

The Liverpool Pals Memorial Fund has been established to place a permanent memorial to the Liverpool Pals placed within Liverpool City Centre, to the memory of the men and boys who volunteered at the start of the Great War. We are also in the process of researching nearly 2800 men who joined the Pals and never returned home. We are also active in educating the people of the city, many of whom were not even aware that Liverpool had had their own Pals, even though most know The Accrington Pals etc.

It is hoped to have the memorial in place in time for August 2014 the Centenary of the formation of the Liverpool Pals. We have commissioned Tom Murphy the local sculptor known for his work around the city, Dixie Dean, Bill Shankly, and most notably Noel Chavasse. Tom has designed a wonderful frieze telling the Pals story in four distinct scenes covering the formation, the goodbyes, the battles and finally the subdued homecoming. We have received permission from Network Rail for the memorial to be placed within Lime Street Station, above the Wirral Underground entrance. The big task is to raise just over £40,000 in the coming months. The memorial will only become a reality with the support of local people.

What is important to remember about The Pals is that these men were not regular soldiers but were volunteers mainly from the Business Community in Liverpool and the surrounding areas, such as Cheshire (now Wirral), North Wales and Lancashire. They will have worked in the same buildings as some of us, lived in the same houses, drank in the same pubs. They were ordinary men who volunteered to serve King and Country leaving behind them the safety of home and the security of employment. Many, over 2800 were never to return.

What follows is a short history of the Liverpool Pals which I hope will give you an insight into the experience of the Pals and the enormous losses suffered which left so many broken-hearted families.

So if you permit me I will take us back to August 1914 and will attempt to give you a short history of OUR Pals the first to be formed and the last to be stood down.

HISTORY

04/08/14:

Britain declares war on Germany

07/08/14:

Lord Kitchener makes his famous appeal for volunteers, 100,000 are required.

27/08/14:

Lord Derby's idea to form Pals Battalions is put forward to the Liverpool Press which announces a meeting to be held on 28/08/14 suggesting that men "wishing to join a battalion of comrades to serve their country together" should report to the meeting.

28/08/14:

Lord Derby addresses the meeting which is packed to capacity, so much so that he has to make two addresses the first to the packed upstairs assembly and a second to an equally packed downstairs:

"This should be a battalion of Pals, a battalion in which friends from the same office will fight shoulder to shoulder for the honour of Britain and the credit of Liverpool.

I don't ask you to uphold Liverpool's honour it would be an insult to think that you could do anything but that, but I do thank you from the bottom of my heart for coming here tonight and showing what is the spirit of Liverpool, a spirit that should spread through every City and Town in the Kingdom.

You have given a noble example in coming forward. You are certain to give a noble example on the field of battle"

31/08/14:

By 8.00 am the plateau of St Georges Hall was packed, queues were forming along Dale Street and the surrounding area. Men from the Cotton Association, Corn Trade Association, The Stock Exchange, bank and insurance clerks, accountants, and men from the City's shipping offices,

Cunard, White Star, Bibby Line, Elder and Dempster, to name but a few. Not your usual supply of soldiers. They were once described as "the cream of Liverpool". By 10.00 am 1,050 men have been recruited at St George's Hall, this is to become the 17th Battalion. Lord Derby tells the thousands waiting to return on 02/09

02/09/14:

St George's Hall witnesses thousands more men prepared to enlist. The 18th Battalion is formed.

07/09/14:

Over 3,000 men have now enlisted and Lord Derby has to call a temporary halt to the recruiting campaign. The 19th Battalion is formed.

14/10/14:

As Service regiments of the Kings Liverpool regiment the Pals would be expected to wear the Kings badge the White Horse of Hanover. However, in recognition of Lord Derby's role in their formation, King George V approves the Eagle and Child cap badge for the Pals Battalions. The Eagle and Child being the Derby family crest and the family motto is also included Sans Changer which translates simply as without change.

By November having made fresh appeals the 20th Battalion is formed. There are enough for a further two reserve battalions the 21st and 22nd.

Due to the suddenness of the call up, there was a serious shortage of equipment. As a result the Pals started their training with only 100 outdated rifles per 1000 men. They were billeted around the area in makeshift camps at Sefton Park, Knowsley Hall, Hooton Park race course the old watch factory at Prescott and the Tournament Hall at Knotty Ash.

By early 1915 the progress of the war on the Western Front, or lack of it, meant that the Pals had to prepare for Trench warfare and so had to practice digging. However as there was little free open land to practice on, they were to begin digging Lord Derby's land at Knowsley Hall. This earned them the nickname of Derby's Lapdogs and there are even reports of some men receiving the White Feather of cowardice from ill informed citizens.

30/04/15:

The Pals Battalions leave Liverpool for training at Grantham. The Pals become the 89th Brigade.

07/09/15:

The entire 89th Brigade is now based at Salisbury Plain for final training.

Between the 6th and 7th November all of the Pals Battalions embark for France.

Between their arrival and the end of June 1916 they were being prepared for the anticipated BIG PUSH. Losses are sporadic and usually due to Trench Raids, Artillery shelling etc.

01/07/16;

The Battle of the Somme commences, the heaviest losses ever suffered by the British Army as **19,240** men are killed in one day and over 40,000 more are wounded. The Liverpool Pals together with the Manchester Pals take the village of Montauban from the Germans, one of the very few successes of the day. In doing so however over **200** men are killed and many more wounded. Montauban is a tiny village in Northern France, within its confines is an obelisk memorial dedicated to "The Glorious Memory of the Liverpool and Manchester Pals who liberated the village on 01 July 1916.

30/07/16:

The Pals are part of an attack on Guillemont. The attack fails and the Pals lose 462 men killed in action on the day which later becomes known as Liverpool's blackest day. The figure exceeds 500 when you count the men who died of wounds received that day. It is a staggering figure when compared to the losses in Afghanistan. In 11 years the British Army has lost 441 brave men and women.

12/10/16:

The Battle of the Transloy Ridges begins. By 22 October, **226** Pals are killed.

During 1916, **64** officers and **1274** other ranks of the Pals have given their lives.

09/04/17:

Easter Monday. Battle of Arras begins, this is one of the costliest battles of the war in terms of days fought and lives lost. The Pals are heavily involved in fighting around the German positions known as the Hindenburg Line. 140 Pals are killed on this day.

20/05/17:

The Pals battalions move from France to the Ypres salient in Belgium.

31/07/17:

The Battle of Passchendaele begins. Between 31/07 and 03/08/17 there are **11** officers and **223** other ranks killed.

In seven months on the Ypres salient in 1917 the Pals have lost **22** officers and **518** other ranks killed.

March – April 1918:

Following the Russian revolution the German army was now able to free up 400,000 men after closing the Eastern Front. They knew that the United States had entered the war and realised that if they were to win the war they would have to act before the Americans entered the battlefield. They knew also that the British and French were stretched and near exhaustion. The Germans on 22 March launch a spring offensive Operation Michael. Such is the expected ferocity of the fighting and so thinly stretched are the British that the order is given to fight “to the last man standing”. The Pals were in the sector around the area of St Quentin in France. Left under no illusion as to their fate, they were to withstand the assault with little chance of support; those in the front line were to wait and meet the assault front on their instructions were:

“You will go to your positions and will not retreat. You will be either killed or taken prisoner. There is to be no retreat and anyone retreating will be fired upon as an enemy”

As the Germans were intent on a Blitzkrieg they were not going to take too many prisoners. On March 22 the full force of the attack was felt. For the next five weeks rear guard actions are taken to stave off the onslaught. Between 22 March and 30 April 1918 a total of 356 Pals have given their lives.

13/05/18:

The Pals battalions are sent to train the newly arrived American troops.

30/06/18:

The 17th Battalion leaves France and returns to England. Not for rest and recuperation but for service in Russia.

10/10/1918:

The 17th Battalion sets sail for Russia to protect upwards of two million tons of stores falling into the hands initially of the Germans, but following the end of the war to ensure that they do not fall into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

08/11/18:

The 18th Battalion attacks the Germans near Marbaux in what proves to be the Pals last engagement of the war. **13** men are killed.

11/11/18:

The Armistice is signed and the First World War is over.

02/09/19:

The last of the 17th Battalion leave Russia for home having lost 21 men during the campaign.

Just over 2,800 men have been killed by the end of hostilities during the Great War and the campaign in Russia.