

THE MEN BEHIND THE GLASS

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LESSON 4

COMMEMORATING THE MEN BEHIND THE GLASS

This lesson examines how men who died in the Great War were commemorated by friends, family and community. It uses the dead of Campbell College Belfast as an example of the different ways in which men were remembered. They were commemorated in many ways – books, items produced in their honour, memorials – by families, friends, comrades, communities and institutions. Many of the men and boys from Campbell were commemorated on multiple war memorials based on where they lived, worshipped, worked or died.

Below are a number of examples of how Old Campbellians were commemorated after the war.

ROBERT MCCONNELL

(OC 938)



BIO

Born on 8th January 1896 and was the son of the Rev. James McConnell of Ulidia, Hollywood Road, Belfast. He was the brother of Samuel Gibson (OC 937).

CAMPBELL COLLEGE

Robert started at Campbell College in 1906. Academically gifted, Robert gained entrance to Queens University and was awarded the Dufferin Medal for Oratory.

ARMY

Assigned to the 10th Battalion, King's Own (Royal Lancaster) Regiment in February 1915. Served in Gallipoli in late 1915 and then headed to Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq) to fight to Ottoman Empire where he was attached to the Indian Expeditionary Force.

DEATH

Robert was killed in the course of operations on 9th April 1916. He is commemorated on the Basra Memorial, Iraq.

COMMEMORATION

His father published a book called In Memoriam: The Late Robert Wallace McConnell. The book recounted "his brief life of 20 years that may be sketched under the three heads of Student, Soldier and Christian" and contained quotes from teachers, academics and classmates testifying to Robert's promising future.



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JOHN DAVIS

(OC 49)



BIO

John was the son of the Rev. John Davis of Ballynahinch. John married in 1908 and went on to have three children.

CAMPBELL COLLEGE

He entered Campbell in September 1894 and went on to achieve his Bachelor's Degree at Royal University Ireland in 1899, progressing to Edinburgh University Army Chaplain's Department. John was ordained in 1907 as Minister in the Church of Scotland, becoming minister to the parish of Buittle, Kircudbrightshire.

ARMY

His original enlistment was with the Royal Army Medical Corps at the beginning of 1916. September of 1916 saw John on active service in the Middle East where he acted as the unofficial chaplain to the regiment.

DEATH

John died on 22 July 1917 after suffering severe heat stroke while on active service in Mesopotamia. He is buried in Amara War Cemetery, Iraq.

COMMEMORATION

After the war, Mr W.J.H. Maxwell of Munches, a former parishioner of Davis', commissioned a brass mural tablet dedicated to the memory of the Rev. John Davis. It was fitted on the chancel wall of the church.



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EDMUND DE WIND

(OC 249)



BIO

Edmund was the son of Arthur Hughes De Wind, Chief Engineer for the Belfast & County Down Railway, and Margaret Jane. His family were from Comber. In 1911, Edmund immigrated to Canada, where he continued a banking career he initially embarked on in Ireland, before enlisting in the 2nd Regiment of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada.

CAMPBELL COLLEGE

He spent five years at Campbell College, joining in May 1895, leaving December 1900. He had broad interests, ranging hockey, cricket, tennis, fishing, shooting and indeed sailing.

ARMY

He briefly enlisted in 1911 to the 2nd Regiment of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada but only served five months with the regiment. In 1914, he again signed up, this time to the 31st Battalion Calgary Regiment, the 6th Brigade of the 2nd Canadian Division. The Division moved to the UK in May 1915 before being deployed to the Western Front in September 1914 by which time he was attached to the Machine Gun section.

Edmund survived many battles of the war from September 1914 to April 1917, at which point, he was moved back to the UK to the Officer Cadet School. On the 26th September 1917 he assumed the position of Commander of the 15th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles who were based at Dundalk. Edmund moved with the Battalion, back to the Western Front in December of 1917.

DEATH

Edmund was killed in action on 21st March 1918 near Grougie, France.

COMMEMORATION

Edmund was awarded a Victoria Cross for his actions at the Racecourse Redoubt, South East of Grougie on 21st March 1918. His mother was presented with the award at Buckingham Palace on 21 June 1919.



CONTINUED



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“

...now is the right time to honour and reflect on the valour of this extraordinary person. There is a new generation who aren't familiar with him and, hopefully, this will help draw them into this famous piece of history.

”

Jim Hamilton
Edmund De Wind VC Centenary
Committee member

EDMUND DE WIND

(OC 249)

COMMEMORATION

Edmund has no known graves but is commemorated in numerous locations:

- Named on Pozieres Memorial, Somme France.
- Mount De Wind, Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada.
- Plaque in St. Mary's Parish, Comber.
- Named on Comber War Memorial.
- Memorial plaque located in Comber Square.
- 'De Wind Drive' in Comber named after him.
- Name on Great West door of St. Anne's Cathedral, Belfast.
- Name on War Memorial stone located in grounds of the Ulster Tower, the Somme.
- In 2017, the Edmund De Wind VC Centenary Committee was established in Comber that aimed to unveil a plinth commemorating him in the town square on the 100th anniversary of this death in 2018.



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The Old Campbellian Society and school governors decided to raise £5,000 to build a war memorial to commemorate all of the OCs, staff and pupils who lost their lives during the war. After an initial design was deemed too expensive, OC Captain James Young (OC 533) – who had served in the war – produced a less expensive design for a memorial in the school's Central Hall. The memorial was sculpted by local artist Rosamund Prager and was unveiled in July 1923 (it was to be originally unveiled in July 1922 by Field Marshall Henry Wilson, but was postponed for a year after he was murdered by the Irish Republican Army).

ELLIOT JOHNSTON

(OC 249)



BIO

Elliott was the son of Samuel Johnston, of 1, Deramore Park, Belfast.

CAMPBELL COLLEGE

His education began at Nottingham High School then he joined Campbell College in September 1903, progressing to Queen's University Belfast in 1906.

ARMY

Before the outbreak of the First World War, Elliot was an Officer with Ulster Volunteer Force serving as a half-company commander in the Newtownards Corps. Elliot received a temporary Commission in the Regular Army on the 29th September 1914, training with the 13th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles at Clondeboy Camp in County Down.

DEATH

Elliot was killed in action with 'B' Company, 13th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles, on 1st July 1916.

COMMEMORATION

Elliot is commemorated on memorials in Belfast (Campbell College and Queens), Newtonards, Strandtown and Thiepval.

“

...to all of us the end of the war has come as an unspeakable relief...Even up to the very last we suffered loss, and...we have to mourn for some who have fallen close to the goal. Their deaths seem all the sadder and have given us a deeper regret as we know how very near the end was, and how near they were to safety

”

The Campbellian, November 1918.



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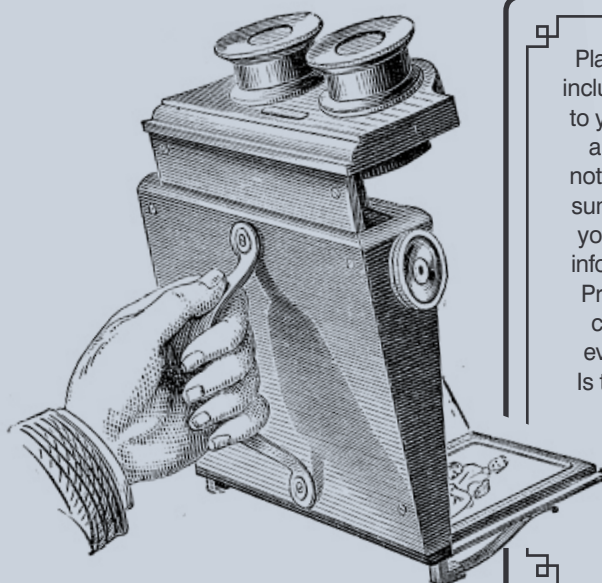
GROUP ACTIVITIES

- ① State reasons as to why you think the following are commemorated:
 - a) events
 - b) people.
- ② The aim of commemoration is to celebrate the memory of a particular event, group or person. Create a mind map and highlight as many commemoration methods as you can. Choose three of these and explain why you believe this method of commemoration has been used. Can you think of any downsides to certain types of commemoration?
- ③ Think of a new way that you could commemorate The Men Behind The Glass. Write down as many details as possible about your commemoration. Remember, commemorations can come in the form of memorabilia, books, events, websites, campaigns, statues, structures, media, informational resources, etc.....

Digital Task

This can be completed as a group/paired activity or an individual activity.

Using presentation software, create a presentation profiling three OCs and how they were commemorated, from The Men Behind The Glass website (<https://menbehindtheglass.co.uk/the-men>).



Plan and script your presentation to include images and text. Pay attention to your presentation design! Choose appropriate colours/fonts and do not overload slides with information - summarise important information on your slides and have more detailed information on your presenter notes. Present to the rest of the class. On completion of your presentation, evaluate its design and relevance. Is there anything that you would do differently the next time? Look at presentations created by classmates and offer constructive praise and feedback.



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