The 2 Million “Burnt Documents ” (WO 363)

Unfortunately about 60% of the soldiers’ Service Records were irretrievably damaged or lost completely as a result of enemy bombing in 1940 during the Second World War. The exact number of serving British soldiers is not known because of the loss of the records.

However, about a third, approximately 2 million, were saved from destruction. These records are known as the “Burnt Records”. Officially they are classed as WO 363 records, which is the reference number given to them by the National Archives.(The “WO” in the classification code stands for “War Office”.) As a result of the loss of so many of the First World War Service Records, there is now only a 40% chance that the Service Record of the individual you want to trace will be available to examine.

The surviving 2 million “Burnt Documents” Service Records are for soldiers who were discharged, demobilized at the end of the war, who died between 1914 and 1920 and who were not eligible for an Army pension. Some soldiers who were in the regular army before the outbreak of war in August 1914 may, however, be included in this class of records.

The Service Records will not include soldiers who continued to serve in the military after 1920. Their records are not available for public access.

Form B. 2512
1

2512.

Card No. 16 G/42/191

SHORT SERVICE.

(For the Duration of the War, with the Colours and in the Army Reserve.)

ATTESTATION OF

No. 282 Name Edmund R Beck Corps Forth R.G.A. (T)

Questions to be put to the Recruit before Enlistment.

1. What is your name? ..... 1. Edmund R Beck
2. What is your full address? ..... 2. 5 Macdowall Rd Edinburgh
3. Are you a British Subject? ..... 3. Yes
4. What is your Age? ..... 4. 36 Years 5 Months
5. What is your Trade or Calling? ..... 5. Insurance Clerk
6. Are you Married? ..... 6. Yes
7. Have you ever served in any Branch of His Majesty's Forces, naval or military, if so,* which? 7. No
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? ..... 8. Yes
9. Are you willing to be enlisted for General Service? ..... 9. Yes
10. Did you receive a Notice, and do you understand its meaning, and who gave it to you? ..... 10. Yes Name R McGill Sergt Corps 13 Lothians Rifles
11. Are you willing to serve upon the following conditions provided His Majesty should so long require your services?

For the duration of the War, at the end of which you will be discharged with all convenient speed. You will be required to serve for one day with the Colours and the remainder of the period in the Army Reserve, in accordance with the provisions of the Royal Warrant dated 20th Oct., 1915, until such time as you may be called up by order of the Army Council. - If employed with Hospitals, depots of Mounted Units, or as a Clerk, etc., you may be retained after the termination of hostilities until your services can be spared, but such retention shall in no case exceed six months. 11. Yes

I, Edmund R Beck do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made.

Edmund R Beck. SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT.

R McGill Sergt *Signature of Witness.*

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

I, Edmund R Beck swear by Almighty God, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown, and dignity against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING OFFICER.

The Recruit above named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me at Edinburgh this 26 day of Nov 1915

Signature of the Justice William Dimelow J.P.

† *Certificate of Approving Officer.*

I certify that this Attestation of the above-named Recruit is correct, and properly filled up, and that the required forms have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to the ‡ Forth R.G.A.

‡ Insert authority, Army Form B. 203 (or other authority for the enlistment) will be attached to the

1916

Lewis Grant
Captain R.G.A. (T).

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT ON ENLISTMENT.

(To correspond with Entries on the Medical History Sheet.)
Applicable to all ranks.

Name Edmund R. Beck

Apparent age 36 years 5 months. Height 5 feet 7½ 7/8 inches.

Chest measurement { Girth when fully expanded 41 inches.
Range of expansion 2½ inches.

Distinctive marks Wart on abdomen

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY RECRUIT.

Name and Address of next-of-kin Mrs Elizabeth — — — — — — — Relationship Wife
5 MacDowall Rd Edinburgh

Particulars as to Marriage.

(a) Christian and Surname of Woman to whom married, and whether spinster or widow. (b) Place and date of marriage. (c) Present address. (d) Initials of Officer verifying entry.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Elizabeth Pickford (Spinster)	Manchester 9. 8. 1905	5 - MacDowall Road Leamington	MAJOR LINDLARCH

Particulars as to Children.

Christian Names.	Date and Place of Birth.

MILITARY HISTORY SHEET.

1. Passed classes of Instruction † ... † This includes any authorised class of instruction, *e.g.*, in swimming, chiropody, &c.		
2. Campaigns ... ... (including Actions.)	1/4 136/16	
3. Wounded		
4. Special instances of gallant conduct and mentions in public despatches.		
5. Medals, decorations and annuities ...	Name of Medal — Clasps.	
[illegible] the		

Army Form B. 103. 132572 Casualty card despatched 12/11/17

Casualty Form—Active Service.

Regiment or Corps 106 Coy Forth R.G.A. Regimental Number 245520

Rank ~~Bdr~~ Gunner Surname Beck. Christian Name Edmund Robert

Religion Wes Age on Enlistment 36 years 6 months.

Enlisted (a) 26/11/15 Terms of Service (a) D.W. Service reckons from (a) 13/6/17

Date of promotion to present rank 12/5/17 22/11/17 Date of appointment to lance rank —

Extended { — } Re-engaged { — } Qualification (b) —

or Corps Trade and Rate —

Group 37 (Insurance Clerk) M Signature of Officer i/c ~~Records~~.

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents
Date	From whom received				
Occupation Cards despatched 12/11/17		Embarked ...			
Bj 8/5/18	M.O. Troops	Disembarked...			
	Posted Dalmeny		26.8.16		
12/5/17	~~Promoted~~ A/Bdr.	Part II orders 234	14/6/17		
22/11/17	Promoted A/Cpl	Part II orders 76	17/3/18		
31/12/16	~~Promoted~~ A/Bdr. (paid)	Part II orders No 4	4/1/17		
31/8/18	Posted 20 (Forth) Fire Command	Part II orders 250	A/7/9/18		A/Cpl
Next of kin :- Wife		Mrs. E. Beck 5 Macdowall Rd Edinburgh			

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.
(b) Signaller, Shoeing-smith, &c.

[P.T.O.

(B99130) W 15012—5156 J. P. & Co., Ltd. Forms/B103/3.

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents
Date	From whom received				
		Transferred to Class "Z" Army Reserve on Demobilization.			
		Date 11 2 19			
		Signature C. Thaulay McLeod for Officer i/c Records			
		Place Savannah Ga			
		Home Address Edinburgh Scotland			

[illegible] every Officer and Soldier, wh[illegible] with the [illegible] or not, will be given an opportunity of filling in this Form. Should [illegible] wish to put forward any claim in respect of a Disability due to Mil[illegible] Service he must sign the Statement hereunder to this effect, in the presence of an Officer of the Unit with which he is serving, who will witness the Signature. Whether a Claim is made or not, this Form will be forwarded by the Unit Commander, in the case of every Officer, direct to the Secretary, War Office; and in the case of every Soldier, to the Record Office of his Unit.

Unit: 'A' Battery 20 (Forth) F.C.

Regiment or Corps: R.G.A.

Regtl. No. 345520 Rank: A/Corpl

Surname: BECK
(Block letters.)

Christian Names in full: EDMUND ROBERT

Permanent address: 5 MACDOWALL RD EDINBURGH.

Age last birthday: 39

First joined for duty (Date): 13-6-16 at (Place): Edinburgh

Medical Category or Grade in which joined: B.1

If the Officer or Soldier has previously been discharged from the Army, Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force, he will state:—

(*a*) Former Regiments or Corps with Regimental Numbers—

(*b*) Dates of discharge

(*c*) Causes of discharge

(*d*) Particulars of Pension or Gratuity received (if any)—

TO BE CANCELLED IF A CLAIM IS MADE.

I do not claim to be suffering from a disability due to my military service.

Place of Examination: Braefoot, Aberdour

Edmund R Beck
Signature of Officer or Soldier.

Date: -

J. Shiu 2nd Lt R.G.A.
Signature of Officer witnessing.

Before the claimant answers questions 1—8 the following should be read by, or to, him:—

"Your statement will be checked by Official Records. In answering question 2, any special matters which in your opinion caused or aggravated any unfitness from which you are suffering, must be clearly stated."

The claimant will answer the questions in his own words and after completing the form will sign it. The Officer will witness the signature. If the claimant cannot write, he will affix his mark, such act being witnessed.

THIS PORTION IS NOT TO BE COMPLETED IF A CLAIM IS NOT MADE.

1. (*a*) In what countries have you served during this war and for what periods? (*b*) In what capacity?	
2. If you are suffering from any disease, wound or injury, state what it is, the date upon which it started, and what in your opinion was the cause of it. (If more space is required a sheet of foolscap should be used and attached firmly to this form).	
3. Give the names of any Hospitals in which you have been treated for the above disabilities during this war.	
4. Did you suffer from the disease or injury mentioned in above answer to Question 2, or anything like it before joining the Army? If so, give details and dates.	
5. Give the names and addresses (if you know them) of any Hospitals you were in or Doctors who attended you before you joined the Army.	
6. Give the name of your National Health Approved Society and, if possible, your membership number.	

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT ON ENLISTMENT.

(To correspond with Entries on the Medical History Sheet.)
Applicable to all ranks.

Name Edmund R. Beck

Apparent age 36 years 3 months. Height 5 feet 7 1/8 inches.

Chest measurement { Girth when fully expanded 24 1/2 inches.
Range of expansion 2 1/2 inches.

Distinctive marks Wart on abdomen.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY RECRUIT.

Name and Address of next-of-kin Mrs Elizabeth — —
— — 26 — Relationship wife
5 Macdowall Rd Edin

Particulars as to Marriage.

(a) Christian and Surname of Woman to whom married, and whether spinster or widow. (b) Place and date of marriage. (c) Present address. (d) Initials of Officer verifying entry.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Elizabeth Pickford (Spinster)	Manchester. 9. 8. 1905	5 Macdowall Rd Edinburgh	MAJOR RSO. EDINBURGH

Particulars as to Children.

Christian Names.	Date and Place of Birth.

MILITARY HISTORY SHEET.

1. Passed classes of Instruction † ...
† This includes any authorised class of instruction, *e.g.*, in swimming, chiropody, &c.

2. Campaigns ... ... (including Actions.)

H. B. 1/6

3. Wounded ... ...

4. Special instances of gallant conduct and mentions in public despatches.

5. Medals, decorations and annuities ...

Name of Medal.	Clasps.

PRESIDENT

(a) for recruits enlisting direct into the Regular Army, and (b) for men of the Territorial Force when they are admitted to Hospital.
Form B. 178A to be used for Special Reserve recruits and Special Reservists enlisting into the Regular Army.

MEDICAL HISTORY of

Surname Reid Christian Name Edmund Robert

TABLE I.—GENERAL TABLE.

Birthplace ... Parish Manchester County Lancaster

Examined ... ... on 26th day of November 1915, at Edinburgh

Declared Age ... ... 36 years 150 days.

Trade or Occupation ... Insurance clerk

Height ... ... 5 feet 7½ inches.

Weight ... ... 120 lbs.

Chest Measurement: Girth when fully Expanded 34½ inches. Range of Expansion 3 inches.

Physical Development ... Good

Vaccination Marks: Arm ... Right / Left; Number 4

When Vaccinated ... ... Infancy

Vision ... ... R.E.—V= 6 L.E.—V= 6

(a) Marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease ... (a) 6

(b) Slight defects but not sufficient to cause rejection ... ... (b)

Approved by (Signature) J S Nesmyth

(Rank) MO Medical Officer.

Accepted ... ... at Edinburgh on 26 day of November 1915.

Corps on Enlistment ... Army Reserve Cl B. 2/1 Lat Forth R.G.A. Regtl. No. 345520.

day of

☞ IF FOUND, please drop this Certificate in a Post Office letter box. Army Form Z. 11.

NOTICE.—"This document is Government property. It is no security whatever for debt, and any Person being in possession of it, either as a pledge or security for debt, or without lawful authority or excuse, is liable under Section 156 (9) of the Army Act to a fine of twenty pounds (£20) or imprisonment for six months, or to both fine and imprisonment."

PROTECTION CERTIFICATE AND CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY

(SOLDIER NOT REMAINING WITH THE COLOURS).

Dispersal Unit Stamp and date of dispersal.

Surname (Block letters) BECK

Christian Names Edmund Robert

Regtl. No. 345520 Rank A/Cpl Record Office Dover

Unit 4th 20th Tank Bn Regt. or Corps RGA Pay Office Dover

I have received an advance of £2. † Address for Pay 5 Macdonald Rd Edinburgh

(Signature of Soldier) Edmund R Beck

The above-named soldier is granted 28 days' furlough from the date stamped hereon pending _____ (as far as can be ascertained) which will date from the last day of furlough after which date uniform will not be worn except upon occasions authorized by Army Orders.*

* If for Final Demobilization insert 1.
Disembodiment insert 4.
Transfer to Reserve insert 3.

Theatre of War or Command: Scotland

Born in the Year: 1899

Medical Category: B I

Place of rejoining in case of emergency: Glasgow

Specialist Military Qualification: —

† As this is the address to which pay and discharge documents will be sent unless further notification is received, any change of address must be reported at once to the Record Office and the Pay Office as noted above, otherwise delay in settlement will occur.

17 FEB 19

R.J. Wilder

This Certificate must be produced when applying for an Unemployed Sailor's and Soldier's Donation Policy or, if demanded, whenever applying for Unemployment benefit.

Date _____ Office of Issue _____ Policy issued No. A/019175

(748) W689/P958 300,000 4/18 Cax.P Ltd.

Army Form B. 104—53.

Inside Sheet.

(For Original Attestation).

No. 345520 Name. E. R. Beck
(Rank not to be shown.)

Registry No.	From whom	Purport and Date	Action
	O.C. Dis. Centre Huddlingston Office	Forwards A. F. Z. 11 14-1-19	
		Forwards A. F. Z. 21	Man 19-2-19
	Office	F. F. Ass. notified	17-3-19

[P.T.O.

Printers, Old Bailey, E.C.4.
250m 3/18m-2 127 55

Forms B. 120 87.

REGIMENTAL CONDUCT SHEET.

Army Form B. 120

Number of sheets (in words) } One

Signature of C.O. or Adjutant } [signature]

O.C. No. 6 COY. FORTH R.G.A. Regim

Regiment of R.G.A.

ntal Number) 345520 E.R. Beck. Attested 26/11/ 1915. Joined 13/6/ 19
nd Name

Place	Date of Offence	Rank	Cases of Drunkenness	OFFENCE	Names of Witnesses	PUNISHMENT awarded	Date of award, or of order dispensing with trial	By whom	Date of Commencement	Date of Expiration	REMARKS
Praefect	11/1/19			Certified correct.							
				J. Thin 2nd Lt for Major, R.G.A. Comdg. "A" Battery 20 (Forth) F.C.							

To be carried over

Capt. [illegible] R.A.M.C.

Capt. Beck R.A.M.C.

I have examined the above named soldier.
Heart appears dilated, diffuse. Distended outwards.
A murmur is heard in mitral area propagated in line of right nipple.
Murmur loud.
Also after exertion when in recumbent position a short soft systolic is present.
Heart responds to exertion in fair - but -

[illegible] that
the man might
break down
under severe
training or the
operation

Ed Vanderveer
Capt. R.A.M.C.

Reports of Inquiry, Vaccination, Examinations for Field or Foreign Service, Re-engagement, or Prolongation of Service; Issue of Appliances; Particulars of Dental Treatment, etc.

Date	Brief details, and signature
2 AUG 1916	Vac Alex M Cowie Capt RAMC
	TAB 14 SEP 1916 A H Jones Capt RAMC
	2 12 OCT 1916 Alex M Cowie
1 OCT 1916	Classed B1 Alex M Cowie
24 NOV 1916	Classed B1 TMB III Attl
9/2/17	" A TMB II Attl
19/3/17	Classed B1 permanent by TMB II Attl
31.1.18.	Proven to be evidence of certain disability
	Classified A J. D. [illegible]
	Recorded by Alex M Cowie Capt E H Dowland Capt RAMC
3.3.18.	TAB J Horton J Stewart.
4.5.18.	Classified A - pending hospital report. J. Horton J Stewart Capt. RAMC
8.5.18.	Classified B1 nine months. J Horton J Stewart Capt RAMC

Table IV.—Service Table.

Station or Troopship	Date of arrival or embarkation	Date of departure or disembarkation	Station or Troopship	Date of arrival or embarkation	Date of departure or disembarkation
Dalmeny					

SERVICES OF No. 2014 NAME

	Battn. or Depot.	Promotions. Reductions, Casualties, &c.	Army Rank.	Dates.	Service not allowed to reckon for fixing the rate of Pension. Years.	Days.	Signature of Officer certifying correctness of Entries.
				1916			
General Service		Attested	Pte	26. Nov 15			
General Service		To Army Reserve	Pte	27. Nov 15			
		Mobilized	Pte	13. 6. 16			
	2/1 Coy	Posted	Pte	14 JUN 1916			
— .. —	..	Std 4 days leave	..	14.10.16 ✓			H.R.P. Bloodworth Lt Col. 1/c Terr. Force Records
— —	..	Appointed paid	Bdr	20 12 16 ✓			H.R.P. Bloodworth Lt Col. 1/c Terr. Force Records
No. 6 Coy. Lond.		Posted.	a/Sgt	12.5.14.			
		Appointed	a/Sgt / Sgt.	12.5.14			
No. 6 Coy. Lond.		Promoted	S/Sgt.	22.11.14.			
Bty No. 20 (Lond) Command. Bedford		Posted.	"	4.8.18.			for OC TF (RGA) Records

Transferred to Class "Z" Army Reserve on Demobilization.

Date 11-2-19.

Signature for Officer i/c Records.

Place Dress

Home Address 5 Rectory Rd. Lond.

Chingford

Hist Cat. B1

	Depot.	Promotions. Reductions, Casualties, &c.	Army Rank.	Dates.	to reckon for fixing the rate of Pension. Years.	Days.	Signature of Officer certifying correctness of Entries.
Service		Attested	pte	26. Nov. 15			
Service		To Army Reserve	pte	27. Nov. 15			
R.G.A.	2/1 Coy	Mobilized	pte	13. 6. 16			
		Posted	pte	14 JUN 1916			
— —	-	Gtd 4 days leave	"	14.10.16			N.B.R. Blood Major for Col.
							(Ld. Forces Records)
— —	"	Appointed Paid	Cpl	30/12/16			N.B.R. Blood Major for (Ld. Forces Records)
Corp. Forth		Discharged	"	13. 3. 17			Chipperson Major RGA 11.3.17
		Appointed	Pte/Cpl	13. 3. 17			Chipperson Major RGA 13.3.17
Corp. Forth		Promoted	Cpl	22. 11. 17			Montgomerie Major R.G.A. Str. Rec. 22 Nov 1917
Qty. No 20 (Forth) Command Bracefort		Posted	acting Corporal	31. 8. 18			R.G.A. (S.A.) Rec.

Transferred to Class "Z"
Army Reserve on Demobilization.
Date 11.2.19
Signature C. Murray 2nd Lieut.
for Officer i/c Records. R.G.A.
Place Dover
Home Address 5 Macdowall Road
Edinburgh
Mid Cal B1

Pension forfeited as above