

**Bury Grammar School Centenary Roll of Honour**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Robert Haslam, 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion**  
**Lancashire Fusiliers, died 29<sup>th</sup> March 1918 aged 19**



Robert Haslam was born on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1898, the only son of Anderson Haslam and his wife Annie (nee Lord), of 337 Hollins Lane, Unsworth. Anderson Haslam was a Solicitor, but at some point after the 1901 Census he went to Quebec in Canada without his family. At the time of the 1911 Census, Robert, his mother Annie and her unmarried sister Ada were living at the Bay Horse Hotel, Unsworth, which was run by his grandparents, Robert and Jane Haslam. The Bay Horse is still a thriving community pub today but was completely rebuilt in 1965. After early education at St. George's Church of England School in Unsworth, Robert joined Form Transitus of Bury Grammar School on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1912. In the Admissions Register his father's occupation is given as '*Solicitor (not in practice). In America Canadian Pacific Railway*'. Robert belonged to Derby House and was a member of the school's Officers Training Corps, reaching the rank of Corporal. He passed the Oxford Junior Examinations in the Third Class in 1914 and gained a Second Class in the Senior Oxford Exams a year later. He was a keen sportsman, receiving 4<sup>th</sup> XI football colours in 1913-14, 3<sup>rd</sup> XI colours in 1914-15 and 1<sup>st</sup> XI colours in 1916-17. However, it was a cricketer that he really shone, leading the Derby team to victory in the Blackburne Challenge Cup in 1916 and being Captain of the School 1<sup>st</sup> XI in the same year. His batting average was a relatively modest 20.15 but as a bowler he took 56 wickets at an average of 8.91. He was a member of the school's Library, Cricket, Football and Sports Committees. Outside school, Robert was associated with St George's Church, Unsworth and its Sunday School and was a member of the Unsworth Cricket and Tennis Club.

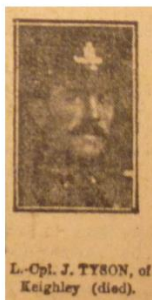
Robert Haslam left the Lower VI of BGS on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1917 to join an Officers' Cadet Battalion at Pirbright in Surrey. School magazine 'The Clavian' reports that all eight members of his class were on active service by July 1917. Commissioned into the Lancashire Fusiliers, he went out to France in September 1917 but two months later was transferred to the Fusiliers' 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion on the Salonika Front in Greece. A British Force had been sent to northern Greece in late 1915 to block an advance in the area by Germany's ally, Bulgaria. Apart from occasional

outbreaks of heavier fighting such as that in April 1917 in which BGS old boy **Lance Corporal Frank Heywood** was fatally wounded, the Salonika Front had settled into a stalemate marked only by occasional patrols and raids. On 25<sup>th</sup> March 1918 Robert Haslam was seriously injured in an accident involving a hand grenade. The Battalion War Diary states: *‘Vladaja Ravine March 25 1918. Weather fine, battalion working. The commanding officer went to Brigade yesterday and is staying until the Brigadier General returns from Salonika. The Adjutant and Padre returned from leave and 14 other ranks returned for duty. 2/Lt Haslam and 3 other ranks were wounded in a bomb accident. It appears that the bomb exploded immediately the lever was realised.’*



**Vladaja Ravine, where Robert Haslam was injured by an exploding grenade** (King’s Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster)

KEIGHLEY NEWS,  
SATURDAY,  
APRIL 6, 1918.



The day afterwards, 34 year-old Lance Corporal James Tyson, from Keighley in Yorkshire, died of the injuries he received in the accident. In Unsworth, Robert Haslam’s mother was informed first of his wounding and then of his death at 31<sup>st</sup> Casualty Clearing Station on Good Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 1918. In a letter of condolence, his Commanding Officer wrote that: *‘his platoon also wish me to say they regret his loss, as he was one of the best officers they had’.*

**Right: James Tyson, who was fatally wounded in the same accident as Robert Haslam** (‘Men of Worth’ Project).

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Robert Haslam was originally buried in Janes Military Cemetery. In February 1921, because of problems with the site of Janes Cemetery, it was decided to move the 560 soldiers buried there to Sarigol Military Cemetery, Kriston, a few miles to the south. Robert Haslam now lies in grave D668 at Sarigol. As well as the War Memorials at Bury Grammar School, his name also appears on the Unsworth Pole War Memorial in Bury.



**Sarigol Military Cemetery, Greece (CWGC) and the grave of Robert Haslam. Note that ground conditions in the area require the use of pedestal grave markers rather than the usual upright headstones. Robert Haslam's mother paid to have the inscription 'Until The Day Dawns' included. (Photograph courtesy of Barry Davis)**



**A poignant early photograph of the Unsworth Pole War Memorial**  
(Carol Spencer, Unsworth Pole War Memorial website)

Sources: Bury Grammar School Archives; Bury Archives (Adam Carter); UK Censuses, Ancestry; 'Bury Guardian'; 'Bury Times'; Unsworth Pole War Memorial website; 'Men of Worth' Project (Andy Wade); War Diary of 12<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers; King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster; De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour; Commonwealth War Graves Commission; Contributors to the Great War Forum.

Written by M.J. Hone 2018