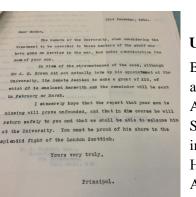
Lance-Corporal Alfred Holdsworth Brown, 1884-1st November 1914 (aged 30)

Early life

Alfred Holdsworth Brown was born in Fulham, London to Alfred Brown, a Commercial Clerk, and Martha Brown. He had two younger brothers, Richard and Charles, and a younger sister named Mary. The family lived in Hammersmith. In 1901, Brown was working as a Banker's Clerk.



The London Scottish arriving in France, September 1914. Found at WWIPhotos.com, Photographs of the 14th London Regiment (London Scottish)



A letter to Mrs. Brown from the Principal, documenting the grant she would receive due to her son's service amid reports that he was missing. Found in Senate House Library Archives, Central File series, 1914-15 Staff Records (ref. UoL/CF/1/15/636)

University of London

Brown continued his career by working at the Athenaeum in Pall Mall as a Junior Clerk for a time, and was subsequently taken on as a Clerk Elect in the University of London's Extension Department. At that time, he enlisted in Kew and joined the $1/14^{th}$ Battalion, London Regiment (London Scottish) 1^{st} Division. The University's Chancellor, Sir Henry Miers, agreed that Brown's service in the regiment should not interfere with his new career.

His appointment to the University coincided with Britain's declaration of war on Germany early in August 1914, and along with the rest of his regiment he volunteered for active service. Brown never had the chance to take up his actual duties at the University, leaving on August 5th, 1914 with just a month's pay, which he handed to his widowed mother. Along with his division, he moved on to mobilisation training at Abbots Langley.

The Great War

The decision was made that the London Scottish were to be sent to reinforce the Expeditionary Force in France, and on 16th September 1914, Brown and his battalion sailed for Le Havre. At such an early stage in the outbreak of war, doubts were expressed about the battalion's readiness for combat. For their first six weeks in France, Brown and his unit carried out duties away from the front line, such as construction and prisoner transportation. Following this, preparations were made for participation in the Battle of Messines in late October.

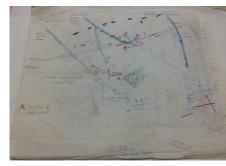
The London Scottish was given an opportunity to fight, and was tasked with recapturing the ridge between Messines and the town of Wytschaete. Against heavy odds and surrounded by German artillery fire, the 1st Division lost almost half of their 750 man battalion on the night of 31st October, 1914.

In a casualty list included in the unit's war diary of 2nd November, 321 men were listed as killed, wounded or missing. Brown was thought to have been among those killed during the early hours of November 1914. In correspondence between his mother and the University of London after the event, it was decided that the Senate would provide Mrs. Brown with a grant of £10, as Brown was unable to send any of his own pay to support his mother as he ordinarily had done. Although his mother and the University had hoped to receive positive updates of his condition, good news was not forthcoming and Brown was officially declared as wounded and missing.

He was commemorated at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres. His name also appears at Senate House, and on the War Memorial in his home town of Richmond. In May 1920, the British Army ordered that Brown and other fallen members of the London Scottish were to be given posthumous entitlement to the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.



A postcard from France concerning Brown's payment from the University, found in Senate House Library Archives, Central File series, 1914-15 Staff Records (ref. UoL/CF/1/15/636)



Hand drawn map of operations of the London Scottish, during the end of October 1914. Found in The National Archives War Diaries series (ref. WO 95/1266/2)



A regimental record following the Battle of Messines, listing the number of killed, wounded and missing members of Brown's regiment. Found in The National Archives War Diaries series (ref. WO 95/1266/2)