

## The First World War on the HER

The Northumberland Historic Environment Record includes a number of First World War sites and we're hoping that more will come to light during this centenary period. This leaflet shows a selection of sites we already have some information about, but if you know of any others or have more information you can share we will be happy to hear from you. Some of the records in this leaflet can be found on our website Keys to the Past ([www.keystothePast.info](http://www.keystothePast.info)).

Two **Coastal Batteries** were constructed at Blyth and Hartley in the First World War.

**Blyth Coastal Artillery Battery** (HER11976) was built as a result of the bombardment of Hartlepool in December 1916 by the German High Seas Fleet, which was a turning point for coastal defence. It prompted the development of a wider coastal defence plan, and construction of a battery at Blyth commenced in August 1916 by the Durham Fortress Engineers RE. The new battery's prime purpose was to prevent enemy landings and engage motor torpedo boats. Officially known as Blyth Battery, the battery was also known as Coulson Battery and Link House Battery. The battery was re-used and modified in the Second World War.



**Robert's Battery** (HER 12025) at Hartley was built in response to the threat of a bombardment of Tyneside. The Army were offered two redundant gun turrets for emplacement on land and two identical batteries were constructed at Marsden, near Sunderland (Kitchener Battery) and at Hartley (Robert's Battery). Construction began in 1917 but was not finished until 1921. Extensive underground works were built including shell and cartridge stores, and an engine room. A Chain Home Low radar station was established on the site in the Second World War, the buildings of which still survive.

**Prisoners of War** were housed in a camp at Seaton Delaval Hall (HER 27489), where a stone wall at Seaton Red House (HER 27457) is carved PoW / 1918. Another camp at Dukesfield (HER 25527) opened in 1917 and the prisoners worked in the Timber Supply Department at Dukesfield and Steel Woods.

Linden Hall Hotel, Longhorsley (HER 21288) was used between 1916 and 1919 as an **auxiliary hospital** for sick and wounded soldiers.

There were a number of First World War **airfields, aerodromes and related sites** in Northumberland. They include **landing grounds** at Stamford near Rennington (HER 26253), Beacon Hill near Netherwitton (HER 26254), Seahouses (HER 26255), Longhorsley (HER 26256), New Haggerston (HER 26257), Ponteland (HER 26258), Rennington (HER 26259), Snipe House near Denwick (HER 26260), Old Heton at Cornhill (HER 26265) and Woodbridge at Milfield (HER 26262) which was in use from 1917 and later as RAF Milfield in the Second World War and is still use today for gliders. There were **airfields/aerodromes** at RAF/RFC Ashington (HER 24051) which was home to

C flight of 36 Squadron, engaged in coastal patrols from 1916-19 and Cramlington (HER 19481) which was used as a night-landing ground by 35 (Home Defence) Squadron until the end of the War and a training base for fighters and day bombers. On Holy Island there was an **airfield and seaplane base** (HER 26264) and two **airship stations** at Chathill (HER 20874) and Cramlington (HER 26252).

Two crash sites are known from 1918 in the sea off Berwick; both are **biplanes** used as training aircraft (HER 26022 and 25720). The **wreck** of an English cargo vessel lies off Coquet Island which foundered in 1917 (HER 26281). A **submarine base** was located in Blyth (HER 21737).



The **Canadian Forestry Corps** was created in the First World War to provide skilled workers to harvest trees. In Northumberland there were camps Amerside (HER 27554), Chillingham Wild Cattle Park (HER 22949), Har-

bottle (HER 27551) and Thrunton (HER 27552) as well as a saw mill at Bridge of Aln (HER 27553). The Berwick-upon-Tweed **National Sawmill** (HER 27194) was established in 1918 and provided cut timber to make and repair ammunition boxes at the National Box Factories.

Extensive systems of **practice trenches** survive at Blaeberry Hill near Rothbury (HER 23930) and Silloans in Redesdale (HER 374). They comprise front line, reserve line and communication trenches together with dugouts. A regimental diary of the 17th Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers records the excavation of the Blaeberry Hill trenches and training on the site during the first half of 1916 and may have been used to train part of Kitchener's army prior to the big 'push'. Smaller practice trenches are known at Embleton Links (HER 23899) and Seaton Point, Longhoughton (HER **27296**).



To contact Northumberland HER please email [archaeology@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@northumberland.gov.uk) or phone 01670 620305.