

Shadows from The Past

THE OUNDLE CENOTAPH MEN 1914-1918



RAY RUNDLE

The men who enlisted in Great Britain's armed services during the first twenty months of the First World War were volunteers or reservists. By April 1916, however, volunteering had been abolished; instead, all men, married or unmarried, aged 18-41, could be conscripted unless they were in a protected occupation, deemed unfit for military service, or convinced a local tribunal that they were indispensable for family or business reasons, or should be exempt from national service on grounds of conscience. By 1918 the age limit had been raised to 51, and 55 was contemplated.

Volunteers came from all parts of society; the privilege and rich, poor and destitute, university graduates and those with the most rudimentary education; landowners, solicitors, labourers, craftsmen, artists, sportsmen, shopkeepers....

No attempt has been made to provide a narrative of the war. The focus is on the men who served in the war, their families and the circumstances in which they died. In this account they do not appear in descending order according to their military rank, but in alphabetical order, on the principle that, having served their country in the Great War, no distinction should be made between them when dead.

The A5 book has 78 pages, about 35,000 words and 40 illustrations, of which several are portraits. The book is offered for sale at £5 before going on sale to the general public.