

# SAMPFORD SPINEY MEN ON THE HORRABRIDGE WAR MEMORIAL

short biographies of those who lost their lives in WWI

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In this, the centenary year of the Great War, it is a fitting tribute we owe to those who sacrificed their lives for the freedoms we so cherish today.

There was a "naivety and innocence" among the men who signed up for the First World War. They had no idea of what they were going into. They didn't just sacrifice their lives, they sacrificed their future and left a sad and depleted generation behind.

Recruitment was intense both in Tavistock & Plymouth - bright uniforms, interesting military equipment, brass bands, local dignitaries, friendly recruiting officers, enticing leaflets (see Europe for Free) and press coverage. However, the people of Devon were reluctant to come forward especially as war broke out at harvest time. In Devon

many stayed at home to farm. The national average who went to war in each village was 11% whereas Devon averaged only 5% but our part of West Devon seems to have kicked this trend. Horrabridge sending 19.3%. The area also lead the way in generosity by collecting eggs & sphagnum moss, knitting garments and sending food parcels let alone collecting £1000s.

The hotly debated Military Service Act came into force on 2 March 1916. From this date, most single men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one years old were considered to be in the military and could be called-up to fight at any time. A second Act in May 1916 included married men and a third, in 1918, raised the upper age limit to 51.

Out of more than 14,000 parishes in the whole of England and Wales, there are only around 50 so called 'thankful parishes', who saw all their soldiers return. Of the 179 inhabitants from Sampford Spiney parish, 12 went off to fight. This was almost twice the national average. Of those that went 3 are now remembered on the Horrabridge memorial. Others, born or connected with the parish, are remembered on other memorials.

### **28306 Sapper Percy John BRIMBLECOMBE**

Percy was born 1 July 1894 to John and Francis Catherine Brimblecombe of North Hill, Plymouth. His parents moved to The Green, Sampford Spiney soon after they were married where his father was the rural postman. He attended Horrabridge School leaving in 1907 to take up an apprenticeship. In 1914 Percy joined The Royal Engineers 12 Field Company. He saw action in France and Flanders. He was killed in action on 9 August 1915 aged 21. He had been awarded the 1914-1915 Star, the 1914 British War medal and qualified for the Victory medal. He is remembered on the Thiepval memorial in Picardy, France and also on the Callington War memorial.

### **51/114 Corporal William Edward RADMORE**

William was born at 8 Wyndhams Street, West Plymouth in 1877 to George and Anna Radmore. After school, William trained to be a junior clerk and had left home by 1901. Aged 37 he joined the Army Service Corp on 9 October 1914. He saw active service and was awarded the usual three medals - Star, British & Victory. He was soon promoted to corporal and saw some action in France and Flanders. He died in Plymouth on 23 November 1916. When his elderly parents were informed of his death they were living at Haytown, Sampford Spiney. He is buried in Ford Park Cemetery, Plymouth.

### **Ship's Carpenter Frederick George RIDMORE**

Born 25 July 1896 at Cole Cottage, Sampford Spiney to Louise and Amelia Ridmore. Frederick, aged 14, was earning a living as a boy golf caddy on the golf links (probably at Yelverton). He joined the Royal Navy at the outbreak of war as a ship's carpenter. At some point he joined HMS Raglan which, on 20 January 1918, was attacked by a Turkish battlecruiser, a light cruiser and four destroyers. HMS Raglan was sunk with the loss of 127 lives. His body was never recovered. He is also remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial (plot 28).

### **288754 Ernest Walter TREMBATH**

Born 27 January 1893 to William and Elizabeth Trembath of The Elms, Sampford Spiney. His father William, was working for himself as a carrier and houseman. By 1912 all the family had emigrated to Canada as farmers. Once Canada had entered the war Ernest enlisted. He joined the 78 Manitoba Regiment on 12 June 1916. He saw action in France and died of wounds whilst at the Canadian Clearing Station on 1 February 1918 aged 25 years and is buried at the Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, Pas de Calais, France.

### **The Woodrow Brothers**

Their parents, James and Louisa Woodrow, lived at Eggworthy. James was gamekeeper to Edwin Spurrel of Eggworthy Farm. They had two children, Walter and John.

### **240684 Lance-Corporal Walter George WOODROW**

Walter was born in 1892 at Witham Friary, Somerset. He was educated at Sampford Spiney School. After leaving school he became a domestic gardener. He volunteered for active service and joined 1st Battalion The Devonshire Regiment in September 1914. He served with the Expeditionary Force in India, Egypt, Palestine as well as France and Flanders. He was killed in action in the Forest of Rheims 20 July 1918 aged 26 years and was buried where he fell in an unmarked grave.

**240655 Private (Reginald) John WOODROW**

John was born in 1894. He was also educated at Sampford Spiney School. He volunteered for active service and joined the 5th Battalion, The Devonshire Regiment in September 1914. He served with the Expeditionary Force in India, Egypt, Palestine as well as France and Flanders. He was killed in action in the Forest of Rheims 20 July 1918 aged 24 years and was buried where he fell in an unmarked grave.

Three more men are remembered on other war memorials: -

**24203 William John Cann**, born Sampford Spiney in 1898. Joined Devonshire Regiment. Died 16 August 1918. Son of John & Emma Cann. Remembered on Walkhampton Memorial

**40868 Private Archibald Parnell**, born Tamerton Foliot 1897. Joined Devonshire Regiment. Died 28 March 1917 aged 19. Son of William & Mary Parnell of Sampford Spiney. Remembered on Bickleigh Memorial

**M2/052193 Charles Richard Philp**, born Sampford Spiney 1884. Joined Royal Artillery Service Corps. Died 11 August 1916 aged 32. Son of John & Masry Philp. Remembered on Tavistock Memorial