

In Remembrance

The College War list spans two generations of Jesuans. While the table below shows a preponderance of younger men, it is clear that many older Jesuans played their part and that some lost their lives. The earliest matriculation date we have is 1868 and the latest is 1916. Data collection in the early years of the war was erratic, as nobody expected to conflict to go on for so long or to cost so many lives. As far as we can tell, 161 men who matriculated before 1899 saw war service, compared to 563 from 1900 onwards.

The war list counts all kinds of military service. Probably the oldest man who served was Charles Stanley Williams, Honorary Colonel of the Queen's Royal West Kent Regiment who was not quite 65 at the outbreak of the War. While there was no Home Guard as such, experienced men were needed to marshal the new recruits and hold the fort at home while the regular army mobilised.

The College has recently learned that the oldest Jesuan to die on active service was one such supernumerary officer, Captain James Robert Ewing, who was struck by a train while inspecting sentry posts.

Previously we believed that the Canadian medic Henry Brydges Yates (1883) was the oldest. He was 50 when he succumbed to illness in January 1916 and is buried back home in Quebec. Hearing of the loss of young lives is heart rending but the death of men like Henry, far from home and doing their duty when they might have expected to leave it to the youngsters is no less poignant.

Sir William Lennox Napier who came up in 1886 and was killed in action at Gallipoli on 13th August 1915 had retired from the military in 1912, but offered his services on the outbreak of war and was gazetted Major with the South Wales Borderers. He was 47 years old at the time of his death. Sir William was survived by three sons, all of whom served during the war, including his eldest son Sir Joseph William Lennox Napier, who was also a Jesuan.

Maurice Solomons was one of the youngest casualties. He was an 18 year-old cadet when he succumbed to appendicitis. It is always heart-breaking to read of the youngest casualties, those who hardly had time to come up before War swept them away.

The table shows that matriculation years 1907 - 1914 saw the highest numbers serving during the War (many of those who were admitted in 1914 never came up or came up after the war to continue their studies). The years 1910 and 1911 contributed the highest number of recruits, while 1910 and 1912 saw the highest number of casualties. The years 1907, 1910, 1911, 1912 and 1914 saw the highest proportion of casualties. All these figures should be seen in the light of an average number of 64 freshmen per year coming up in the Edwardian years.

The Classical scholar and Fellow of the College John Maxwell Edmonds, who would have known many of these men wrote:

“When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrows these gave their today”

The figures can only hint at the sacrifice of the Jesus men, of all ages and a mixture of backgrounds, sportsmen and academics, medics and chaplains, new recruits and seasoned

servicemen, from the UK and from overseas who put their lives and their worlds on the line to serve.

We will remember them.

Written in November 2014, revised October 2016

MATRICULATION DATE	SERVED	KILLED
1868	1	
1869	1	
1870	1	
1871	1	
1875	1	
1876	3	
1877	2	
1878	3	
1879	3	
1880	3	
1881	1	
1882	3	
1883	4	1
1884	4	1
1885	2	
1886	6	1
1887	11	2
1888	5	1
1889	6	
1890	7	2
1891	8	
1892	9	6
1893	11	
1894	10	1
1895	7	
1896	14	
1897	8	
1898	17	1
1899	9	2
1900	14	
1901	11	2
1902	23	1
1903	24	2
1904	18	4
1905	36	7
1906	28	6
1907	43	14
1908	40	4

1909	45	5
1910	61	19
1911	65	14
1912	48	17
1913	50	8
1914	42	15
1915	9	3
1916	6	1