

# *Visit* **ANGUS**

Scotland's Birthplace

## **World War I Heritage Trail**

Walk in the steps of your ancestors





Every parish in Angus has at least one memorial to the servicemen and women who fell during the Great War.

Memorials were created by communities, schools and churches, amongst others. Some are on public view whilst others are behind closed doors.

It took a few years for grieving and war weary communities to decide upon an appropriate memorial, raise funds and gather names for inclusion. Some towns ran design competitions for their memorials; others found it difficult to agree on the site for such an important venture. A number debated whether a memorial was appropriate and suggested a centre for ex-servicemen might be a better choice.

Memorials were funded by public subscriptions, usually organised by a committee of administrative and social leaders of local society. They steered the project to completion, from collecting the names to appear on a memorial to the unveiling ceremony.

In addition to the main war memorials, many communities such as schools and churches raised their own memorials and details of these can be found at [www.visitangus.com/heritage-trails](http://www.visitangus.com/heritage-trails)



## The VCs of Angus

Three men from Angus were awarded the highest military decoration, the Victoria Cross. Charles Jarvis and George Samson were associated with Carnoustie and Charles Melvin lived for most of his life in Kirriemuir. All 3 VCs will be commemorated by special paving stones. The first was installed near the entrance to Carnoustie Championship Golf Course on 23 August 2014 in memory of Charles Jarvis. Samson and Melvin will be commemorated on the anniversaries of their VC awards.



### CHARLES JARVIS

Charles Jarvis was awarded one of the war's first Victoria Cross medals for his gallantry at the Battle of Jemappes on 23 August 1914. Under heavy fire and in full view of the enemy, he worked for 90 minutes to demolish a bridge. Jarvis was born in Fraserburgh in 1881, but lived much of his early life in Carnoustie, where his father was a coastguard and later janitor at Carnoustie Public School. Jarvis trained as a plumber before joining the army, reaching the rank of Lance Corporal in the 57th Field Company Royal Engineers at the outbreak of the First World War. Jarvis died in Dundee in 1948. Jarvis Place in Carnoustie was named in his honour in 1966.



### GEORGE SAMSON

George Samson won his Victoria Cross for his actions on 25 April 1915 at V Beach, Seddul Bahr, Gallipoli, where he was the first man ashore. Samson was awarded the VC for his actions in rescuing and tending wounded men. He worked for 30 hours under fire to secure a safe landing for troops from HMS River Clyde and suffered multiple wounds, leading to his discharge from the navy for a 12 month period. He was invested with the Victoria Cross medal at Buckingham Palace on 5 October 1915, the first seaman in 50 years to be so honoured. After the war Samson continued to work in the merchant navy. He died in 1923 after contracting pneumonia. In 1966 Samson Place in Carnoustie was named in his honour. Samson had lived in Carnoustie during his youth, where his father worked as a shoemaker. He attended the same school and same church, Carnoustie's Episcopal Church, as Charles Jarvis.



George Samson (left), Rev. J. B. Jobberns (centre), Charles Jarvis (right)

Jarvis and Samson returned to Carnoustie on 29 October 1915 to a hero's reception in the YMCA Hall. Both VCs were members of the Holy Rood Episcopal Church and both had attended the same school in the town.



### CHARLES MELVIN

Charles Melvin was awarded his Victoria Cross for actions on 21 April 1917 at Istabulat, Mesopotamia "for most conspicuous bravery, coolness and resource in action" when charging an enemy trench. He was born in Boddin, Craig parish, the son of a ploughman, and had joined the army in 1907. After the war he settled in Kirriemuir and worked in a jute factory, marrying local power loom weaver Susan Irvine in 1919. He lived at various addresses in the town including 94 Roods and Glengate. Melvin died on 17 July 1941. A commemorative stone is located in Cumberland Close, Kirriemuir.

# Arbroath

Situated on the High Common overlooking the sea, Arbroath's war memorial sits 30ft high on top of a stone base. Arbroath's Western Cemetery contains the largest number of war graves in Angus, relating to both World Wars, all of whom are commemorated on the war memorial. It was designed by G Washington Browne RSA of Edinburgh and unveiled by local man James McKay, Lord Inchcape on 3 June 1922.

## Spotlight soldier

Private Scott Oram joined up at 15 years old in November 1914. He was taken as a Prisoner of War at Mons and spent the remainder of the war enduring the hardship of captivity in Germany and occupied Russia. Sadly, on the eve of his release, he contracted influenza and died in Germany on 23 December 1918.



## Did you know?

- Arbroath Evening Continuation Classes offered soldiers classes in field cookery, ambulance work and conversational French.
- German schooner Behrend entered the harbour on the day war was declared and was put under arrest. The vessel was guarded by a troop of local Boy Scouts.
- Red Cross volunteers provided Sunday morning refreshments to troops travelling by train. Local ladies would often include their names and addresses in cigarette packets and strike up correspondence with the receiving soldier.
- The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders and the Welsh Cycle Battalion were amongst the military units stationed in the town.
- Seaforth House and its stables, Inverbrothock School and Abbey School were used as military billets with the pupils attending Keptie, Parkhouse and Ladyloan Schools on a half day system.
- The Webster Memorial Theatre was named in honour of Joseph Frain Webster, son of manufacturer Sir Francis Webster. Joseph Webster died in France in October 1914 in action while preventing a trench from being captured by the Germans.

# Brechin

Brechin's memorial takes the form of a 40ft obelisk designed by Wright & Wrigley of Wakefield and is constructed of stone from the local Ardovie quarry. Originally the memorial was to take the form of the old market cross and be located on the High Street, but the site was considered to



be too small and too busy. Instead, the memorial was located in the Public Park and was unveiled by the Countess of Dalhousie on 23 December 1923.

Brechin Town Council commissioned a Book of Remembrance of their war dead, currently on view in Brechin Library. The book was created by Charles L Davidson and his wife Nina and is a beautiful work of craftsmanship, full of detail and symbolism, listing the names of the dead from Brechin parish.

## Spotlight soldier

The first Brechin man killed at the Front was Corporal William Dunn, the 22 year old son of local photographer John M Dunn, on 23 January 1915. A letter from Dunn's commander reached the family before the official intimation of his death describing how he was shot while digging trenches by a German sniper. Dunn was buried in Estaires Communal Cemetery.

## Did you know?

- In December 1914 the Earl of Dalhousie was saved from a battlefield death at Ypres by his valet GH Tait, who had accompanied him to the Front. When the Earl failed to return to camp, Tait searched for him on the battlefield at great personal risk. He found him injured and dying and carried him back to camp.
- Tank Julian, and its Tank Bank, visited Brechin in February 1918 raising £39,000, enough to purchase 7 tanks for the war effort.
- 16,834 eggs were collected in Brechin during the first National Egg Collection Week in 1915.
- Nettie Lamb and Ethel Duke, aunt and niece, served as nurses with Scottish Women's Hospital units in Serbia and were both taken as POWs. They were released in December 1915.
- The first military burial in the cemetery at Brechin was that of Private Tom Irvine, D Company 5th Black Watch, who died of injuries sustained at Ypres in June 1915.
- Miss Margaret McNabb of Keithock was a fund raiser extraordinaire for the Red Cross, egg collection for wounded soldiers, comforts for soldiers and almost every other local fund raising campaign.

# Carnoustie

Carnoustie's impressive memorial was unveiled on 31 October 1925 by the Earl of Strathmore. The memorial was designed by James Prain Bruce, an architect and former resident of Carnoustie, who designed many of its Edwardian villas. The sculpture of the soldier was created by Thomas Beattie of Edinburgh. The model was local man Charles Crawford who had served with the Seaforth Highlanders during World War One. The memorial is set within a beautiful Rest Garden which was completed in 1926.



## Spotlight soldier

Private Joseph Duncan, 2nd Gordon Highlanders and son of a retired salmon fisher, died after serving at the Front for only 3 weeks. He was shot by a sniper while volunteering for dangerous work. His platoon officer wrote to his parents that Duncan was one of his best men and a future NCO. Duncan was well known in the town as a pastry baker, before emigrating to Canada, where he lived for 3 years. He signed up early in the war and died on 17 June 1915.



## Did you know?

- D (Forfar) Company Highland Cyclist Battalion were billeted in the YMCA Hall until 1919.
- The Red Cross VAD Convalescent Hospital was located in the Union Club, Park Avenue, under the care of Miss Sutherland, with another hospital opening in Carlogie House in 1918 under the care of Miss Kidney.
- News of the death of Lance-Sergeant Alfred Gooch at Sabutilline reached the town on 4 November 1914, the first death in action of a Carnoustie resident.
- The Keeper of the Privy Purse wrote on behalf of the King to acknowledge the extraordinary response of Westhaven where 24 men were of military age and 21 of them had enlisted.
- Barry Buddon was a training area for soldiers and housed large guns as part of the Tay defences.
- Farrier-Sergeant David Sanderson, brother-in-law of George Samson VC, won the DCM in 1915. Samson's sister, Mrs Sanderson, engaged in munitions work in Carnoustie.

# Forfar

Forfar's war memorial sits on top of Balmashanner Hill. It is built in the style of a castellated tower using locally quarried stone and stands 65ft at the highest point of the turret. The roll of honour is located within the tower, which is open occasionally, although the memorial can be visited at any time. It was designed by Thomas R Soutar, architect, and was constructed by Alexander Adamson junior with David Stewart completing the joinery work. It was unveiled by the Earl of Strathmore, with Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon in attendance, on 11 September 1921.



## Spotlight soldier

Rev Gilbert Elliot, minister of the West United Free Church, enlisted not as an army chaplain but as a serving soldier in the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 12th Battalion. He served for 2 years as a Lance Corporal before being declared missing in March 1918. Elliot's death was not confirmed until March 1919. He is commemorated on the Poizieres Memorial.



## Did you know?

- Forfar was a preliminary military training centre with 2,000 soldiers from the Black Watch, the Gordon's, the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, Highland Light Infantry and the Royal Field Artillery in the town at any one time.
- The South School, East School, Reid Hall, Masonic Hall and the South Street factory were used as military billets.
- A Montrose Flying Corps biplane fell 300ft and crashed in a field near Nether Drumgley farm on 14 October 1915, killing its 2 occupants Captain Frederic Arkwright and Lt Hardy.
- Mons the Cat, rescued from a farmhouse near Hill 60 in Belgium, was purchased by William Lammond, cattle dealer in South Street, Forfar. Mons was resold for charity numerous times, but always bought back by Mr Lammond, raising £3,000 for war funds.
- 957 patients were treated in the Red Cross Auxiliary Hospital at Briars Cottage.
- The Forfar Bridie was banned as part of measures to conserve dwindling flour supplies in 1917. An appeal was made to the Ministry of Food and the ban on the bridie was rescinded in August 1917 on condition that less meat was used.



# Kirriemuir

The Kirriemuir war memorial is located at the top of the Hill, offering fine views over the Angus countryside. The memorial features the statue of a 9½ft Highlander soldier on guard, standing on top of a 26½ft base, with the names of the fallen soldiers organised by theatre of war. The town held a competition for the design of its memorial and Henry Hutcheon Ltd of Aberdeen was chosen. The memorial was unveiled on 12 August 1923 by Mabel, Dowager Countess of Airlie.



## Spotlight soldier

Two of Sir J M Barrie's nephews died during the war and are commemorated on a memorial plaque to the men of the former South United Free Church (now St Andrews Church), Kirriemuir. Lieutenant William Cowan Ogilvy Barrie died in action on 14 October 1916, only months after his elder brother Corporal Charles David Ogilvy Barrie died on 1 July 1916.



## Did you know?

- The Red Cross Hospital was located in Brechin Road, Kirriemuir, in 1916-1918 and had treated 240 patients by its second anniversary.
- Mary Robertson took over the postal route of John Boyd when he enlisted in the Mechanical Service Corps in June 1915. She was the first woman to take over a man's job in Kirriemuir.
- Major David Wilkie of Platten had just arrived in Canada on business when the mobilisation order came through. He immediately returned home, serving in France until his death in April 1917. He was a partner in J & D Wilkie, manufacturers.
- Lance Corporal John Beaton, 5th Battalion Black Watch, regularly sent poems home from the Front. These were printed locally and sold to raise money to purchase tobacco and cigarettes for his regiment.
- A vegetable depot operated at 5 High Street, Kirriemuir, to collect vegetables for Fleet personnel
- Charles Melvin VC unveiled the war memorial on St Andrews Church, Glamis Road, Southmuir, on 31 December 1930. The inscription reads, 'In grateful memory of the men of this church who gave their lives in the Great War Lest we Forget.'



# Monifieth

Monifieth's memorial was unveiled on 25 June 1922 by the Earl of Strathmore. It was designed by Charles G. Soutar, architect in Dundee. The bronze statue was created by Herman Cawthra of London. The art deco style memorial sits within an attractive garden on a site donated by Mrs Dalrymple Mitchell.

## Spotlight soldier

Private Sam Brown of the Black Watch fell in action on 23 April 1917, one of 3 sons of James Brown, Tay Street, Monifieth, serving at the Front. Brown was 20 years old and had been a ploughman at Ethiebeaton before joining up at the end of 1914. He is buried at Brown's Copse Cemetery, Rouex near Arras, France.



## Did you know?

- The Red Cross VAD Hospital operated from Gerard Hall and was run by Mrs Annie McLaren, a former nurse and wife of the minister.
- Monifieth's burgh surveyor Mr Mackenzie joined up and served in the Royal Engineers.
- 85 year old Mrs Gibb of Nicoll's Land knitted 6 pairs of socks for servicemen in 2 months during 1916 despite her failing eyesight
- Gunner Alex Maiden of the Royal Field Artillery, son of Monifieth's serving Provost, was gassed and wounded.
- In 1917 James F Low & Co Ltd added the Louvain Shell Factory to their iron works. The shell factory was a long oblong building made of concrete. It is now under modern housing.
- As food shortages started to bite, the rules about keeping pigs and chickens in back gardens were relaxed.

# Montrose

The Montrose war memorial, dominated by its central figure of Peace, occupies a prominent site on the Mid Links. The memorial was designed by Messrs Gamley & Kinross. It was unveiled by Major Hoyer

Millar on 1 June 1924. Montrose was also the site of Britain's first operational military airfield set up in 1913 by the Royal Flying Corps. The Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre now tells the story of the airmen of two World Wars.



## Spotlight soldier

Before joining up in 1915, David Oliphant, aged 25, worked as a constable in Montrose Police Force, and was engaged to be married. Oliphant served in the Royal Army Medical Corps (R.A.M.C.), 2nd Highland Divisional Field Ambulance unit. He had been serving for nearly a year when an enemy shell killed him and three other Scotsmen on 24 July 1917 while they were constructing a medical post near Ypres. His name can be found on the Montrose War Memorial, Farnell War Memorial (his father was a chauffeur at Kinnaid Castle) and the Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium.

## Did you know?

- The area between the former Bents Hotel and the shore was used to teach soldiers how to dig trenches and practice obstacle courses.
- The area behind Montrose Museum was used as a field bakery by the Royal Field Artillery.
- The 30 bed Red Cross VAD Hospital operated from the Congregational Church Hall on Baltic Street under superintendent Mrs Martin.
- Montrose Academy created its own war memorial dedicated to former pupils and teachers.
- Union Mill was used as a barracks by both airmen and soldiers. Panmure Barracks, formerly the Asylum and now the site of the Glaxo factory, also billeted soldiers.
- William Lamb, a Queen's Own Cameron Highlander, became a well known artist and sculptor despite a severe shrapnel injury to his right hand in 1917. After the war he learned to use his left hand and was commissioned to create the war memorials at Farnell and Hillside and the World War 2 additions to the Montrose War Memorial.



## Family history sources

The following websites can provide information about the men and women who died during the war.

### **ScotlandsPeople**

[www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)

### **Soldiers' and Airmen's' wills**

[www.nas.gov.uk](http://www.nas.gov.uk)

### **Ancestry military records**

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

### **Find My Past military records**

[www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)

### **Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

[www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

### **Scottish War Graves Project**

[www.scottishwargraves.phpbbweb.com](http://www.scottishwargraves.phpbbweb.com)

### **Imperial War Museum**

[www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)

### **Black Watch Museum**

[www.theblackwatch.co.uk](http://www.theblackwatch.co.uk)

### **Scottish National War Memorial Roll of Honour**

[www.snmw.org](http://www.snmw.org)

### **Scotland's War, Angus section**

[www.scotlandswar.ed.ac.uk/Angus](http://www.scotlandswar.ed.ac.uk/Angus)



Angus Archives War Stories Collection is available in the search room containing details of soldiers, nurses, soldiers' letters and poems amongst other things. The Archives are always looking to add more stories about local heroes to this collection.

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or visit [www.angusalive.scot/museums](http://www.angusalive.scot/museums)

