

‘Our Quaker Dead’: A Forgotten Quaker History

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Abstract

This article surveys Quakers who died in the First World War in the service of their country, not necessarily as members of the armed forces, although the majority were such. The narrative highlights the context within which the Quaker Peace Testimony should be understood, especially in relation to the issue of compulsory military service. That testimony does not entail adherence to a pacifist stance, although an abhorrence of war and the promotion of peace was still paramount within London Yearly Meeting from 1914 to 1918. It was to be the issue of ‘liberty of conscience’ as a general principle that ensured unity within it when the voices of dissent were at times challenging and divisive. This article seeks to redress a misinterpretation of the testimony, but more importantly seeks to uncover the story of a group of men whose sacrifice has been overlooked and largely forgotten.

Keywords

Peace Testimony, pacifism, liberty of conscience, militia, enlistment, conscientious objectors, Wartime Statistics Committee, Quaker schools, War Graves Commission, war memorials, death notices, disownment, Friends Ambulance Unit, Friends War Victims Relief Committee

Introduction

A small group of men associated with London Yearly Meeting (LYM) represent a story that has been largely untold during the last century. The reasons for this might be simply explained: exposure was unnecessary, it was a small number, and their existence was a distraction to a more fundamental discourse relating to the integrity of the Quaker Peace Testimony and long-standing popular perceptions of its expression.

However, a more complex and nuanced analysis might posit an inadequate understanding of that discourse and argue that, over the 365 years of the Religious

Society of Friends' existence, the Peace Testimony has been misinterpreted and improperly understood. This article does not seek to explore that complexity in any detail, but seeks to provide a broader understanding of how Quakers approached that testimony, and how that approach was more pragmatic than has been previously understood, especially in relation to the First World War.

This article divides into six main sections. The first offers an overview of the Peace Testimony in the light of expectations placed upon Quakers up to 1852. This is followed by an exploration of the challenge of conscription within LYM and the inevitable tensions around the declaration of war in 1914. This is not intended to reflect on all the arguments that were ongoing within it in relation to the testimony, such as the discussion around the South African Wars, which sharpened desire among many, particularly younger Friends, for greater understanding as to the personal and corporate obligations of the testimony and their attempts to recover what they thought to be its core. The third section considers the role of what became known as the Wartime Statistics Committee, established by LYM in 1916 to gauge the involvement of its members and attenders in the war effort across all its Monthly Meetings, while the fourth considers seven Meetings that did not provide returns to the committee. The penultimate section relates to data on those who died, examined within six categories, providing information on particular individuals alongside some statistical information. The final section draws broad conclusions from the deaths identified. This research is still in progress, and some 1,679 records are still to be looked at; thus the total number of deaths may rise.

Commemoration of the centenary of the First World War has been a dominant topic in recent years, and Quakers in Britain, rightly, have highlighted the often tragic and sad experiences of the conscientious objector during the conflict, as well as focussing on the practical contribution of the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU), the Friends War Victims Relief Committee (FWVRC) and the Emergency Committee on Aliens. These are worthy reminders of social action in adversity, while at the same time remaining true to the demands of conscience and affirming that witness against war is an essential component of Christian faith and practice. Yet it is a fact that many Quaker men served in the military during the war, and some were killed. They deserve as much recognition as the Quaker conscientious objectors or those who served in non-military units. The conundrum, if it be such, is that, 'To the outside world, a fighting Quaker, a Quaker supporter of war is a misnomer, a confusion',¹ and dead Quaker soldiers were a contradiction better disregarded. They are part of a 'forgotten' Quaker history.

1 *The Friend (TF)* letter from Charles Edwards Gregory, Evesham, 20 September 1918, 576.

The Peace Testimony

Many interpret the Peace Testimony as indicating that Quakers are pacifists. This is erroneous. Rubinstein, in his presidential address to the Friends Historical Society in 2014, concentrating on Friends and war between 1899 and 1945, summarises the inconsistency inherent in that understanding while reminding us that LYM was, and still is, a peace church.² (For a more detailed and extensive treatment Kennedy is essential reading.³) The First World War was to provide a ‘painful re-examination of the society’s pacifist heritage’⁴—or, in reality, the Society’s peace heritage. It is questionable that, prior to 1899, the description ‘pacifist’ is accurate, and in any case that heritage was far from being a linear, uninterrupted process of noble bearing and stance on principle. From 1660 to 1916 there was no absolute compulsion for Quakers to join the armed forces to fight foreign wars. Enlistment into the regular army was entirely voluntary, and Quakers in Britain could, in conscience, stand apart from the call to be involved in any armed conflict. There was recruitment into the local militia, but this was haphazard and often dependent on local circumstances. In fact, following the 1660 Restoration, Quakers were automatically excluded—as were Catholics and other Dissenters—from military service. They were considered a threat to the political order, and could not be expected to defend the crown. The Militia Act of 1661 confirmed the king as supreme commander of the armed forces, but Quakers and others were excluded from their ranks, and indeed the local militias were often used by the authorities to persecute Quakers. As the perceived threat to the establishment diminished, however, especially after the failure of the Jacobite rebellions, so the legal encumbrances to the recruitment of non-Anglicans into militias were relaxed.

The reorganisation of the militias in 1757 presented Quakers with a challenge. The Militia Act of 1757 aimed to create a professional national military reserve for home defence, and the liability for its organisation fell on each county, directed firmly by the Lord Lieutenants. Membership of the militias was selected by ballot, and all able-bodied men, in every parish, were expected to serve, although until 1798 militia officers had to be Anglicans. From 1757 the challenge for Quakers was that they could be selected by ballot, but the legislation did not require them to serve personally if they could produce a substitute to take their place. Those selected could pay a fine of £10, but this did not excuse that person from being balloted to serve at the next ballot. In certain instances the elective sub-division could hire substitutes to replace Quakers,

2 Rubinstein, D., ‘Friends and War 1899–1945’, *The Journal of the Friends Historical Society* 65 (2014), pp. 3–30.

3 Kennedy, T. C., *British Quakerism 1860–1920: the transformation of a religious community*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, especially chapters 9, 10 and 11.

4 Phillips, B., ‘The Society of Friends’, in Leventhal, F. M. (ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain: an encyclopaedia*, New York: Garland, 1995, p. 309.

and could then recover the cost by distraint.⁵ There was then, for Quaker men, the challenge of personal conscience in the matter of how they would react to the ballot. If balloted, what did they do? If they paid for substitutes, or paid the fine, they were deviating from denominational expectations. Some adhered to the discipline. Pearson Thistlethwaite notes that within Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting in 1809 four Friends were imprisoned for refusing to pay for a substitute when called up to the militia.⁶ In 1760 the Yearly Meeting noted its disquiet regarding Friends in some counties using substitutes and payment to exempt themselves from militia service, 'a practice inconsistent with that testimony for the reign of the Prince of Peace.'⁷

The Napoleonic Wars brought further challenges, and in 1810 the imprisonment of a few young men for refusing militia service was recorded.⁸ In 1809 the total cost of distraint, across the whole of the Society, came to £13,000,⁹ of which a part was related to military service and it was recorded that a 'A few young men have suffered a temporary imprisonment, never long, under the militia laws.'¹⁰ In 1810 similar recordings were made:

Our belief of the attachment of many of our youth to their peaceable testimony, induced this apprehension, and it has been verified by the confinement of several more on account of the local militia, and of one for the common militia. Though these temporary sacrifices of liberty demonstrate a disposition which endears them to our hearts ...¹¹

The same was noted for 1811, 1812 and 1813, while in 1814 and 1815 ten men were recorded as having been imprisoned. Between 1816 and 1851 the militia system slid slowly into disarray. By 1820 there are no records of imprisonment for refusing to join the militias, although in 1821 a few distraints of a military kind were recorded, and witness overall was estimated to have cost £15,600.¹²

Thus, most Quakers avoided militia duty, sought substitutes or paid the fine. Such laxity was similarly to be a feature of their traditional witness against tithes. Indeed, some Quakers had become tithe owners as a result of their commercial

5 Western, J. R., *The English Militias in the Eighteenth Century: the story of a political issue 1660–1802*, London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1965, p. 251.

6 Thistlethwaite, P., *Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting 1665–1966*, Harrogate: Author, 1979, p. 374.

7 *A Selection from the Christian Advices issued by the YM of the Society of Friends*, London: Edward Marsh, 1851, p. 252.

8 *A Selection from the Christian Advices*, p. 256.

9 Some £1,441,000 at today's prices (using <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result>).

10 *Epistles from the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in London to the Quarterly Meeting and Monthly Meetings from 1681–1857, Volume II*, London: Edward Marsh, 1858, p. 252.

11 *Epistles from the Yearly Meeting of Friends*, p. 151.

12 £895,000 at 2014 prices (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result>).

activities. As Evans notes in his history of tithes between 1690–1851, ‘there must have been a large number of Quakers who regularly and continuously paid tithes’,¹³ and evasions, with outright collusion, were legion. In 1728 Meeting for Sufferings,¹⁴ the Society’s executive body, took steps to deal with what was seen as obvious deterioration in the traditional witness, but to little effect.

Up to 1852, then, there was a discernible gulf between belief and practice, with a strong element of pragmatic compromise evident. After the Militia Act of 1852 the militia was to be raised entirely by voluntary enlistment, and so the position of Quakers was safeguarded, with no expectation that they would undertake any military service.

The distinction between pacifism (the personal conviction that it is wrong to take part in war) and pacifism (an ethic of responsibility to prevent and oppose war) is useful.¹⁵ Up to 1916 Quakers in Britain could, as an organisation, identify with the latter. In fact, Meredith Weddle argues that the early Quaker position on nonviolence was in the main a positive and personal spiritual choice, and that commitment to it was never so monolithic as to be absolute. There was to be reconciliation between religious principles and military and religious needs. There were to be periods when personal interpretation of the testimony and local circumstances shaped responses.¹⁶ Richard Greaves’ summation was that, despite an inevitable element of pragmatism surrounding its development, the testimony was a declaration of intent. It was not a declaration meant for ‘withdrawal and quiescence but a statement of engagement and vigour’ not ‘synonymous with a life of retreat’.¹⁷ This seems to be a fair summary of the situation in 1914.

The introduction of conscription in 1916, however, meant that men of a certain age had to respond to an absolute legal, personal requirement to join the armed forces, and the Yearly Meeting had to consider its response. Were all Quaker men expected to adhere to the demands of the peace testimony by refusing to undertake military service? Inevitably, a polarity of views revealed itself within LYM, some Friends being wholly supportive of the war, others stridently clear that military service could not be countenanced. In practice many did take up service, and were tolerated and supported from within the Yearly Meeting. Quakers were to remain divided over the question of military service, but were united in upholding the principle of liberty of conscience and witness concerning

13 Evans, E. J., ‘A History of the Tithe System in England 1690–1850’, PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 1970, p. 186.

14 Hereafter as Sufferings, and MfS in footnotes.

15 Ceadel, M., *Pacifism in Britain, 1914–1945: the defining of a faith*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.

16 Baldwin Weddle, M., *Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker pacifism in the seventeenth century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

17 Greaves, R. L., ‘Shattered Expectations? George Fox, the Quakers and the Restoration State, 1660–1685’, *Albion: a quarterly journal concerned with British studies* 24/2 (1992), pp. 237 and 259.

compulsory involvement with the military. The 1917 Yearly Meeting strongly reiterated this and in the face of other developments, such as censorship under the Defence of the Realm Act, which saw three Friends imprisoned in 1918, declared that it 'renewed our testimony on behalf of liberty of conscience ... we no longer have full freedom of speech, of action or of the Press. We therefore reaffirm our testimony as to the supremacy of conscience.'¹⁸

Creeping Militarisation and Enlistment

The Yearly Meeting had long been vocal in its opposition to any notion of compulsory military service as envisaged by, for example, the National Service League, founded in 1902, and which by 1911 could claim 91,000 members. Two commissions on the armed forces, one in 1892 and another in 1904, had endorsed some form of conscription. Between 1908 and 1914 five parliamentary bills were introduced in Parliament to implement conscription in various guises, all of which failed.¹⁹ When in 1909 universal military training was introduced in Australia and New Zealand, LYM had been much exercised,²⁰ although some voices, who in 1914 were to be stout supporters of the war effort, would comment differently. H. Sefton Jones, a prominent and weighty Friend, commented on looking at the Australian Defence Acts that 'in accepting useful service under civil control in lieu of military service, Friends would sacrifice none of their testimonies, whilst yielding every reasonable obedience to the declared will of the peoples with whom their lot is cast.'²¹ Such arguments would reappear in 1914. In June 1914, two months before the outbreak of war, the Yearly Meeting declared:

We must continue to offer strenuous opposition to the establishment in any part of the British Empire of a system of compulsory military training. The youth of the nation requires to be trained in true conception of patriotism and of the duty and privilege of service for country and for humanity, but we maintain that this service is best promoted by an appeal to the highest elements rather than by associating it with warlike institutions which are out of harmony with the growing sense of international brotherhood.²²

That last phrase was, perhaps unfortunately, not borne out by reality once war was declared.

18 *Yearly Meeting Proceedings, 1917 (YMP)* (London), minute 105, 135.

19 Beckett, I., 'The Nation in Arms 1914–18', in Beckett, I. F. W. and Simpson, K. (eds), *A Nation in Arms: a social study of the British Army in the First World War* (Manchester: MUP, 1985), p. 4.

20 *TF*, 28 January 1910, report of delegation to see the prime minister about the legislation.

21 *TF*, 14 February 1913, p. 109. Sefton Jones was the son of William Jones, who became secretary of the Peace Society in 1883, was prominent in Quaker relief during the Franco-Prussian War and wrote *Quaker Campaigns in Peace and War*.

22 *TF*, 5 June 1914, p. 423.

As a peace church LYM was consistent in its public pronouncements about the First World War, but controversy was never far away. When in August 1914 Sufferings issued a peace message of goodwill in response to the outbreak of war, it did not find favour with everyone. Such was the response to it that *The Friend* felt unable to print any letters received in respect of the message—an exercise in self-censorship no doubt seeking to avoid the exacerbation of division:

We have considered the desirability of inserting such letters in *The Friend* and, whilst anxious to open our correspondence columns as widely as possible, have come to the conclusion that little or nothing profitable is to be gained by so doing ... In regard to the action of the Government we think that it is not entirely suitable or convenient that we should open the columns ... to a political controversy.²³

Inevitably, the question of voluntary enlistment among its membership challenged the Yearly Meeting in 1915. But *The Friend* could comment that, despite the differences, ‘the heart of the Society was true to its peace principles.’²⁴ Robert H. Marsh quoted historic examples to show how Friends had compromised their peace testimony in the past (for example, John Bright’s view that it was never ‘peace at any price’), and recklessly used the example of Brigadier-General John Nicholson, who had relieved Delhi during the Indian Mutiny, as ‘the son of a Quaker father.’²⁵ For J. W. Graham the dilemma for the Society arose not from insincerity but from the complexity of the issues surrounding service during a time of war.²⁶ The discussion inevitably rehearsed arguments heard in 1910, when the Territorial Forces, an organisation joined by some young Friends, were formed. At that time the hope was expressed in Sufferings that, if action was taken against them, ‘it would be of a very loving kind.’²⁷

When the Peace Committee reported to Yearly Meeting in 1912 it rejoiced that many young Friends were ‘showing the disposition to enquire about peace views for themselves’ and that the testimonies could not just rest on tradition.²⁸ In 1915 the Yearly Meeting could look back to the formation of the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) in 1914 as a reflection of this and as a means for young men to demonstrate their loyalty and patriotism without having to join the military.

Ormerod Greenwood, in his study of the Quaker contribution to the relief of suffering, highlights how this was tied to an understanding of the peace testimony. The call of J. Wilhelm Rowntree in 1895 that ‘the message of

23 *TF*, 21 August 1914, p. 615.

24 *TF*, 7 May 1915, p. 396.

25 His father had died when he was nine, and he had been reared by his Presbyterian mother. An East India Company officer, his actions during the mutiny were decidedly brutal and indefensible.

26 *TF*, 7 May 15, p. 403.

27 *TF*, 2 June 1910, p. 378.

28 *YMP*, 1912, p. 108.

salvation is cold comfort to men who are starving here' was a challenge accepted by many young Friends, bringing Quakers in Britain to a more modernist view of their witness and duty. They were 'drawn together into a fellowship of service', as Binns described it, which Greenwood feels came to characterise the way younger Friends interpreted their faith.²⁹ Thus the formation of the FAU should be understood as social witness to the demands of suffering rather than as a pacifist statement at the outbreak of war ensuring that younger Friends could show their patriotic spirit. Even as a more active pacifistic stance became more evident to Quaker identity 'so too did the provision of relief as a constructive act of international friendship ... peace meant more than the absence of armed conflict.'³⁰

The formation of the FAU was not initially greeted with wholesale enthusiasm, however. Henry Tuke Mennell of Croydon wrote that he was uncertain about the proposed Unit, as he saw it as part of the military, and that, 'This was the view Friends took in 1870, when they were able to carry out work under the War Victims Fund, strictly limited to non-combatants, the extent and blessings of which it would be difficult to over-estimate.'³¹ The response the following week was that the unit was not 'aiding militarism ... ours is the answer of the human heart.'³² Despite Mennell's initial hesitations, four of his sons served in non-military capacities: Bryan, in 1914, went into the FAU, two more served with the FWVRC, and the fourth, Robert Oscar,³³ became secretary of the Friends Service Committee (FSC),³⁴ the committee established by the Yearly Meeting in 1915 to challenge compulsory military service and, after it was introduced, to support those who refused to serve.

In November 1914 an appeal was made to Sufferings pleading for its warm sympathy towards the FAU, 'but after earnest consideration there does not seem sufficient unanimity to adopt such a resolution'.³⁵ In February 1915 Sufferings considered a minute from Manchester Preparative Meeting suggesting that the Unit might perhaps come under the cognizance of the FWVRC, which might be enlarged for this purpose.³⁶ That never happened and the FAU remained,

29 Ormerod Greenwood, J., *Quaker Encounters*, York: William Sessions Ltd, 1975, who quotes Rowntree (p. 170) and Henry Bryan Binns (p. 171). His chapter 10, pp. 165–84, offers a fuller exploration of this development.

30 Gill, R., *Calculating Compassion: humanity and relief in war, Britain 1870–1914*, Manchester: MUP, 2013, p. 157.

31 *TF*, 21 August 1914, p. 640.

32 *TF*, 4 September 1914, p. 655.

33 By January 1919, Robert Oscar Mennell was to serve four sentences for disobeying military orders and two years in prison as an absolutist conscientious objector.

34 Established by the 1915 Yearly Meeting, and accountable to it, to give support to young men facing conscription, and which proved both a radical and forthright challenge within the Yearly Meeting.

35 Friends House Library (FHL), Minutes of MfS, minute 7, 6 November 1914.

36 MfS, minute 3, 5 February 1915.

although as an independent organisation, under the caring arm of the British Red Cross. By mid-1915 the work of the unit was better supported by Friends and it was asked to report to Yearly Meeting on its activities, although it was never accountable to it.

Ambivalence concerning the FAU³⁷ among some Friends resurfaced in 1916, once conscription was introduced. Robert Mennell, as secretary of the FSC, wrote to Sir George Newman (his cousin) in June expressing his serious doubts about the direction the FAU was taking in light of the agreement reached between it and the War Office,³⁸ making 'any working arrangements impossible as far as Pacifists are concerned'.³⁹ Newman confirmed that restrictions had been agreed, so that men in the unit could no longer take part in public discussion or be involved in anti-war 'agitation or active peace propaganda'.⁴⁰ Mennell sought a conference between the FAU, the FSC, the Yearly Meeting Finance Committee and those Quakers on the committees of the No Conscription Fellowship and Fellowship of Reconciliation to explore how principles had been compromised. Newman declined. FSC papers reveal serious hesitations about FAU practices such as their use of military titles and the level and nature of co-operation with the military. A FSC letter drafted in June 1916, but never sent, highlights this: 'It is becoming increasingly clear that the FAU has come to be recognised by the War Office as an integral part of the organisation of the Army.' T. E. Harvey MP, prominent in support of conscientious objection, expressed his concerns that the FAU and FSC were seen to be working against each other, but even he was concerned that the military representatives on the military tribunals were under the impression that 'the FAU is simply a Quaker Non-combatant corps the object of which is the prosecution of the war.'⁴¹ As it transpired, the tribunals gave conditional exemption to men who were willing to serve with the FAU, which established a General Section, as it became known, to allow for those serving within the domestic sphere, such men not serving in the war zone.

By Yearly Meeting 1915 information had been received about enlistment within the Society from a questionnaire circulated to Monthly Meetings. Out of 65 Monthly Meetings, 58 had responded: 215 young Friends had joined the army

37 See Wynter, R., 'Conscription, Conscience and Controversy: the Friends' Ambulance Unit and the 'Middle Course' in the First World War', *Quaker Studies* 21/2 (2016), pp. 213–34, for a more detailed exploration of the issues, and also Meyer, J., 'Neutral Caregivers or Military Support? The British Red Cross, the Friends' Ambulance Unit, and the Problems of Voluntary Medical Aid in Wartime', *War & Society* 34/2 (2015), pp. 105–20, at <https://doi.org/10.1179/0729247314Z.00000000050> [accessed 12/01/18].

38 All FAU men already in France were subject to conscription, but most were given exemption and did not have to return to their home areas plead their case before the military tribunals.

39 FHL, FSC papers, SER 23, letter 20 June 1916.

40 FHL, FSC papers, SER 23, letter 22 June 1916.

41 FHL, FSC papers, SER 23, letter 11 June 1916.

or navy, 43 of these with the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) (this in itself relieved them of a duty to take up arms);⁴² 30 had joined the Citizen's Guards or similar; 15 Friends served on recruiting committees; two had been killed. Perhaps to defend a purity of purpose, *The Friend* commented that the larger number of these 215 were nominal Friends, hinting, somewhat dismissively, that their actions could not to be taken seriously, since their attachment to the Society was minimal. The report highlighted the fact that 50 resignations had been submitted to Monthly Meetings, of which 30 had been accepted.⁴³

The question of how Monthly Meetings should respond to its enlisted members⁴⁴ was a delicate one. Guisborough Monthly Meeting was anxious that there should be uniformity of action across the Yearly Meeting, since enlistment could be a matter of discipline and possible disownment.⁴⁵ The action taken by North Warwickshire Monthly Meeting in December 1914 was to be replicated across the Yearly Meeting. The Monthly Meeting received a report from a committee established to consider enlistments, part of which read:

We think it will be the wish of the Monthly Meeting to act towards the enlisters in a spirit of tenderness and sympathy, and to avoid any semblance of harsh judgement. In the absence of specific enquiry, we can only speak from common report as to the question of motives We shall be on the safe side, however, if we take it for granted that most of those who have enlisted did so from a real sense of duty, and we may believe that their obedience to what they conceived to be a call to self-surrender will be the means to their advancement and enlightenment in the things of God. And we remember that their response is a step which implies a willingness to part with life itself, as attractive and full, and it cannot therefore be without an element of true goodness.⁴⁶

The report made plain that military service in any form was incompatible with 'true membership in the Society of Friends' and that 'the Monthly Meeting should make it clear that we cannot retain as members those who demonstrate by their action that they differ from us in a matter so vital.' A blanket approach was not pursued and the Monthly Meeting established an enlistment committee to monitor the situation and make contact with enlistees. Some resignations were accepted, but most were deferred until hostilities ceased. This became the

42 Members of the RAMC could be expected to do so if circumstances dictated or if ordered. In July 1915 Western Quarterly Meeting asked Sufferings to make representation to the government regarding RAMC enlistees being transferred into the infantry against their wishes. By August some reassurance on this had been received.

43 *TF*, 28 May 1915, pp. 408–09.

44 Prior to January 1916 enlistment was synonymous with volunteering. After January 1916 all men become conscripts, whether or not they entered the army voluntarily. I have not maintained this distinction to avoid confusion.

45 MfS, minute 7, 5 February 1915.

46 Birmingham Public Library Archives, SF/2/1/1/3/9/1/1 Warwickshire North Enlistment Committee Minute Book 1914–1919, report 8 December 1914.

general rule across the Yearly Meeting. Disciplinary action was not pursued and contact was made with enlistees to demonstrate sympathy, loving support and understanding of their position. Local meetings were encouraged to send messages to the enlistees. Edgbaston Meeting, Birmingham was one such. Its tender, non-judgmental content is worth reading (see Appendix 1). It is almost a letter from a mother to her son; indeed, Gertrude M. Lloyd, one of the two overseer signatories, was the mother of an enlistee who was killed on 4 August 1916 on the Somme.⁴⁷

Darlington Monthly Meeting's approach was possibly less conciliatory, taking a more cautious approach, but being clear that disciplinary action should await the end of the hostilities. As for enlistees:

We sympathise with them in their desire to serve our country ... but we feel that patriotism should not lead us to actions incompatible with the higher service under the Prince of Peace We have decided to take no further disciplinary action in the case of those who have taken up arms but we record our sorrow at their action.⁴⁸

Their one disownment, of W. Trevelyan Thomason⁴⁹ in January 1915, overturned on appeal by Durham Quarterly Meeting, was based on Thomason's attitude to the Peace Testimony but more particularly on the fact that he had publicly identified himself as a Quaker at recruiting meetings. The disappointment of the meeting was apparent in their minute of response, where they continued their criticism of Thomason and stated that the position taken by him was 'utterly inconsistent with the principles we profess on the question of peace'.⁵⁰ Thomason, alive to the criticism, resigned his membership in December 1915; feeling that intolerance was at the base of the Monthly Meeting's actions, he saw no useful purpose in continuing his membership.

Enlistment from August 1914 to January 1916 was a challenge to the Society, and the choice to enlist was defended by many. A letter from a mother of three Quaker soldiers highlights the arguments used to defend the enlistees' decisions as they struggled with the implications of membership in the Society. Frances M. Smee, of Golders Green, wrote to *The Friend* that all her three sons had enlisted 'to uphold as they honestly believe, the honour and freedom both of individuals and nations'. They had done so with seriousness and gravity in the

47 Appendix 1, 950, Letter from Elders and Overseers of George Road Meeting, undated but probably late 1914/early 1915. Imperial War Museum Archives, IWM 20525, 950.

48 Durham Records Office (DRO), SF/Da/MM/1/21. Darlington Monthly Meeting, minute 3, 13 March 1915.

49 Thomason was a direct descendent of John Reckless, sheriff of Nottingham in 1649, when George Fox visited the town, where he was thrown into prison. Reckless and his wife soon afterwards became Quakers, and their home became a meeting place. Thomason was a prominent politician in Middlesborough, serving on the council from 1904 until his death in 1928 and as its MP from 1918 until 1928. He joined the army in 1917.

50 DRO, SF/Da/MM/1/21. Darlington Monthly Meeting, minute 9, 12 August 1915.

way 'they have decided to follow the guidance of the Inward Light', and many, such as her sons, had 'gone through a severe conflict and a time of mental stress'.⁵¹ Her oldest son Rosslyn became a lieutenant in the Household Cavalry and Archibald attained rank as temporary Major in the Suffolk Regiment, and was awarded the Military Cross (MC) for gallantry in the field, to which was added a bar for his further acts of gallantry.⁵² Archibald resigned his membership with Westminster and Longford Monthly Meeting in April 1916, which was accepted, probably not because he was in the military but because he had indicated his determination to join the Church of England. The third brother Colin, an ex-Bootham scholar, became a captain in the Middlesex Regiment. All three survived the war; given the attrition level among officers, their mother was indeed fortunate.

For Friends such as Joan M. Fry, seeking to be conciliatory and sensitive, it was clear that offering the enlisted sympathy did not mean that Friends were endorsing their belief that they were fighting for peace, adding that 'those who hold the Peace Testimony have no feeling but love for men who have entered the army'.⁵³ Like many, she equated adherence to the testimony with being a necessary pacifist witness, but given the atmosphere surrounding issues of compulsion this was probably not surprising. Yearly Meeting in 1916 had been clear in reaffirming 'our entire opposition to compulsory military service and our desire for the repeal of the act'.⁵⁴

Despite this, the call to arms was one which many young Friends could not resist, and they received considerable and considered support from within the Yearly Meeting. Possibly the most prominent expression of this was a letter organised by E. Harry Gilpin in April 1915, to be sent to all Friends who had enlisted. Its phrasing is sensitive, recognising that not all the letters' signatories necessarily agreed with the decision taken by enlistees:

We ... send to all our fellow-members of the Society of Friends, who in the present crisis have deemed it their highest duty to enlist in the Army and Navy, a warm message of friendship. We know that for many of you this decision has meant much Inward conflict, difficulty and sacrifice ... Not all who sign this letter would have seen fit to do as you have done, though many of us are in complete sympathy with your action. We all, however, believe that great diversity of personal opinion and conduct is necessarily found in our Society.⁵⁵

51 *TF*, 5 February 1915, p. 104.

52 His citation in the *London Gazette* (16 September 1918) reads 'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in collecting stragglers who had lost their commanders. He took up a defensive position with them and held it against repeated enemy attacks for four hours, taking prisoners and inflicting heavy casualties. By his gallantry and coolness he set a splendid example, and prevent the enemy from carrying out a flanking movement.'

53 *TF*, 13 September 1918, pp. 553–54.

54 *YMP*, 1916, minute 139, p. 190.

55 *FHL*, Box L 208/44–49.

Some 2,052—10 per cent of the Society's membership, a substantial number—signed the letter, pleading that enlistees should not resign their membership and that the Society had never been entirely agreed in matters of personal opinion or conduct. 'It would not be a living body if it were. Its strength is in unity which underlies diversity.'⁵⁶ Significantly, despite the considerable support for the letter, *The Friend* made only passing reference to it, noting only that those who declined to sign it or were critical of it did so because it contained 'some propositions or suggestions which they could not wholly accept, and this was, of course the reason why it was thought undesirable to print it in *The Friend*'.⁵⁷

Despite this vigorous discussion at the time, military activity among Quaker men has been overlooked. Hardly anything has been said about the casualties among them. This deficiency became apparent to me as I wrote a previous article⁵⁸ and reflected on the deaths of three young Quaker soldiers from South Wales Monthly Meeting. The dearth of commentary on such deaths was striking, but perhaps not surprising. The one exception was an article in *The Friends Quarterly* by Maude Robinson in 1932 entitled 'Lest we Forget'. She wanted to ensure that younger Friends, who had not grown up with the agonies of war and had little knowledge of those who had suffered, combatant and otherwise, should be aware of what had happened, especially since those who had been involved were reluctant to tell their stories. Hers was a sympathetic call to adhere to the traditional testimony on peace, and applauded the stance the Yearly Meetings had taken on the importance of liberty of conscience.⁵⁹ Robinson referred to the number of young men who had been drawn into the whirlpool, identifying from the *Annual Monitor* 108 men who had died.⁶⁰ In carrying out the same exercise, counting the returns in the *Annual Monitor* for 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918 and the final 1919–20 edition, I identified a total of 176 men. The disparity of 68 is somewhat puzzling and I can only imagine that she did not count those listed in the 1919–20 edition.⁶¹

56 Two of the signatories were Constance and Lawrence Rowntree, the widow and son of John Wilhelm Rowntree, who had strenuously opposed the South African Wars—Lawrence initially joined the FAU but resigned, becoming a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Horse Artillery, and was killed in action on 25 November 1917. George Cadbury also signed; his son Egbert enlisted initially in the Royal Naval Air Service, and was to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) and the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

57 *TF*, 28 May 1915, p. 308.

58 Evans, O. G., 'Quakers in Wales and the First World War', *Quaker Studies* 21/2 (2016), pp. 193–234.

59 Robinson [Brighton], M., "'Lest We Forget": a memory of the SoF in the war years [1914–1918]', *Friends Quarterly Examiner* (1932) pp. 91–104, 158–72.

60 The *Annual Monitor* listed Quakers in Britain who had died in each year, and was published between 1812 and 1919–20.

61 There were 74 men listed in the 1919–20 edition who could be considered casualties of war; two were civilians and 60 were military men, while ten served in the FAU or FVWRC and two were conscientious objectors.

The Imperial War Graves Commission (CWGC in the text) was established⁶² originally as an organisation under the British Red Cross and in the absence of any official mechanism for marking and recording graves of those killed. It was then incorporated into the British Army in 1915 as the Graves Registration Commission, and was formally established and constituted by Royal Charter in 1917. It was made responsible for commemorating all those men and women from across the globe who lost their lives while serving with the forces of the British Empire. One of the Commission's principles emphasised equality as a core ideology, such that no distinction should be made between officers and men lying in the same cemeteries or in the form or nature of the memorials.⁶³ The policy of the commission was that anyone who died while in uniform, from the beginning of the war to August 1921, should be commemorated.⁶⁴ Hence, many who died of the Spanish flu or any other medical complaint after 11 November 1918, and still in uniform, are commemorated. Those parameters serve as the basis for this study and the dates within which the dead have been counted.

Determining how many died and bringing their stories to light is problematic. In establishing the FSC in 1916 the Yearly Meeting ensured that the plight of conscientious objectors was carefully monitored. This task was done with considerable care and attention, so much so that in 1918 the Yearly Meeting was asked by those supportive of military action to establish a similar committee for those in the armed forces. The war's end negated that intention, but those pursuing that objective must have influenced discussion in the 1917 Yearly Meeting that considered the level of war activity among the membership. Reading the Yearly Meeting minute it is almost as though the second part was written as an addendum, sought by the pro-war Friends anxious that the role of, and support to, combatant Quakers should not be overlooked. The minute reads:

A desire has been expressed for the preparation of statistics showing the respective numbers of Friends (Members and Attenders) working for or in connection with the Aliens Emergency Relief, the War Victims' Relief and the FAU Committees. In addition to this, information as to the position of members and attenders of military age has been desired. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to procure and tabulate these particulars.⁶⁵

62 Renamed as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) in 1960.

63 The names of those Commonwealth soldiers with no known grave were listed on the Memorials to the Missing, the principal memorials being the Menin Gate in Ypres, Tyne Cot (Ypres Salient), Thiepval on the Somme, the Helles Memorial (Gallipoli), Arras Memorial (Arras sector, north-western France) and the Basra Memorial in Iraq, all with a total of 256,487 names.

64 See https://web.archive.org/web/20110405192931/http://www.cwgc.org//admin/files/History_per_cent20leaflet_per_cent20NEW.pdf [accessed 14/04/19].

65 *YMP*, 1917, minute 114, p. 149.

Sufferings in July then set up what became known as the Wartime Statistics Committee (WSC).⁶⁶

The Wartime Statistics Committee

The WSC prepared a questionnaire to be sent to all Monthly Meetings asking them to complete a return for each man of military age, as defined by the Military Service Act (MSA), who were associated with the meeting, whether as members or attenders. There were to be five such acts over the duration of the war, each one extending the criteria for conscription. In January 1916 enlistment was restricted to single men aged between 18 and 41, but in May 1916 the net was widened to include married men, and by January 1918 occupational restrictions were dropped. The last revision extended age of service to all men up to 51 years of age.

The committee asked for returns by November, an unrealistic expectation given the variable ways Monthly Meetings arranged their business. The method of collecting the information would vary between meetings, some being more particular than others. In some the responsibility fell on the Clerk; the larger meetings established groups to collate information; and some sought direct replies from servicemen, which would inevitably have slowed the process, given that many were serving abroad. The collation could not be hurried.

At Yearly Meeting 1918 it was reported that fourteen Monthly Meetings had not complied with the request and others had not been able to make a complete return. It is unlikely that all Monthly Meetings were ever able to send full returns on the all the men under their care, and no returns were expected for those who might have joined up later in 1918, or were caught up in the criteria of the revised legislation. Given the incompleteness, a reminder to the meetings was agreed. In the final analysis no returns were ever made from seven Monthly Meetings: Alton, Southampton and Poole, Canterbury and Folkestone, Hereford and Radnor, Ratcliff and Barking, Staffordshire, Witney and, finally, Witham.

By Yearly Meeting 1919 the committee had still not reported on their results, instead sending an interim report that indicated that 32 per cent had joined the military, 17 per cent were working in non-military capacities such as the FWVRC, the Emergency Committee or under the Pelham Committee,⁶⁷ 6 per cent worked in munitions, 20 per cent remained in their occupations, 3 per cent were in prison and 20 per cent 'went to ambulance work'.⁶⁸ The WSC noted they had nothing to report to the Yearly Meetings in 1920 and 1921 and did not report

66 Minutes of this committee are not available.

67 The Pelham Committee was set up by the Board of Trade to find suitable Work of National Importance and supervise its allocation to individual COs. Its official title was the Committee on Work of National Importance.

68 *YMP*, 1919, minute 55, p. 73.

to its 1922 session. It was only in November 1922 that their final report went to Sufferings, which then reported to the 1923 Yearly Meeting, and it made no expansive minute in relation to the final analysis of 1,666 returns, recording that, of these, 40.2 per cent applied for and were granted exemption as conscientious objectors; 17.3 per cent applied for and were granted exemption on other grounds; 5.0 per cent applied for and were refused exemption on conscientious grounds; 33.6 per cent enlisted; 3.4 per cent were exempted as not resident in Great Britain; and 0.3 per cent were exempted as Ministers of Religion.⁶⁹ These percentages translate as some 670 men granted exemption on grounds of conscience, with 560 enlisting.

The Friend, commenting on the Sufferings meeting in November, noted wryly that, 'after considerable delay, (the committee) presented their report', but commented that it had not stated how many men had joined the FAU, nor how many were arrested, and that, although the returns were interesting 'as far as they went', their incompleteness was regrettable.⁷⁰ The editor said nothing about the final analysis, and no letters were published about the results, if any were sent in. The only conclusion that one can draw is that by 1923 the membership had no wish to be reminded of the war. They had more important things to focus on, and for Friends, as for everyone else, the 'blasted, splintered landscapes of the trenches ... and the sight of bodies in pieces ... provided the imagery through which the state of mind in the postwar years would be represented and articulated.'⁷¹ It was the right thing to move on and not reflect too much on the horror. At no time did the Yearly Meeting or Sufferings reflect in depth on the implications of the war dead to its membership.

The WSC returns, despite their incompleteness, remain the principal source of information regarding the level of military and non-military activity among Quaker men of military age. They also provide information in relation to family structures and occupations, furnishing a socio-economic profile of the Society. The WSC returns at Friends House, when examined, actually provide details on 2,410 men—1,891 members and 519 attenders—and not the 1,666 upon which the report and analysis to Yearly Meeting relied, a disparity of 744. The analysis to the Yearly Meeting did not include attenders, despite collecting information about them; it relates only to members. This figure of 1,666 also appears among uncatalogued and undated analysis in the archives of the FSC, as does a figure of 2,440 (not in the same document), but without indicating the source of the information. This suggests that the FSC and the WSC worked closely together, and that there would have been considerable overlap in their need for information, given that both were monitoring similar activity.

69 *YMP*, 1923, p. 231.

70 *TF*, 10 November 1922, p. 782.

71 Kingsley Kent, S., *Aftershocks: politics and trauma in Britain 1918–1931*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009, p. 12.

One explanation for this disparity might be that the figures provided to Yearly Meeting were of those returned between December 1917, as requested, and up to March 1918, as reported by Margaret Sefton Jones to Sufferings in November 1922. The committee had decided that to bring the record up to the time when all the men were discharged would be a matter of considerable difficulty and it 'doubted whether the results would be commensurate with the labour and expense involved'.⁷² Had that been done then the record on deaths and level of enlistment would have been more accurate.

Seemingly, then, the committee did not analyse the whole of the returns and ignored attenders, and the statistics presented to the Yearly Meeting in 1923 should be considered as incomplete. Why should this be so? Perhaps the committee never met after 1918? Indeed, the fact that they reported to Sufferings only in November 1922 hints at some blockages. The absence of any minutes is unhelpful, but the task of analysis was far from easy. Their final analysis should have been based on 2,410 men and not on 1,666. Despite this, the proportions of Quakers in the armed forces does not change markedly.

Since attenders were not included in the 1923 report there is still a disparity of 225 (the difference between the 1,891 in the returns less 1,666) and a disparity of 744 names if attenders are included. The simplest explanation for the 225 is that they were returned after November 1918 and thus discounted. Given the time delay, that seems odd, given that what the Yearly Meeting wanted to know was the level of activity across the whole of its membership.

In terms of the analysis of the WSC returns, I have identified all those who had been recorded as being in the armed forces with the exception, at this stage of the research, of those who joined the Non Combatant Corps (NCC). The NCC was established by March 1916, under the MSA, to allow for conscientious objectors to undertake non-combatant duties, but as an arm of the Army Labour Corps its members were members of the armed forces and subject to full military discipline. Some 3,400 men joined its ranks. CWGC figures indicate that 34 NCC men lost their lives, one of whom was an attender with Friends. This initial, limited analysis of the WSC identified 540 members and 191 attenders in the armed forces: a total of 731. Those from the remaining non-military group, who might have subsequently joined the forces, have not yet been identified. This is still work in progress, and entails looking at the remaining 1,679 returns.

Against the WSC total of 2,410, the figure of 731 gives an enlistment rate of 30.33 per cent, slightly lower than the figure given to Yearly Meeting. If the figure of 540 members is compared against the 1,891 members then that percentage falls to 28.55 per cent, but it rises to 32 per cent if they are measured against the 1,666. The WSC shows that, of these 731 men, 89 had died: 69 members and 20 attenders (Table 1). The incompleteness of the WSC returns does not detract from their importance, but, given the importance of

72 MfS, minute 12, 3 November 1922 when the committee was also discharged.

the exercise, why did some Monthly Meeting fail to respond even when they were encouraged to do so?

Table 1: Analysis of WSC returns: men in the armed forces

	Enlisted Members	Enlisted Attendees	Killed Members	Killed Attendees	Total Members	Total Attendees
	540	191	69	20	1891	519
Totals		731		89		2410

The 'Missing' Monthly Meetings

Why Alton, Southampton and Poole never sent their return is hard to understand. In December 1917 they minuted that 25 members and three non-members had returned their forms, and that their details would be copied into the Monthly Meeting minutes before being forwarded; this did not happen.

As a large Monthly Meeting with 300 members they had been active in providing support during the war. Bournemouth meeting house was used by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and they arranged regular visits and meetings for worship for conscientious objectors in prison and work camps. William Alfred Clayton made a hundred such visits, primarily to Dorchester Civil Prison and military camps in Weymouth, and there were 110 visits to Winchester prison by three Friends. Three of their meeting houses, at one time or another, were requisitioned, for short periods, by the military.⁷³

The Monthly Meeting was caring of their members and attendees, and hesitated to accept resignations from those in the forces. In January 1916 Arnold Elliott communicated that he had joined the army and felt it right to resign his membership, adding that he had the greatest respect for the peace principles of those Friends who continued to think differently. The meeting decided that 'such a resignation of a valuable Friend should not be accepted for the present; the Clerk is directed to write to our Friend with a message of our sympathy in his great difficulty informing him of our decision.'⁷⁴ In September 1916 they recorded that seven members were in the army, two were associated with FWVRC and six with the FAU.

Four of their members died while on active duty. One poignant death was that of Thomas R. Winter. He and his brother, David, applied for membership in January 1916 but the meeting felt that, while being sympathetic to their sincere

⁷³ Alton, Basingstoke and Fordingbridge.

⁷⁴ Hampshire Record Office, 24M54/423a, Minutes Alton and Southampton and Poole Monthly Meeting 1911–1918, minute 14, 12 January 1916. In December 1919 Elliott sought a certificate of removal to North Somerset and Wiltshire Monthly Meeting, so had remained in membership after the war.

application, 'such applicants should show full concurrence with Friends views generally not merely to Peace principles.'⁷⁵ Both were admitted into membership in September 1916, by which time they were in training with the FAU. Thomas was to die in hospital in York in November 1917 while serving with the FAU. In November 1919 their mother would be accepted into membership by the Monthly Meeting.

The three others killed were Raymond Ashby, Donald Green and John Basil Taylor. Raymond and Donald died at the Somme in 1916 within one month of each other; both are commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. Donald's father wrote to the meeting in September 1917 to say that he was acting as minister in the Congregational Church at Kingsfield, and he hoped that he would not have to resign his membership because of it. The Monthly Meeting seems to have taken no action with his declaration, a sign perhaps that they were in sympathy with his loss. Lance Corporal Raymond Ashby was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), the oldest British award for gallantry in the field.⁷⁶ Taylor was a native of Sunderland and in 1911 was living with his widowed mother in Boscombe. He died in April 1917, a private in the Royal Fusiliers, and is buried at Bois-Carre British Cemetery. His gravestone bears the inscription 'He shall receive the crown of Life' (James 1,12). Most Quaker military graves, adhering to tradition, bear no inscription.⁷⁷ The meeting also recorded the death from his wounds at the London Hospital of Percy Day Harrison, the son of two of their members, and who in March 1917 was a member of Reading Monthly Meeting. Percy was buried at Wimborne Road Cemetery in Bournemouth.⁷⁸

Folkestone and Canterbury in 1914 was a small Monthly Meeting of 166 members, with ten associate members and 64 attenders. Its minutes do not record receipt of the WSC request nor of collation of figures on the activity of members—no enlistments or deaths from war activity are recorded. Yet it was as exercised as any by the war. In October 1915 Gertrude Amelia Jeffrey wrote resigning her membership, stating that her eldest son was now serving in the army and that she now found herself out of sympathy with Friends. Eric Stainton Jeffrey and his younger brother Edward Maurice were both ex-Saffron Walden scholars. Eric had attested at the age of 19, joined the forces in October 1914, and was a private in the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment—The Buffs—in April 1915, but by March 1916 had been discharged on medical grounds, his papers recording 'General Paralysis of the Insane' and by the summer of 1916 he was a patient at the Retreat, York.⁷⁹ By January 1918 Edward was serving with the

75 Hampshire Record Office, 24M54/423a, Minutes Alton and Southampton and Poole Monthly Meeting 1911–1918, minute 14, 12 January 1916. They were both subsequently admitted into membership in September.

76 His older brother Gerrald served with the FWVRC 1915–18.

77 Such inscriptions had to be paid for by the family.

78 Percy was a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Sussex Regiment, 4th Battalion, Territorials.

79 Military papers recommended that he be discharged as permanently unfit, as he was

FAU in France. Gertrude's resignation was accepted. The Monthly Meeting also accepted the resignation of Arthur J. Wood in January 1917. He felt that, since the Military Tribunals seemed to give preferential treatment to Friends, he 'would rather sever my connection with the Society than apply for exemption as a Friend should circumstances arise for me to have to do so'.⁸⁰ Similarly, they accepted the resignation of Edward W. Horsnail in April 1918, who expressed himself out of sympathy with the views of Friends.

One interesting and unusual event relating to deaths in the war relates to Aldington Mission Hall, which in 1918 had 43 attenders and was under the care of Ashford Preparative Meeting. Aldington, some seven miles from Ashford, had a Quaker meeting house in 1667, which closed in 1791. In April 1919 Aldington parish council approached the Monthly Meeting asking if they could place a memorial tablet in the mission hall for those who had fallen in the war, a duplicate to the one to be placed in the parish church. The meeting minuted: 'While we should not ourselves have taken such a step we feel that the offer is a valuable one, as expressing goodwill and a sense of Christian unity, and we decide to accept it in this spirit, subject to the arrangement of details with a small committee of Friends.'⁸¹ This must be unique, and after 1920 Aldington was probably the only Quaker meeting house with a war memorial on its walls.⁸² None of the dead, according to a local historian, were in membership of the Society,⁸³ although some might have attended the mission. Interestingly, and in contrast, in the same year the Monthly Meeting would not allow the Boy Scouts the use of the meeting house at Dover 'on account of the military tendency of the movement',⁸⁴ an attitude, incidentally, that was prevalent across much of the Society in the early days of the scout movement.

Ratcliff and Barking Monthly Meeting had 586 members, and noted receipt of the request from the WSC in December 1917, somewhat belatedly given the hope that returns were expected by November: 'a request is received from Meeting for

manic: 'Has been restless, talkative and unable to give a clear account of his recent past doings.' Eric had claimed that he had been at Gallipoli, which the military could not verify, but the Buffs were at Suvla Bay in July 1915 and then in Egypt by December 1915. His medical board, at Alexandria, decided that his incapacity was 'not the result of service', but he was awarded an interim pension.

80 Kent Archives, N/FMf 1/14, Minutes of Folkestone and Canterbury Monthly Meeting (FCMM), minute 5, 11 January 1917.

81 Kent Archives, N/FMf 1/14, FCMM, minute 5, 9 April 1919.

82 The wording on the tablet emulates the minute: 'This Table Was Erected, Together With A Similar One In The Parish Church, By The People Of Aldington. The Society Of Friends Gratefully Acknowledge The Good Feeling Thus Expressed'. The tablet has 12 names. The mission meeting was sold c.1922 and the meeting became an independent Evangelic Church, which still meets there.

83 Private correspondence with David Hughes, who was responsible for ensuring the erection of a long overdue war memorial for Aldington in 2016.

84 FCMM minute 5, 9 July 19.

Sufferings for full particulars of war time service rendered by our members and attenders who are of military age, the minute is continued.’⁸⁵ In January 1918 they appointed a group of nine, with a representative from each of their local meetings, to collect the information, and in so delegating the task to such a large group it would appear that it was never completed.

Herbert E. Brooks in July 1915 wrote to the meeting that he was no longer in sympathy with Friends, commenting:

the preservation of order and the protection of the weak is maintained by Force clothed in the uniform of the Police. Between nations and in the absence of international force of similar and adequate character there is unfortunately no means of defence against wrong doing and no protection for the weak except by the use of military and naval force.⁸⁶

Brooks added that in the light of this he had encouraged his only son to enlist, while he himself was acting as Chairman of his local recruiting committee and had accepted command of a volunteer training corps. He felt that by resigning he would not injure the reputation of the Society. They accepted his resignation. His son returned from the war: Captain Herbert Reginald Graham Brooks served in the Royal Garrison Artillery and was awarded the Military Cross.⁸⁷ His father would have been proud, and fortunate; the attrition rate for officers was extraordinarily high, especially those, like Herbert, with a public school background.⁸⁸

Barking and Ratcliff noted the deaths of three of their members but no other data relating to the war. The minutes on the deaths read coldly, but it was the Quaker style: ‘The Clerk is directed to remove his name from the list of members.’⁸⁹ Thus it was for Private John Fred Willings Johnson of the Royal Canadian Regiment, killed in action on 22 February 1917 and buried at Ecoivres Military Cemetery, Mont St Elor, with the inscription on his grave ‘Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.’ A former pupil of Saffron Walden School, his name does not appear on the school’s Roll of Honour, but Gunner Arthur Edward Sholl of the Royal Field Artillery, killed aged 24 on 30 September 1917, is on that roll. The third death was that of Private Harold Simpson of the Middlesex Regiment, who died on 11 April 1917 aged 27, one of 34,000 names

85 FHL, Minutes Ratcliff and Barking Monthly Meeting, minute 15, 12 December 1917.

86 FHL, Minutes Ratcliff and Barking Monthly Meeting, minute 4, 14 July 1915.

87 forces-war records.co.uk database [accessed 03/11/17]. His citation reads: ‘When his battery position was heavily shelled by a concentration of hostile guns he worked hard with the personnel to extricate men from the debris of a dug-out and to extinguish fires amongst the ammunition. His conduct throughout was such as to establish confidence and give courage to all his men.’

88 See Lewis, J., *Six Weeks: the short and gallant life of the British officer in the First World War*, London: Orion, 2010. In 1911 Herbert, aged 16, was a pupil at Clifton College, Bristol, a Corporal Cadet in their OTC and a 2nd Lieutenant in their force in 1912.

89 FHL, Minutes Ratcliff and Barking Monthly Meeting, minute 15, 11 July 17.

on the Arras Memorial—most killed in the Battle of Arras, fought between 9 April and 16 May 1917.

The Monthly Meeting might have been conservative in its view on the question of war activity. In 1916 it turned its attention to the duty of the Society in war, writing a long minute suggesting that the war effort was secondary and not as pressing:

The duty of our Society in preparation for a Permanent Universal Peace at the close of the war, has claimed the serious consideration of the Monthly Meeting at this time. We cannot but feel that this war has been made possible by the failure of the Christian Churches of the world in their testimony to the real implications of the Gospel of Christ We feel that it is only a re-baptism of the Churches with the living Presence of the Holy Spirit that the change of heart so essential to the cessation of war can be accomplished. The Society of Friends has ever stood for the unlawfulness of all war; but we should remember that the testimony of George Fox went beyond any mere negative teaching: 'We should live' said he 'in that life which takes away the occasion for all war'.⁹⁰

Among the minutes of the FSC are notes of a meeting held at Jordans' Meeting House in September 1916 giving examples of inadequate support provided by some overseers to men in prison, thus at both Taunton and Willesden Meetings the 'Overseers are doing nothing', but then there was this sad note in relation to Ratcliff and Barking that the Superintendent of the Sunday morning children's school (not specified where) 'will soon be in need, but as he is not a Friend the Overseers refuse to do anything. Has been an attender and teacher ... for years.'⁹¹

Staffordshire Monthly Meeting had 86 members in 1914. Its minutes from 1914 to 1921 are sparse, but in June 1916 they established a committee to advise and assist 'both members and attenders, and others not connected with us'⁹² who were in financial difficulties because of the demands of the Military Services Acts. They reported one death, that of Edward Dell Brown, a 2nd lieutenant in the King's Royal Rifle Corps and a former pupil at Ackworth who was killed in August 1917. His younger brother Lancelot William, also an ex-Ackworth pupil, enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1918. Edward's death is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial along with the names of seven other men associated with the Society, two of whom were brothers.⁹³ The memorial contains the names of some 35,000 men with no known grave, nearly all of whom died between August 1917 and November 1918 in what was known as the Ypres Salient.

90 FHL, Minutes Ratcliff and Barking Monthly Meeting, minute 4, 16 February 1916.

91 FHL, Minutes FSC, SER/M1.

92 Staffordshire Record Office (SRO), D4769/1 Minutes of Staffordshire Monthly Meeting, minute 6, 8 June 1916.

93 Arnold Pumphrey, aged 26, was a captain in the Durham Light Infantry, was awarded the DSO and killed in action 21 September 1917 and Hubert was a 2nd Lieutenant in the Cheshire Regiment, killed in action 26 April 1918. Both were ex-Bootham scholars.

In December 1917 Staffordshire Monthly Meeting recorded that letters had been sent to 12 of their members and attenders involved in war duties, with no note of their location or actual activity, and eight had replied, appreciative of the interest. They had accepted Harold Wood, serving as an orderly with the FAU, into membership in December 1917, and the only other named Friend actively serving and noted in the minutes was Ernest Marshall, in the RAMC. He addressed the meeting in October 1918, and spoke of his, and his brother's, 'gladness' of the meeting's letter: 'a tangible evidence the friends⁹⁴ at home had not forgotten them and encouraged friends to do all they possibly could to keep in touch with those who were away from home.'⁹⁵ There is no reference to the WSC questionnaires in their minutes.

Neither did Hereford and Radnor Monthly Meeting send in results—assuming, that is, that they were collected. Nevertheless, information is available on one of their constituent meetings, Llandrindod Wells, offering a snapshot of a meeting clearly affected by the impact of war. Since 1896 the meeting had been serviced by a Home Mission worker, Hercules Davies Phillips, and no doubt his acquaintance with all those associated with it saw him in 1919 propose that the meeting prepare a roll of honour for those who had served. The minute is blunt. He thought it a necessity that the meeting should have a roll, 'as a recognition of the part taken by men of our meeting and Sunday School in war work including those at home and abroad',⁹⁶ and in March it was so decided.

The meeting needed a new bible and 'good purpose might be served in purchasing one and having the names of all the men mentioned inscribed'.⁹⁷ On its front page the bible has 46 illuminated names of those members of the Meeting and congregation or ex-Sunday School scholars who had served. Their definition of who served was far broader than that used by the WSC, with its request only for the names of members, associate members and attenders. Thus, the names of three FAU men are also inscribed; FAU records show that four men associated with the meeting served in the unit, but one was a Wesleyan.⁹⁸

On a separate page are the 11 names of those killed who are given no designation of their status in relation to the meeting. All these 11 are included in my death totals, as the meeting felt that their connection with them and with the Society was

94 The word 'friends' was not capitalised in the minutes and thus refers to all, not just to Quakers.

95 SRO, D4769/1. Minutes of Staffordshire Monthly Meeting, minute 10, 17 October 1918. In all probability his brother was Percy Marshall, also a private in the RAMC. The family lived in Stafford.

96 Powys Archives, R/NC/2B/3, Llandrindod Wells Preparative Minute Book 3, minute 7, 14 January 1919.

97 Powys Archives, R/NC/2B/3, Llandrindod Wells Preparative Minute Book 3, minute 2, 18 March 1919.

98 John Davies might have been omitted because, according to his FAU record card, he was released by the Military Tribunal to take up local work.

Table 2: WSC returns adjusted to include four Monthly Meetings and two Preparative Meetings

	Enlisted Members Col 1	Enlisted Attenders Col 2	Members Non-combat Col 3	Killed Members Col 4	Killed Attenders Col 5	Total Members Col 6	Total Attenders
WSC Figs	540	191		69	20	1891	519
Alton, South and Poole	25	3		3		25	3
Folkestone and Canterbury	2	2				2	2
Ratcliff and Barking	3			3		3	0
Staffordshire	2	12	1	1		3	12
Llandrindod		56	3		10	3	56
Penybont and Pales			4			4	0
Sub-totals	572	264	7	76	30	1931	592
Totals			843		106		2523

important enough for commemoration. Only one of those listed was a full member, albeit in a different monthly meeting, but one closely associated with Llandrindod meeting, so he would have been considered part of the meeting. Phillips was to be involved in supporting the creation of the town's war memorial and in recognition of his service was made an honorary member of the town's British Legion.⁹⁹

This additional examination meant that 59 men associated with the meeting served in the war, one of the highest levels across the Yearly Meeting, and the same in number as recorded for the two London-based Monthly Meetings—Westminster and Longford, and Devonshire House. A few miles from Llandrindod was the meeting at Penybont, linked with the meeting at Pales. Four men from this cluster joined the FAU. Hence, from Radnorshire the total serving in one capacity or another was 63.

The minutes of Hereford and Radnor, Witney and Witham Monthly Meetings are lost. The figures from the four other 'delinquent' Monthly Meetings and the two Radnorshire preparative meetings have been added to the totals in Table 1. This might be considered speculative, if not fanciful, and slightly alters the

⁹⁹ The Quaker Bible is held by Llandrindod Local Meeting, and to my knowledge is a unique record of its type within Britain Yearly Meeting.

WSC totals. The adjustments are shown in Table 2. From the adjusted totals the proportion of all those militarily active (843 of 2,523) is 33.4 per cent, similar to the overall Yearly Meeting figure. However, where the numbers are restricted only to members and taken against the Yearly Meeting total of 1,666, military involvement is 34.33 per cent. In relation to the revised membership level of 1,931, the rate of involvement among the members falls to 29.6 per cent (572 of 1,931).¹⁰⁰

The Fallen Quakers

I have already mentioned the extraction of information from the WSC returns and the use of the *Annual Monitor* to identify those killed. The other principal source was the obituary columns of *The Friend* from 1914 to 1922, allowing for any reported late deaths from 1921. There is no guarantee that those named in the obituaries were in membership or were attenders at Quaker meetings. The notices were used to inform the readership of lost grandchildren or nephews who might no longer have any connection to the Society. In some cases one parent, for example, might have been in membership and their children perhaps registered as birthright members. Where there was uncertainty I decided to include the deaths in my totals, and some might feel that such inclusions distort the overall picture. Correcting inclusions would demand the examination of all Monthly Meeting records. Indeed, examining such records would be the optimum approach, and could even identify deaths not included in my totals. However, it would say nothing about attenders killed, since Monthly Meetings would not have minuted their deaths.¹⁰¹ This, of course, assumes that all Monthly Meetings recorded deaths while on military duty in their minutes; Darlington Monthly Meeting, for example, did not.

The other sources were the Rolls of Honour from the Quaker Schools, available for Ackworth, Bootham, Great Ayton, Leighton Park, Saffron Walden, Sidcot and Wigton. Sibford has neither a roll nor any immediately available information about former pupils who served or were killed. I have identified

100 There is something fanciful about playing with these figures. The Yearly Meeting did not analyse its membership by age, defining only a gender breakdown. In 1915 the total membership of LYM was 19,941: 9,173 male, 10,678 female. How many of these men aged between 18 and 51—the upper limit of service as per last revision of the MSA—were eligible for service? In 1914 Devonshire House Monthly Meeting had a membership of 517: 247 male, 270 female. WSC analysis shows that at least 69 of their men were combatants, 27 per cent of all men. Darlington Monthly Meeting in 1914 had 883 members, 392 male, 491 female: 98 of their men were in the military, some 25 per cent. If these broad parameters (25–27 per cent) are applied to the total male membership of 9,173 then you could expect some 2,293–2,476 Quakers to be of military age, being in excess of the 1,931 revised estimate (Table 2). Some 22 per cent of the male population in the UK served. This would provide for up to 2,018 Quakers in the military, provided that the Quaker male distribution replicated that of the general population.

101 Darlington Monthly Meeting minutes make no reference to death notices of soldiers.

only one death among its ex-pupils, and he was in the FAU. There are no rolls for Rawdon and Penketh Schools but deaths of former pupils from these schools can be identified.

Names from all sources, the living and the dead, were checked against the 1911 census and then, if no results were obtained from there, against the 1901 and 1891 censuses. In some cases a longer trawl was necessary to confirm family connections. In all cases any siblings identified who from 1914 would have been of military age were checked and information gathered about their military activity, and in some cases deaths not recorded elsewhere were revealed. The same census data provider also gave access to various family trees which proved useful, often confirming connection to the Society of Friends and allowing for some useful correspondence with family members.¹⁰²

Every name was cross checked against the CWGC database and against two other online military databases.¹⁰³ In some instances enquiring through the various regimental history websites was helpful. Enlistment or attestation papers for Australia, New Zealand and Canada are available online and are full and readable, unlike the UK papers, which are in a sorrier state or not available at all. Many such records were destroyed in the Blitz. Cross-checking with FAU records available on the Friends House was helpful to clarify some connections, as was the Pearce register of conscientious objectors available on the Imperial War Museum website.¹⁰⁴ Denominational allegiance of soldiers is poorly recorded but not unknown. UK records are sparse in this regard, but in some rare cases the designation Quaker is entered. Australian and Canadian notations of denomination are usually, but not always, complete.

What, then, of the Quaker casualties of the war? They are divided into five groups:

- Group 1: Soldiers commemorated by CWGC definition—thus those either killed in action, who died of their wounds or who died after 1918 and up to 1921 while on active duty. This includes men from Ireland. Conscription was never introduced in Ireland, so any Irish Quakers in membership of Dublin Yearly Meeting who joined the military forces were volunteers throughout the campaign. Dublin Yearly Meeting was an independent body but on certain issues of discipline LYM still had residual authority. Quaker servicemen from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa are included because they were technically members of LYM, their own Yearly Meetings having not yet been created. Canadian

102 ancestry.co.uk, used for census access, medal rolls and other military information.

103 forces-war-records.com.uk, especially useful for information about regiments, and the Imperial War Museum database, <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/home>.

104 Available at <https://search.livesofthefirstworldwar.org/search/world-records/conscientious-objectors-register-1914-1918>. This is a website maintained by the Imperial War Museum. A monumental register collated by Cyril Pearce.

Quaker soldiers were, in the main, still attached to their former home meetings in the UK, whereas Australian soldiers were members of Australian Monthly Meetings.

- Group 2: Anomalies—a small group whose connections to the Society were uncertain, or who could not easily be identified in the military records because of insufficient information. This is especially true of attenders. Inevitably, and in all instances, common names cause problems. Thus, and to use the proverbial John Smith, there were at least 435 killed and identified of that name and filters do not always help to reduce any search.
- Group 3: Members of the FAU, FWVRC or other civilian humanitarian organisations. Some died during hostilities but several died after 1918 and before 1922. It seems reasonable to include them, as their deaths could have been related to their war experiences. Many FAU men were not demobilised until 1919.
- Group 4: Conscientious objectors who died while detained in prison or on work schemes.
- Group 5: Civilians killed as a result of war action outside the UK.

The ex-scholar casualties of the Quaker schools fall into one of the five groups, but are mentioned separately, since their fate was an important part of the Yearly Meeting discourse.

To avoid too complex and detailed a narrative, general comments relevant to each group follows, adding substance to what could otherwise be a statistical litany. Details of all those listed under the five groups are available on spreadsheets, which will eventually be made available electronically to anyone wishing to undertake further research.¹⁰⁵

Group 1: Soldiers Commemorated by the CWGC

The total of dead was 211. Not surprisingly, the death rate reflects the growing involvement of the British forces as the war progressed. In the first two years, on the Western front, the burden was borne primarily by the French forces as the British built up their commitment.

Nine served in the Australian forces (three died at Gallipoli), 17 were Canadian, three South African and one was from New Zealand—making a total of 30—and 13 were from Ireland. Breakdown by rank is shown in Table 3. Rank and file numbered 127 and officers 84, of whom 59 were identified as having attended public schools, 45 the Quaker schools. The group has 15 sets of brothers—17 if

¹⁰⁵ These are too lengthy to appear as an appendix. For all casualties detailed notes on their backgrounds and families will be lodged in a suitable archive. Similarly, personal details of the fallen are taken from many websites too numerous to detail, including local commemorative sites.

Table 3: Deaths by rank and by year

Year	Private	L/Cpl	Cpl	L/Sgt	Sgt	2nd Lieutenant	Lieutenant	Captain	Major	Total
1914	1				1					2
1915	9				1	4	6	1		21
1916	22	5	4		2	12	5	3	1	53
1917	32	2	2		1	14	3	5		59
1918	29	5	4	1	2	15	4	6	2	66
1919	4						2	1		7
Total	97	12	10	1	7	45	20	16	3	211

a brother killed and who seems to have had no connection with the Society are included.

The first death recorded in October 1914 was Charles Hoare Forrington, aged 18, a signalman in the Royal Navy who drowned when his ship, HMS *Hawke*, was torpedoed in the North Sea with the loss of 524 men and 70 survivors. His name does not appear in the WSC returns, nor does that of his brother, Robert Edgar, who joined the West Yorkshire Regiment. Their father Charles Tesseyman Forrington, at the age of 49, enlisted in March 1915, possibly as a reaction to the loss of his second eldest son. Given his age he never saw any fighting, and was retained as a Clerk in the Yorkshire Regiment for the duration of his service.¹⁰⁶

The second death, on 11 December 1914, was that of Evan Warner, aged 34, a sergeant in the London Regiment. He arrived in France on 5 November and gave 38 days of active service. The tragedy of the Warner family, attached to Croydon meeting, is that on 1 July 1916 Archibald Warner, a former pupil at Leighton Park and a 2nd lieutenant in the London Regiment, was killed, after which, on 12 April 1917, the younger brother Bertram, again a 2nd lieutenant in the London Regiment, was also killed. Their mother, who died in 1907, did not have to carry the burden of their loss. Their father did. This is the only record of three deaths from the same family.

There are 60 names on the various memorials to those without marked graves. The highest number, 15, is found on the Thiepval Memorial, with ten on the Ypres–Menin Gate Memorial.

Seven men were to be buried in Friends Burial Grounds. Stephen Walker was buried at Saffron Walden (his father was headmaster of the school), Enock Roberts

106 Both Charles and Robert were to be buried in the Friends Burial Ground, York.

at Winchmore Hill and Allan Cox at Adel, Leeds—and, at 17 years, the youngest to die, of injuries received while on military duty at York. John Henry Waterfall, from Neath in South Wales, serving in the RAMC, died after the armistice, of a heart attack following an operation for appendicitis, and was buried at Cork Burial Ground, Eire, where he was then serving. Three Irish Quakers were buried in Ireland—Lieutenant Hubert Malcolmson at Conmel, Tipperary, 2nd Lieutenant Alexander Coghill at Blackrock, Dublin, and Private Ambrose Maxwell at Lurgan.

Wars makes demands of the fighter, and parlour discussions on questions of high ideals might not feature prominently when preparing for action and facing possible death. In such circumstances reactions do not allow for much introspection. The Quaker soldiers faced the same dilemmas as everyone else; they did their duty and for some there would be official recognition of their actions. The award of at least six Military Crosses (MC), one Distinguished Conduct Medal, one Distinguished Flying Cross, three Military Medals and two Distinguished Service Orders (DSO) are all evidence of actions under conditions which most of us will never experience.

The most highly awarded Quaker was probably Captain William Howard Lister, RAMC, who was awarded the DSO and MC with two bars, and was killed on 9 August 1918, one of the very few Quakers to die in Italy. He had joined the Officer Training Corps at university in 1909. Some might consider him a nominal Quaker; he was for a short time at Ackworth. His DSO, for his bravery around Ypres, was announced in the *Gazette* on 14 December 1917. His citation read:

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty as bearer officer taking parties to the Regimental Aid Post, though they suffered heavy casualties on the way. When the regimental medical officer was wounded, he attended to the wounded of this battalion, searching our lines and No Man's Land from midday to dark for wounded and then returned to his field ambulance for another 12 hours until relieved.¹⁰⁷

His second bar reflects the same level of dedication and bravery: 'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during operations. For thirty hours, he supervised the work of his stretcher bearers in the open under heavy shell fire. On another occasion, he searched a wood for wounded under very heavy shell fire.'¹⁰⁸ The second DSO was awarded to Captain Arnold Pumphrey of the Durham Light Infantry, killed in September 1917. He had joined the army as a private in September 1914, gazetted as 2nd lieutenant in 1915, was promoted to captain in January 1916 and was made a captain in April of the same year.

There are two men included in this group who are technically non-military: one was a sailor in the merchant navy, Commander George Herbert Doeg, aged 51. His ship, the SS *Connemara*, collided with another merchant ship off the Irish

107 *London Gazette*, 19 April 1918.

108 *London Gazette*, 20 October 1916. Robert Hill Tolerton, an Irish Quaker, was awarded the DSO and MC, and his brother was killed in action in Gallipoli in 1915.

coast on 3 November 1916, with the loss of all 32 crew and 54 passengers. The people of Holyhead, Anglesey, wanted the names of all local crew members—26 in all—placed on the town war memorial, and this was done. Doeg was originally from Carlisle, but had lived in Holyhead for a number of years and was conductor of its orchestral society. It seemed appropriate to include Doeg in the list, as his name appears on a war memorial. The other inclusion is John Edwin Reynolds, who died on 19 October 1920 in Paris while working for the IWGC. He had served with the RAMC, suffered a nervous breakdown as a result of his experiences as a stretcher bearer on Paschendaele Ridge, was discharged and then joined the IWGC. He is not commemorated by the CWGC, although he is among the 3,397 burials at Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, of which 34 are non-war burials.

Group 2: Anomalies

This group consists of 14 names. In most cases there was insufficient information in the WSC to allow certainty as to whether they were killed or had some association with the Society. The information in the WSC is spartan and it is difficult to pinpoint them in other records and on the CWGC.

Two could go into Group 1. Firstly there is Kenneth Gordon Garnett, killed in 1917, who was a lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery. His brother William Hubert, of the Royal Flying Corps, was killed in a flying accident in 1916 and is commemorated in the *Annual Monitor*, Kenneth was not so commemorated. William is included in Group 1, and was buried in Putney Vale Cemetery. Both brothers attended St Paul's School, London. Their mother was a Quaker, but their father, formerly a lieutenant-commander in the Royal Navy, was not. William had worked in Toynbee Hall, and his entry in De Ruvigny's¹⁰⁹ says of him that 'he was always strongly opposed to war, and would not encourage his scouts (he was a sea scout leader) to take part in military display.' Secondly, there is Sydney Robert Armitage, lieutenant in the RAMC, who was killed together with his horse while on convoy duty. His father, a Quaker, was an ex-Ackworth scholar, but his mother was an Anglican, and it looks as though the children were brought up as such.

Ten other names are those of attenders. Two are possible attenders, as their brothers were attenders and were casualties.

Group 3: FAU, FWVRC

This group consists of 32 names, 24 with the FAU and eight with the FWVRC. Nine FAU men died in France and all are buried in military cemeteries. Non-Quakers served loyally with both organisations, but any casualties among them are not considered for the purpose of this article: for example, two prominent

109 De Ruvigny, Marquis, *The Roll of Honour. A biographical record of all members of His Majesty's naval and military forces who have fallen in the war*, 5 vols, 1922. Contains over 22,500 references.

woman who worked with the FWRVC, namely Gertrude Powicke, who was a Congregationalist, and Ruth Sidgwick, an Anglican, are omitted.¹¹⁰

Of the FAU deaths in France, six were killed as the result of enemy action. Frederick Garratt Taylor was the first, killed on 25 September 1915 by a shell while evacuating the wounded from an advanced post. He was buried at Malo Les Bains Communal Cemetery with its 34 CWGC First World War graves. Taylor was to be awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French military for displaying courage and dedication ‘by ensuring day and night evacuation of the wounded in often dangerous conditions’.¹¹¹ Near to him lies his FAU co-volunteer Walter Messer, killed as a result of aerial bombing two months later.

The remaining three men died in hospital: William K. Smith of meningitis in 1917 and Joseph Woodwiss of the influenza in October 1918. Maurice Thompson Barker, who died on 29 September 1915 at the age of eighteen, is not identified as a member or attender on his FAU record card. I have assumed that he was an attender.

All FAU men serving in France were awarded the Victory and the British War Medals. Those who had entered the FAU in 1914 and in France would also have been awarded the 1914 Star. Those serving with the FAU general services—that is, serving domestically and not going abroad—would not have received medals.

There were 14 other deaths of former FAU men before 1922, 13 of whom are buried in England.

Tatham and Miles, in their history of the FAU,¹¹² list 38 names of those who had been with the unit who had died, not all of them Quakers. Included in their list is Theodore James Anderson, from Sligo; his mother was a Quaker, his father a Moravian. He joined the unit in 1915, left in 1916, married a Frenchwoman in Paris—being Irish he was not subject to conscription—and died in 1956 in Bogota, Columbia, serving with the diplomatic service. Therefore, he does not qualify for inclusion in this list. In addition, in trawling through various records it appears that Tatham and Miles overlooked three other names who should have been included, so that their final tally should be 40.¹¹³

Philip Meyer, a former Bootham and Ackworth scholar who served with the British Red Cross (alongside his brother) and was not in the FAU, died of

110 Constance died of typhoid in Warsaw in 1918. Rose died of influenza while on a visit to the USA, again in 1918.

111 ‘a fait preserve de courage et de dévouement en assurant de jour comme le nuit l’évacuation des blessés dans des conditions souvent dangereuses.’ Another FAU member, John Oliver Watkins, from Swansea, suffered the effects of a gas attack while ferrying the wounded and was awarded the Croix de Guerre with a silver star. The *Cambrian Daily Leader*, in its report in January 1918, headlined their report with the banner ‘A Gallant Quaker’.

112 Tatham, M. and Miles, J. E., *The FAU 1914–19: a record*, London: The Swarthmore Press, 1919.

113 Arthur Frederic Collins, d. 1920, ex-Ackworth; Duncan Howard King, d. 1919, ex-Sibford; Edward Victor Wilson d. 1920.

influenza in Paris in October 1918. It seems appropriate, for the purpose of this research, to include him among the FAU group. At least four former FAU men who joined the forces were killed in action.

The FWVRC group consists of seven names, two of whom are women. There is some uncertainty around the Quaker connections of one woman, Mary Ellen Appel, an American relief worker in Vienna, where she died in August 1920 by her own hand. She is mentioned by Fry in her book.¹¹⁴ Martha Woolmer, known as Marty, died in London sometime during 1917, but she had served the FWVRC as a chauffeur alongside her husband, Frank Preston Woolmer, who served from May 1916 to January 1919. She served from November 1914 to May/June 1916.¹¹⁵

This group also includes George Lloyd Hodgkin, who died in Baghdad in June 1918. Although not technically working for the FWVRC, he had been asked to join an expedition to investigate distress in Armenia and to settle the allocation of money sent out by the Lord Mayor's Fund—a non-Quaker fund.

Of the remaining four FWVRC deaths, one occurred in Paris in October 1918 as a result of influenza. Of the other three post-armistice deaths, two were from influenza: Ralph Vipont Brown died in March 1919 and is among the 1,546 burials at Les Baraques Military Cemetery, Sangette; and Samuel Cole died in Vienna in January 1920. Alfred Herbert Littleboy died at home in September 1920. Both he and Cole had been in the FAU but their deaths are not recorded by Tatham and Miles.

There is an eighth name that could be considered: Violet Tillard, a remarkable woman who died in Russia in 1922, but she falls outside the parameters of this study.

Group 4: Conscientious Objectors

Seven names fall into this group. All but one appear in Pearce's Register of Conscientious Objectors and all died of natural causes. Five are recorded in the *Annual Monitor* and two in *The Friend*.

Overall, 73 conscientious objectors died: ten in prison, 24 while on the Home Office Schemes, six in military custody and the remainder on release, because of their weakened states.¹¹⁶ The first death was in April 1917, at Wakefield work centre. Albert Levenson James was 37 years old and from London. He had been baptised an Anglican but was to be buried at Wakefield Friends Burial ground. Ernest England died in March 1919 at home in Leeds, following release from his Dartmoor work scheme placement. He has no CWGC registered grave because he was not considered to be in the military, and is buried at Adel Friends Burial

114 Fry, A. R., *A Quaker Adventure: the story of nine years relief and reconstruction*, New York: Frank-Maurice Inc., 1926, p. 357.

115 FHL, list of FWVRC members and names listed in Fry, *A Quaker Adventure*.

116 Kramer, A., *Conscientious Objectors of the First World War: a determined resistance*, Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2014.

Ground, Leeds. Walter Bone died in Winchester prison in 1919 of pneumonia. He refused to sign any army papers or respond to military discipline, but was drafted as a private into the Non-Combatant Corps and technically should be included among the military dead. Given his particularly defiant witness, however, it seems appropriate to include him among the conscientious objectors. He was buried in Birkenhead with a gravestone provided by the CWGC.

Three men were exempted provided they undertook work of national importance. The Pearce register notes that Spencer Dodington was assigned to farm work from October 1916 to November 1918, but his health broke down and he died in February 1919; Frederick Wickenden, an attender, died in Bristol in December 1918 and was buried at the Friends Burial Ground in York. Neither appear in the Peace Pledge Union list of those who died as a result of their treatment.¹¹⁷ Oswald Bennett, a pharmacist and former Sidcot scholar, was a member of Golders Green Quaker meeting. His exemption from military service was conditional on him continuing in his current employment and in the Special Constabulary. He died in August 1918 aged 39, at home, and some might not consider his death war-related.

John St George Currie Heath died of influenza on 5 November 1918, aged 36. His name does not appear in the Pearce register, but he was exempted to do work of national importance and worked for the Ministry of Labour. His memorial in the 1919–20 *Annual Monitor* marks him out as a man of considerable ability. He was, for example, fully involved in the establishment of the Whitley Industrial Councils. From a Quaker perspective he was a member of the Friends Service Committee from its establishment in 1915 and was warden at the first committee meeting at Toybee Hall on 4 June 1915.

Group 5: Civilians

This is a group of ten, all of whom died when their ships were torpedoed. Such civilian deaths were not commemorated by the CWGC and they have no memorial. Eight are of non-military age. Two were on the *Lusitania* when she was sunk in 1915. Theodore Naish was by then an American citizen and had joined the Methodists when living in Kansas, but his Quaker antecedents would have been well known. J. Foster Stackhouse, a polar explorer and friend of Captain Scott, was the other, and he was a retired commander in the US Navy. Three Irish women perished with the sinking of the mail ship *Leinster* in October 1918; two were Elia Murphy and her daughter. With the sinking of the *SS Hirano Maru* off the coast of Ireland on 4 October 1918 the Friends Foreign Mission Association lost two of their missionaries. Benjamin Jackson was returning to China and James Ryan to Madagascar. The youngest person lost was Elizabeth Impey, aged 38, an ex-Mount scholar and on her way to Lahore, India, to take up a position as a hospital doctor. Two of her brothers volunteered for the forces, and one took up a permanent commission in the RAF at war's end.

117 <http://www.ppu.org.uk/cosnew/cotx13b.html> [accessed 24/11/17].

Scholars of the Quaker Schools

There is, then, the one other group to consider, which comprised a prominent section within the Society particularly affected by the enactment of conscription—the scholars of the Quaker schools. Where they were casualties and identified as members of the Society they are included in either Group 1, 3 or 4.

The WSC asked for information on all members and attenders involved or attached to Monthly Meetings. I have not pursued the issue of the definition of an attender. Given that scholars in the schools were expected to attend meetings for worship as part of school life, should they be considered as attenders? I felt that such an approach was too broad.

All the fatalities from the school were cross-checked in detail, since the rolls of honour do not designate whether or not they were associated with the Society.¹¹⁸ Table 4 gives total casualties for each school, showing the number who were members of the Society—a few came into membership after leaving school.

Table 4. Pupils from the Quaker schools Rolls of Honour
—adjusted for duplicated names

School	Numbers Killed	Quakers	Additional Comments	School Count
Ackworth	77	27	2 added to the school's list	75
Bootham	50	19	7 names removed, included in Ackworth	57
Great Ayton	23	4	2 names removed, included in Ackworth	25
Leighton Park	28	8	No duplicates	28
Saffron Walden	23	5	3 names added but 1 removed included in Ackworth	24
Sibford	1	1	Incomplete, school has no roll of honour	0
Sidcot	31	19	1 name removed included in Bootham	32
Wigton	21	4	1 names removed included in Sidcot	22
Totals	254	86		263

118 Ackworth School very kindly sent details of all their casualties, highlighting those who were associated with the Society, and I am extremely grateful to Celia Wolfe, the school archivist, for giving me generous access to her researches of former pupils killed. Information regarding Bootham, Wigton and Great Ayton were available on the web, and Saffron Walden school kindly sent me a photograph of their roll of honour from which I worked.

Five names identified from research have been added to the school totals, as they were not recorded in the school's rolls of honour, produced primarily through the efforts of the old scholar associations. The rolls may not include all former pupils killed, as the collation of information was problematic. At the time of writing two of the schools have produced memorial brochures, but their descriptions of their fallen soldiers make no reference to membership of the Society.¹¹⁹ Some pupils killed were at more than one school, so the figures have been adjusted to take account of this fact.

In September 1918 the situation of the schools featured in a three-hour-long discussion at Sufferings concerning the establishment of a committee to support members in the forces. *The Friend* described in detail part of the discussion. Joseph Bevan Braithwaite, whose name featured often in support of the war effort, sought such a committee, relying, in part, on figures relating to the schools to further his argument. He contended that 64 per cent of old scholars of six Friends' Schools were in the forces, some 600 men, and the majority of the remainder were in the FAU, trying 'in the way which seemed to them right, to uphold our Peace Testimony'.¹²⁰ Forming a committee was then a positive step and in line with the 1917 Yearly Meeting epistle, which talked of 'prayerful sympathy', especially since, in his view, Monthly Meetings and Preparative Meetings were not doing enough.

Bevan Lean, headmaster of Sidcot, responded that his school accepted responsibility for its old scholars, and that Braithwaite was misusing statistics. Sidcot had identified 260 old boys, of whom 56 were in the FAU, 36 were in the FWVRC or its equivalent and 56 were in the forces, as were the remaining 90 non-Friends. He thought that a committee was not necessary, the sympathy of the Society having already been expressed, and that keeping in touch was better left to the Old Scholars, overseers and heads and masters of the schools. Albert J. Crosfield, on behalf of Saffron Walden Old Scholars, noted that 167 old scholars were in the forces, of whom 57 were Friends; 50 were with the FAU, 15 were with the WVRC, seven were in prison, 17 were exempted and 89 had taken a stand as conscientious objectors. In his Monthly Meeting 12 were in the forces, of whom five had never attended meetings, and there were 19 conscientious objectors.¹²¹

Sufferings did not agree to the establishment of the committee but urged Preparative and Monthly Meetings to keep in touch with those in the forces, and thought that a committee might yet be set up. The schools were to look after their own.

119 Allinson, J. and Smith, C., *Great Ideals: Leighton Park School and the First World War*, Reading: Dreamcatchers Press, 2014. Gladwin, C., *Still, Small Voice: Sidcot in the Great War*, Sidcot School, 2015.

120 *TF*, 13 September 1918, p. 553.

121 *TF*, 13 September 1918, pp. 553–54.

Overview

In September 1919 an editorial in *The Friend* commented that discussion of the role of men during the war should not be dependent on particular statistics, comparative or otherwise, but inevitably that is what happened. The level of activity, whatever grouping men fell into, whether as objectors or as members of the military, became important, as it justified a particular standpoint—that resistance to war was essential or that loyalty to country was paramount.

This investigation and combined recording of Quaker deaths may seem to prolong an undesirable, unnecessary debate, but the deaths do record a level of sacrifice and suffering: all who died are victims of the same heroics and futility. The total number of deaths are shown in Table 5. As stated above, these figures will include a few men who were possibly not in membership or even attenders, some with nominal allegiance to the Society. The figures rely on names collected from acknowledged Quaker sources, but it would be churlish to ignore those who had only a passing acquaintance with the Society. Their inclusion will have only a minimal effect on the overall numbers.

Table 5. Deaths by grouping

Group 1: military	211
Group 2: anomalies	14
Group 3: FAU etc.	32
Group 4: COs	7
Total	264

Excluding Group 2, this provides for 250 fatalities. In relation to the adjusted WSC total of 2,522 this provides for a fatality rate of 9.87 per cent; against the other Yearly Meeting total of 1,666 it rises to 15 per cent. In terms of the number of men mobilised in the UK, the death rate was some 11.1 per cent,¹²² and it would be surprising to think that fatalities among Quaker men were higher than the national average. The war death rate taken against the total UK population has been estimated to be in a variable range from 1.91 to 2.23 per cent.¹²³ The Quaker rate of 249 against the Yearly Meeting membership of 19,942 gives a return of 1.2 per cent.

Focussing on the statistics of how many men enlisted, became conscientious objectors or died does not detract from the fact that we are looking at the living

122 War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire during the Great War*, London, 1922. The rate is based on 704,803 casualties from Great Britain against its mobilisation of 5,704,416 men.

123 Haythornthwaite, P. J., *The World War One Source Book*, London: Arms and Armour, 1993, pp. 102–04.

experience of men caught in a maelstrom. For Britain Yearly Meeting it is important to recover and be reminded of all aspects of its history, and recognise that from its membership men died fighting, as well as in giving succour to the wounded and those dispossessed because of the war. As for the dead, the Yearly Meeting could consider preparing a book or roll of remembrance, acknowledging and honouring all those men who acted in faith and according to their conscience. London Yearly Meeting was united in upholding liberty of conscience and all these deaths bear witness to that fact.

In August 1918, following discussion in *Sufferings* of support to enlisted members, one soldier, Arnold Elliott,¹²⁴ then at Parc Wern Red Cross Hospital, Swansea, wrote that during his time in the forces he never felt cut off from the Society, and that the question of support should be left to Monthly Meetings to deal with. He had joined the forces because he and others 'felt it our duty to take our share in the opposition of Prussianism by force'¹²⁵ but it was vital that the Society should maintain and uphold its Peace Testimony. In November the editorial in *The Friend* reflects this very same theme, conscious of the fissures that were present within the Yearly Meeting: 'We are pacifists nowadays. The only difference between us is the method of bringing about the desired Peace. We all wish for Peace, but there are many diverse roads traversed in its search, and even in our Society there is considerable difference of opinion as to the way.'¹²⁶

Those fissures did have a political flavour to them. Sefton Jones in January 1918 could refer to political and pacifist extremists influencing the proceedings of *Sufferings*,¹²⁷ and would follow this up at Yearly Meeting with the observation that the FSC 'did ... not represent the general feeling, being selected from one part only of the Society, and which stood for political activities of which many Friends did not approve.'¹²⁸ E. Harry Gilpin was not to be outdone: 'The Free Quakers of today have borne for four years the burden of an unrestrained and anarchic Pacifism. May we not reasonably ask our Pacifist Friends to try the weight of ours?'¹²⁹ After the war, such fissures were reflected in the decision of the Yearly Meeting not to support the formation of the League of Nations, with Friends such as Sefton Jones and J. B. Braithwaite championing its advent and finding much ready support for their efforts.

The Yearly Meeting maintained its unity as a body throughout the war despite the tensions that existed. Once the war was over attention turned to other endeavours. The ongoing deliberations of the War and Social Order Committee, established by the 1915 Yearly Meeting in response to a report presented to it

124 Not identified among the members of the forces in the WSC returns.

125 *TF*, 30 August 1918, p. 536.

126 *TF*, 15 November 1918, p. 675.

127 *TF*, 18 January 1918, p. 50.

128 *TF*, 31 May 1918, p. 344.

129 *TF*, 6 September 1918, p. 549.

by the Friends Social Union, was one such. It was charged with examining the connection between war and the social order. It presented its 'Foundations of a True Social Order' to the 1918 Yearly Meeting, which saw them as the 'blueprint for post-war Quaker social policy', but with some hesitation, as Kennedy demonstrates.¹³⁰ Thus Staffordshire Monthly Meeting would minute in October that a 'Circular has been sent from the Propaganda Committee of the Society of Friends on War and Social Order enclosing a copy of the Yearly Meeting minute containing statement on the Foundation of a True Social Order.'¹³¹ The opening clause signposted some ambivalence!

The 1920 All-Friends Conference, the first Quaker world conference, would be another opportunity to discuss and refocus on the meaning of the peace testimony. The preparation for the conference was thorough, and even though it may not have achieved its full objective it did affirm that the peace testimony was 'the fundamental basis of Quaker Christian truth, that man must not kill his fellow man',¹³² and could reaffirm Quakers in Britain as a peace church.

The unity of the Yearly Meeting was maintained because there was never any real tension about witnessing to and about liberty of conscience. That is what the minute of Yearly Meeting in 1919 reflects. It contains a brief (and the only) reference to those killed, as those who had 'passed away from us to return no more', who would be held 'in tender remembrance', but, looking back over the past four and a half years, what was highlighted were the different paths 'trodden ... in the desire to the call of duty'.¹³³

The peace testimony was a standpoint to which all in the Yearly Meeting were committed. But the much-vaunted Quaker pacifism had long been diluted and 'totally absorbed into the larger culture'. It was a badge of identity, but individual Quakers could endorse or walk away from it without necessarily compromising their consciences.¹³⁴

The epistle from the 1919 Yearly Meeting opened with the words, 'We live in days of disillusionment',¹³⁵ reflecting, no doubt, much uncertainty and sadness. This full minute from Kingston Monthly Meeting, meeting two days after the armistice, would undoubtedly reflect the feelings of many across the Yearly Meeting, and, for Kingston, the memory of the Warner brothers must have been a factor in its writing:

130 Kennedy, *British Quakerism*, p. 384.

131 SRO, D4769/1, minute 9, 17 October 1918.

132 John Percy Fletcher quoted by Kennedy, *British Quakerism*, p. 413.

133 YMP, 1919, minute 104, p. 194.

134 See Hamm, T. D., Marconi, M., Kleinhen Salinas, G. and Whitman, B., 'The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the 20th Century: Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends as a case study', *Indiana Magazine of History* 96/1 (2000), available at <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals-playground/index.php/imh/article/view/11785/17278>.

135 YMP, 1919, p. 219.

We have remembered together, with thankfulness humility and prayer, the end of the Great War by the signing of the Armistice on Monday last the 11th. Our hearts have gone out in loving tenderness to those of our number who have lost on the field of battle dear ones, cut off in the flower of their youth; and in as much as those died for the Truth as they saw it, we rejoice at their faithful witness. We have remembered, too, those from amongst us who not less faithful, have been or are still witnessing in prison for the Truth as they see it. Not unmindful of the difficulties which such divergent views must bring, we are happy to remember that our points of argument are many—we are one in our devotion to a common Master, one in a single aim, to seek out and follow our Master's will. In the difficult days which are ahead of us these past years of mutual tolerance, the expressions begot of trials and sorrows patiently borne, shall with God's grace, enable us to win together nearer to the eternal truth, and out of the wreck and tragedy of a world at war, together help us to establishing the Kingdom of the Prince of Peace.¹³⁶

Appendix 1

From the Elders and Overseers of George Road Meeting, undated late 1914/early 1915

Dear Friend

As the weeks and months go by we want you to know that you are not forgotten by our little George Street Meeting, and we wish to remind you that you have our continued love and sympathy.

We share with you the desire to do our utmost at this great crisis, and while the call to service comes to each in different ways we pray that each of us may be found faithful. We hope that it may be a strength and encouragement to you to know that your friends at home have you in their thoughts and prayers, and that the common desire that we all share may draw us nearer to one another and to the source of help and strength in this time of need. May God guide, guard and bless you in His own good time bring you safely back again.

Gertrude E. Lloyd, Alfred Wilson¹³⁷

Author Details

Gethin Evans, on retirement, has researched aspects of Quaker history in Wales, focussing on the role of Quakers in a schism within the Presbyterian Church of Wales and an overview of Quakers in Wales from 1860 to 1918. His interest now

136 FHL, Kingston Monthly Meeting minutes, minute 13, 13 November 1918.

137 Imperial War Museum, Papers and correspondence of Lieutenant Alan Scrivener Lloyd, 20535, p. 937.

lies in those elements of Quaker life that have become 'invisible', such as Quaker soldiers in the First World War.

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