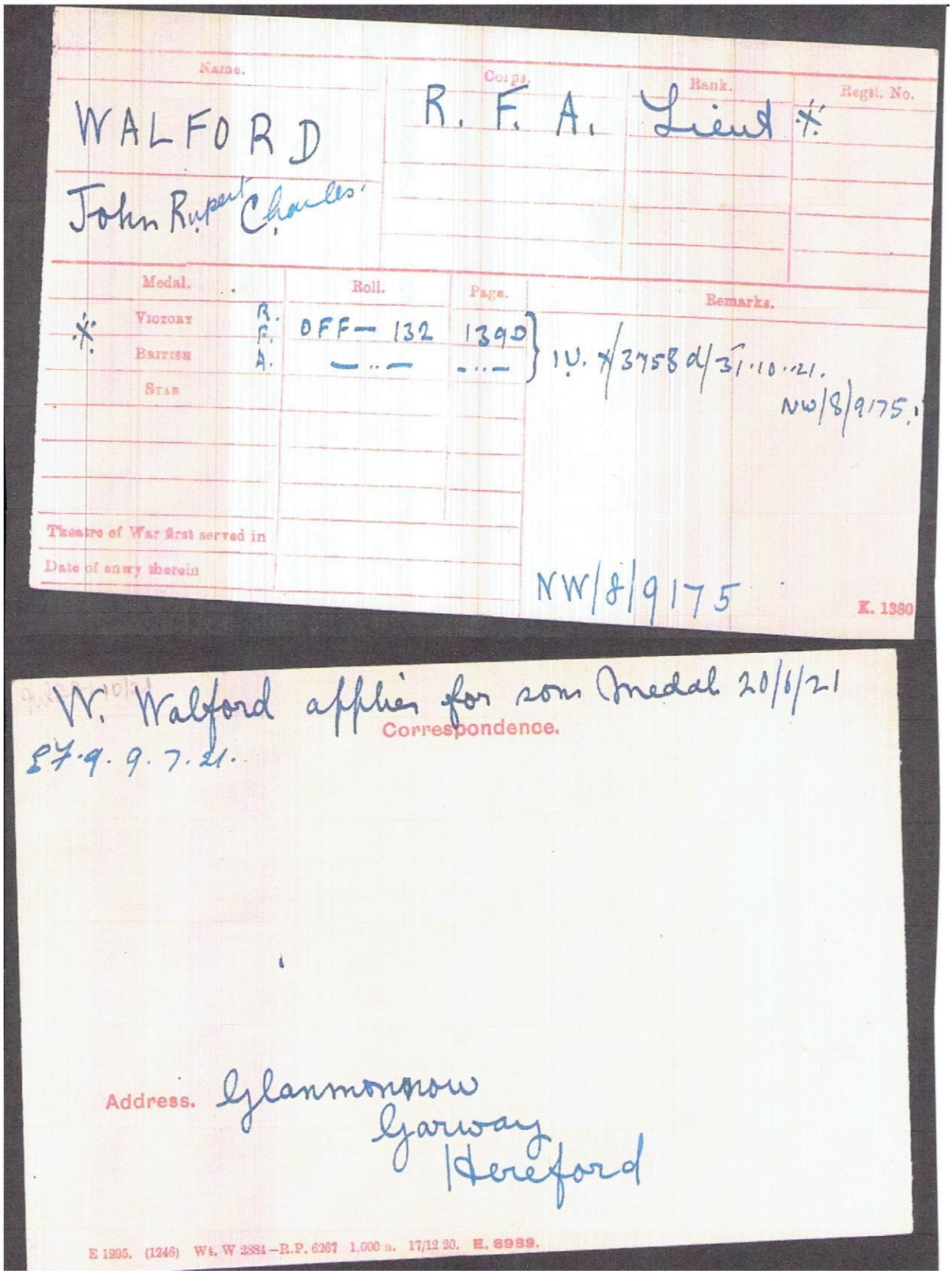
William Geoffrey Walford's Father also served in the Great War


Name. WALFORD William
Corps. Labour corps
Rank. Capt
Regt. No.
Medal. Roll. Page. Remarks.
Lab. Corps/Off/225. 23
I.V. 2548/W. 19/1/22. NW/8/9174.
Theatre of War first served in
Date of entry therein 23.7.17.
NW/8/9174
W. Walford applies for Medals 20/6/21
Correspondence.
Address. Glanmorrow Garway Hereford


British War Medal - Victory Medal.

From the memoirs of his daughter Torfrida Walford.
. He left to superintend a Chinese labour corps unloading ships in Boulogne, making roads and burying the dead. I loved my father and admired him going to France at the ancient age of fifty.

And his Brother John Rupert Charles Walford also served.



Name. WALFORD John Rupert Charles

Corps. R. F. A.

Rank. Lieut. *

Regtl. No.

Medal.		Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
Victory	R. F. A.	OFF— 132	1390	1V. */3758 d/31.10.21. NW/8/9175.
British		— .. —	... —	
Star				

Theatre of War first served in

Date of entry therein

NW/8/9175

K. 1390

W. Walford applies for son Medal 20/6/21

27.9.9.7.21.

Correspondence.

Address. Glanmorrow
Garway
Hereford

E 1905. (1246) Wt. W 2884—R.P. 6267 1,000 n. 17/12 20. E. 6989.

In Memory of

Captain

William Geoffrey Walford

62nd Sqdn., Royal Air Force who died on 04 November 1918 Age 23

Son of Capt. William Walford and Laura C. Walford, of Glanmonnow, Garway, Hereford.

Remembered with Honour

Blaugies Communal Cemetery

Commemorated in perpetuity by

the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

From the memoirs of Lucy Torfrida Ransford (Walford) and her time at

GLANMONNOW- Garway

We were used to the dog-cart but thrilled with awe when the doctor came in a car! We hovered around it - hoping he would give us a ride - lucky if he allowed us to climb in by the back doors and sit sideways facing one another, just as we did in our governess cart - when Mother droveus to dancing lessons in Lichfield. A ride in a motor-car was an event, but by 1911 we possessed a beautiful green Sunbeam car and it was in that that Father collected me, Phoebe and Kathleen from the station at Ross-on-Wye to take us to our new home at Glanmonnow in Herefordshire.

A more glorious home for children would be hard to find! There were spacious lawns, a big bank to roll and slide down on trays, a greenhouse and a potting shed, stables and pig-styes, cowsheds and woods stretching on all sides towards meadows where our ponies and cows roamed.

We moved during the summer, which was a record hot one. Coming in from the glare outsideone afternoon I saw my mother gasping, her face puce, the sweat pouring off her cheeks and nose. “They would test the central heating on the hottest day of the year”, she laughed.

Those pipes ran down the passages under the floor with a grating on top to warm the house. This was a haven for rats during the winter- and ugh, the smell when one was trapped there! –and, when located, the gardener was fetched to remove it. ‘Such things were ‘events” in our quiet life in the depths of the country. Another event was theday the pig was killed! It meant a holiday from lessons, and another holiday allowed when the hounds met nearby. Kitty and Frankie rode Sylvia and Topsy- while we younger ones followed on foot, soon guessing, by the way of the wind and lie of the country which way the fox would run. We were mostly on his side!

These events broke the routine of our school days with our P.N.E.U. governess at home. We began with prayers before breakfast, followed from 9 - 11am by lessons which always started with scripture. We learnt a portion of the old and New Testament - a hymn and a psalm and several poems by heart every term. Break for milk came at eleven with a run out of doors where we also did drill. Lessons followed until lunchtime. How our long-suffering governess endured us
I do not know. Six of different ages - of varied ‘wit’ - so that the bright ones quickly had the answer before their slower sisters had a chance!

I was one of the slow ones. Our governess was patient, on the whole, but at times we feared, and ducked a cuff on the ear stung by her signet ring! Phoebe lost all interest in arithmetic and I had no desire to play the piano as the lessons invariably

ended in tears from repeated taps on the fingers from a ruler. Anyway, endless scales were deadly dull.

After lunch we went for a walk learning botany and natural history - but if we passed through Skenfrith village we endeavoured to lag behind whisking into the shop for 1 penny worth of peppermints if one of us could find a penny! Handicrafts - sewing and book-binding - or painting followed the walk till tea time during which Scott's and Dickens' works were read to us and, in order that there were few interruptions, sewing was mere tacking and hemming.

After tea we were free till bed time, and the governess was free too. We were taken over by Sharatt- our sewing maid who gave us supper and put us to bed — combing out tangles in ourhair to the tune of:

Oh Oh Antonio, He's gone away,
Left me all alon-io all on my own-io
l'll go to meet my own sweetheart,
Then up will go Antonio in his ice cream cart.

But bed time did not mean sleep. Three of us shared a bedroom and on days when visitors came to dine - we held our feast upstairs: lowering our nighties like 'grand ladies' we devoured the 'bits' brought up the back stairs to us by our pet parlour maid. Previously we had peeped through the banisters to watch the party 'parade' to the dining room, headed by my father taking the arm of the most important lady with my mother at the tail with the husband. She seemed rather strange in the rustling brocade dress arranged in all her jewels as she came to kiss us good-night. A rather different kind of mother had mopped our tears with a handkerchief, scented with eau-de-cologne, when we'd been sent out of the school room, crying. She did not condone our stupidity, rather encouraging us to be brave and do better.

During the holidays when the governess went away, we had unlimited freedom. The elder ones enjoyed exercising their horses and we younger ones found our own activities watching the gardeners, game keepers, cowmen at work, refreshed by tit-bits from the cook who knew well our secret knock knock on the larder window!

Our favourite game was making 'camps' in the undergrowth in the Dingle Wood. We were Christopher Columbus; Francis Drake, 'exploring'- and soon we became 'Red Indians'. We absorbed every book by Fennimore Cooper; we learnt Indian words, knowing much of Longfellow's *Hiawatha* by heart. I was 'Chingachghook', Chief of the Ojibways and Kathleen' Kaliba-knocker'. Arthur was our 'slave'. He swept out the hard earthen floor of our camp - and
so that no one should be annoyed at his dirty Eton Collar I covered it over for him with my dirty handkerchief. We made bows from the yew tree branches, and arrows from the hazel twigs, trying to put tips on them from the old tins from the rubbish

heap. That was not very successful but we were proud of our clothes made out of sacks cut up with fringes and covered with rabbit skins, cured with alum and nailed up to dry. We only needed painted faces and turkey-tailfeathers in our hair to frighten the enemy.

Laura Mary Walford nee Cook

But these halcyon days were not to last long. Early in 1913 Mother became ill and the local doctor was called in. He tried various remedies for her tummy pain, and after about a week said to my father,

“I think we may have to operate if we have time”.
“Time ?" demanded my horrified Father, “What do you mean ?"
He was told.

We had no telephone and the hospital was twenty seven miles away in Gloucester. He could not leave six children alone, at midnight. We never woke, we never heard a sound - as a message was taken to a good friend 3 miles away over the hills, and Mother was driven in his car to be operated on ‘just in time.’

She was in the Nursing Home for two months having six operations in all. As she grew betterwe were taken in turns to see her. It was a quiet, strange home without her.

“She might have died,” said Frankie
“Then we’d have had to wear black dresses,” said Kitty.

In those days we wore woollen dresses in winter and cotton in summer, always covered withlarge white starched pinafores with a tape to pull up round the neck. Stockings were black, worn with boots - boys’ boots with studs for lacing. None of us have ever had trouble with our feet! On Sundays straw floppy hats adorned with flowers were the order for church - with our Sunday dresses. We went to church as a matter of course. Walking three miles there and back

over the fields, sometimes cornfields - and climbing over styles, and shutting gates. Mother sometimes played the organ while we took our turn to ‘pump’.

Christmas was glorious. After lunch of turkey and plum pudding, a great big cane washing basket full of presents waited for us, each parcel being taken out by Arthur, the youngest, to our Father who read out ‘who to, who from’ and we had to WAIT till each was opened and the donor thanked. The ceremony took all afternoon. Then — a run outside for ‘the rabble’ as wewere called, however cold the weather.

In good weather our favourite game was ‘Nurkey’ - or ‘I spy kick the can.’ The hay stacks, the stables and bushes made endless good hiding spots, and what a thrill when we could ‘kick the can’ and release the prisoners!

In 1914 the tennis parties and the shooting parties were to end. I remember vividly a lovely hot day in early August. I can smell the scent of newly mown grass - I can hear the sound of the machine and the clog of the horse with leather shoes on his hooves. The bees were humming among the flowers. Inside, the hall was cool and restful from the glare outside. A postcard lay on the hall table (postcards were always considered public property to read). It was one to Mother from a neighbour ending with ‘worrying news about Germany — will it be WAR do you think?’ I wondered what it meant; no one could answer my questions though Iwas soon to understand.

A few days later, Geoffrey suddenly appeared in his O.T.C. uniform. He and Johnnie were at the Charterhouse Camp held at the end of their term. His explanation was: "They said they did not want us any more. There might be a war.” Johnnie came back too.

William Geoffrey Walford

Days of hushed voices, hidden fears, clouded the summer days and my birthday picnic on August 10"', when we usually walked up Garway Hill, was of no interest to anyone. Tennis parties were cancelled, the roses faded, unplucked - and we ate the grapes ripening in the greenhouse - usually left for visitors.

What about the ponies to be brought in from the fields and got fit for 'cubbing'? It was all exciting in some ways but no fun. Gardeners and men all went away to enlist with only one man left who was exempt because of his broken wrist.
Geoffrey was commissioned to the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers in Monmouth, 8miles away. He proudly showed us his uniform from Hawkes - a glittering sword, spurs on highly polished riding boots, and his Second Lieutenant stars on his shoulders - and his R.M.R.E. badge on his cap. He practised drill and taught us to 'form fours', 'attention', and' present arms' with home-made wooden rifles.

The whole country was stimulated with patriotic fever. All the boys' friends enlisted together with gardeners, cow-mecn, grooms and farm workers. The trains were

crowded with British determined to save ‘Poor little Belgium’ from the bullying Huns. Bands played, women sang, Kitchener pointed with steely eyes from posters ‘England needs You’. John returned to Charterhouse alone - he was too young. Oh, when when would I be old enough to do MY BIT?

That thought stirred our minds as we heard the news. The Germans were nearly in Paris, and it was rumoured that the Russians had arrived in Scotland to help us. People had seen them:"Snow was still on their boots." Our hunters went, Daddy went- helping to sort out the muddle of recruiting papers in the South Staffordshire Depot in Lichfield. So many ‘Jack Jones’s - to disentangle from those killed, wounded - or still alive. He was given 12 policemen as clerks -and going from door to door with inquiries. News of the killed mounted. Long lists appeared inthe Daily Mail. “What was in the paper when there was NO WAR? I asked." We grew into our teens knowing nothing of Ascot, the Grand National, theatres, ski-ing and dancing - we were utterly engrossed in keeping the ‘Home Fires Burning’.

My Mother, aided by Miss Henderson, our governess, certainly did, giving motherly love and hospitality to the many friends coming to say Goodbye. Many were Geoffrey’s fellow officers roaring on motor bikes up the Buckholt valley from Monmouth, through Welsh Newton, over Pembridge Castle Hill on and on to Glanmonnow. They often needed our assistance to get their acetylene lamps to work in order to see their way back! At last, in December 1914, it was Geoffrey’s turn to say goodbye - before going to France with No.5 Company. We had turned the enemy from Paris; was God on our side?

I do not remember any sadness of farewell. We were thrilled to have such a hero brother. What did Mother think? Perhaps she thought her prayers were answered when a telegram arrived a few days later. “In hospital in Dover with scarlet fever.” A letter followed telling us he was already at the "peeling stage over his hands and feet."

Eventually he returned to Monmouth spending some weeks on leave. His condition proved to be not scarlet fever but a rare skin complaint suffered only by policemen and those exposed to intense COLD. Poor Geoffrey, his disappointment was great, but he never failed to play with his young sisters. He was our ‘Boiby’ and I his ‘mother Mrs Crow’ helping him with heavily
bandaged hands and feet. The skin trouble took years to heal and draft after draft left Monmouth without him. Would he ever be declared fit? Meantime John had left Charterhouse getting a commission in the Royal Artillery.

1915 came and went. By then everyone of available age had gone. Our maids went to nurse or make munitions in factories in Hereford. We found our lessons less and less interesting. To feed the poultry, clean out pigsties, look after the dogs, learn to set wires to catch rabbits, gut and skin them, seemed far more important. We had to

make our beds, tidy the school room, lay the table, and even help in the kitchen and pantry -previously kept as the ‘holy of holies’. Now
we knew where the sugar and butter were kept, rationed to each of us, exactly.

We visited farms begging for an egg to be sent to hospitals; on each egg was written the name and address of the donor. Hampers of wild daffodils were sent to Netley Hospital. It was an excuse for an outing to climb to the daffodil field on the Graig Hill on the opposite hillside of the Monnow Valley because the spring picnics to Llanthony Abbey were not necessary.

However, I had not entirely lost my sense of adventure. One spring morning I stole a fishing rodfrom the gun-room. Never allowed – but - Daddy was away! I had watched others fish, carrying tackle up and down the banks of the Monnow. I grew to know the likely runs where trout may ‘take’. I sped down the fields to Skenfrith. The path was well worn for I was the one who ALWAYS HAD TO TAKE telegrams and telephone messages sent to Monmouth from the Post Office.

I found the old Water Bailiff, Albert Pritchard. “Come- please tell me how to fish." I caught three trout uplifted with joy of achievement to the highest courts of Heaven - and from then, till I die, I have had the delightful fever of fishing.

But there were few chances for such escapades. We worked, we weeded the garden, we grew vegetables. Our Red Indian Camp lay desolate under the three fir trees but sometimes wandering through the woods I lay hidden beneath the branches of a yew tree watching birds a tour ‘walker’ - a tree stump on which we put worms and below, mud to trace their tracks.

One day, I read about the gas attack on the Somme, reading lurid accounts of the awful beastliness of men choking to death. I could bear it no longer and uncontrollable tears engulfed me. I must hide them and ran out into the wood to sob my heart out. As I gained control I sat quietly and stock still as I watched a hen pheasant return to her nest. They were difficult to find. I marked the spot, reluctant to disturb her. From then on the woods and trees were my comfort
when the tension and family ructions overwhelmed the war strain intruding every home.

So many had wounded sons, convalescent at homes where mother visited them with comforts and sympathy. The newly formed Women‘s Institute in the village made hospital boots and knitted socks and scarves and helmets. Fathers and sons were killed or missing. ‘It could not happen to us’; notwithstanding we cried and sorrowed for Phoebe when we heard our old parson droning away in Skenfrith Church as the sun shone rainbow colours in the Chancel.

“I have sad news - Robin Thomas has been killed, flying in Egypt”. He was our friend - a brother to us and very kind to Phoebe, buying her chocolates and walnut iced cakes and even allowing her to drive his car. He was 23, inherited the estate of Blackbrooke on the other side of Monnow Valley. “How can I help Phoebe?” I knew the light of her life had gone. A part of herdied that day. His father and two brothers were killed later, leaving only a widow and sister living
when the war ended.

However we were indoctrinated ‘to WIN the war’. We must “Pack up our troubles and SMILE".An urgency to tackle anything: ‘Someone must do this job - why shouldn't it be me?’ and so we ‘carried on.’ I never heard a word of despair from mother. We hated the Huns. We stopped learning German.

1916: Geoffrey went out to France- and Johnnie was in an ammunition column often waiting from an observation post. They came on leave. “What are you going to do John? Ride or Fish?” He decided to fish. There was a chance there, to lie in the sun and SLEEP. I found him lying in a deep sleep beside the lullaby of the rippling waters.

How little we understood. Kitty left school becoming a V.A.D. in Monmouth Hospital. Frankie was soon to leave school and go to an agricultural college.

Phoebe was devoted to her violin and cycled ten miles to and from Ross each week for lessons. She had no desire to forsake her violin lessons and piano to go to school where she would not be allowed the hours of practice she wanted.

But I? I wanted to go to school and I was often told that it was time I did. I was arrogant, rude and defied our governess sitting sourly at my lessons - but no one bothered about me. My father came home. He had finished the work at Lichfield and was eager to go to the front. He had a partner, an able clerk in his solicitors’ office whom he trusted. He left to superintend a Chinese labour corps unloading ships in Boulogne, making roads and burying the dead. I loved my father and admired him going to France at the ancient age of fifty.

He took notice when I demanded, “Why can't I go to school?” Mother co-operated and found an ‘unexpected vacancy’ at Sherborne School for Girls (a red-headed girl had been expelled by Miss Mulliner, the head mistress, for writing a note to a MAN working on the cabbage patch!)

Sherborne in Dorset was described in glowing colours and I longed to go, but the date was September 18th 1918, and Geoffrey was home on leave. Every day was fun and precious. He only had three more days.

He had come from France in June to train as an ‘Observer’ in the Royal Flying Corps and was due to go back to France. He had taken me on my first visit to London with Mother, after dining at the Holborn Restaurant, followed by a theatre ‘The Bitter Ole.’ I longed to stay with him three more days to join in singing ‘Hitchy Koo’, ‘Alexander’s Rag Time Band,’ as he picked out the
notes on the piano. I used to assist him in his dark room in the cellar enlarging photographs he took of his friends’ horses. He called me ‘Taperins’ because of my long fingers. Drawing, painting was the one subject in which I could surpass my sisters. Geoffrey too was an excellent draftsman of horses, making calendars and Christmas cards for the family. The margins of his school books were filled with drawings of race horses. Geoffrey too was sad, I think, to see me
go. “Be good - if you can," he said when I went to say goodbye in the early morning as he lay in bed. I longed to throw my arms about him and hug him as my ‘Boiby’ in a passionate farewell - but kisses were not ‘the thing’ in our family.

I must have been a dull daughter for mother to escort by train from Ross to Gloucester -change and trundle through Templecombe , Castle Carey to Sherborne. She had to miss Geoffrey too - but I, I only thought of myself. What an odd picture I made. A rather old ‘new girl’ of sixteen with long chestnut hair tied with a huge brown bow of ribbon on top of my head with a thick plait down my back. “Look - another red-head" they laughed as I was hurled into the
medley of school life.

We wore long ribbed black, or brown stockings, viyella shirts with tweed skirts - the necktie and hat ribbon displayed our house colours. Beech, mine, for ‘Thurstan’.

Lucy Torfrida

I slept alone, for the first time in my life, in a cubicle partitioned in the senior dormitory of twelve girls. There was one other girl of fifteen years old. We made friends. Her name was Lilias Peel-Ritchie, the eldest daughter of her father, who was the first naval Victoria Cross of the war. (We were to remain faithful friends till her death of multiple sclerosis in 1972). l was very shy, expecting no one to like me, or walk over to school with me and rather afraid to ‘tag-on’ in the break at eleven a.m. having managed to avoid drinking the horrible school milk.

Half way through the term, Spanish flu hit the school. It rampaged over the whole world, killing millions. Girls caught it by the hundred. The school lessons closed for two weeks. We were nursed in our beds in the six houses. It must have been a nightmare for the staff, but we were too ill to care, lying, tossing with fever and aching all over through hot and uncomfortable sleepless nights and days. We must not get up too soon ‘if you did you died’. Many did so ,especially farmers to attend to their live-stock. Lusty farmers, spared from the army, but wornout with overwork and short rations, died alarmingly.

The school opened for lessons again on November eleventh 1918.

Suddenly bells rang all over the school. “What was it? - A fire alarm?” A girl rushed breathless into the classroom. “You are all to go to the Hall at once.” So, we all trooped in. A hushed silence as Miss Mulliner walked in - a dignified figure in her black gown and hood.

“Girls The WAR is OVER. An armistice has been signed this morning".

Pandemonium broke out. Like balloons blown up and let go we rose up free, gloriously happy -bursting the tension and strain of years! Cheers rang to the ceiling. “Hurrah for the Army - the Navy- the Flying Corps". We were deliriously happy. The boys would be HOME for the holidays. Much too excited to pray, we shouted, bawling out the hymns of thanksgiving in the lovely old Abbey in Sherborne that evening.

There was no silence in the dormitories that night. From the windows we watched the bonfires lit on hill after hill, gazing at the rockets soaring into the sky. It compensated for our disgust of prep being demanded on SUCH a day!

A week later l was having a dancing lesson in the Hall and noticed some one peering through the glass door as if looking for someone. “It’s me she wants”, I thought, but told myself not tobe silly! ‘Who would want me?" and so I returned to the classroom to grapple with some sums for ‘prep’. A voice called “Torfrida Walford, to go to Miss

Mulliner's study AT ONCE." Blushing and conjuring in imagination all my possible sins, I arrived to see my father and Frankie in the
room, but no Miss Mulliner. My Father kissed me: "Your brother Geoffrey is killed".

I froze - Miss Mulliner entered, clasped me to her bosom saying "Dear child". I collected my prep dumbfounded and I suppose picked up some clothes on our way to the Digby Hotel for the night. Gradually I gleaned the truth from Frankie.

A telegram had arrived on Armistice to say that Geoffrey was "missing believed killed" and no further news had come. Mother had gone to Dunchurch Prep School near Rugby to tell Arthur,the only other member of the family away from home. He remained at school, but I was allowed home for a week. I sat silent by the fire wondering, hoping that 'missing' Geoffrey might be found alive.... only roused to furious contempt when I heard my sister grumbling "I'm sick of
ALWAYS having rabbit and pheasant to eat". Compared to our meagre school food of margarine (which tasted horrid then) cold macaroni with tomatoes — home food was 'Heaven'.Still no news - when I returned to school after a week. I was rather glad to be back as I was beginning to make friends there. Others had lost brothers and fathers, but not just the last week of the war.

November 4th 1918

Not long after, I received a parcel from Kitty - containing black hair ribbons and an arm band. I knew the worst. Unable to concentrate over lessons. There was hope of a 'remove' now in order to learn chemistry instead of Latin. Nothing seemed to matter anymore. "Don't you ever talk at meals"? asked Phyl Heckle.

After that, the holidays were no fun. I found a harsh, bad tempered Father, a more silent and loving mother. Utterly disillusioned in my Father, astonished that I never saw mother give in."We have given our best", she said.

The war was OVER. England would be a 'land fit for heroes'. But where were the heroes? So few came back home, we knew. Our world was empty. Memorials were put up all over the country - in every village lists and lists of the fallen. The maids did not come back to us either. They had learned to find employment in the towns. We lived far too far out from towns for them.To keep Glanmonnow going meant an eternal slogging at menial jobs - "Why don't you do this?" "Buck up, get on with it, lazy little devil". "You are far too dirty to be seen". "People are
coming, go away, hide". "There are too many of us to play tennis, besides you have nothing to wear", shouted my elder sisters.

Weed, weed, weed the garden. I cleared out the dovecote for my Fantail pigeons and thatched the roof with heather.

It was August 1919. Our home looked over the golden valley leading to the Black Mountains, their colours ever changing to “light a lovely mile”. I felt rebellious. And with the encouragement of Kathleen and Arthur we decided to STR|KE. “Why should we not have a holiday?" We decided we'd go on a walking tour to the Black Mountains. Luckily Daddy was agreeable to give us £5 and we agreed that we should come home when we had spent it. He also volunteered to drive us the first 10 miles to Pontrilas in the car.

Our luck was in! We were away for a week or more when no rain fell; I gambled on not carrying a mackintosh! Father kept his promise setting us down at Pontrilas on the road to Longtown. It was our ambition to reach Llanthony Abbey that day. So with our knapsacks over our shoulders, throwing our caps in the air, we were rejoicing in our freedom, with the open road before us and our beloved Black Mountains to explore!

We did reach Llanthony and begged for a haystack that night - not wishing to pay for beds. We were allowed to lie under cover on a stack of bracken and though our bodies were aching with the long walk, sleep was difficult. We were to learn! Soft as the green fern was on the hills, when dry, they lost their soft ‘cushion’ leaving only the hard stalks to dig into our bones.

Lucy Torfrida 1918

Arthur, with his golden hair, blue eyes and soft voice was selected to ask the farmer’s wife for butter, bread and cheese to take on our way up the hills. instead,

she asked us into her kitchen giving us a smashing breakfast of bacon and eggs and refused any payment!

Before climbing the hills before us, we soaked our hands and feet and faces in the pure rippling waters of the Hondu river, even cleaning our teeth in its pure waters.

So up we climbed keeping the sun on our right, and behind our backs until it began to set in the west on our left. Then, as light began to fail, we looked for a farm in the valley where we could seek a haystack for the night. We were met with kindness all the way, and after three or four days reached the crest of the Black Mountains; a sharp precipice which we had seen from Glanmonnow.

“Hurrah, hurrah, we've made it!” tossing our now almost empty knapsacks down the steep hill, retrieving them among the boulders and bracken below. Then came a four mile walk to Hay-on-Wye. We still had money left, as little had been asked for the sumptuous breakfasts given us at the farms, so we decided to ask for an inn for the night at Hay, but where and which? On our asking at the Rectory for the most suitable place, we were invited in and given an excellent tea, and playing cards with the family afterwards. How kind they were! What fun it was. We never forgot the De Wintons, who later became important people in the country’s history.

“We have only two beds" they said at the Swan Inn, "and one is a double one", so Kathleen and I shared. We lay down heavy with sleep, never stirring till morning on the feather bed. Oh, the glory of it!

Having had our fill of the mountains, and knowing I must get back in time to return to Sherborne school, we were rather glad to go home down the valley walking happily along the narrow roads through Dorstone, Peterchurch, Vowchurch, Abbeydore and Ewys Harold, then past Pontrilas to Kentchurch, Grosmont to Skenfrith. It was a long walk, but I do not remember stopping
anywhere except at the home of our Estate Agent on a Sunday for tea. What a dishevelled trio we must have looked. Then it rained! I had no mackintosh! “Take mine," persuaded our host but before we departed so had the rain. How cock-a-hoop I was.

The lanes were full of flowers. Apples were tumbling from overhanging branches. I plucked one and Arthur remonstrated “That’s stealing.” I did not care, and soon we were all biting gaily into lovely juicy apples. We were at Skenfrith at twilight and sat for a rest before embarking on the climb up the fields to our home. Finishing all our bits of food, including a whole pot of raspberry
jam, guiltily greedy, because we were still on war rations.

Coming home there was no red carpet, no whoop of joy (though our parents must have been thankful). “Shall we keep the remainder of our money, or give it back to

Daddy?" It was very tempting to keep it, but we decided to offer it to him because he is bound to let us keep it. We did so, "Well done" he said, taking it and putting it in his pocket. I vowed never to give him back one penny ever ever again! Old meany!

I enjoyed my last year at school. That walking tour had given me confidence, courage and independence. I had shed the ugly camel's hump off my back. I became somebody. I made friends easily, was made a prefect in the house, (though in a remove form 'for duds'). I was able to represent the House in various activities, superintended the House gardens but at every spare time from prep, (which I did not bother much about, except to secretly enjoy writing a
weekly essay for a loved history mistress, a thing most girls groaned over!)

I spent time in the studio and at last I was learning how to draw and paint. I had always dreamed of being an ARTIST. I wanted to be able to show the beauty of the world, especially to those poor people who had to live in the ghastly houses seen on the train going to London.

My best friend was the Head of the House and the School. I could not believe she liked me, with so many adoring her, so many to choose from. She introduced me to poetry and literature. Whole new worlds opened up for me so that when it was time for me to leave in July 1920, I wished I could stay longer and learn more. It was not to be....

During the last summer term I had a letter from my mother to tell me that we were leaving Glanmonnow. My father was obsessed with the idea that Britain must grow its own food and what better than a farm with his gang of 'unpaid slaves' to do the work? Herefordshire was poor land. He had found a farm in Northamptonshire. Each of us was to be instructed in the running of one portion of a mixed farm, the dairy, the poultry, the house and the accounts, while
brother John was the managing director of a Limited Company of the farm at Green Norton. To me was allotted the poultry.

During the war I had collected scraps, boiled up nettles in the big old 'copper' near the stables, cleaned out the dirty old sheds, in fact MADE the hens lay clean eggs. Poor things, never could when straddling in mud, drinking dirty water, underfed by anyone who had 'time to rememberthe hens', when we were bereft of staff. So it was that I was connected with poultry and considered to 'like' them!

"You will have to go to an agricultural college to learn about them scientifically," wrote my mother. The idea was that when the farm started we would all be paid a salary, and the money we would inherit from mother would be put into the farm...

I read mother's letter. I thought, I wondered and I remembered... Our governess, who had now left us, had returned from a weekend holiday in Bath, with a glowing

description to me of a visit to a poultry farm run by two ‘girls’. It was a ‘White Farm’ and she described cocks and hens in apple orchards, white turkeys, white cats, and even a white donkey. She made it sound enchanting.

Perhaps, I thought they MIGHT take a pupil. IF I MUST do hens, I WON'T go to a College. A sigh for any hope of being an artist, time to read books and lap up poetry. Back to work, work, work.

I got the address of the White Poultry Farm from my old governess. I wrote to them and a reply came that they took no pupils in October as there was not enough work to do. I badgered them again offering to do any work from making beds and scrubbing floors and offering to pay. They relented, accepting my offer. Something kept tugging at my mind to go there. “Why not the College?" asked my father. “They don't seem keen to have you." (“But the pig would not"). I stayed at the Perseverance Poultry Farm at Pensford during the autumn of 1920 and went again in the spring of 1921. During the summer holidays, I was asked to look after poultry and puppies at the Pophams in the local big house while their dairy girl was away.

During the Christmas holidays of 1920-21 I agreed to go and help at the home of a school friend in Kington. Her mother treated me as a servant, so I made friends with their cook, asking her if she knew anyone in Kington who would go and work in our home at Garway (Glanmommow). She did, sending May Leek who was a willing hand for some years even though she flirted with the Belgian gardener, an ex-prisoner of war, and stole the grapes, flogging them in Kington on her day off. “I'm sure there were ten ripe bunches here last evening”, said my mother, but May was up at daylight, to nip off with a bunch or two on her bicycle while we slept (I was to meet her years later in 1964 when we lived in Eardisley).

I left Sherborne in July 1920 with tears and lamentations, which was the order of the day; no one wanted to leave, we loved our school. The horizon looked bleak for girls then, who were not clever enough to go to the University or wish to do a domestic course. Hair must be put up, skirts down to the ankles and home meant ‘doing the flowers’, joining girl guides and helping in the village and church jumble sales. Two million surplus women after the war, we did not realize then we were among those two million with little chance of finding a husband.

October 12th 1920

It was with suspended animation and much trepidation I travelled alone from Ross to Keynsham near Bristol. I tried to feel grown up, and hide my shyness. On arriving at Keynsham station, who would I see to meet me? All passengers hurried off leaving only two people on the platform at the far end. “They look much too nice”, I thought,

it cannot be THEM but as I gazed helplessly, a tall smiling lady greeted me “Are you Miss Walford?” "Yes" “This is my brother.
He will take your luggage in the trap and you will have to risk yourself in my car. It is too small for three - it’s a funny little thing and we might have to help it up the hills." She laughed. Fearsvanished. I felt I'd help her push along anything, anywhere.

To my astonishment I recognized the brother as being a man I had noticed, rushing to catch the train as I changed at Bristol. Hearing his running steps, I looked out ready to open my carriage door to help him get in before the train started. The whistle had gone, doors slammed. He must have jumped in somewhere.

After pushing the Humberette car up Corston Hill his sister and I came to the Poultry Farm in Hunstreet village near Pensfold. Here I was introduced to the other Miss Ransford, Isabelle, and their mother. How easy it was to fit in with such happy people living in a house belonging to the Popham family of Hunstreet House.

Two big black Labradors were friendly, the two Scotties rather more guarded in their welcome.There were cats too, but as mice abounded in the old stables and cowsheds nearby, theyseldom possessed the house. Old Mother Ransford loved her parrot and her bible, and theelder sister, Winifred, loved her pair of fantail pigeons.

Florence and Thomas Davis Ransford

Alistair and Florence Ransford

But it was the poultry that fascinated me. I had never seen such lovely birds as their white leghorns kept in immaculate conditions in spacious army huts filled with deep litter to scratch in and ‘dropping boards’ under the perches which were cleaned daily and covered over with new sawdust. Each hen laid her egg in a ‘trap nest’ and could not be released until the number on her leg ring had been recorded on a chart hanging in the poultry house.

Such was the happy go lucky atmosphere of the whole establishment, that the dogs werecalled up to lap up a bucketful of broken eggs - dropped when spring cleaning a hut. I was horrified with fear conjuring up the furious admonitions of my father, and amazed at the lack of concern and sense of fun over the episode! The white donkey too, who pulled cart-loads of dirty litter away was a never ending cause of amusement being an obstinate ass refusing to move until his tail was twisted!

This modern system of rearing poultry to produce eggs from pedigree flocks came from a Canadian friend who persuaded the Miss Ransfords that “If you are going to keep hens, keep good ones” and so, encouraged with his advice, they ventured on a sitting of White Leghorn eggs costing £5. In this way, the Perseverance Poultry was built up and the ‘Bountiful Strain’ bought eagerly by ex -service men trying to make a living from their small-holding allotted to them from the Government. ‘A land for heroes to live in.’

The brother brought my trunk and stayed a day or two, departing to Cardiff where he was learning electrical engineering. He was a Captain in the Royal Engineers and had survived in asignal company during the war. He was twenty-three. Like all his family, he was charming but what astonished me most was that he helped his sisters. He even did the washing up after meals, teasing a funny old body who fussed around. ‘A man in the kitchen’; unheard of in our family.

Alistair Ransford 12.11.15

He had been at school at Fettes in Edinburgh. Their mother being Scottish (Macalister) determined that her children should have the best education, of course, in Scotland. The girls, (there were two others), went to St Leonards in St Andrews. I knew nothing of Scotland, never heard of Fettes but I did know something about St Leonards being a parent school of Sherborne, so we had a school outlook in common. I too had played lacrosse! I too hated maths!

I sensed I was welcome to go off on a Sunday on discovering that my school friend Rhona Robinson lived within bicycling distance at Flax Bourton. What fun peddling

along empty roads from Pensford, Stanton View and Chew Magna, up and over Ludsgate Bottom, crossing the main Bristol Road and then finding the lane over the moor to Backwell. I felt as joyful as a lapwing in spring, spreading my wings, happy as a lark on a borrowed bike.

The Robinson family were kind, but I had to transform myself quickly to their conservative waysand mind my p's and q's. Dear old Father Robinson put me at my ease talking of horses and showing me his collection of birds - shot ones in glass cases.

"I'll fetch you back in my car 'Juliet' if you like, suggested Alister. We arranged I'd be on the Backwell common at four-thirty and I remember how shyly I introduced Captain Ransford to Rhona. We tied the bicycle on the back of the car and I squeezed into the front of the two-seater beside him.

It seems strange now that it never entered my head that anyone would like me. I was absolutely sick of the boyfriend talk of my sisters and what I saw of romantic marriage in my parents was such a disillusion that I felt 'I'd have none of it.' "I want to see the world" I had once said to my father. "Nonsense, you don't know your own country." "I can see that when I am old.."

Before he quickly squashed my idea of being a nurse by remarking: "you'd be no good, you can't even shut a door quietly". So I grew up with little pride in myself. I even hated my red hair. It would not stay up, so I left it in a plait. The Ransfords won't mind.They did not mind anything, showing their appreciation of whatever I did so that my efforts to be useful were indefatigable. To be among people who NEVER found fault enabled me to blossom as bright as the flowers during that remarkable hot summer of 1921.

It was not until the autumn that Alister's attention to me was more noticeable than that he paid to his cousin Nan Davies, a 'student' on the farm. At the Clifton Zoo he chaffed me as I tried to take a snapshot of a lion through the bars. Another time, when with the Ransfords hearing 'theMikado' at the Royal Theatre in Bath, I was far more aware of Alister sitting in the row behind than at KoKo or Nanki Pooh on the stage.

Another day Roddie offered to take me to Glanmonnow coming out of his way to do so. Usually I would havejumped to go with him. We all loved Roddie Williams who so often stayed with us between periods in hospital. A bomb had crippled his legs making crutches necessary for many many years. His courage and cheerfulness influenced us all. I polished his boots, we cleaned his motor bike and side-car and his car. He called me his 'Faithful Ally', so no wonder he was disappointed when I refused his offer. "But I do not want to go home." After he departed, I wondered. How extraordinary? Why? Might it be because Alister might

come down here next week? Recently, on taking down some curtains, he had helped me and I felt myself blushing and very shy as I saw the intense look of adoration in his glorious blue eyes which penetrated the corners of my heart and the depths of my bowels. I just knew his eyes were ‘heaven.’

In October my father took Frankie and me to the Dairy Show in London. We drove up from Glanmonnow and stayed at the Russell Hotel. The Ransfords were showing their birds and I had been invited with them to go to a theatre by the Pophams. "I'll take you to a dance afterwards" suggested Alister, who was then working at Battersea Power Station. Returning home, I ventured to say I had had an invitation from the Pophams to a theatre but was immediately torn to shreds by my father. “Who do you think you are? Accepting invitations from
people I do not know - when am I taking you”. I was compelled to refuse under pressure, not caring to admit it was because of a severe father!

At the show, Alister followed me round all day - helping to decipher ‘Lady Bountiful’ in the catalogue and find the beautiful White Leghorn 1st prize hen in her cage. Of course she won! Had I not helped to wash her, polish the comb and claws a few days ago?

Before leaving, my father spoke to Alister and they exchanged experiences in France during the war. We had just subscribed to a room in memory of Geoffrey at the Toc H Hostel in London. As Alister had been to the original Toc H, in Poperinghe, he was keen to know the London address which my father offered to give him. “Come to the hotel, after breakfast tomorrow as we are leaving early", he said, and then securing me safely by his side, took us to see Fay Compton in ‘Quality Street’ that evening.

Next morning Alister was waiting in the hall before my father came down to breakfast. Frankie and I gave him the address and then she went up to pack. I stood speechless, loathe to follow her, but I must say goodbye. Alister held my hand. “I wish you could have come out with us, but you must come and stay again”. “I do so hope so.” “Yes, so do I.” And as I returned upstairs a black cloud of gloom loomed in my heart.

“Glanmonnow, the farm, work, no money. How shall I ever be able to go away again?” New horizons had shone for me. I had seen what fun life could be with the Ransfords, what appreciation and kindness meant with the Robinsons, but I must face the wrangles and bitter unsympathetic misunderstandings and the discontent that racked my heart at home.

Sitting behind in the Sunbeam car as we drove home I was a dull, tired, forlorn passenger, loathe to respond to anything -just a

“A self yeast of Spirit — a dull dough sours I see
the lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine and their sweating selves but worse.”

As Gerald Manley Hopkins so aptly describes. We sped at 30 miles an hour taking most of theday. It was considered good timing in 1921.

“What is the matter, Tory?" asked Phoebe on seeing me so sullen, “Was Daddy horrid? Wasn'tQuality Street lovely?" She and I shared a bedroom. For long hours we talked. For the first time I told her about Alister. “I suppose I AM in love with him.” Exhausted, sleep came at last.

Next morning, Phoebe up and dressed first rushed up with a letter for me. “Look, look! I bet Iknow WHO it is from!” I did too, excitedly, I wanted to read it, alone. "I must get dressed andclean my teeth first.” Then I read that he loved me, would I marry him? He was writing to myfather to ask if he could come down and become engaged. He had written and posted the letterimmediately on leaving the Russell Hotel yesterday morning. It bore a 1penny stamp. (Years later
he showed me the post box in which he posted that very important letter!)

There was no holding me. I felt like a young colt let out to grass in spring. I wanted to kick myheels, toss my mane and fly off to the stars. Everything shone, but I could not blazen my secretjoy to the world. It was much too too precious, so I volunteered to take a bale of wheat to a farmnear Garway Hill. To sit behind the cob ‘Button’, jolting along in the float gave me ample time tothink and hug Alister’s wonderful letter to my heart. I tried to be reasonable, I tried to come
down to earth, but whatever I thought, there seemed no reason in the wide wide world why Ishould not marry Alister!

Oh, dear I was soon to know that my father knew many reasons against it when he summonedme to his study after reading that Alister wished to come down and ask for my hand. I stoodshivering with nervous fear as he ranted, shouting questions at me. “Ridiculous, you? You only19 years old, knowing nothing, marrying a penniless army captain. Who does HE think he is?Nonsense I tell you. THIS must STOP”

Alistair Ransford

I was reduced to a lump of despair, utterly astonished that my father could conjure up so muchWRONG. As he continued, he demanded a year's silence and that ALL letters must be burnt.Though rebellious, I kept silent. Arguing was no good. Does HE imagine one year's silence andnot writing letters will kill our love. Even if I do burn the letters, each word will be graven on myheart for ever...

I did not know what was written from my father to Alister, for I heard from him that he had been rushed to Mill Hill hospital with acute appendicitis so that he could not come down until herecovered. Letters from him came daily though my father instructed that EVERY letter broughtby the postman must come to him first! It was not difficult to meet the postman half way downour long quarter of a mile drive. He was on my side. "Another one Miss!" But I missed seeing a registered parcel containing an R.E. badge broach. My father sent it back, I never knew.

We kept our bargain. "What utter fools" you will say. Pressure damped my spirits. I could not begin to think with NO MONEY and NO CLOTHES presentable to go anywhere.

I did not burn those letters. How could I? We'd been brought up to be honest; to keep ourword; never tell lies. I did the next best thing, taking them to our old Red Indian Camp. A year to WAIT. Only mother and Phoebe knew besides my father of whom my mother,loyal as ever, said, "Father knows best." I did tell my friend Rhona, who told her mother. Aforbidding looking woman but with a warm heart. She would not get involved with others' familyaffairs but sent a message to steel my broken spirit. "It is TRUE love, it will come right in the
end, TRUE LOVE, TORY", Rhona emphasised and with that I struggled on.

I kept silence to the Ransfords too, not caring to admit such a cruel father. Perhaps I brooded inself-pity, reading: “The joy of a whole life dies when love is dead." At Christmas I read amessage on a cracker: it seemed it had floated from Heaven.

“Though twix you and me
May run the sea

Never shall I cease
Loving thee."

I kept it safe between the pages of my bible, where it still lies.Looking back, my parents did much to compensate in their determination to keep me happy at home. I was taken to the Hereford Hunt Ball arrayed in a beautiful white satin dress, and I wasinvited by Arthur to the Oriel Ball in Oxford.

It would have been all great fun if I had allowed myself to enjoy it, but even being given a WhiteRose for being the ‘Belle of the Ball’ by a rather worse for drink dancer seemed no joke (to me!)I was just bloody minded...

In April 1922, we were due to leave Glanmonnow. To me it seemed like the crack of doom. I burnt rubbish, collected out of the house for 3 months... tidying everywhere. Some of the familywent to Devon for a holiday while Daddy, Kitty and I stayed till the last.

“Go and turn off all the taps”, commanded my father,“and see that every plug is out.” I did so,mingling my tears with the water draining away. All I love is here, I thought, "What is Ieft to hope for? No Geoffrey. No Alister." Just utter indescribable desolation ahead!

This is a rough idea, I wrote at about 19 years old:

Glanmonnow

Glan-monnow on the hill-top
Glan-monnow in the Sun
Glan-monnow with the river running by
There the children laugh and play
There the sun shines all the day
Rabbits, birds and squirrels gamble
Scutter, flutter, fly and scramble

In wind and rain or sunny weather
Mid the bracken and the heather
Down the drive beside the lime trees
Blackbirds, finches, wrens and thrushes
Make their nests among the bushes
“Come to us” they call and sing
Calling to us as their King

And the little lady larches
Tall and slim, sedate, remember
Moonlit nights, between their branches
Stars shine
While the magic harvest moon
Sheds glorious light

Squirrels, weasels, stoats and tom-tits
Snowdrops, primroses and violets
Cowslips and the daffodils
Nod their heads and bid us bide

Oh, the happy laughing days
Listen to the doves coo cooing
See the nut hatch in the trees
There’s the blackbird singing, singing
Age old song for ever new
Never, never go away

Say you will come back one day
Come back, come back, come back and play