

Farnhill WW1 Volunteers and their medals

1914 Star (aka “Mons Star”)



Issued to men who served in France or Belgium between 5th August 1914 and 22nd November 1914.

A narrow horizontal bronze clasp sewn onto the ribbon, bearing the dates '5th AUG. - 22nd NOV. 1914' shows that the recipient had actually served under enemy fire during that period.



These were men who fought in the early, “mobile” phase of the war, including the battle of Mons, the retreat to the Seine, the battles of Le Cateau, the Marne, the Aisne and the first battle of Ypres.

The medal is a four-pointed star, made of bronze. The front includes the date 1914 and the rear is stamped with the recipient’s name, rank, number and unit.

This medal was always awarded along with a British War Medal and a Victory Medal.

The following Farnhill Volunteers are known to have been awarded a 1914 Star:

- Private **Ambrose Bower**, 2nd Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment (Green Howards)
- Private **John Pollard**, 2nd battalion York & Lancaster Regiment
- Private **Joseph Smith**, 2nd battalion, Duke of Wellington’s (West Riding) Regiment – with clasp
- Lance-Cpl **John Sunderland**, 1st battalion, Royal Lancaster Regiment

These were all men who were serving in the army at the start of the war or who were recalled immediately from the reserves.

In addition it is likely that other men, such as **William Ward**, who we know had a military background, but for whom the project has been unable to find official medal cards, would also have been eligible for a 1914 Star.

1914-15 Star (aka "1915 Star")



This medal was awarded to all men who served in any theatre of war against Germany between 5th August 1914 and 31st December 1915, except those eligible for the 1914 Star – a man got one or the other depending on when he commenced his active service.

The design is similar to the 1914 Star but the front is inscribed 1914-15.

As with the 1914 Star, this medal was always awarded along with a British War Medal and a Victory Medal.

The following Farnhill Volunteers are known to have been awarded a 1914-15 Star:

- Private **Herbert Barker**, 1/6th battalion, Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment
- Private **Albert Edgar Bower**, 1/6th battalion, Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment
- Private **Thomas Bulcock**, 10th battalion, Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment
- Corporal **James Arthur Hartley**, 168th (Huddersfield) Brigade, Royal Field Artillery
- Private **William Birch Holmes**, 10th battalion, Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment
- Victualler's Assistant **Willie Latham**, Royal Navy
- Driver **Ben Thornton Smith**, Army Service Corps
- Private **Percy Edward Walmsley**, 1/6th battalion, Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment

These men were members of the Territorials at the start of the war or early recruits to Kitchener's Volunteer Army (or Navy recruits in the case of Willie Latham).

As with the 1914 Star there may be other men who would have been eligible for a 1914-15 Star but for whom the project has been unable to find official medal cards.

British War Medal, 1914-18



This medal was awarded to all men of the British and Imperial Forces who saw service overseas, in any theatre of the war, between 5th August 1914 and 11th November 1918.

Most of the 6.5 million British War Medals struck were made of silver – although a small number of bronze medals were issued, mainly to Chinese, Maltese and members of the Indian Labour Corps.

The front of the medal shows the head of King George V and the recipient's service number, rank, name and unit are impressed on the rim.

It is likely that all the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers, except those few who were discharged during their UK-based training, would have been eligible to receive a British War Medal.

Allied Victory Medal



Each of the allied nations issued their own bronze Victory medals, of similar design and identical ribbon.

The Victory Medal was issued to all those who received the 1914 Star or the 1914-15 Star, and to most of those who were awarded the British War Medal. It was not awarded singly.

To qualify, recipients must have served in the armed forces and have entered a theatre of war between 5th August 1914 and 11th November 1918. Home service did not count.

Approximately 5.7 million Victory medals were issued.

The British medal was designed by W. McMillan. The front depicts a winged classical figure representing Victory. The recipient's service number, rank, name and unit were impressed on the rim.

It is likely that all the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers, except those few who were discharged during their UK-based training, would have been eligible to receive a Victory Medal.

Silver War Badge



The Silver War Badge (SWB) was issued to men who were discharged or forced to retire from the military service due to of sickness or injury caused by their war service.

The badge was intended to be worn on the right breast of a recipient's civilian clothing, rather than on a military uniform, and was designed to prevent the “white feathering” of men who had served but could no longer do so.

The badge was made of sterling silver and the words “For King and Empire; Services Rendered” were engraved on the rim.

Each badge was also engraved with a unique number on the reverse, although this number is not related to the recipient's Service Number.

There were about 1,150,000 Silver War Badges issued in total for First World War service.

A number of the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers are known to have been discharged as unfit to serve and were awarded a Silver War Badge. These include:

- **Cecil Green** – 5th battalion Duke of Wellington’s (West Riding) Regiment
- **Harry Green** (?) – possible, service details not known
- Private **Fred Hargreaves**, 5th battalion Duke of Wellington’s (West Riding) Regiment
- Lance-Corporal **William Birch Holmes**, 10th battalion, Duke of Wellington’s (West Riding) Regiment
- Private **George Frederick Myers**, Royal Army Service Corps
- Private **Frank Pollard**, 4th battalion York & Lancaster Regiment
- Private **Charles Slack**, 2/6th battalion, Duke of Wellington’s (West Riding) Regiment
- Lce/Sergeant **Leo Spencer**, 8th battalion, Duke of Wellington’s (West Riding) Regiment
- Sergeant **John Sunderland**, 3rd Garrison battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers
- Private **Percy Edward Walmsley**, 4th battalion, Yorkshire Regiment

Military Medal



The Military Medal (MM) was awarded to men below commissioned rank for bravery in battle on land. The award was established in 1916, with retrospective application to 1914, and was awarded for "acts of gallantry and devotion to duty under fire".

Only two of the Farnhill Volunteers are known to have been awarded a Military Medal:

- Private **Ambrose Bower**, 2nd Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment (Green Howards)
- Private **John Spencer Whitham**, stretcher bearer, 5th battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment

