

# Captain Eric Archibald McNair, VC

1894-1918



School Leaving Photograph - courtesy Charterhouse School

By Sue Fisher-Pascall

Eric Archibald McNair, known to his friends as Fuzzy<sup>1</sup>, was born on Saturday 16 June 1894 at 5 Harington Street, Calcutta, India and baptised there two months later on 13 August<sup>2</sup>. He was the youngest child of George Burgh McNair, Senior Partner of Morgan & Co., Solicitors, Calcutta, and Isabella Frederica Gow-Smith, who married on 28 September 1882 at St Stephen's Westbourne Park, Bayswater<sup>3</sup>. Although married in London, both his parents had been born and lived in India, as had both their parents.

His father was born 18 October 1852 in Monghyr Bengal, India, and died aged 69 on 29 April 1932 at the family home 5 Harington Street, and was buried the next day in Calcutta. His grandfather William Nathaniel McNair was born 9 January 1826 in Futtehghur, Bengal, India, and married Ann Smith on 10 October 1848 in Calcutta. His great grandfather Robert McNair was also thought to have been born in India. His mother was born in Jessore West Bengal in 1852. She died aged 88 on 12 January 1940 and was buried the next day in Calcutta. Her father George McAllan Gow-Smith had been an Indigo Planter and, with her mother Sarah, lived in Ramnaghur, Jessore, India.

There were five children in the McNair family, all born in Calcutta. The first child, Robert Arthur George McNair, was born in 1883 but died the same year; the second, Frederica Annie Lillian McNair, was born 1884; the third, Violet Isabelle McNair, was born in June 1885 but died the following April; and the fourth, George Douglas McNair, was born 1887<sup>4</sup>. So when Eric Archibald made his first appearance in 1894 he had an older sister Frederica aged 10, and an older brother George aged 7, but both would probably have already left India for school in England by the time Eric was 1.

Life in India at the turn of the century was one of extremes – wealth and poverty lived side by side as they had always done, but power was firmly in British hands. Once the sea routes to India had been discovered and opened up, Europeans strove to acquire trading posts. The East India Company began trading in 1600 but by 1757 was acquiring, by force, large tracts of land in Bengal and setting up a military authority. This was the beginning of British Rule, also known as the British Raj, in India. British soldiers and traders made fortunes, the Indians became impoverished, and rebellion was inevitable. After the mutiny, the British government abolished both the Mughal Dynasty that had ruled India for some 300 years and the East India Company, giving control to a British Governor General, who would report back to the Secretary of State for India and the British Parliament. At the time the British Raj covered about 2/3 of modern India with the other 1/3 comprising hundreds of independent "princely states" ruled by their own Indian rulers, but under the overall authority of the British crown. Queen Victoria promised improvements on the previous authorities and the British Raj settled down to rule India reasonably peacefully for the next 150 years<sup>5</sup>.

The McNairs, as part of a long-standing ruling elite in India, would have led a life of comfort, but also with constraints as to where they could go

and who they should meet. Position in society was of vital importance and had to be maintained. Friends and colleagues would have come from the same backgrounds, and lived similar lives. Despite the cultural differences around them, the British Raj remained firmly British.... and in charge.

When he was about 8 years old Eric left India to go to school in England, following in the footsteps of his older brother George. He first went to Branksome Prep School, a boys school run by Charles Sylvester in Filmer Road, Godalming, where he was one of some 30 boarders, amongst whom were several others, like himself, from India or one of the other British Colonies. In those days most boys living abroad would be sent back to England to receive their education. The chief aim of Public Schools at that time was to produce Officers and Civil Servants to run the Empire. Many children, arriving at the tender age of 8, would not return to their parents until they were 17 or 18 and their schooling was over. Travel was difficult and lengthy. Parents might make an occasional trip over to see their children, but in the main children remained in England, staying with relations or others acting in loco parentis during the holidays.

In the summer of 1907 Eric moved from his Prep school to Charterhouse School in Godalming, Surrey, where he became a member of Lockites House. His brother had been a pupil at Charterhouse from 1901 until 1904, so although a strong reputation doubtless preceded him at both schools (his brother would become a High Court Judge and was knighted), the brothers were never together at either school.

Initially Eric was somewhat unruly, his misdemeanours featuring quite frequently in Charterhouse's "Black Book". He was "troublesome" or "slack", had not handed his work in, was found eating in detention, or simply "a nuisance" or "late". Poor Fuzzy, it seems discipline came hard to him initially. These misdemeanours were punished by doing lines, getting extra prep, translating Virgil, or doing Drill which involved marching up and down for a set amount of time. By the end of his first year, however, he had settled down and the Black Book entries diminished, although lateness continued to be a problem right through his time at school – especially for chapel! He moved steadily through the school attaining both Junior and Senior Scholarships, with Classics his strong subject throughout. He took part in most school activities. He joined the Rifle Brigade in his first year and enjoyed sports, playing 1<sup>st</sup> XI Football, 3<sup>rd</sup> XI Cricket for the School, House Cricket and Maniacs Cricket (a team that played against local villages). He also took part in several Open long distance running and steeplechase races. He was a popular boy, loyal to his friends, level headed and modest, with a good sense of humour<sup>6</sup>.



Lockites House –  
[www.friendsreunited.com](http://www.friendsreunited.com)

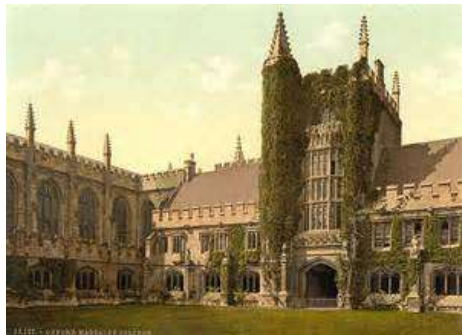
The 1911 census<sup>7</sup> shows him at Lockites, Charterhouse, as a schoolboy

of 16 with 43 other boys aged between 14 and 19. That night an Assistant Master, William Moss, was in charge of the house, with a Matron, a Cook, two Dormitory Maids, a Scullery Maid, a Parlour Maid, a Kitchen Maid, a Home Maid, and two Page Domestics, all resident. Quite a household. Fuzzy became a Monitor that year and the following year became Head Monitor (the Charterhouse term for Head Boy) of the School.

His last year saw him as Vice President of the Debating Society, Athletics Editor of the Carthusian (the school magazine), Treasurer of the Athletics Committee, a member of the Lawn Tennis Committee and a member of the Fire Brigade which was comprised of the most athletic senior boys. Despite a full diary, It would seem he found some time for school work as he was elected to a Demyship at Magdalen College Oxford to read Classics.



The Fire Brigade - courtesy Charterhouse School



Magdalen College, Oxford  
[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magdalen_College,_Oxford)

In the Autumn of 1913 Fuzzy went up to Magdalen College, at the same time (their birthdays were only a week apart) as the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), with whom he would become acquainted. Both were destined to have their time at Oxford cut short when war broke out the following August 1914.

Why did the war start? Over time, countries throughout Europe made mutual defence agreements, so if one country was attacked, allied countries were bound to defend them. Before World War 1, the following alliances existed:

- Russia and Serbia
- Germany and Austria-Hungary
- France and Russia
- Britain and France and Belgium
- Japan and Britain

When Arch Duke Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated by a Serbian Nationalist, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, starting a chain of events. Russia got involved to defend Serbia. Germany, seeing Russia mobilizing, declared war on Russia. France was then drawn in against Germany and Austria-Hungary. Germany attacked France through Belgium pulling Britain into war. Then Japan entered the war. Later, Italy and the United States would enter on the side of the allies<sup>8</sup>.

On his appointment as Secretary of State for War shortly after the declaration of the war, Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener called for volunteers to increase the size of the army. From August 1914 a new "short service" term was introduced under which a man could serve for "3 years or the duration of the war whichever is the longer" rather than the standard term of 12 years.



McNair applied for, and obtained, a Commission on 8 October 1914 and was gazetted to the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment, as a Second Lieutenant. A few weeks later, on 22 December 1914, he was promoted to Lieutenant, and the following August 1915 was transferred to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment<sup>9</sup>.

Royal Sussex Regiment Badge  
[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Sussex_Regiment)

The 9<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion was formed at Chichester in September of 1914. After formation the battalion went into camp on the South Downs around Brighton, where it often took part in recruitment marches on the seafront. Here it became part of the 73rd Brigade of the 24th Division, which was established in September 1914 as part of Army Order 388 authorising Kitchener's Third New Army, K3.

By December 1914 the 9<sup>th</sup> battalion had moved to billets in Portslade and barracks near Dover and the following April units of the Division, including the 9<sup>th</sup>, began to assemble in the Shoreham area.

To begin with things were fairly chaotic, the new volunteers having very few trained officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) to command

them, and no organised billets or equipment. Makeshift drab uniforms arrived in March of 1915, but it was not until July that rifles were issued. Despite this slight problem, the 9<sup>th</sup> made a further move to Woking in June with the Division and went to Aldershot for five days final training. Lord Kitchener inspected the Division at Chobham ranges on 19 August and the next day it was the turn of King George V. Orders to move to France were received on 19 August and the first units departed one week later<sup>10</sup>.



RSR WW1 Marching & Dress Uniforms  
<http://www.royalsussex.org.uk/>

The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion departed Southampton on 31 August aboard the SS Marguerite, landing in France at Le Havre 1 September 1915, when they marched to Camp 5. After 24 hours, they boarded a train to Maresquel arriving there on the 3 September and were billeted at Embrey and Rimboval in the late afternoon. The weather was bad and it was found that much of the leather equipment was not standing up well to the conditions. Concentration was completed in the area between Etaples and St Pol on 4 September<sup>11</sup>.

The Division's first experience of warfare was truly appalling. Having been in France for only a few days, lengthy forced marches brought it into the reserves – the Beuvry Trenches - for the British assault at Loos. (25-26 September 1915). Compared with the small-scale British efforts of spring 1915, this attack of six Divisions was a mighty offensive indeed - so much so that it was referred to at the time as 'The Big Push'. Taking place on ground

not of their choosing and before stocks of ammunition and heavy artillery were sufficient, the opening of the battle was noteworthy for the first use of poison gas by the British Army. Despite breaking deep into the enemy positions near Loos and Hulluch<sup>12</sup>, General Headquarter (GHQ) planning left the Battalion too far behind to be a useful reinforcement on the first day, but it was sent into action on 26 September. The 9th fought near a position called "The Dump" and held the position for 2 days but suffered heavy losses, 2 Majors, 5 Captains, 7 Lieutenants, 6 2nd Lieutenants and 362 other ranks were killed plus some 3800 further men injured, for very little gain. The reserves had been held too far from the battle front to be able to exploit the successes and succeeding days bogged down into attritional warfare for minor gains.

The Battalion Diaries show life at the Front as a mixture of high adrenalin on the one hand and almost boredom on the other. When back from the line there were bomb throwing and machine gun courses, general drill, digging latrines, practising the quick loading of busses, fully equipped – which was finally achieved in 35 seconds – the usual round of Army life punctuated with increasing frequency by 5 terrifying days at the front. After their first heavy losses at The Dump, a small amount of time was given to bring them up to strength again before they went to the Rosenhill Trenches from 28 October to 2 November 1915. They found these trenches collapsing due to rain, so had to do as best they could to repair the damage, all the while dodging snipers or any other missiles coming in their direction. Five days off, then back into the Trenches 7-12 November; five days off again and once more into the trenches 17-22 November; and so it continued. The diaries are sprinkled with the small things that made life easier to bear – the arrival of some sausages and peppermints one day from the Sussex Soldiers Cigarette & Comforts Fund; a game of Football; a day when it didn't rain!<sup>13</sup>

The start of 1916 saw the Battalion in "Regent Street" at Zouave Wood from 19-30 January, and in February they moved to the Ypres Salient where they took over trenches on the Bellewaarde Ridge near the hamlet of Hooze, the site of a chateau which had been used as the Divisional Headquarters for the area. In 1914 the staff at the chateau, from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Divisions were all killed when the chateau was shelled on 31 October. German forces continued to attack and, despite the detonation of a British mine by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division which left a massive crater, took control of the chateau and the surrounding area on 30 July. The chateau and the crater (craters being strategically important in relatively flat countryside) were taken again by the British 6<sup>th</sup> Division on 9 August<sup>14</sup>.

Eric McNair was now 21 and doing another turn in the trenches. On 14<sup>th</sup> February it was raining and a considerable amount of shelling had taken place throughout the day. At 5.45 the enemy blew up two mines on the front line, Lieutenant McNair and a number of men were flung into the air and many were buried. Although much shaken, McNair at once organised a party with a machine-gun to man the near edge of the crater and opened rapid fire on the advancing enemy. They were driven back with many dead. McNair decided to run back for reinforcements, and send to another unit for bombs, ammunition and tools to replace those buried, but the communication trench was blocked. With little thought for the danger, he took his life in his hands and ran across the open, under heavy fire, successfully reaching his objective, and brought up the reinforcements the same way. His bravery and quick thinking undoubtedly saved a critical situation<sup>15</sup>.

The London Gazette records his achievement and states that "His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to award the Victoria Cross to Temporary Lieutenant Eric Archibald McNair, 9<sup>th</sup> (service) Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment for most conspicuous bravery"<sup>16</sup>. In the same Gazette a further extract reads: "Citation for Victoria Cross. Eric Archibald McNair, Lieutenant, 9th Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment, for courageous defence of a crater on the front line near Ypres on 14 February 1916"<sup>17</sup>



Gallagher Tobacco Card "VC Heroes"

It is interesting to read the Battalion diary for this day:

"At 5.45 pm the enemy blew up two mines on the Front line. These were immediately seized by B & D Companies and a German attack was repulsed. A platoon of D Company was completely buried alive with 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Hill. B Company also suffered heavily. The CO showed remarkable gallantry and coolness and gave three cheers for the Germans when they attacked. The night was spent digging themselves in on the crater. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Wolf killed. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lts. Shaw and Goad injured. Capt. Cerely wounded at duty."<sup>18</sup>

No mention is made of McNair at this point. Acts of bravery were almost commonplace – many unheralded, unseen, unnoticed, certainly not recorded. The continual ebb and flow of battle took all the concentration, there was no time for individual praise, merely the dull recording of deaths necessitating replacements.

Despite his award, and a promotion to temporary Captain on 14 October 1915, life in Hooze in 1916 continued as before, up to the front for a few days - 25-29 Feb; 8-11 Mar; 6-11 Apr - and back to camp in between. I think this ever changing situation must have been one of the hardest things to come to terms with, constantly alternating between the build up of mental strength to face the Front and impending death, followed by relief a few days later at finding oneself still alive and back in camp. On 15 April a message was received from Headquarters (HQ) that all leave had been stopped and all men on leave were to be recalled. McNair had

been due to go on leave to be awarded his Victoria Cross, but was unable to go. It was later discovered that this order should only have applied to those men already on leave, not those due to go on leave. A typical example of how messages, like Chinese Whispers, can be altered as they pass down the line.

On 28 April word spread that the Germans were going to attack with Gas. Precautions were taken and gas masks worn for several hours in anticipation, but it proved a false alarm. However 2 days later at Wulverghem/Kortepyp the attack came and the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion had 20 minutes of thick gas before it dispersed. The German gas was a mixture of chlorine and phosgene. An eyewitness account by Arthur Guy Empey gives a terrifying view of gas in action:

"We had a new man at the periscope, on this afternoon in question; I was sitting on the fire step, cleaning my rifle, when he called out to me: 'There's a sort of greenish, yellow cloud rolling along the ground out in front, it's coming ---' But I waited for no more, grabbing my bayonet, which was detached from the rifle, I gave the alarm by banging an empty shell case, which was hanging near the periscope. At the same instant, gongs started ringing down the trench, the signal for Tommy to don his respirator, or smoke helmet, as we call it. Gas travels quietly, so you must not lose any time; you generally have about eighteen or twenty seconds in which to adjust your gas helmet.

"A gas helmet is made of cloth, treated with chemicals. There are two windows, or glass eyes, in it, through which you can see. Inside there is a rubber-covered tube, which goes in the mouth. You breathe through your nose; the gas, passing through the cloth helmet, is neutralized by the action of the chemicals. The foul air is exhaled through the tube in the mouth, this tube being so constructed that it prevents the inhaling of the helmet is good for five hours of the strongest gas. Each Tommy carries two of them slung around his shoulder in a waterproof canvas bag. He must wear this bag at all times, even while sleeping. To change a defective helmet, you take out the new one, hold your breath, pull the old one off, placing the new one over your head, tucking in the loose ends under the collar of your tunic. A gas, or smoke helmet, as it is called, at the best is a vile-smelling thing, and it is not long before one gets a violent headache from wearing it.



WW1 British Gas Helmet 1916

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/>

"For a minute, pandemonium reigned in our trench, - Tommies adjusting their helmets, bombers running here and there, and men turning out of the dugouts with fixed bayonets, to man the fire step. Reinforcements were pouring out of the communication trenches. Our gun's crew was busy mounting the machine gun on the parapet and bringing up extra ammunition from the dugout. German gas is heavier than air and soon fills the trenches and dugouts, where it has been known to lurk for two or three days, until the air is purified by means of large chemical sprayers.



We had to work quickly, as Fritz generally follows the gas with an infantry attack. A company man on our right was too slow in getting on his helmet; he sank to the ground, clutching at his throat, and after a few spasmodic twistings, went West (died). It was horrible to see him die, but we were powerless to help him. In the corner of a traverse, a little muddy cur dog, one of the company's pets, was lying dead, with his two paws over his nose. It's the animals that suffer the most, the horses, mules, cattle, dogs, cats, and rats, they having no helmets to save them. Tommy does not sympathize with rats in a gas attack. At times, gas has been known to travel, with dire results, fifteen miles behind the lines."<sup>19</sup>

In May of 1916 McNair was finally allowed a short leave to receive his Victoria Cross and on 20 May at Buckingham Palace he was decorated by HM King George V. Then back to the trenches again and again with the 9<sup>th</sup> - 1-5 May; 12-17 May; 26-31 May; 1-3 June; 12-17 June with another Gas attack lasting 40 minutes; the Germans reclaiming the Chateau on 16 June. At the start of July it was decided to increase the time spent at the front from 6 to 8 days - 2 more days to risk life and limb, 2 days longer to survive each time before relieved.



Ruins of the Chateau at Hooze in 1915, by 1917 it would be completely obliterated

The battle for the Chateau at Hooze and its crater went on for years. It was retaken by the British on 31 July 1917 when the 8<sup>th</sup> Division managed to push past it by about a mile. Many large craters from

[www.ypres-salient.com](http://www.ypres-salient.com)

underground mines were blown over the course of the fighting, and in October 1917 it became the location for a war cemetery. The Germans retook the site in April 1918 as part of their Spring Offensive but were expelled from the area by the British on 28 September as the offensive faltered. During this time, the chateau was completely destroyed along with the entire village. The site of the chateau is now a theme park, with a hotel and a pond (formed by a crater from a mine blown up by the British on 19 July 1915) close by. A museum, founded in 1994, is opposite the Cemetery<sup>20</sup>.

Other Battalions of the Royal Sussex Regiment (RSR) were involved in the battle of Boars Head in June 1916 – sometimes called 'The day Sussex Died' – when 17 officers, 349 men, including 12 sets of brothers – 3 from one family - were killed, and a further 1000 were wounded or taken prisoner. The attack was just a "diversion", not considered a separate action in the history of the war, and remains largely unmentioned in any of the official histories<sup>21</sup>. The Corps commander looked upon the attack as a raid and considered it to be successful<sup>22</sup>.

In August 1916 orders were received to make an attack on Guillemont on the Somme. The plan was for the 7<sup>th</sup> Northants to attack at 2.45 pm on 18 August and take the Guillemont front line and quarries. The 9<sup>th</sup> RSR

would attack at 5 am the following day and advance half way through the fortified village of Guillemont. McNair was in charge of B Company with 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants C M Prince and K C Bright in support. At 2.45 pm the 7<sup>th</sup> Northants attacked as planned. RSR's A & B Companies had moved to the forward trenches at noon and at 2.45 pm had moved to the front line trenches. C & D Companies were following behind. The 7<sup>th</sup> Northants lost heavily in hand to hand fighting, and at 4.30 pm needed reinforcing by part of A & B Companies. Lieutenant McNair and Corporal A R McIver were both wounded trying to find a route across No Man's Land. Of his two 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants, C M Prince was killed in the bombardment and K C Bright was killed by machine gun fire leading his men across to reinforce. The battle cost the lives of 3 officers and 23 other ranks, with 137 wounded and 23 'missing'<sup>23</sup>.

The 24<sup>th</sup> Division served on the Western Front for the remainder of the war, taking part in many of the significant actions, but McNair's injuries were severe – he had gunshot wounds to his shoulder and back – and he was evacuated back to England, never to return to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion again.

He remained "unfit for service" until January 1917. Although not fully recovered from wounds and sickness, he again volunteered and through the influence of Edward, Prince of Wales, whom he had come to know as a fellow-undergraduate at Oxford, was put on probation for Staff work<sup>24</sup>, going through a special Staff course and being appointed General Staff Officer Grade 3 on 18 April 1918.



HRH Edward Prince of Wales c 1915  
[www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org)

Despite continuing ill health, he obtained a posting attached to the General Staff at the Expeditionary Force GHQ in Italy at the end of April and returned once more to active duty under Lieutenant-General Lord Cavan, the Commanding Officer of British Forces in Italy<sup>25</sup>.

Italy, despite a triple alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany, had refused to join them when war first broke out. In 1915 Italy was offered large sections of territory in the Adriatic Sea region in return for joining Britain and France and thus signed the Treaty of London. It was thought that war on yet another front, requiring the withdrawal of some troops from the Western & Eastern Fronts, must weaken the enemy's power there. With minimal Allied support, Italy repeatedly attacked Austria but suffered heavy losses and had little success, advancing only 10 miles into Austria in 2 years. In October 1917 the Italian army were catastrophically routed in the battles of Caporetto. Facing an Austrian army reinforced by 7 German Divisions, they lost 300,000 men and the retreat brought shame and humiliation<sup>26</sup>. The Allies promptly sent reinforcements - 6 French Army Divisions & 5 British Army Divisions – to straighten out the front line<sup>27</sup>.



Headstone, Plot I, Row B, Grave 32 [Ancestry UK](http://Ancestry.UK), Victoria Cross

Medals, 1857-2007

McNair, still suffering from poor health and thus susceptible to disease, became ill and was invalided back to the base hospital in Genoa with chronic dysentery. He died there on 12 August 1918<sup>28</sup>. He was just 24 years old<sup>29</sup>.

He was buried in Staglieno Cemetery, Commonwealth War Graves Section, in the northern suburbs of Genoa, Liguria Province. His name is also inscribed on the Regimental Memorial in Chichester Cathedral and in the Memorial Chapel at his old school Charterhouse.

His brother George's first child, born in 1919, was named Erica in his memory.

"They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old,  
 age shall not weary them nor the years condemn,  
 at the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
 we will remember them"



In addition to his Victoria Cross, McNair was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-1920 and the Victory Medal 1914-1919 – affectionately known to the British Tommy as "Pip, Squeak & Wilfred".



Victoria Cross



1914-15 Star



British War Medal



Victory Medal 1914-1919

1914-1920

Google Images

After the death of his brother Sir George Douglas McNair in 1967, McNair's Victoria Cross was presented to the Royal Sussex Regiment and displayed at the Eastbourne Redoubt Museum in Sussex.

Over 3,500 Old Boys from Charterhouse (Carthusians) served in the Great War 1914-1919, in the forces of Great Britain, its Dominions and its allies, or with those forces in civilian roles, and at least one served with the German army. Of these, some 670 died: about as many as there were boys in the school at any one time at that period. In 1917 a War Memorial Fund was inaugurated and post-war a new chapel, Memorial Chapel designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, was built in honour of the fallen old boys, masters and other school staff.

By one of the War's many ironies, McNair's opposite number as deputy head monitor in 1913 was a Southern Irish boy who remained a non-combatant throughout hostilities<sup>30</sup>.

#### Royal Sussex Regiment - World War I 1914 – 1918

The regiment raised 23 battalions for the war all of which saw action. The regiment had a battalion in every theatre including Russia in 1919. In all, the regiment lost 6,800 men during the war and, as well as McNair's, three other Victoria Crosses were awarded to men from the regiment. After the war St Georges Chapel, in Chichester Cathedral, was restored and furnished as a memorial to the fallen of the Royal Sussex Regiment. It now has all their names recorded on the panels that are attached to the chapel walls.

At the end of the war on 11 November 1918, the 9<sup>th</sup> battalion was still part of 73rd Brigade, 24th Division, and was stationed at Bavai, in France, finally disbanding early in 1919<sup>31</sup>.

- <sup>1</sup> Robert Graves autobiography "Goodbye to all that".
- <sup>2</sup> Family Search index project C39358-0 India-EASy source film number 512349).
- <sup>3</sup> Times of India edition 27 October 1882 & UK Marriage Registration Q3 1882 Kensington
- <sup>4</sup> India Births & Baptisms 1786-1947, India Deaths & Burials 1719-1948 – [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>5</sup> Kaul, Chandrika - "From Empire to Independence: The British Raj in India 1858–1947"
- <sup>6</sup> Charterhouse School
- <sup>7</sup> 1911 Census - Reference RG14PN3090 RG78PN111 RD33 SD5 ED3 SN90
- <sup>8</sup> Top five causes of World War One by Martin Kelly <http://americanhistory.about.com/od/worldwar1/tp/causes-of-world-war-1.htm>
- <sup>9</sup> Paul Reed - <http://battlefields1418.50megs.com/vc2.htm>
- <sup>10</sup> The Long Long Trail – 24<sup>th</sup> Division in 1914-1918 - <http://www.1914-1918.net/24div.htm>
- <sup>11</sup> War Diary. Official War Diary of the 9th Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment, in France and Belgium, comprising duplicates of original summaries of daily events - 21 August 1915 - 30 June 1919 – held by West Sussex Records Office RSR/MSS/7/16.
- <sup>12</sup> The Long Long Trail – Battle of Loos - <http://www.1914-1918.net/bat13.htm>
- <sup>13</sup> War Diary. Typescript copy of the official War Diary of the 9th Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment, in France and Belgium RSR/MSS/7/17 21 August 1915 - 31 May 1919 West Sussex Record Office
- <sup>14</sup> Wikipedia – Hooge Belgium - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hooge,\\_Belgium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hooge,_Belgium)
- <sup>15</sup> Citation from the [London Gazette](#), No 29527 March 30, 1916
- <sup>16</sup> [The London Gazette](#) No 29527 of March 30, 1916
- <sup>17</sup> West Sussex Record Office RSR/MSS/7/26
- <sup>18</sup> War Diary. Typescript copy of the official War Diary of the 9th Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment, in France and Belgium RSR/MSS/7/17 21 August 1915 - 31 May 1919
- <sup>19</sup> Empey, Arthur Guy, Over The Top (1917) - <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/gas.htm>
- <sup>20</sup> Wikipedia – Hooge Belgium - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hooge,\\_Belgium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hooge,_Belgium)
- <sup>21</sup> Wikipedia – Richebourg-l'Avoué - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_the\\_Boar%27s\\_Head](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Boar%27s_Head)
- <sup>22</sup> Miles, W. (1938). History of the Great War: Military Operations in France and Belgium, 2 July to the End of the Battles of the Somme (IWM & Battery Press 1992 ed.). London: Macmillan. ISBN 0-89839-169-5.
- <sup>23</sup> War Diary. Typescript copy of the official War Diary of the 9th Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment, in France and Belgium RSR/MSS/7/17 21 August 1915 - 31 May 1919 West Sussex Record Office
- <sup>24</sup> Courtesy of Charterhouse School
- <sup>25</sup> [London Gazette](#) 30966 – 18 October 1918
- <sup>26</sup> Forces War Records - <http://alphahistory.com/worldwar1/italian-front/>
- <sup>27</sup> Wikipedia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Caporetto](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Caporetto)
- <sup>28</sup> GRO War Death Army Officers Indices (1914 to 1921) Year 1918, volume O.12, page 112
- <sup>29</sup> Forces War Records
- <sup>30</sup> The Carthusian December 1915 commentary by Dr Eric Webb - <http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/dreericwebb/docs/Belgrade.pdf>
- <sup>31</sup> Royal Sussex Regiment History

#### Illustrations

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