

LOOKING BACK

Blood brothers' ultimate sacrifice

On the eve of Remembrance Sunday, ex-Normanton School headmaster Graham Conway looks back at a Buxton family's ultimate sacrifice during the Great War

Remembrance

Next year marks the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.

As we stand around our cenotaphs this coming Sunday we will be reminded of the supreme sacrifice made by many of our local families.

Perhaps none more so than the Blood family of Harpur Hill, Buxton. When war broke out, Thomas and Sarah Anne (née Bennett) Blood had eight children, Margaret, Sarah, Samuel, Thomas, Mary, Daniel, William and Harry.

Of their five sons, four answered the country's call (Harry being too young) and, as the *Buxton Advertiser* reported in April 1918, by the end of the Great War three sons had been killed in action and the fourth had lost a leg.

Thomas Blood enlisted at

Buxton in the 19th (Reserve) Battalion, Sherwood Foresters, on November 1, 1915. Six weeks later, on December 11, he transferred to the 94th Company, Machine Gun Corps.

Thomas left for France from Southampton 18 days later, on May 16, 1916, arriving at Le Havre the following day, and survived just 39 days before being killed in action, possibly due to a shell burst, on July 26. Thomas is buried near the village of Richebourg-l'Avoue, nine kilometres north-east of Bethune.

Daniel Blood enlisted into the 16th Battalion, Sherwood Foresters (Chatsworth Rifles) at Buxton early in 1916 and first saw action in the second Battle of Ypres, notoriously now known as 'Passchendaele'.

The German Spring Offensive began on March 21, 1918, and sometime in the next week Daniel received fatal

wounds and died in a casualty clearing station at Namps-au-Val, and now lies in the cemetery nearby.

Both Thomas and Daniel are commemorated with pride on the Buxton War Memorial on The Slopes and also on the small memorial at Harpur Hill, where many readers will congregate this coming Sunday morning.

Their older brother, Private Samuel Blood, of the 13th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment, was also killed in action on October 21, 1916.

Samuel's name does not appear on the Buxton memorial, but he is named on the memorial at Glossop, where he was living at the time of his enlistment, after marrying Sarah Anne Nixon in 1910.

One of the many phases in the Battle of the Somme, 1916, was the advance on Ancre Heights.

Samuel was in the front line that advanced in three waves and successfully took its objective, but 12 officers and 198 men of his battalion were killed



The Blood brothers' names on the Buxton war memorial. Photo: Jason Chadwick. NBUA 5-11-13 JC1.

during the advance. Samuel was one of them and he is buried in Stump Road Cemetery, Grandcourt.

The youngest of the brothers to serve, William, also enlisted in the Sherwood Foresters Regiment, rising to the rank of 2nd Lieutenant.

The *Advertiser* of August 27, 1918, reported that he had lost a leg whilst in action.

Sunday is the day for our annual Act of Remembrance. If you are at any of these memorials look up these boys from one of Buxton's bravest families and 'Speak Their

Name With Pride'.

Remember also that when you buy your poppy this week, most of the money raised will go to support our modern day heroes who, like William Blood, have been severely disabled in the service of their country – please give generously.