

In Memory Of

Lieutenant

HUBERT REGINALD BALDWIN

Nelson Bn. R.N. Div., Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve who died on 13 July 1915

Son of William Baldwin, of Colleybatch, Tenbury, Worcs.

Remembered with Honour

HELLES MEMORIAL

Panel 8 to 16.



|||||
COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
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COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

29-year-old Hubert Reginald Baldwin from Colleybatch in Boraston was reported “missing in action – presumed killed” at Gallipoli in the Dardanelles on July 13th 1915. He is the first in the alphabetic list of fallen servicemen on our parish War Memorial, and he the only one with no known grave.

I am indebted to Hubert’s great-nephew, Philip Baldwin, who was born at Colleybatch during the Second World War for his help with the family history. When I was preparing my talk in 2016, he gave me a copy of Hubert’s photo and some notes he’d made in 2014 about his branch of the Baldwin family. We talked about his father, William, who served in WW2 and who is commemorated in the Baldwin window, and his grandfather, Hubert’s older brother, Sir Archer Baldwin. Philip and his wife Angela used to attend most of our Remembrance Sunday services before the Covid lockdowns.

Birth, family background and pre-War career

Hubert Reginald was the 3rd son born to William and Elizabeth Baldwin on November 22nd 1885 at his parents’ farm at Underley in the parish of Wolferlow between Tenbury and Bromyard. The Census records from 1891 and 1901 reveal that he grew up there with his parents and his older brother, Archer Ernest Baldwin. (William and Elizabeth briefly emigrated to Tennessee in America, where Archer was born in December 1884, returning to Underley when their timber felling business failed). When the Census was taken in April 1901 Hubert was a 15-year-old teenager helping with the work at Underley Farm, where his father had 260 acres.

Thanks to the UK Electrical Engineers WW1 Roll of Honour published in 1924, we know that Hubert was educated at Lucton School from 1897 to 1901, and that in June 1902 aged 16 he began a 3-year apprenticeship with the Electric Light and Power Company at Ross on Wye. At this time electricity was still rare and expensive. Although a handful of large estates had private electricity supplies from the late 1870s (the first being Cragside in Northumberland in 1878), the first towns and cities were only just beginning to get a public supply between 1890 and 1910. Hubert was starting in a new profession, and he had a bright future. During his apprenticeship, as well as maintaining the company’s plant and equipment, he helped to lay electricity mains and connect domestic properties.

When his apprenticeship ended in October 1904 he went to work for The India Rubber, Gutta Percha and Telegraph Company at Silvertown in East London, where he stayed for 10 years until he volunteered for War Service. He started with them as an Assistant Electrician in the company’s Electric Light Department carrying out pre-sale testing of motors and dynamos, calibrating instruments and quoting for installations into factories. He had 2 trips abroad on cable laying ships, working on the Manila to Shanghai submarine cable in 1906, and then from September 1907 to February 1908 on undersea cable repairs for the Spanish government. Upon his return from this second expedition, he was promoted to Assistant General Engineer and ran the company’s power plant at their Silvertown factory.

When the 1911 Census was taken, 25-year-old Hubert was lodging with a music teacher and his family at 62 Wellington Road, Charlton in south-east London. By then his father, William, had handed the farm at Underley down to Hubert’s newly married older brother, Archer Ernest, and retired to Colleybatch on Boraston Bank where in 1910 - in his great grandson Philip’s words – he “restyled a small farmery and added to the buildings”.

In 1911, William Baldwin was living at Colleybatch with his wife, Elizabeth, Hubert's 21-year-old younger sister, Lucy Kathleen, and a domestic servant.

At the outbreak of World War One, Hubert Baldwin's service record reveals that he was living at 2 Grote's Place, Blackheath in London. Although he never lived at Colleybatch, it is the address he gave for his next of kin, which is why he is commemorated on our parish War Memorial.

The Gallipoli Campaign

Hubert served with the Royal Naval Division in Gallipoli, a small peninsula guarding the Dardanelles Strait in modern Turkey. The 8-month Gallipoli campaign was fought by British, Commonwealth and French forces to try and force Turkey out of the war, to relieve the deadlock of the Western Front in France and Belgium, and to open a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea.

There's a detailed account of the campaign and the politics behind it in Lyn MacDonald's book "1915 – The Death of Innocence" and an excellent summary in "Nine Reasons Why Gallipoli Was One Of The Worst Fronts Of The First World War" on the Imperial War Museum website, which describes it as "the scene of some of the fiercest fighting".

Allied troops landed at Gallipoli on 25-26 April 1915:- the 29th Division of mainly British Forces at Cape Helles in the south and south east where Hubert Baldwin served, and the Australian and New Zealand Corps north of Gaba Tepe on the west coast in an area which became known as Anzac. The climax of the campaign came on August 6th, shortly after Hubert died, when Allied assaults on all 3 fronts failed due to the difficult terrain and stiff Turkish resistance. No further serious action was fought after the end of August 1915, and the campaign descended into the stalemate of trench warfare.

By this time the British Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, was so concerned about the lack of progress that he sent the Secretary to the War Cabinet, Sir Maurice Hankey, out to investigate. Hankey travelled with a Kings Messenger, who made sure his confidential reports (which pulled no punches) came back quickly without having to go through the open channels of military communication. This saved him from embarrassment and made sure their contents could not be watered down by local commanders.

Hankey's findings were borne out by the veterans, who remembered Gallipoli as one of the worst places to serve. There were heavy casualties, not only from the fighting but from the unsanitary conditions. 145,000 of the estimated 213,000 British casualties died from illness caused by the intense summer heat, swarms of flies, body lice, dysentery, severe lack of water and insufficient supplies.

The trench warfare stalemate continued with the lines unchanged until the peninsula was successfully evacuated in December and early January 1916.

Military Service

Hubert Baldwin enlisted with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in 1914 and went out to fight on the Dardanelles peninsula in 1915 as part of the Mediterranean Expeditionary

Force. Rather than serving onboard ship, because the Navy and RNVR had too many men for the available number of crew places, Winston Churchill – who was then First Lord of the Admiralty - created the Royal Naval Division on August 14th 1914 to accommodate the surplus. The men fought alongside the army on the Western Front and at Gallipoli; and because the RND was under Winston Churchill's command, each battalion was named after a famous admiral.

Hubert was commissioned as a temporary Sub Lieutenant on October 1st 1914 and, after basic training in London, he joined Howe Battalion at Blandford in Dorset on February 9th 1915. He was "sick at home" when his comrades sailed with the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force on February 28th - so he transferred to B Company, Benbow Battalion, which went out on May 10th.

He was promoted to Temporary Lieutenant on May 20th, and transferred to yet another new battalion, Nelson, on June 15th - the same day he was evacuated to the Anglo American Hospital at Gezireh in Egypt on the hospital ship Grantully Castle, where he was admitted with dysentery on June 19th. After a further spell at the Deaconess Hospital in Alexandria with gastro enteritis on June 29th, Hubert was passed fit and "discharged to duty" on July 4th 1915, returning to Gallipoli on the troopship "Nile".

Hubert Reginald Baldwin re-joined Nelson battalion on July 11th 1915 and was reported missing in action 2 days later, on July 13th. His body was never found. An inscription at the bottom of a contemporary press photo of him published in one of the daily lists of fallen, which I found in the Imperial War Museum's Bond of Sacrifice – First World War Portraits Collection reads "Lieut. Hubert R. BALDWIN, Nelson Battn. RNVR, missing at the Dardanelles on July 13th, 1915, last seen with Sub Lieut. Smyth of same Battn".

It is very sad to see that his name was still recorded in the live Royal Navy Division Officer Listings for October 1915 and January 1916. Following an investigation, the following handwritten note was added to his service record on February 16th 1916 "Previously reported as missing – 13th July 1915, now officially presumed to have been killed on this date".

After the War

The Helles Memorial serves the dual function of Commonwealth battle memorial for the whole Gallipoli campaign and place of commemoration for Commonwealth servicemen with no known grave. When it was built near Sedd el Bahr in 1924 Hubert Reginald Baldwin's name was omitted from the original roll of over 20,000 names. The confusion caused by 3 changes of Battalion in the 2 months leading up to his death and the fact he'd only been in Nelson Battalion for a short while - so he was still a new Officer only just getting to know his men - may be a contributing factor.

The omission was put right 90 years later by Roy Swales when he was researching the Nelson Battalion for his book "Nelsons at War 1914-1918 - History of the Nelson Battalion of the Royal Naval Division". Roy wrote to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in 2001 to report Hubert's non-commemoration, and his name was added to the Memorial as an addendum in 2005.

In his will, Hubert left effects to the value of £260, although Probate wasn't granted until January 3rd 1921 - and as he was unmarried, everything went to his father. After the War, Hubert's parents, William and Elizabeth, continued to live at Colleybatch for the rest of their lives. The 1921 Census reveals there were just the two of them there with a servant. William died on August 25th 1930 at the age of 75, and Elizabeth, who was related to the Mytton family in Boraston, lived on to the ripe old age of 91. She was laid to rest beside him in Boraston Churchyard in January 1939.

Hubert's older brother, Archer Ernest, served on the Western Front with the Royal Horse Artillery and the Royal Field Artillery, where he received the Military Cross in 1918 for Conspicuous Gallantry. Archer's son, another William, and daughter, Joyce, were born at Underley before the War in 1911 and 1913, and he and his wife went on to have a second daughter, Joyce, in 1920. Archer was a land agent and one of the founders of Russell, Baldwin and Bright auctioneers in Leominster. In later life he was Knighted for services to Agriculture.

It is Archer's son William who is commemorated in the Baldwin window at Boraston Church. He and his wife came to live at Colleybatch in 1939 - and their eldest child and only son, Philip, who gave me so much help with the family history, was born there in 1941. Philip told me his father was badly injured in the leg fighting in Italy during WW2, and that his injuries contributed to his death in 1953 at the relatively young age of 42. I might come back to talk about William Baldwin's WW2 service at some point, but that's a story for another day!

Bobbie Matulja
November 6th 2025

Sources

- Philip Baldwin's personal notes about his branch of the Baldwin family written in 2014, including a photo of his great uncle, Hubert Reginald Baldwin
- Ancestry.co.uk - Family history, Census, employment and military records
- Imperial War Museum (www.iwm.org.uk) – Information about the Gallipoli campaign, a head and shoulders press photo of Hubert Reginald Baldwin from the Bond of Sacrifice – First World War Portraits Collection, photo of troopship SS Nile
- The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwg.org) - history of the Gallipoli campaign and information about the Helles Memorial
- The National Archive – RNVR service records for Hubert Reginald Baldwin
- "1915 – The Death of Innocence" by Lyn Macdonald published in 1993 by Headline Book Publishing - history of the Gallipoli campaign and information about Sir Maurice Hankey's factfinding mission in August 1915
- "Sailors in the Trenches" published in Issue 15 of Brave Report by The Very Rev. Dr Houston McKelvey, OBE QVRM TD on the reservesandcadetsni.ork.uk website
- www.gov.uk :History of the UK government – information about Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and his leadership in 1915
- royalnavaldivision.info – formation, structure and timeline for the Royal Naval Division
- Google AI – history of electricity in the UK and information about troopship SS Nile
- The Wartime Memories Project – additional information about HMHS Grantully Castle and SS Nile

Documents and Photographs



Photograph of Hubert Reginald Baldwin courtesy of his great-nephew, Philip Baldwin.

Hubert Reginald Baldwin’s RNVR Service Record (The National Archive)

| | |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1914 - 1915 STAR DISCHARGED. DD. | |
| Name | HUBERT REGINALD BALDWIN |
| Branch of Service | RNVR. |
| Rank | Sub.Lieut. Temp.Lieut. |
| Dates | 1.10.14. 20.5.15. |
| Private Address | |
| Religion | C.of E. |
| Next of Kin | Father. |
| Name | Wm Baldwin, |
| Address | Colleybatch, Barnby, NORFOLK. |
| Notes | |
| Where Serving | |
| 9.11.15. Howes Battalion. B. Coy. | |
| 10 May 15. Mediterr. Exped. Force. Benbow | |
| June, 1915. Nelson Battalion. | |
| 16.7.15. Rep.recd. Missing D'nelles | |
| 13.7.15. | |
| 12.6.15. Transferred from Benbow Batt; | |
| to Nelson Battalion. | |
| (Sick at home when Howe Battn. | |
| embarked for M.B.F., 28.2.15. | |
| Left with Benbow Battn. 10.5.15.) | |

Catalogue Reference:ADM/339/3

Image Reference:70

27.6.15. Tel. from G.O.C.Egypt. Admt. Anglo American Hos.
Gezireh, suffering from Dysentery. 22.6.15.
30.7.15. Received D/O. No. 28. 19.7.15. (Missing, 13/7/15.)
28.7.15. & 3.7.15. (Circ). Adm. Anglo-American Hospl. Gezireh. 22.6.15.
Dysentery. Adm. Deaconess Hosp. Alex. Gastric Enteritis.
This Officer is on List compiled by Royal Society of Scientific
& Technical Men on Active Service. (List of Electrical
Engineers, Aug. 1915.) RND/C/3030. (List recd. 19.10.15.)
10.7.15. Recd. D.O. No. 26, 28.6.15: To Hosp. D'nelles, 15.6.15, Dysentery.
7.7.15. Recd. D.O. 22. 23. 6.15. Transferred from Benbow Battalion to
Nelson Battalion, 12.6.15.
30.7.15. Recd. D.O. 28. 19.7.15. Missing (Dardanelles) 13.7.15.
16.2.16. C.W. Casualty No. A.75. Previously reported as missing
13th July 1915, now officially presumed to have been
killed on this date.
26.1.17. Recd. AFB.103. (Trans. to Nelson Battn. Gallipoli. 15.6.15. To
Hosp. Ship "Grantully Castle" Dysentery. 19.6.15. Trans. to Anglo-
American Hosp. Gezireh, Cairo. Dysentery. 20.5.15. Promoted to
Temp. Lieut. 29.6.15. Trans. to Deaconesses Hosp. Alex: Gastro-enter-
itis. 4.7.15. Discharged to duty. 7.7.15. Posted to Alex: &
emb. HMT "Nile" to rejoin Unit, D'nelles. 13.7.15. Missing, D'nelles
A.F.B.103 retained.

Catalogue/Reference:ADM/339/3

Image Reference:70

| Docket No. | Subject | How disposed of |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Contents No. | Baldwin ^{Sub Lieut} Reginald 2 Grosvenor Place Blackheath S.E. | 465 |
| | Sub Lieut R.R.V.R. for R.R.D. Depot C/o 1/10/14 | |
| | 4/299. transferred Oct 1914: to 2 nd Brigade Stone Bn. See 1/10/14 | |
| | C1321 App'd. to "Benbow" Bn. | |
| | C1792 Subd. Secy 7/5/15 for promotion to Temp. Lieut R.N.V.R. | |
| | CW 2467 App'd. to date 20.5.15. Cnd. 28/5/15 | |
| | C1792 P.O. sent S.O.C., R.N.D. 29/5/15. | |
| | P.T.D. | |

Catalogue/Reference:ADM/339/3

Image Reference:70



Detail from a watercolour by Jim Rae on the British and Commonwealth Shipping Company Register website of hospital ship Grantully Castle with Aquitania and another ship at Mudros during the Gallipoli campaign.

Grantully Castle was built in 1910 by Barclay, Curle & Co. at Glasgow for the Union Castle Line. She was used as a troopship from January 1915 and then converted to a hospital ship with 552 beds at Malta on May 1st 1915. As well as carrying Hubert Baldwin to hospital in Egypt to recover from dysentery in June 1915, a couple of months earlier she carried the famous War poet Rupert Brooke (who also served as a Sub-Lieutenant in the RNVR) on passage to the Dardanelles when he developed sepsis from an infected mosquito bite. In his last hours Brooke was transferred to the French hospital ship "Duguay-Trouin" anchored off the Greek island of Skyros, where he died onboard on April 23rd 1915. After the war, Grantully Castle was returned to her owners and used as a passenger and cargo vessel for another 20 years before being broken up at Boness in 1939.



Photograph of the Middlesex Yeomanry destined for Gallipoli, disembarking from the transport ship SS Nile at Alexandria in April 1915. (Photograph by Lieutenant Ernest Brooks, catalogue number Q13215 in the Ministry of Information First World War Official Collection at the Imperial War Museum).

SS Nile was the troopship that carried Hubert Reginald Baldwin back to Gallipoli from hospital in Alexandria on July 4th 1915 after his second bout of illness. She was a large vessel that had to anchor in deeper water off the beaches at Gallipoli. Trawlers, lighters and other smaller craft were used to ferry troops and equipment to and from the beaches.

The SS Nile was built in 1893 by J&G Thompson of Glasgow for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co., and she was initially used as an intermediate cargo / passenger ship on their liner service between Britain, Buenos Aires and other South American ports. She was requisitioned as a troopship in 1900 for the Boer War and again in August 1914 at the start of WW1. From 1914 to 1917 she was used for transporting troops to the Mediterranean theatre (including Egypt and Gallipoli) and Mesopotamia, and from 1917 to the end of the War she was used as a transport by the US military. Afterwards she returned to civilian service on the Pacific route and was eventually broken up in the USA in 1925.