The first number of The Watsonian produced during the First World War was published in December 1914. The frontispiece remained the same throughout the conflict with the exception of July 1915 when one deemed more appropriate was designed by Watson's talented art teacher, Ralph Hay. This bold design was dominated by the pagan classical goddess of wisdom (Minerva) and the god of war (Mars). No reason was given for it being discontinued, but although Minerva would certainly patronise a war of defence she would have absolutely no sympathy with Mars's savage love of violence and bloodshed. Perhaps this design just proved to be a little too controversial.

In the December 1914 number a grand memorial page appeared for those killed-in-action. This was a design for a war that would be over by Christmas. As the conflict intensified, so the number of casualties rose. By July 1915, 43 Watsonians had been killed, many in horrific engagements such as Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge, Second Ypres and, of course, the disastrous Gallipoli Campaign against the Turks in which the 4th Royal Scots was heavily involved. Given the numbers involved the old-style memorial page had to be altered.
Ralph Hay came up with a second, more suitable style for the July 1915 number, and new categories appeared for ‘POWs’ (five names), ‘Gassed and Missing’ (one name), ‘Missing’ (one name) and ‘Wounded’ (89 names). A special graphic was designed for the latter and used in each subsequent number until the end of the conflict.

In April 1905, The Watsonian recorded that an enormous flagstaff (three storeys high) had been erected on the school roof. Ten years later...

On the afternoon of 26th February a rather startling accident happened in school. A gale was raging outside, and about 2 p.m. the flagstaff snapped, and fell with a tremendous crash on the roof of the Geography and Science rooms. Classes were at work in both rooms at the time. Pieces of the flagstaff and fragments of half inch glass showered liberally down on them. The marvel is there was no serious injury inflicted. Mr Ligertwood got his shoulder bruised by a falling bit of wreckage, and one or two boys were cut by the glass, while everybody got a bad scare.

The din was so alarming as to give the impression that our Hunnish foes had at last paid us a visit. One scared youth staggered into a neighbouring room and fell into the master’s arms, exclaiming "Oh, those Germans!" - or words to that effect.

Casualties
The first photographs of those killed-in-action appeared in July 1915. These were set into another specially designed graphic by Ralph Hay inscribed, in Latin, “How sweet and noble it is to die for one’s country”. In the pages which followed an obituary would be printed. The first photograph was of Lieutenant J.B. Aitchison and his obituary is typical of the multitude yet to come.

Second Lieutenant John Brebner Aitchison, 5th Royal Scots
John Brebner Aitchison, son of Mr Richard S. Aitchison, C.A., 6 Braid Avenue, Edinburgh, was born in Edinburgh, 28th September 1895. He entered Watson’s in his eighth year and left in 1913. He was a member of the Cadet Corps, attaining the rank of sergeant, and subsequently gaining Certificate A, which qualified him for a commission. Prior to entering on his professional training as a chartered accountant, he visited Belgium and Canada. Gazetted to the 5th Royal Scots in March 1914, he was called up on the outbreak of hostilities, and at once volunteered for foreign service. He took part in the operations on the Gallipoli Peninsula, and, the battalion having been ordered to take a wood at all costs, he fell in the charge. “He was a brave boy,” wrote his O.C., “and did his work fearlessly. He was well liked by his men, and is mourned by all. His name will be remembered by the regiment as that of a gallant officer who died doing his duty.”

In April 1917, there was a significant change of format with a new inscription translated as, He was not afraid to die for his dear friends and country” which reflects a change of mood since 1914. The terse and vague nature of the obituaries was due to censorship.

This striking graphic by Ralph Hay from the December 1914 number was the earliest and longest lasting of all. It depicts a representation of the Cadet Corps Pipes and Drums proudly on the march from Lauriston Place and heading for Princes Street. The total number of Watsonians who served in the First World War? An astonishing 3,102!
Starting in April 1915 were lists of those who had won awards such as 'Mentioned in Dispatches'. The July 1916 number proudly announced that the first Watsonian to win the Victoria Cross was H Peel Ritchie, Commander of HMS *Goliath*. The other VC holder was David L McIntyre of the 6th Highland Light Infantry who won his in late 1918. Yet another VC winner was discovered in the 1980s - David McGregor, who attended both Watson's and Heriots.

Of particular interest are the two summaries produced in April and July 1916 which break down the numbers of those serving with particular regiments, or other branches of the armed services. Unfortunately, these summaries were abandoned in favour of a much less useful general sort. From June 1916 to November 1918, 1,165 more Watsonians either volunteered or were conscripted which means that at least 62.5% of those who served did so voluntarily. That was a huge and impressive contribution to the war effort. Luckily, a simplified summary appeared in April 1919 which helped produce this analysis.

### Summary of George Watson's College Roll of Honour as at 9th March 1916

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Scotland's Einstein - William Gordon (Seggie) Brown

Seggie was born at 6 Great Stuart Street in 1895 and then moved to 3 Blackford Road. Seggie attended Watson’s for 13 years from 1901 to 1914. He had outstanding ability, especially in Mathematics. Far from the later image of a fragile and retiring academic Seggie was promoted to Colour Sergeant in the Cadets, appointed a Prefect and elected Treasurer of the Literary Club. Indeed, he was a first-class shot and range-finder.

In 1914, instead of going to Edinburgh University, Seggie enlisted as a Private in the 4th Battalion Royal Scots and served in Gallipoli where he was invalided home. Although not fully recovered, Seggie insisted on being transferred to the Royal Naval Division which soon crossed to France and took part in the final phase of the Somme Battle, the attack alongside the 51st Highland Division on Beaumont Hamel on 13-18 November 1916. Seggie was killed on the 13th.

Amazingly, Seggie had continued his mathematical studies while serving in the army, even contributing to The Philosophical Magazine an article entitled ‘Note on Reflections From a Moving Mirror’ and providing the mathematical theory of a phenomenon in optics.

It was said at the time that only two other people had achieved so much as undergraduates - Clerk-Maxwell and Kelvin. Seggie also left behind him other papers some of which were placed in 1922 before the Royal Society of Edinburgh. These dealt with tubes of electrical force in a four-dimensional space. Seggie had arrived independently at the same conclusions regarding Relativity as had Albert Einstein.

Cecil Moles – Musician of a Lost Generation

Cecil Frederick Coles was born in Kirkcudbright on 7 October 1888 and came to Watson’s in 1899. He entered Edinburgh University as a music student at the remarkable age of 16 and then, in 1906, won a prestigious scholarship to the London College of Music. In London he joined the Morley College Orchestra whose conductor was Gustav Holst. There began a strong, fruitful and lasting relationship. A sign of what could have been had not the War intervened was his appointment, in 1908, as assistant conductor of the Stuttgart Royal Opera - an astonishing achievement considering that he was a foreigner and only 23 years old.

In 1914, Cecil was called up immediately as he was the regimental Bandmaster of the 9th Battalion, Queen Victoria's Rifles and acted, as all musicians, as a stretcher-bearer. Despite all difficulties he continued to compose even in the trenches - as testified by his mud-bespatched and shrapnel-torn manuscripts which he sent to Holst. On 26 April 1918, Cecil heroically volunteered to bring in some wounded comrades following an attack. He was shot by a sniper. Musician to the end, he died humming Beethoven. He is buried at Crouy on the Somme.

Cecil was the musician of a doomed generation. His Behind the Lines, composed in 1918 amidst the thunder of the guns, has strength, depth and beauty, the last movement, 'Cortege', being the most powerful and haunting. His traumatised wife, Phoebe, refused to talk about him and no music was ever again played in her home.

“He was a genius before anything else and a hero of the first water.” (On Cecil Cole's gravestone at Crouy)
Lieutenant David Lowe Macintyre

Lieutenant David Lowe Macintyre was born in 1895 in Portnahaven (Islay) and attended Watson's from 1907 to 1914. His father was a minister in the United Free Church and, in Edinburgh, his family lived at 25 Downie Terrace, Corstorphine. When war broke out David joined the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders serving in Egypt, Jerusalem and France. On 24 August 1918, while attached to the Highland Light Infantry, he was involved in the ferocious fighting required to break the mighty Hindenburg Line at Henin near Arras. His Victoria Cross was earned by coolness under heavy shell and machine-gun fire during which he pursued an enemy machine-gun team through a barrage into a pill-box, killed three, captured an officer plus ten other ranks and five machine-guns. From that pill box David and his men then raided three others and enabled his battalion to capture the entire position.

Subsequently, while reconnoitring the exposed right flank, a single enemy machine-gunner opened up on him. Without hesitation he rushed it single-handed, chased the enemy away and brought back the gun.

Whilst in London on 26 October recovering from a bullet wound in the thigh David heard he had been awarded the Victoria Cross. As a Gaelic-speaking Highland officer David was not only a hero, but a living embodiment of the Scottish military tradition.

David later achieved the rank of Major-General and after the Second World War was a senior civil servant.

In 1939, the Scottish Naval and Military Museum at Edinburgh Castle had closed and its artefacts put into storage. Given post-war austerity and anti-militarism things just might have stayed that way had it not been for David who insisted that it re-open under the supervision of the Ministry of Works.

Thus, twice a hero.

David died on 31 July 1967 in Edinburgh.

Commander Henry Peel Ritchie

Commander Henry Peel Ritchie was born in Edinburgh in 1876, the eldest son of Dr RP Ritchie, and attended Watson's between 1882-5. He joined the Navy and became Army and Navy Light-Weight Amateur Boxing Champion in 1900. On 28 November 1914 he was in command of HMS Goliath charged with a search and demolish operation at Dar-es-Salaam, Tanganyika (now Tanzania). Goliath entered the harbour unopposed, but then a storm of shell and bullets erupted from all directions. Henry was hit eight times in 20 minutes, but carried on until he fainted from loss of blood. He was awarded the Victoria Cross on 10 April 1915. Henry was later promoted to Captain. He died on 9 December 1958 in Edinburgh.
HMS *Goliath* was a 16-gun, twin-screwed battleship launched at Chatham in 1898. It had a crew of 750 and had played a part in the Chinese Boxer Rebellion of 1900. In 1914, it went on escort duties in the East Indies operating against the German light cruiser *Konigsberg* on the Rufigi River, East Africa. After the attack on Dar-es-Salaam on 28-30 November 1914 Goliath took part in the ill-fated Dardanelles/Gallipoli Campaign and was sunk on 13 May 1915 with the loss of 570 men.

**Lieutenant David McGregor**

Watson's third VC holder is shared with Heriot's. Lieutenant David McGregor of the 6th Royal Scots, attached to the Machine Gun Corps, attended Watson's between 1900-8 and Heriot's for three years. He was the son of David and Annie of Ferragon, Craigs Road, Corstorphine,

David is buried in Stasegem Communal Cemetery, Belgium. He was only 23 years old. The citation for the VC is given below:

“For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty near Hoogmolen on 22nd of October, 1918, when in command of a section of machine guns attached to the right flank platoon of the assaulting battalion. Immediately the troops advanced they were subjected to intense enfilade machine-gun fire from Hill 66 on the right flank.

“Lt McGregor fearlessly went forward and located the enemy guns, and realised that it was impossible to get his guns carried forward either by pack or by hand without great delay as the ground was absolutely bare and fire swept. Ordering his men to follow by a more covered route, he mounted the limber and galloped forward under intense fire for about 600 yards to cover. The driver, horses and limber were all hit, but Lt McGregor succeeded in getting the guns into action, effectively engaging the enemy, subduing their fire, and enabling the advance to be resumed. With the utmost gallantry he continued to expose himself in order to direct and control the fire of his guns, until, about an hour later, he was killed. His great gallantry and supreme devotion to duty were the admiration of all ranks.”

**Douglas Gillespie - Flying Ace**


He became a famous RFC pilot during WW1, but was shot down on 6 April 1918 by the 'Red Baron', Manfred von Richthofen, leader of the famous Flying Circus.
Eric Geddes - Mighty Manager

Of the Coalition Government that won the First World War five members were Watsonians: R.S. Home (Civil Lord of the Admiralty), Ian Macpherson (Vice-President of the Army Council), T.B. Morison (Lord Advocate), Eric Geddes and his brother, Auckland. The Geddes brothers were undoubtedly the most famous of them all.

Eric Campbell Geddes was born in 1875 at Agra (India) to a Scots civil engineer. The family returned to Edinburgh in 1880 living at 16 Athole Crescent and Eric entered Watson's in October 1887 at the age of 12. He didn't last very long. And within a year he had been moved to Merchiston. Indeed, he didn't last long anywhere and was expelled from six of the seven schools he attended. Eric was a cheerful imp, consistently at the bottom of the class. When asked by his father to explain this, Eric simply said that it was much more fun than being at the top! But Eric was bright and he excelled at games and swimming. On leaving school he appears to have had a very long 'gap' session, but eventually 'found himself' when he joined the North Eastern Railway in 1904. Within ten years he had become its General Manager, famous for his energy, organising ability, dynamic personality and use of modern innovative management techniques such as statistical analysis.

During WW I David Lloyd George (as Minister of Munitions) was on the lookout for "men of push and go", thus Eric was drafted to serve as Deputy Director of Supply. His reward for ensuring sufficient shells for the Somme offensive was a knighthood. In 1916, Eric was sent to France as Inspector General of Douglas Haig's British Expeditionary Force. As such he gained the honorary title of Major-General. Eric revolutionised the BEF's transport and supply system helping make it the equal of the German Army.

Faced with the consequences of Jutland and unrestricted U-boat warfare Lloyd George moved Eric to the Admiralty, installing him as First Lord of the Admiralty. Eric was now both a General and an Admiral! His strenuous work there helped save Britain from defeat by the U-boats. His reward this time was a seat in the House of Commons as MP for Cambridge.

Unfortunately, his post-war career was less than illustrious. He gained fame (and notoriety) for his promise to squeeze the German lemon, 'until you can hear the pips squeak'. If the Treaty of Versailles was a factor in the rise of the Nazis and a cause of WW2, then Eric Geddes bears some responsibility. He also gained a dubious and lasting renown as the author of the Geddes Axe in 1922, proposing savage expenditure cuts which would stifle educational opportunity for working-class children, slash spending on health and pensions, cut teachers' and police pay and savage the military. Even his right-wing government colleagues were aghast.

Eric subsequently became Chairman of Dunlop and then Imperial Airways. He died on 22 June 1937 and his ashes were scattered over the English Channel from Flying Boat Canopus. Had he survived to experience the Second World War there is no doubt Eric would have revolutionised aircraft production and thereby achieved the unique position of high command in each of the three services.

The Auck - Cut and Thrust
Auckland (The Auck) Campbell Geddes was born on 21 June 1879 and spent his entire school career at Watson's. Unlike his brother he was a workaholic as well as a talented swimmer and footballer. Auckland gained entrance to medical school, took part in the Boer War and then trained as a surgeon. Before the War he advanced from Assistant Professor of Anatomy at Edinburgh University to Professor at the Royal College in Ireland and then on to Canada and McGill University Montreal.
When war broke out in 1914 Auckland was commissioned as a Major in the Northumberland Fusiliers, but then made the astonishing leap - perhaps aided by his brother – to become Director of Recruiting at the War Office between 1916 and 1917. He proved to be remarkably efficient, but attempts to conscript increasing numbers of men brought him into conflict with the trade unions as well as Irish nationalism. He became a Conservative MP for Basingstoke (1917-20) and, post-war, held a number of public posts including Ambassador Extraordinaire to the USA (1920-4) and Civil Defence Regional Commander (1929-42).

Unfortunately for his future reputation Auckland was also Chairman of the milling company Rio Tinto (1924-47) which, along with Hitler, Mussolini and the British Government, supported Franco's fascists in a civil war against the democratically elected Spanish Republican Government. Shockingly, he even told the Company's 1937 AGM in London:

"Since the mining region was occupied by General Franco’s forces there have been no further labour problems... Miners found guilty of troublemaking are court-martialled and shot."

Auckland was made a Baron in 1942 and died in 1954.

Watsonian War Service, 1914-18

Highland Regiments

416 fought in Highland Regiments (i.e., 13.4%) which comprised the 51st Highland Division used as a ‘Stormer’ unit. As such it took part in some of the most ferocious battles of the First World War and, of course, suffered appalling casualties.

Officers

62.4% of Watsonians served as officers which is not unexpected given their educational and class background, as well as being from a school with an active Cadet Corps, which prepared boys for military leadership. However, surprisingly, a huge number served as private soldiers. This could reflect a spirit of the times when many preferred to fight alongside friends or colleagues rather than seek or accept promotion especially in another regiment.

Which Branch?

Only 4% served with the Royal Navy. The vast majority joined the Army although 116 did transfer to the Royal Flying Corps. One who did was Douglas Gillespie who was shot down in 1918 by the ‘Red Baron’, the leader of the famous Flying Circus, Manfred von Richthofen. Fifteen served with the Tank Corps, 54 with the Machine Gun Service, 2 with the US Army whilst 29 acted as Chaplains.

Imperial Forces

462 fought with Indian, Canadian, African, Australian and New Zealand units, i.e., 14.9%.

The Royal Scots

A total of 476 (15.3%) Watsonians served with the Royal Scots, all but 11 serving with the Territorial or New Army Battalions. This represents the highest percentage of Watsonians serving in any regiment, or other branch of the armed forces. To 23 June 1916, 196 served as officers, i.e., 45.7%. The two Battalions which attracted most volunteers were the 4th and 9th. To 23 June 1916, the 4th attracted 26.3% and the 9th 29%. Thus, on the eve of the Battle of the Somme, 53% of all Watsonians in the Royal Scots were serving (or had served) in just two Battalions.

RAMC

280 (9%) served with the Royal Army Medical Corps, sometimes dubbed ‘Rob All My Comrades’, but that, of course, would not have applied to any Watsonian.
Killed-in-Action/Died of Wounds
605 Watsonians lost their lives in the First World War. This represents about 1 in 5 (19.5%) of all Watsonians who served in the armed forces from 1914 to 1918.

Artillery or Engineers
381 served with such specialist units, i.e., 12.3%.

Scottish Units
To 23 June 1916, 907 served with easily identifiable Scottish infantry regiments, i.e., 46.8%.

This drawing, 'Duckboard Parade', appeared in July 1918 and was sketched by Alexander Macpherson. He had joined the 9th Royal Scots but, in 1919, transferred as an officer to the Highland Light Infantry. He fought on the Somme, including Beaumont-Hamel, but was wounded in April 1917 at Arras.

As a result of government censorship no realistic account of warfare was ever published in The Watsonian, but two drawings did appear. This sketch of Ypres 1918 appeared in July 1919. It was drawn by Alan Ronald of the 17th Royal Scots who had won the Watson's Special Drawing Prize when at school. The devastation had been caused by artillery, not bombing. The GWC History Department takes a party of youngsters to the Western Front every three years. Ypres is always a memorable and moving occasion.

A Pacific Beginning
The militarisation of Watson's really began not in the summer of 1914, but 10 years earlier when a military Cadet unit had been established.

Military training in schools had been a hotly disputed issue ever since the days of the French invasion scare of 1859 which had sparked off the new adult Volunteer movement and its junior counterpart, the Cadets.

The British community was deeply divided between enthusiastic support and fierce opposition, the latter mostly from religious groups. For about 30 years after Watson's opened as a day school the Headmaster, Dr George Ogilvie (1870-98) was totally against the introduction of any military unit.
The Cadet Corps, which now bulks so largely in the School life, had, like football, a very modest beginning. Away back in the early eighties a master might sometimes have been seen stealthily leaving School with five or six boys carrying rifles which on no account were to attract the attention of the headmaster. The Doctor had a rooted antipathy to all things military, and Mr Sellar had practically to have recourse to weekly "gun running" to let the boys get decent practice. In spite of this handicap the Rifle Club made good. One year the inter-schools trophies for swimming and for shooting were won by the College, and the boys were very proud of the double achievement. The Doctor, however, could not get over his prejudice against the rifle, and one remembers with amusement his estimate of the relative value of the trophies from his remark, "This for saving life, that for destroying it".

G.C. Ligertwood, Jubilee Number, July 1920.

**A Change of Mood**

A new Headmaster, Dr John Alison (1904-26), was of a different persuasion and, supported by a new team of Governors, he introduced a Cadet Company. Merchiston School had the first school Cadet Unit in Edinburgh, but Watson's was the first day school to have one and was the first to start a Pipe Band.

The decision to start a Cadet Corps attached to the Queen's Rifle Volunteer Brigade was taken in 1903 and the Corps actively recruited in 1904. On 27 June 1905 its uniform had been agreed as:

- Glengarry bonnet with Blackcock feather and the school badge in white metal.
- Green serge jacket (service pattern) with buttons the same as the Queen’s Rifle Volunteer Brigade.
- Hunting Stewart kilt with pin.
- White goat sporran with black tassels and school badge in white metal.
- Hose tops and garters to correspond with the tartan, if not too expensive.
- White spats.

On 14 December 1905, metal letters for the shoulder straps were agreed. The choice of dark green jackets is intriguing. Was a deliberate effort being made to revive the old Hospital colour, or was it a mere coincidence?

One problem was that previous Cadet organisations in Edinburgh (e.g., John Hope's 'British League Cadets) had targeted the poorest social groups and there was a certain stigma attached to the name. In 1908, however, that problem was overcome by Haldane's army reforms which changed the Cadets into 'The Officers’ Training Corps' (OTC). Watsonians, however, usually just called it 'The Cadet Corps'. By 1913 it was a popular, efficient and successful school organisation.

**An Earlier Organisation?**

This letter was written to The Watsonian in November 1920 by a Mr J Boyd Jamieson:

> Firstly, in Mr Shepherd's account of the School Cadets he states that "there was no military organisation attached to the School before 1905". This is a mistake, for in 1885 an enthusiastic company, some sixty strong, armed with muzzle loading Enfield rifles and sword bayonets, were wont to parade for drill in the playground of the Little School, at the grisly hour of 8 a.m. under the command of Capt. W. R. Mackersy, of the Queen’s Edinburgh Rifles, of course, a Watsonian. This company, which had no uniform, was greatly helped by the enthusiasm of Mr Sellar, and was probably the first Cadet Company to be formed in Scotland, if not in Great Britain. When the questions of making it a permanency and of clothing it in a uniform came to be discussed, the opposition of Dr Ogilvie to all things military caused the extinction of the formation.

It has been suggested that this group also formed the first school Pipe Band. If so, that would make it the earliest civilian pipe hand in Scotland. Unfortunately, the documentary evidence is missing.

Jamieson is quite wrong regarding the first Cadet units which were formed in the very early 1860s.
This photograph of December 1912 shows the uniform which the boys provided at their own expense. The Cadet age limit was between 13 and 18, and, in 1905, the smallest Cadet was just over 4ft while the tallest was 6ft 1in. Captain F.P. Shepherd was the first CO ably assisted by Lieutenants Dr H.J. Scougal and Sandy Morrison along with Sergeants E. Milroy, J.R. McGlashan, W. Kennedy and C. Marksman, the latter acting as Colour Sergeant. The Corps drilled every Tuesday and Friday after school hours in the playground. The first drill instructor was Colour-Sergeant Bradford from the Royal Scots. The first Pipe Band consisted of six pipers, four side drummers and one bass drummer who wore a leopard skin presented by an FP in India. The first Pipe-Sergeant was Neil Morrison and the first tutor was Mr Stuart. All those in the photograph served in the armed forces during WW1. Dandie and Morrison were both awarded the Military Cross. Kennedy was killed on 27 May 1917. Stewart was wounded in 1917 and died in Edinburgh on 3 January 1919.

**Cadet Capers**

Apart from drill and military field exercises Watson's Cadets offered a variety of activities which must have seemed extremely attractive to boys brought up in a more restrictive society than ours.

- Shooting
- Signalling
- Cycling
- Pipe Band
- First Aid
- Summer Camps

Rifle shooting took place at Hunter's Bog in the Queen's Park, at a range in Malleny and also in a Morris Tube situated in the Drill Hall, Forrest Road, run by the Royal Scots. A miniature rifle range was opened in Watson's in May 1913.

**Cadet Scouts**

This is a Cadet Scout camp held at Taynuilt during the Easter vacation, 1908. It was organised by Sandy Morrison who is the large figure in the Watson's jersey. Inset, is Sandy Somerville in his Cadet uniform. Sandy became the first Scoutmaster of a troop independent of the Cadets which became the 9th Midlothian.

We have reserved for latest mention in this introductory paragraph what is perhaps the most noteworthy development of the term in connection with the Corps, affording pleasing proof of its robust vitality – the institution of a Scouts' Class conducted by Lieutenant Morrison, who has manifestly transmitted to his ‘disciples’ the enthusiasm which he himself exhibits in this as in all other departments of the work of the Corps.

The Watsonian, April 1908

**George Watson’s College Troop Boy Scouts (The 9th Troop), founded May 1908**

Looking back it is interesting and not a little significant to notice the development of the “Scouting” idea in Watson’s. There grew up in the early days of the Cadet Corps a Scout Section, or Military Reconnaissance class, under Sandy Morrison. With them the “Wanderlust” - the call of the Wild - was very strong, and gave itself expression in an Easter Camp, which was held two gears at Taynuilt and one other at Aberfoyle. About the same time Scouting for Boys began to come out in its original 4d. parts, and by April of 1908 a number of “Lone” patrols had been formed. Malcolm Mallace - the first Silver Wolf in Scotland - and Norman Peacock were leading amongst the Scouts. They approached Sandy Morrison and asked him to become their Scoutmaster. He being too much taken up already, turned the matter on to his then Scout Sergeant, the present Scoutmaster. Thus in May 1908 the troop became registered, and has continued through various times and circumstances ever since.

The Watsonian, Jubilee Number, 1920
Cadet Soccer

The Cadets also encouraged football as in this Staff v Cadets match at Myreside on 11 March 1908. A hard, spirited, but fair game resulted in a 3-1 victory for the Staff.

Cadet Rivalry

Field Exercises - On Saturday, 11th March, the Contingent, in conjunction with Heriot’s O.T.C., engaged in a tactical exercise on the ground of Swanston Farm, kindly placed at our disposal by Mr Jack. Heriot’s took up a defensive position under the shadow of “Steep Caerckett”, where they invited attack from our men. As usual, both sides won.

The Watsonian, April 1911

Cadet Pipe Band

A start was made with the Tactical Exercises on 7th April when the Corps defended Craiglockhart Hill against an attacking force consisting of the 3rd Highland Company, Q.R.V.B., R.S. (Captain Fleming). Several useful lessons were learned, and the movements were afterwards thoroughly discussed.

On that day also the Band made its first public appearance, and greatly improved the marching of the Corps.

The Watsonian, June 1906.

School Battalion, 1914

“I was one if the spectators of the first dress parade of the Cadet Corps on a chilly afternoon late in 1905, and like many another Watson boy from outside of Scotland, I was entranced with the pipes, so joined the Cadet Corps to become a piper. A sergeant from the Seaforths (then stationed at the Castle) gave us lessons once a week, and after some weeks' tuition, I ventured to ask him how long it took to learn. His sardonic reply was that 'it would take the likes of you seven years and seven generations'. I put that dream away.”

Former Pupil Eric Thomson from Canada, quoted in The Watsonian, May 1953
A wet drill day means a lecture, the nature of which we, raw recruits, can only guess at for it has never rained on a drill day yet, save once, when we were subjected to a gentle upbraiding of our faults. We believe great store is put by these lectures, and we may be pardoned for expressing the hope that one will come our way soon.

It is significant that in a large school such as ours no one has raised any objection to being drilled. The necessity in this present crisis, of bearing such subsidiary evils as drill has enforced itself on the minds of all. Every one is impressed with a sense of duty but should there be any misguided souls who may imagine that the path of glory is by way of a wilful disobedience to commands, there looms over them the grim, dread shadow of defaulters’ drill.

It is not for us to speak of the progress we have made. We can, however, candidly admit that we know more about military matters than we did at the beginning of October; and that we know just enough to recognise how little we really know.

Just now the Meadows resent the appearance of having had all their grass crushed in the earth by countless human feet. For the benefit strangers I may remark that we did drill in the Meadows. To produce such effects the drill must be strenuous. That it is. For one hour we tramp and turn and wheel, form sections, double incline and go through all manner of evolutions. At the end of the hour, you may be sure, we are not sorry to hear the whistle, sharp and shrill summon us back to the playground.

Could you get a glimpse of the playground (perhaps I should say parade ground) at this hour you would see the Battalion at the ‘Tention, you would feel the intense hush as the officers fall out, and would understand the feeling of relief when we hear, “Battalion - Dismiss!”

JSB (VI)

The land is lucky this year in having so many of last year’s successful band back, and is looking forward to having another good year. There is a large number of piper recruits, and we trust that the hope than one day they may become fully fledged pipers will be some solace at least to the parents whose war-torn nerves must bear the full brunt of that fearsome din that bagpipes can produce in inexperienced hands. Piper recruits should be interned in a sound-proof garret, or marooned on some distant island - at least so think those who suffer from their practicing.

A cheery note from The Watsonian, December 1911

In October 1914, the entire school was transformed by the Headmaster into a military-style ‘School Battalion’. Those who were already in the OTC, or its junior training reserve, were all expected to take part. At first it was quite popular, but the boys soon realised that all it amounted to was drill, more drill and yet more drill with the added bonus of being bossed about by some members of the OTC. This was one enthusiastic response by the Headmaster which was gradually allowed to wither away.

The School Battalion idea didn’t last long, but more permanent were the changes to the voluntary Cadets. The Great War saw an end to the green jacket and spats. Instead, the Corps donned khaki and hose. Before 1914, all Watson’s Cadets wore blackcock feathers in their glengarries in imitation of their parent regiment, The Royal Scots, but that soon disappeared too. Only the Pipe Band still maintained an old tradition by continuing to wear the full pre-1914 uniform into the 1950s.

On the 2 October last, the Senior School, with the exception of the first year classes, assembled in the Hall. The headmaster, in a short speech, pointed out that it was the duty of one and all to join the OTC in this time of crisis. He gave in detail the condition of joining and concluded by ordering the whole school to parade in the playground. From that day to this we have paraded regularly every Monday and Friday.
The first year classes did not figure in the original scheme. It is because they bitterly resented such treatment that the Battalion in full strength appears in this number.

Lieutenant Gerard and a staff of competent officers control and manage the affairs of the battalion. Those who, from long service and ability, have attained a high place in the OTC are given command over their less fortunate fellows.

The consequence is that the school is divided into squads, each with its own squad instructor, and each full of the belief that it is the best squad in the Battalion. The reader must not think that we have become an armed camp; for we have not yet got rifles. This is a grievance to many.

The early stages of our drill were marked by a tendency on our part to reduce the cosmos to chaos when we received the order to form fours on the march. The confusion has departed from us. We are become like unto machines. Wherefore hath drill become not a very pleasant subject, and one which we hope is but a necessary preliminary to better things.

Raising a Watson’s Pals’ Battalion
This was seriously considered in the autumn of 1914 by a group, which included the redoubtable Sandy Morrison. In fact, it was probably his idea. Such battalions were extremely popular at that time and were associated with towns (e.g., Hull, Sheffield and Barnsley), or work (e.g., Commercials, Tramways, Post Office), or large organisations (e.g., Public Schools, Glasgow Boys’ Brigade). So why not a school battalion?

The agency through which this could be achieved was created and named, The Watson’s Military Training Corps. The aim was to be sanctioned by the War Office as a separate unit of Kitchener’s New Army. Very quickly 350 Watsonians joined the Corps. However, a number somewhere around, or over, a 1,000 was the minimum required. Efforts to secure such a number within a short period failed and the War Office refused to recognise the Corps.

Having failed to create a battalion the idea then moved onto the idea of creating a Watson’s Pals’ battalion within an existing regiment. That also proved difficult, but large numbers joined the 4th, 9th or 15th Battalions of the Royal Scots, the parent regiment of Watson’s Cadets. A warm reception in the 4th was assured as one in three of its officers were Watsonians.

The 9th was known locally as ‘The Dandy Ninth’ because it was the only battalion of the Royal Scots dressed in full Highland military regalia. Indeed, the uniform of the Watson’s Cadets had been modelled upon it, so it is hardly surprising that many ex-Cadets wished to enrol.

War Work
Christmas 1914
Boys collected over £15 so that Miss Panton (the school cook) and her kitchen staff could make plum puddings for the troops. Staff collected £2 to buy tobacco. Ladies collected clothing. All sent to 2nd Royal Scots in France. Some suggested gifting the puddings to the Germans who would then immediately surrender!

Staff
Ten had joined up by Christmas 1914, including the entire PE department. Others gave up free periods to cover. More and more women came to fill the ranks, but by 1918 even they were leaving to join the Wrens and WAAC.
The Watsonian in Trouble
In 1914 it was decided to send a copy to every serving Watsonian. Then photographs of the dead were published in each number. As the casualties mounted The Watsonian began to sink into debt. In 1915 the price was doubled to 6d and then doubled again in December 1918.

- Every week 53 pupils took wounded soldiers to tea in town (April 1916).
- Older boys went to summer logging or replanting camps.
- YMCA (1916) appealed for books for soldiers and got enough for 13 libraries!

The Literary Club
It held debates on several issues, e.g.

1. That men are mostly fools.
2. That war has been the most effective instrument of human progress.
3. That patriotism is to be condemned.
4. That Democracy and Empire are incompatible.

Watson's Scouts
Engaged in all sorts of war work, e.g., Red Cross, message carrying, orderlies at recruiting offices. All this counted towards a War Service Badge. In April 1917 four Scouts were praised for helping day and night with the arrival of wounded soldiers at Waverley Station. Some took part in coastguard duties.

Muscles
Teachers volunteered (1915) to work during the holidays in a munitions factory in Barrow, or local farms. Some said this would improve school discipline as it would strengthen 'belting arms'!

Fund Raising
Oct 1914 - staff began a monthly levy. First amount went to Belgian refugees and then the Red Cross.

April 1915 - Ladies of the College held a sale of work which raised £175 for the Waverley Station Tea Room Fund.

Boys continually raise funds, e.g., the Boys College Bed in the Infirmary for wounded soldiers.

Watson’s Boys
Boys, boys, boys
Just an avalanche of boys
With the maximum of noise
on the stairs:
Rushing, crushing, in your hurry
To be done with school-time worry
And its cares.

Din, din, din!
When the pipes and drums begin
After three, while we’re kept in
Here perchance.
Yet they make our sad hearts thrill
With the thought of war's stern drill
There in France.

Watson's boys
When man's power to you belongs
Be ye eager to right wrongs
At life's call!
Be ye worthy of their fame
Who have fought in freedom's name,
'Sonians all!

The Watsonian, July 1916
Sandy Morrison

Captain 1st XV, 1904-6
First School Captain, 1905-6
Founder of the Cadet Corps, 1904
Founder of The Watsonian, 1903
Founder of GWC Scouts, 1908
Founder of the Training Corps, 1914

Most obituaries were terse, but, on occasion, someone's contribution to school life had been so great that much more was deemed appropriate. Captain Alexander Morrison, 5th Cameron Highlanders, rightly belonged to that select band. Sandy had been born in Oban, the third son of Mr and Mrs John Morrison, but moved to Canaan Grove, Edinburgh. Sandy entered Watson's in 1899. He was killed-in-action on 25 September 1915 leading his company during the Battle of Loos in a charge upon the infamous Hohenzollern Redoubt.

With every Scottish regiment represented, Loos had the largest concentration of fighting Scots in any battle in history. The casualties were, quite simply, shocking. Sadly, like so many others, Sandy has no known grave and is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, Dud Corner Cemetery, Panels 119-124. At least 13 other Watsonians are commemorated alongside him, 11 being killed on the same day. The photograph was taken when he was School Captain.

Alexander Robertson

Alexander was born on 12 January 1882, son of the Headmaster of Edinburgh Ladies College. He entered Watson's in 1890 and gained a First Class Honours Degree at Edinburgh University in 1906. He then taught in Watson's and at the Lyceé in Caen before embarking upon postgraduate studies at Oxford. In February 1914, he was appointed Lecturer in History at Sheffield University. Six months later Alexander enlisted as a Private in 'The Sheffield Pals'. After some time in Egypt his Battalion was ordered to France in March 1916.

At 7.30am on 1 July 1916, Alexander took part in the opening attack of the Battle of the Somme at the village of Serre. The men were met with shell, rifle and machine-gun fire. Within minutes he had been hit and his body was never found. He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing.

Alexander wrote two books of poems: Comrades and Last Poems.

**Lines Before Going**

*Soon is the night of our faring to regions unknown,*  
*There not to flinch at the challenge suddenly thrown*  
*By the great process of Being - daily to see*  
*The utmost that life has of horror and yet to be*  
*Calm and the masters of fear Aware that the soul*  
*Lives as a part and alone for the weal of the whole,*  
*So shall the mind be free from the pain of regret,*  
*Vain and enfeebling, firm in each venture, and yet*  
*Brave not as those who despair but keen to maintain,*  
*Though not assured, hope in beneficent pain,*  
*Hope that the truth of the world is not what appears,*  
*Hope in the triumph of man for the price of his tears.*
Hamish was born on 5 April 1896 in Broughty Ferry, near Dundee. He attended Watson's between 1904-13. His family lived at Red House in South Gillisland Road. At the beginning of the war Hamish assisted at Craigleith Military Hospital (now the Western General) and became joint editor of *The Craigleith Chronicle* submitting articles under the name of Lucas Cappe. In August 1916, Hamish joined The Black Watch and fought in the Battle of the Somme. On his way to High Wood on 9 October 1916, he wrote *The Zenith*.

**The Zenith**

To-day I reached the zenith of my life!
No time more noble in my span of years
Than this the glorious hour of splendid strife,
Of War of cataclysmal woe, and tears.
All petty are the greatest things of yore,
All mean and sordid is my dearest lay;
I have done nothing more worth while before. . .
My hour, my chance, my crisis, are today!

On the opening day of the Battle of Arras, 9 April 1917, Hamish was wounded and died the following day. Three days before the attack he penned his last and most famous poem, *The Great Dead*, put to music in 2003 by one of our pupils, Kirsty Gorman.

**The Great Dead**

Some lie in graves beside the crowded dead
In village churchyards; others shell holes keep,
Their bodies gaping, all their splendour sped.
Peace, O my soul. . . A Mother's part to weep
Say: do they watch with keen all-seeing eyes
My own endeavours in the whirling hell?
Ah, God! how great, how grand the sacrifice.
Ah, God! the manhood of yon men who fell!

And this is War. . . Blood and a woman's tears,
Brave memories adown the quaking years.

**Peary - The Myreside Pals**

James Pearson was born on 24 February 1888 and lived at 3 East Castle Road. He attended Watson's from 1896 to 1907. Although short and light, Peary became a giant on the sports field playing for both the 1st XI and 1st XV school teams, winning the 1907 School Championship against formidable opposition and becoming one of the best known and loved Internationalists of his age. Peary had the good fortune to play alongside two future great internationalists, Eric Milroy and Alex Angus, as well as the dominant Watsonian of the day, Sandy Morrison. Only Angus would survive the war as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Gordon Highlanders, winning the DSO and mentioned three times in despatches. Those four were good friends - churns or pals to use the then fashionable words.

They socialised, had a laugh and got into scrapes. The story below comes from *The Watsonian* of 1929 and gives us a rare glimpse into the social life of pre-1914 Watson's youngsters.

‘Ben’ was Ben Gray who emigrated to Canada, joined the Canadian Army in 1914 and was killed at Vimy Ridge in April 1917. A Lost Generation indeed.
There must be many who remember pleasant Saturday (or Sunday) afternoons (or evenings) spent in Ben's flat in Bruntsfield Place. Myresiders and non-Myresiders, former pupils, younger brothers; "swots", and loafers climbed the long stair and spent an hour or two (and sometimes five or six) discussing poetry, football, religion, food, politics, or love with this prince of eccentrics. On a wet winter Sunday afternoon you might find there Ben Gray, Sandy Morrison, the Angus brothers, Robin Law, Duncan Macgregor, Tom Bowie, Donald MacInnes, Pat Watson, and a few more. One summer evening some of us had gone up there to get a good view of one of the cyclist' processions of those days. One of the party, leaning over the window, was amusing himself with a pea-shooter and a pocketful of peas. A complaint from an onlooker brought up to the door a heavy-footed constable who was wearing very wide trousers. We stood with bowed heads in the passage and listened to his rebuke. All was going well until Jimmy Pearson in the background made some disparaging remark about "the slop's bree". That settled it. All our names and addresses were noted down and we were instructed to report at Causewayside Police Station at such-and-such a time. Sandy Morrison was not in the flat that afternoon, but when we crept into the Inspector's room, wondering whether it would be the birch or penal servitude, we found Sandy sitting in an armchair beside the Inspector. The latter, with a twinkle in his eye, brought home to us the gravity of the offence, but "let us off". In the street outside Sandy accepted our thanks for his intercession, and gave us the good advice, "put not your trust in princes; make friends with the police". A trivial thing to remember. I forget who were all there and know not where some of them are now, but the tenant of the flat, and the friend of the police, and the critic of the constabulary trousers are in "some corner of a foreign field that is for ever" Scotland and Watson's.

Not less memorable were those suppers in Newbattle Terrace, in the little room on the ground floor, when Sandy entertained with Highland hospitality and Highland music. During supper a small boy (who is now a member of Parliament) and one (or sometimes two) of his brothers had to pace solemnly up and down the room playing the pipes. Then came the long ascent to the sanctum on the top floor and the philosophy and the poetry and the charm of Sandy.

This article was published in The Watsonian in 1929

Peary scored 103 tries and a total of 338 points for Watsonians during their golden age when the unofficial rugby football championship of Scotland was won in 1908/9, 1909/10, 1911/12 and 1913/14. Watsonians success was based on players with football skills playing together in combination, the fulcrum being the half-backs and the centre-threequarters who were a superb mid-field quartet, including Peary. His speed as an athlete combined with his football skills made him a centre-threequarrer of international standard and he played 12 matches for Scotland.

His final appearance on a rugby pitch was at the Melrose Sports in April 1914. The memorable moment happened when Peary gained possession behind the goal line and ran the length of the pitch to score a try and win the Ladies' Cup.

When war broke out on 4 August 1914 Peary joined the Watsonian Military Training Corps led by his pal Sandy Morrison. Peary needed the training as he had never joined the school Cadets. When the idea of a Pals' Battalion collapsed Peary joined the 9th Royal Scots, 'The Dandy Ninth' which became the first Edinburgh Territorial Regiment to go to the Front. Arriving on 26 February 1915 in the Ypres Salient the Ninth were caught up in the aftermath of the world's first gas attack at St Julien, helping to stem the German advance.

On 27 April the Battalion was in Sanctuary Wood digging trenches frantically under a massive artillery bombardment as the Germans attempted to hammer their way into Ypres. The Ninth held its line until the night of 22-23 May when it was eventually relieved.
It was Peary's bad luck to he hit by a sniper just hours before he was due to leave Sanctuary Wood. He was going to get water for tea. His grave was destroyed by shellfire, but miraculously found in 1930. In that year a comrade wrote this account in The Watsonian.

Sanctuary Wood has many memories, but there is one which transcends all others - the sight of the wee white face with the little smile as we filed past the little athlete lying in his last long sleep, clad not in the panoply of greatness which he deserved, but in the common tunic and kilt of a private lying like a warrior taking his rest, with a bloodstained greatcoat round him. His name was known and loved by thousands. Countless times he had thrilled them with his genius, and now, in the sacred cause, he had laid down his life as a humble soldier. Never again will the little round-shouldered figure, with its long arms and gloved hands, gather a hall unerringly as of yore; but there must always be one spot in Sanctuary Wood that is for ever hallowed in Scottish Rugger hearts – the resting-place of Jimmy P., peerless threequarter, private soldier, and gentleman.

J.H.

Watson's Bombed
The account below was written by a Watson's schoolboy and comes from the December 1918 number of The Watsonian - the first permitted account.

DORA was the 'Defence of the Realm Act' which authorised censorship. The Leaving (Leavers) Certificate was the equivalent of 'Highers'.

Pace DORA

DORA is dead, or at least dying. We are therefore in a position officially to inform our readers there was an air raid on Edinburgh, and especially George Watson's College, on the morning of the 3rd of April 1916.

Why the 3rd of April. If you mark the coincidence, the Latin 'Leavings' were to be held - and were held-on that day. Now it is not for us to pry into the combined mysteries of the doings of German High Command and the Leaving Certificate Examinations, and the relations these bear to one another Mr Le Queux will probably tell us all about it in his revelations of the secret life of the ex-Kaiser.

Until then we shall say nothing. To descend from the general to the particular, it happened that the writer of this article was one off the unhappy wights doomed to spend that day in the torture cham... – I mean the Examination Hall. The night before I had gone to bed sorrowful for I felt I knew nothing whatsoever about the work for the exam. At 12.56¾ am I was awakened and informed that an air raid was in progress.

Without a moment's hesitation I arose and bolted for the cellar, snatching up a Latin Grammar en route. After some half-hour of study in that region I returned to bed, little dreaming of the happy aim that had attended one of the enemies missiles. On my road to School in the morning I met several joyous persons who informed me that the Easter holidays had begun - compulsorily. Eager to know the worst. I hurried on and discovered that, raids notwithstanding, I had a morning of examination yet to pass through. Of that paper let us say nothing. Suffice it that we examinees were to some degree recompensed by being the only ones allowed inside the gates, with the result that both before and after the exam, a casual observer might have thought that a lesson in the gentle art of digging oneself in under fire was being given, such was the number of people lying down in the dust, and excavating feverishly.
A closer inspection proved however, that the industrious grovellers were merely souvenir-hunters in search of fragments of bomb. How many pieces of commonplace lead piping are still being treasured as mementos of the Great War I do not venture to say?

The damage done, though fairly serious, was nothing in comparison with the excited reports that were flying about among those who had not seen the ‘ruins’. The outside wall of Room 1, beside which the bomb fell, was blown in, while all the windows in the front of the School had vanished in the night. The passages, too, were thickly carpeted with a mysterious powder, consisting apparently of crumbled plaster, broken glass, window-frames, classroom doors and such like trifles. Several enthusiastic scientists were keen to take samples for home analysis.

It’s an ill wind etc., and there were some compensating features even about an air raid. First and foremost was the additional week’s holiday obtained (though a raid appears to be much less powerful in this line than epidemic influenza); and let it be whispered gently, some vindictive spirits seemed to find a curious pleasure in contemplating the havoc wrought in certain class-rooms belonging to masters with ideas on the subject of tidiness. But the chief recompense was the pride we felt that, though not ourselves in the trenches, we too had experienced War. The scars still remain on the fence at the School and the battered pillar from the steps stands in the playground as a reminder to future generations of what happened to Watson’s in the War - and also forming most convenient wickets for the use of small boys’ summer game of miniature cricket.

AHC (VII)

During the Zeppelin air raid on the night of 2 and 3 April 1916 a bomb fell on the playground just outside the west wing Classrooms, smashing windows and doing considerable damage. To the excitement of the boys was the added satisfaction of an additional week’s holiday A plaque was set in the wall near the point of impact, and a German eagle was set in the pavement. Both of these were offered to the Merchant Company Education Board by the demolition contractors after Watson’s moved from Archibald Place to Colinton Road.

H Waugh (ed), George Watson's College, 1970

Remembering 1914-1918 – Family Memorials

The Ford Trophy (April 1916)

This was the first family memorial to be announced.

Mr G Ford, Portobello, in memory of his two sons, George Turner and Charles Henry Ford, 1/4th Royal Scots, both pupils of Watson’s, who fell at the Dardanelles on 28 June 1915, has endowed an athletic prize for the school to be known hereafter as the ‘Ford Prize’.

It will be awarded for the 220 yards race at the Sports in May.

In the name of the School we tender the generous donor heartiest thanks for his gift, and trust that those who win in future years may be animated with the same heroic spirit as those whose memory it commemorates.

Two of Mr Ford’s four sons were killed in WW1, both on the same day, in the same Regiment and within yards of each other in Gully Ravine, Gallipoli.
The Ranken Memorial Trophy (July 1917)
John was a great runner, gaining Scottish Athletic International honours for four years. He was killed while leading a bombing party on a Turkish trench. Ernest was famous for cycling, football and rugby.

John Ranken
Corporal, A Coy., 1/4th Royal Scots
Wounded on Gallipoli 28th and died 29th June 1915
Mentioned in Despatches
School Period 1885-1898
His first mile, W.C.A.C, 4m. 59s. (1898)
His best mile, S.A.A.C. 4m. 30½s. (1903)
Scottish Cross Country Champion (1904 and 1905)

Ernest Ford Ranken
Second Lieutenant, 7th K.O.S.B.
Wounded 20th March 1916
Died at St Omer, France, 25th March 1916
School Period 1994-1906
Joined Cadet Corps at Formation
Played in Watsonian Rugby Team, 1911 to 1914
Both joined their old Battalion, 4th Royal Scots, 5th August 1914

The Eric Milroy Trophy (Spring 1920)
The relatives of Eric Milroy have intimated to the Headmaster their intention of presenting an athletic trophy in his memory. It will probably be awarded for the Place and Drop Kick competition at the games. We thank the donors very sincerely for this permanent memorial of so fine a man and so loyal a Watsonian.

Eric was a brilliant rugby player and played in almost every International Match from 1910 to 1914. He toured with the British team in S Africa in 1910. Eric first joined the 9th Royal Scots, but soon gained a commission with The Black Watch. He died during the Battle of the Somme whilst engaged upon an attack on Delville Wood in July 1916. His body was never found.
College Memorials

In the July 1916 *Watsonian* a letter was published from an Arthur Hunter in New York who suggested the creation of a relief fund to aid orphans and dependants of those killed or maimed. This was eventually to lead to the establishment of the Watsonian War Memorial Fund in July 1917. This would provide a permanent memorial and financial assistance to those in need. By December 1919, the enormous sum of £9,594 had been raised. Designs were then sought for a permanent memorial and it was also decided to publish a Watsonian War Record to commemorate all those who served during the Great War.

By December 1920, 50 dependants were being supported by the new fund and a drawing was produced showing the proposed new permanent memorial which would cost around £3,000. During the Winter Term of 1921 the memorial was erected in front of the main school steps. On Friday 16 December at 3pm the memorial was unveiled after a solemn ceremony by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Robert Horne. This is the memorial which was later moved to Colinton Road. Note the OTC, Pipe Band and the ERI building in the background.

An indoor memorial in the form of a fine carved display cabinet to hold the Watsonian War Record was presented by Mr John Crerar and friends. Does anyone know where this is? Two new cabinets are now in the Library and pages from the Memorial books for both World Wars are still religiously turned each day by Mrs Hooper.

Other Memorials

To record for future generations, the insensate brutality of the Hun, the Merchant Company Education Board has placed on the wall of the College, nearest the spot where the Zeppelin Bomb struck, a bronze tablet with this inscription:

*THIS CITY WAS RAIDED BY GERMAN AIRSHIPS ON THE NIGHT OF 2ND APRIL 1916. NEAR THIS SPOT A BOMB EXPLODED, CAUSING SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE COLLEGE BUILDINGS.*

The precise point of impact is marked with a Prussian eagle in bronze, let into the pavement.

Near by stands a captured German field-gun. The conjunction of the two is not without significance to the reflecting mind.

December 1919

All the 420 obituaries in The Watsonian had been written by the Head of English, Mr Henry John Findlay, who also spent countless hours preparing the now invaluable Watsonian War Record, 1911-18.

*ARMA VIRUMQUE by WS Craig (VI)*

Two field-guns were given to Watson's by the Government as war trophies.

What happened to them?
In 1922 this oak Memorial was made to hold a copy of the Watsonian War Record and paid for by John Crerar and friends. It was placed at the head of the central staircase facing the clock. In 1932, it was erected in the Masonic Hall (now part of the Library).

Does anyone know where it rests now?

The First Armistice Day Remembrance, 1919

On 11 November we joined in the national Act of Remembrance by observing the two minutes’ silence in our classrooms, The drums of the Corps sounded in the corridors, and the classes, suspending their work, stood to attention for the prescribed time, with a very full understanding of and sympathy with, the meaning and significance of the act.

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