

1st Lieutenant Alexander Nigel Trotter WWI

Royal Scots



Lieutenant Trotter who was known as Nigel Trotter, was the son of Alexander Pelham Trotter and Alys Fane Trotter nee Keatinge. They lived in Greystones, Teffont Evias.

Nigel Trotter was born on 17 September 1894 in Cottesmore Gardens, London where his father was a famous electrical engineer. Nigel was schooled first at Packwood Haugh preparatory school (Figure 1) which had only opened some six years before he attended the school.





Figure 1 - Packwood Haugh Preparatory School

He went on to Clifton College in Bristol (Figure 2) where he was a member of the college cadet force.

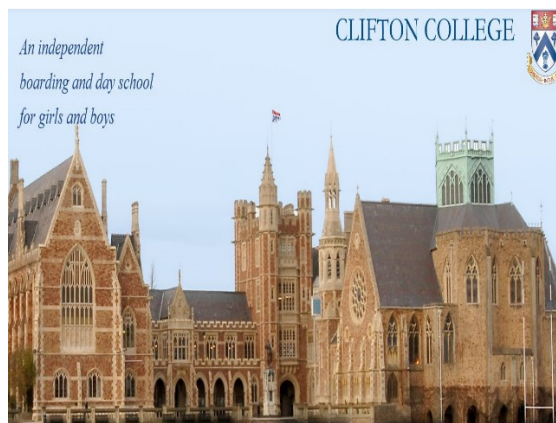


Figure 2 - Clifton College Bristol

He was commissioned into the third battalion the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment) as part of the special reserve of officers and here we see in (Figure 3) a copy of the entry in the London Gazette to be a Second Lieutenant on probation dated 21st of December 1912.

account of non-employment. Dated 21st December, 1912.

GENERAL RESERVE OF OFFICERS.

CAVALRY.

Lieutenant Montague J. C. S. Johnstone resigns his commission. Dated 21st December, 1912.
Arthur Rawlins, late Cadet Sergeant, Cambridge University Contingent, Officers Training Corps, to be Second Lieutenant. Dated 21st December, 1912.

ROYAL REGIMENT OF ARTILLERY.

Major Howard M. S. Lovering resigns his commission. Dated 21st December, 1912.
Leonard Morris Webber, late Captain, Royal Field Artillery (Special Reserve), to be Captain. Dated 21st December, 1912.

INFANTRY.

Claud George Cole-Hamilton, D.S.O., late Captain, 4th Battalion, The Royal Irish Rifles, to be Captain. Dated 21st December, 1912.
The undermentioned to be Second Lieutenants. Dated 21st December, 1912:—
Frederick William Powell, late Cadet, Glasgow University Contingent, Officers Training Corps.
Charles Gorville Banister, late Cadet Sergeant, Cambridge University Contingent, Officers Training Corps.
Valentine Knox Gilliland, late Cadet Corporal, Cambridge University Contingent, Officers Training Corps.

SPECIAL RESERVE OF OFFICERS.

INFANTRY.

3rd Battalion, *The Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment)*, Alexander Nigel Trotter, late Cadet, Clifton College Contingent, Officers Training Corps, to be Second Lieutenant (on probation). Dated 21st December, 1912.
3rd Battalion, *The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)*, Charles Meredith Bouverie Chapman to be Second Lieutenant (on probation). Dated 21st December, 1912.
4th Battalion, *The King's (Liverpool Regiment)*, Second Lieutenant Gilbert W. Mapplebeck to be Lieutenant. Dated 6th December, 1912.
3rd Battalion, *The Royal Irish Regiment*, Conrad Fulke Thomond O'Brien French to be Second Lieutenant (on probation). Dated 1st October, 1912.
4th Battalion, *The Lancashire Fusiliers*, Thomas Reginald Blain, late Cadet, Haileybury College Contingent, Officers Training Corps, to be Second Lieutenant (on probation). Dated 21st December, 1912.
4th Battalion, *The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)*, Major Charles J. Lynch to be Lieutenant-Colonel. Dated 29th October, 1912.
Second Lieutenant (on probation) Raoul F. J. de Merindol is confirmed in his rank.
3rd Battalion, *The East Surrey Regiment*, Murray Stuart Benning, late Cadet, Uppingham School Contingent, Officers Training Corps, to be Second Lieutenant (on probation). Dated 21st December, 1912.
3rd Battalion, *The Hampshire Regiment*, John

Ward Cox to be Second Lieutenant (on probation). Dated 1st October, 1912.

3rd Battalion, *The Manchester Regiment*, Second Lieutenant (on probation) George Dixon is confirmed in his rank.

4th Battalion, *The Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment)*, Captain William Joseph Roskell, retired pay, late Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire Regiment), to be Captain under the provisions of Appendix III, Royal Warrant for Pay and Promotion, 1909, with seniority as from 18th February, 1905. Dated 21st December, 1912.

Princess Louise's (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders), The undermentioned Second Lieutenants (on probation) are confirmed in their rank:
Edmund P. Buchanan.
Robert B. Elliot.

3rd Battalion, *The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians)*, John Joseph O'Brien to be Second Lieutenant (on probation). Dated 21st December, 1912.

6th Battalion, *The Rifle Brigade (The Prince Consort's Own)*, Captain Beauchamp A. T. Kerr-Pearse resigns his commission, and is granted the honorary rank of Major with permission to retain his rank and wear the prescribed uniform. Dated 21st December, 1912.

War Office, 20th December, 1912.

TERRITORIAL FORCE.

YEOMANRY.

Dorset (Queen's Own) Yeomanry; Surgeon-Captain George H. S. Daniell, M.B., resigns his commission, and is granted permission to retain his rank and to wear the prescribed uniform. Dated 21st December, 1912.
Fife and Forfar Yeomanry; Lieutenant Stephen Mitchell to be Captain. Dated 18th April, 1912.

Lothians and Border Horse Yeomanry; Lieutenant Samuel S. Steel to be Captain. Dated 19th October, 1912.

North Somerset Yeomanry; Lionel Cyril Gibbs to be Second Lieutenant. Dated 1st November, 1912.

ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.

2nd East Anglian Brigade, *Royal Field Artillery*; Herbert Reginald Graham Brooks (late Cadet Corporal, Clifton College Contingent, Junior Division, Officers Training Corps) to be Second Lieutenant. Dated 2nd November, 1912.

4th Lowland (Howitzer) Brigade, *Royal Field Artillery*; Private Kenneth Marshall Young, from the 9th (Glasgow Highland) Battalion, The Highland Light Infantry, to be Second Lieutenant. Dated 21st December, 1912.

ROYAL GARRISON ARTILLERY.

Kent Royal Garrison Artillery.
Lieutenant Charles William Ford, Royal Garrison Artillery, to be Adjutant. Dated 12th December, 1912.
Lieutenant Charles W. Ford, Royal Garrison Artillery, is granted the temporary

Figure 3 – London Gazette 1912

The 3rd Battalion was a reserve battalion which was stationed at Glencorse at the outbreak of the war. It was part of what was called at that time the Territorial Force and we would know it today is the Territorial Army. On 5 August 1914 the Territorial Force was mobilised and the reservists reported to their drill halls and the third battalion moved to Weymouth. Although it cannot be certain it is believed that Nigel Trotter embarked from Weymouth with 100 reservists for Boulogne. He was to be attached to the second battalion of the Royal Scots who at the outbreak of war were stationed at Willsworthy camp on Dartmoor where they embarked for Boulogne on 14 August. We must assume that the reservists of the third battalion married up with the second battalion in Boulogne and then entrained for the front. You will understand particularly those that have served in the army the enormous difficulties that Nigel Trotter would have faced. The day after war was declared he was mobilised, moved to Weymouth, joined a bunch of reservists some of whom he may have never met before and probably were not all part of his platoon and on arrival in France would have been split to reinforce all the regular companies of the 2nd Royal Scots. It is quite likely he would have been given command of a platoon of regulars with additional reservists. He would probably have not had a great deal of training and would be unfamiliar with the regular soldiers. They would have spent the first night in Boulogne joining up with their regular counterparts and the following day on 15 August would have entrained for the front. The 2nd battalion were part of 8 brigade of the 3rd Division of the 2nd Corps commanded by Lt Gen Horace Smith-Dorrien of Isandlwana fame.



Figure 4 - Lt Gen Horace Smith-Dorrien

(Figure 5) map shows broadly the route taken by the Royal Scots from their first battle until the death of Nigel Trotter and each letter represents a major battle.



Figure 5 - Route taken by Royal Scots first battle

On 22 August the Battalion took part in the first Battle of Mons (Figure 6). So within a week of meeting his platoon Nigel Trotter was fighting in his first battle. The bulk of the casualties were taken by the 8th Brigade holding the bend in the Mons canal. Over the subsequent days the British

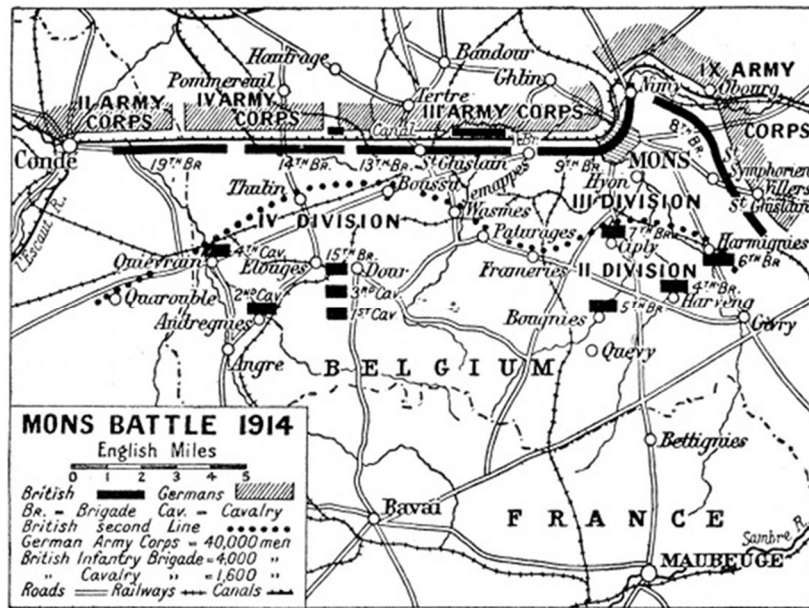


Figure 6 - Battle of Mons 1914

Expeditionary Force pulled back (Figure 7) and on 26 August fought ferociously in the delaying action at Le Cateau with the 2nd Corps facing the bulk of the action.

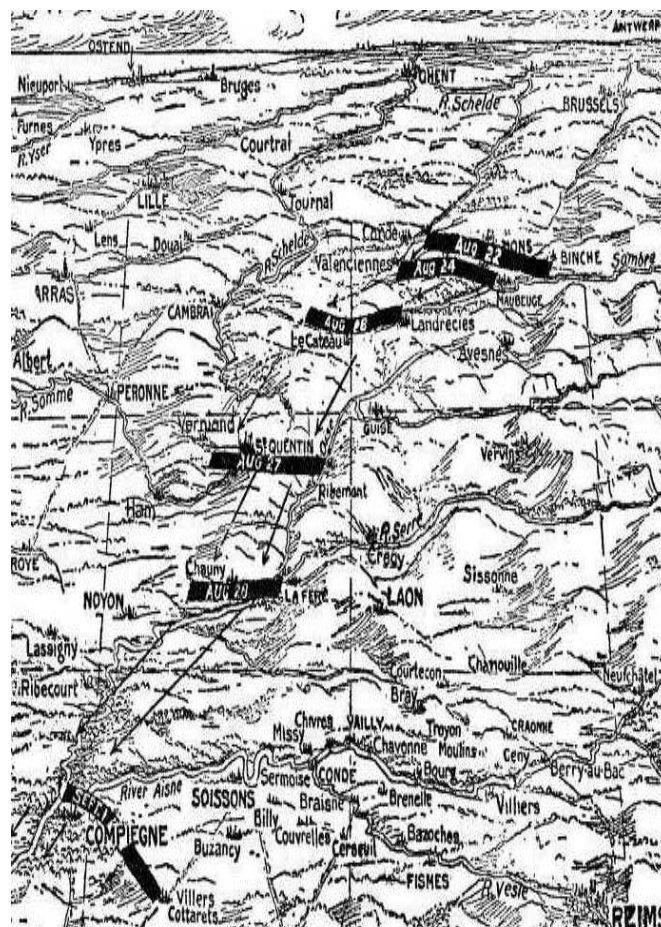


Figure 7 - Expeditionary Force Pulled Back

A Cpl in the Royal Scots wrote later: "We held our ground at Le Cateau from an early hour in the morning till half past four in the afternoon, a terrific fire pouring in on us all the time. The shells dropped on us like rain, many of them bursting in the trenches around. C Company of the Royal Scots got the worst of it there, the shrapnel causing terrible havoc among them. The transport we had was completely destroyed. It was stationed in a farmyard - many wagons containing ammunition and provisions - and when the Germans got the range of it, it was absolutely wiped out, many of the horses being killed (Figure 8) and the wagons being blown into the air like matchwood."



Figure 8 - Horses and Men Killed

Two weeks later the Battalion fought in the Battle of the Marne from the 7 to 10 September which was a costly battle for both sides. While the French recorded 250,000 casualties, the BEF took about 12,700 casualties. The German troops lost over 222,000 soldiers. The victory at the Battle of the Marne was a significant triumph for the Allied Powers, for it foiled German plans to capture Paris. Despite having captured sizable portions of north-eastern France, the German troops were forced to settle for trench warfare that lasted the rest of World War I.

The Battle of the Marne (Figure 9) was followed by the pursuit of the German Army and culminated in the Battle of Aisne from 12 to 15 September in which the Royal Scots played a major role leading the advance of the 3rd Division. After the Battle of Aisne (Figure 10) the race to the sea began and the British Expeditionary Force was transferred north westwards to take up a position that they would occupy for the remainder of the war.



Figure 9 - Battle of the Marne

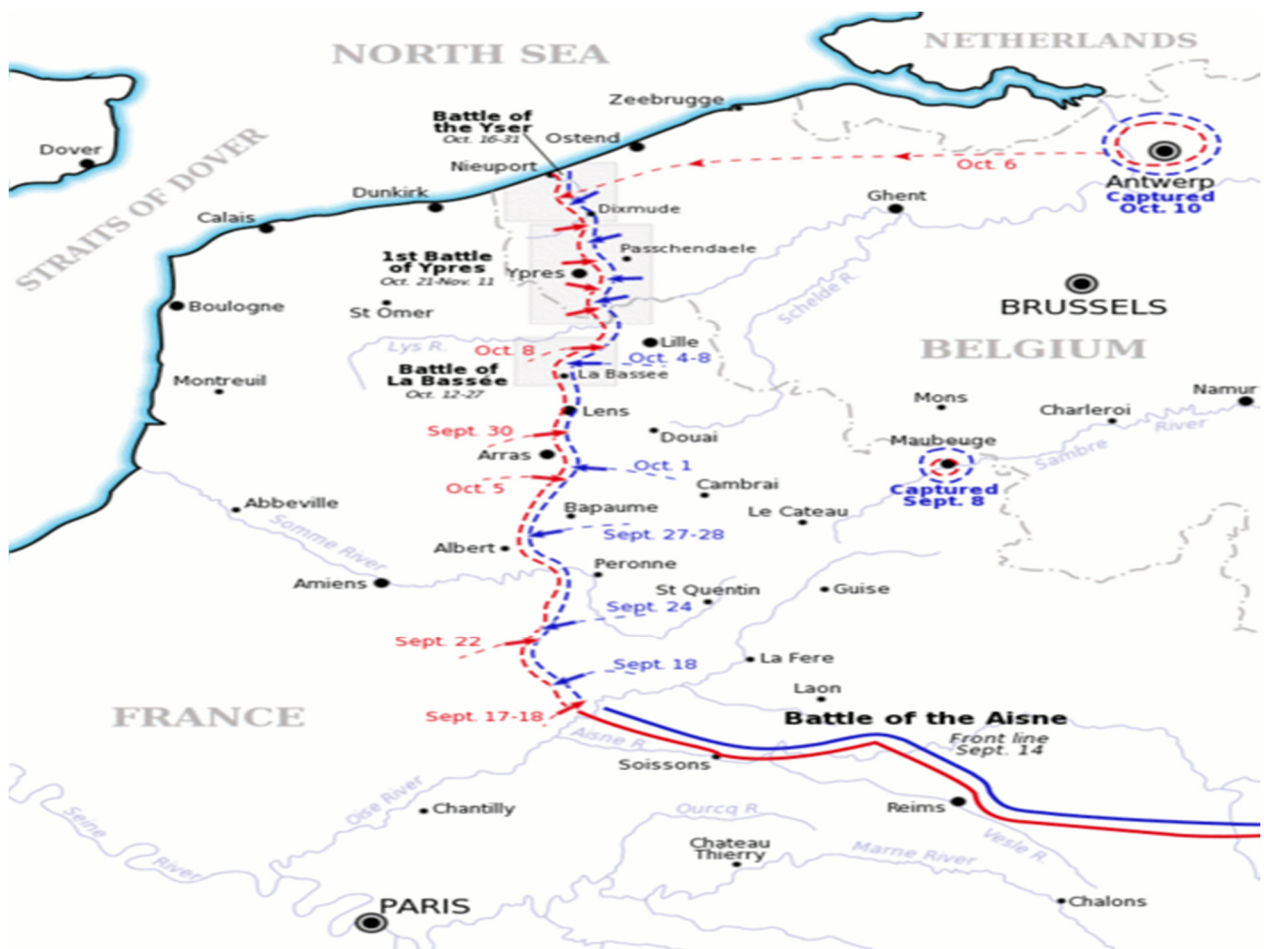


Figure 10 - Battle of the Aisne

By 10 October the Royal Scots were located near Bethune and on 12 October the advance (Figure 11) began.

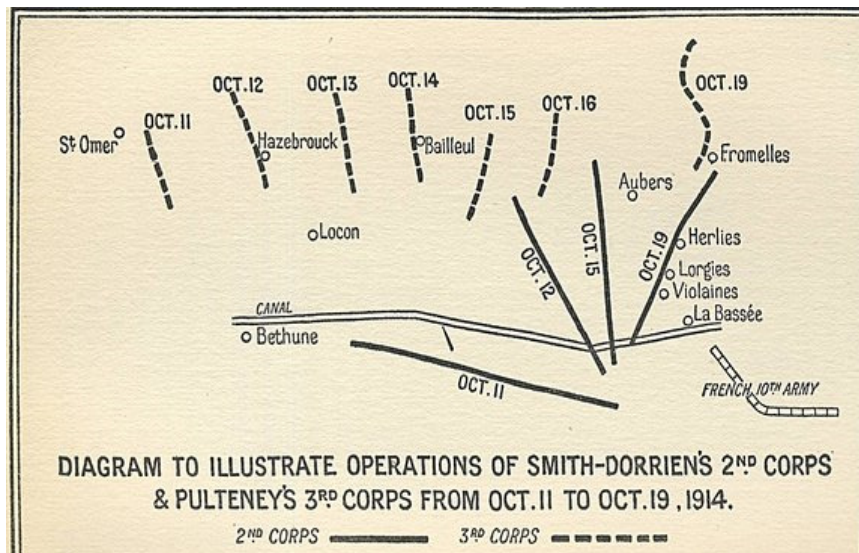


Figure 11 - The Advance

The country in which the Second Corps was advancing was extraordinarily difficult, which offered many advantages to the defence over the attack. It was so flat that it was impossible to find places for artillery observation, and it was intersected with canals, high hedgerows, and dykes, which formed ready-made trenches. The Germans disputed with great skill and energy every position which could be defended, and the British advance during the day, though steady, was necessarily slow. Every hamlet, hedgerow, and stream meant a separate skirmish. The troops continually closed ranks, advanced, extended, and attacked from morning to night, sleeping where they had last fought. There was nothing that could be called a serious engagement, and yet the losses almost entirely from the 3rd Division amounted to 300 for the day, the heaviest sufferers being the 2nd Royal Scots. And it was on this day that Nigel Trotter leading his platoon was wounded three times at a village called La Fosse (Figure 12) and was carried to a house in Veuille Chapelle (Figure 13) where he died of his wounds.

As always with the fog of war it is difficult to piece together exactly where and how Nigel Trotter was killed but unusually we do have several eyewitness accounts

A letter from Pte H E Beaven of the Royal Scots to Nigel's parents stated: "I wasn't about 6 yards away from him when he was shot. It was on Monday, 12 October 1914, we were ordered to take the bridge over the canal, and advanced towards the bridge under very heavy fire, and we had advanced about three quarters of a mile when your son was shot.... All the men was sorry to lose him as he seemed to have no fear, and was a good leader of men and died like a hero."

His Coy. Commander, Capt Tanner, D.S.O., wrote: "Everyone is unanimous that Nigel died like a hero, and knowing him, I could not suppose it otherwise. I saw him under fire at the beginning of the action"

Another letter to his parents indicates that he was first wounded in the chest before being shot again in the head as he was falling. His orderly, Private W. Grant, wrote that he died at 11pm. He was wounded three times and was carried to a house in Vieille Chapelle where he died of his wounds.

He was buried at Zelobes Farmhouse and subsequently in the War Graves Commission cemetery in France at Pont du Hem. (Figure 14) with the War Graves Commission certificate (Figure 15).



Figure 12 - La Fosse



Figure 13 – Vieille Chapelle

He is buried in the cemetery at Pont-Du-Hem Military Cemetery in France (Figure 14) with the War Graves Commission certificate (Figure 15).



Figure 14 – Pont-Du-Hem Military Cemetery

In Memory of

Lieutenant

Alexander Nigel Trotter

3rd Bn. att'd. 2nd Bn., Royal Scots who died on 12 October 1914 Age 20

Son of Alexander Pelham Trotter and Alys Fane Trotter, of Greystones, Teffont, Salisbury.

Remembered with Honour

Pont-Du-Hem Military Cemetery, La Gorgue



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Figure 145 - Military War Graves Certificate



Figure 15 - Commemorative Plaque

Nigel Trotter is included on the war Memorial at Teffont Magna and there is also (Figure 16) a commemorative plaque which is inside Teffont Evias church.

There can be no better or moving tribute to him than the poem which his mother who was an accomplished artist and poet wrote in 1917. He had just turned 20 years of age.