

# Salisbury Cathedral

## Roll of Honour



*Lest we Forget*

### World War I



MAJOR

**H. W. F. B. FARRER M.C.**

ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY

30TH OCTOBER, 1918

## Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne FARRER

Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer was born on 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1894 to parents Henry Richard William Farrer & Georgina Beatrice Farrer (nee Blackburne). Henry's birth was registered in the district of Dublin South, Ireland in the September quarter of 1894. Henry's parents had married in the June quarter, 1890 in Dublin South, Ireland.

The 1901 Census recorded Henry W. F. B. Farrer as a 6 year old, living with his family at 84 South Street, Bridport, Dorset. 84 South Street, Bridport was the address of the Rectory. His parents were recorded as Henry R. W. Farrer (Clergyman – Church of England, aged 39, born Ireland) & Georgiana B. Farrer (aged 35, born Ireland). Henry was the middle child of 3 sons listed on this Census – Edward R. B. (aged 9, born Ireland), then Henry & Robert G. B. (aged 3, born Ireland). Also listed was a visitor - George C. Hutchings (Clergyman– Church of England, aged 36, born Dorset) & 3 servants – Elizabeth Dancey (Widow, aged 53, Nurse domestic), Elizabeth Daubeney (aged 31, Cook) & Annie C. Tuck (aged 21, Housemaid).



**St. Mary's Church, Bridport Dorset, located next door to The Rectory**

*(Photo by N. Chadwick, 2011)*

The 1911 Census recorded Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer as a 16 year old Boarder at Bedford School, located at 1 Newnham Road, Bedford. Henry's place of birth was recorded as "Co. Dublin, Rathfarnham Resident". John Parke Kirkham, aged 53, was listed as the Schoolmaster (Grammar School).

H. W. F. B. Farrer was listed as a member of the Rugby team for 1911-1912 & 1912-1913 for Bedford School.

Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburn(e) Farrer was a member of the Dorset Cricket Team – Minor Counties Championship 1913-1914.

Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer volunteered for service on 12<sup>th</sup> August, 1914 and joined as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant with the 39<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Royal Field Artillery.

Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer's Medal Index Card does not show when he had entered a Theatre of War, it does however state that he embarked from Southampton on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1914. (A notation at the side of the card reads "WS/5/1366 G.C. states 23-10-14").

The 39<sup>th</sup> Brigade was part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division. One of the earliest Divisions to move to France, the First Division remained on the Western Front for the whole duration of hostilities and took part in many major actions; including Mons, Marne, the First Battle of Ypres, Somme, Passchendaele, and the Hindenburg Line.

Second Lieutenant H. W. F. B. Farrer was awarded the Military Cross. (*London Gazette* (Supplement) 23 June, 1915 p. 6119).

The Military Cross was created on 28<sup>th</sup> December, 1914 for commissioned officers of the substantive rank of Captain or below and for Warrant Officers. In August, 1916 Bars were awarded to the MC in recognition of the performance of further acts of gallantry meriting the award and recipients of a bar to use the post nominal letters MC.



**Military Cross**

Second Lieutenant H. W. F. B. Farrer was appointed Lieutenant, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1915. (*London Gazette* (Supplement) 10 July, 1915 p. 6798).

Lieutenant H. W. F. B. Farrer was promoted to Acting Captain from 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1916. (*London Gazette* 14 November, 1916 p. 10971).

From the *London Gazette* (23 March, 1917 p. 2863)

*"Royal Regiment of Artillery- The undermentioned to be acting Majors whilst comdg. Batts:-  
Lt.(Actg. Capt.) H. W. F. B. Farrer, M.C.*

Lieutenant (Acting Captain) Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer was awarded a Bar to the Military Cross. (*London Gazette* (Supplement) 17 April, 1917 p. 3677).

*"His Majesty the KING has been graciously pleased to award a Bar to the Military Cross to the undermentioned Officer:-*

*Lt. (Actg. Capt.) Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer, M.C., R.F.A.*

*For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when a gun team became casualties. He went to the gun and rendered assistance to the wounded under very heavy fire. He has at all times set a splendid example of courage and determination."*

Lt. (A./Maj.) Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer, M.C., R.F.A. was awarded a 2<sup>nd</sup> Bar to the Military Cross. (*London Gazette* 25 September, 1917 p. 9969).

*"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when a cottage full of ammunition had been set on fire by enemy shells close to his battery. He took a party and saved some 400 rounds by pulling away boxes.*

*Some of the shells, however, exploded, killing one man and wounding four, causing his party to retire. This officer, hearing cries from a man who had been left behind wounded, gallantly ran into the middle of the burning cottage, pulled him to the door, and with the help of two others, got him away in spite of the exploding shells. He was much bruised by falling masonry, and his hands were scorched and his hearing damaged. His example of self-sacrifice and devotion was beyond all praise. (Supplement to London Gazette January 9, 1918 p. 569).*

From the London Gazette (Supplement - 8 November, 1917 p. 11552)

*“Royal Regiment of Artillery- The undermentioned to be Lts. to be. Cpts; and to retain their actg. Rank where specified. 3 Nov, 1917.*

*(Actg. Maj.) H. W. F. B. Farrer, M.C.*

From the London Gazette (Supplement -1 February, 1918 p. 1524)

*“Royal Regiment of Artillery- The undermentioned to be actg. Cpts.*

*Lt. (now Capt.) H. W. F. B. Farrer, M.C. 28<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1917*

From the London Gazette (Supplement-17 December, 1917 p. 13161)

*“Royal Regiment of Artillery - The undermentioned relinquish the actg. Rank of Maj. on ceasing to comd. Batts:- Lt. H. W. F. B. Farrer, M.C. 25<sup>th</sup> Sept”*

Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer was awarded the Croix de Guerre in 1917. The Croix de Guerre (1914-1918) was a French military decoration awarded to recognise French and allied soldiers who were cited for their service during World War 1, similar to the British “Mentioned in Dispatches”.



**Croix de Guerre**

Other achievements – Mentioned in Dispatches 22/6/1915, 1/1/1916 & 4/1/1917.

Captain (Acting Major) Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer was killed in action on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1918, during fighting at Mazinghein. This was less than 2 weeks from the end of World War 1. He was aged 24 years.

From the Brigade War Diary –

Mazingheir, 30/10/1918

At 0530 hours S.O.S. was signalled by our infantry and immediately responded to by us, but the enemy managed to penetrate our lines S.W. Cattilon. At 1200 hours an attack was made under cover of our barrage, and the ground captured by the enemy in the morning was retaken. At 1415 hours a single gun from the 54<sup>th</sup> battery was sent forward to deal with an enemy M.G. emplacement. The gun moved up but before coming into action our infantry had captured the gun.

Further serious loss of officers was inflicted on the Brigade the following being killed in action:

Major H.W.F.B. Farrer MC	30 <sup>th</sup> Battery
Lieut. F.A.H. Sharp	51 <sup>st</sup> Battery
2/Lieut. W. Dunlop	51 <sup>st</sup> Battery

Major Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer was buried in La Vallee-Mulatre Communal Cemetery Extension, France – Grave reference – A. 38. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The CWGC lists Major Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburn Farrer, aged 24, of Royal Field Artillery as the son of the Rev. Canon and Mrs Farrer, of South Canonry, Salisbury. Croix de Guerre (Belgium).

#### Obituary:

Major Henry Wyndham F. B. Farrer, M.C. with two bars, R.F.A., killed instantaneously by a shell on October 30, was the second son of Canon and Mrs Farrer, of South Canonry, The Close, Salisbury, and grandson of Mr Edward Blackburne, K.C., Rathfarnham Castle, Co. Dublin. He was educated at Sandroyd and Bedford Grammar School, where he was a mathematical scholar. At both schools he obtained first colours for cricket and football, and developing into a fine athlete, he got his cap for Dorset cricket, playing the last three seasons before the war, and while still at school being asked to play in the Midland Counties Rugby XV. against the N.Z. All Blacks. He passed 28<sup>th</sup> into Woolwich in December, 1912, and immediately got his Rugby XV. colours. Owing to the war, he was given his commission in August, 1914, and went to France in the following October, serving there continuously till he was killed. He was three times mentioned in dispatches, and received the Military Cross and two bars; immediate rewards for gallantry in the field. In 1917 he was presented with the Belgian "Croix de Guerre" and also held the 1914 Star. He had been wounded on six occasions, four times seriously. (*The Times*, London – Tuesday November 5, 1918)

Major Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer was entitled to the 1914 Star, British War & Victory Medals. His Medal Index Card shows the following address details – Rev. Canon H. R. W. Farrer (Father) South Canonry, The Close, Salisbury, Wilts.



1914 Star, British War & Victory medals



**South Canonry** (Photo by Collin West)

Probate was granted on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1919 at London Registry – “Farrer Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburn of The Close Salisbury major R.F.A. died 30 October 1918 at Marzingheim Flanders. Administration London 22 July to the reverend Richard William Farrer clerk. Effects £182 16s. 9d.”

H. W. F. B. Farrer is remembered as a Casualty of WW1 in the Diocese of Salisbury Memorial Book for Salisbury Cathedral.

Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer is remembered on a memorial plaque inside St. Mary's Church, Bridport, Dorset.



(Photo with permission from Michael Day)

## La Vallee-Mulatre Communal Cemetery Extension, France

La Vallee-Mulatre is a village about 11 kilometres south of Le Cateau. The village was captured by the 1st Northants on the 17th October, 1918.

The Communal Cemetery is immediately West of the Church. In the North-West corner of it are the graves of three United Kingdom soldiers, and on the South boundary those of three others; one (a R.F.C. officer) fell in March, 1918, and the other two in October, 1918.

The EXTENSION is on the South side of the Communal Cemetery. It was made by fighting units in October and November, 1918, and five British graves were brought in after the Armistice. It now contains the graves of 46 United Kingdom soldiers (mainly of the 1st Division) and four unknown German soldiers; and in addition one special memorial is erected to one United Kingdom soldier, known to be buried in the Cemetery.



La Vallee-Mulatre Communal Cemetery Extension, France (Photos by David Milborrow)



**CWGC Headstone of Major H. W. F. B. Farrer, M.C.**



*(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)*