

Lorenzo Reginald (Laurie) Bell 1894-1919

Introduction Heroes and Villains

Some years ago, a friend asked if I could research a relative of whom they had very little information. The subject of this research, **Lorenzo Reginald Bell** was born in Margate, Kent, 1894. He was the oldest of two brothers who both served in the British military during the First World War.

The family knew of his younger brother, George Stanley Bell, (also born in Margate, Kent in 1897), who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal after an action on **August 23rd 1918** whilst with No. 49 Squadron, R.A.F. He is remembered for this brave action and is referenced in several books and articles.

However, Lorenzo Reginald Bell's life and history is unknown. This essay is an attempt to open a window into his short life. The story revealed is fascinating and borders on the incredible. Most of the research for the article was done using British Army Service Records and the British Newspaper Archive.

He served (sometimes briefly!) in the Worcestershire Regiment, the Royal Artillery, the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, the Gordon Highlanders, the Royal Horse Artillery and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

It is a story of deception, desertion and, for Lorenzo, perhaps adventure! It takes us from England to France, then to Mesopotamia and finally to India.



Lorenzo Reginald (Laurie) *Bradford Weekly Telegraph* November 13th 1914

Lorenzo Reginald (Laurie) Bell 1894-1919

This article narrates the story of Lorenzo Reginald Bell's life, from childhood through to British Army Service between 1912 and 1919. To explain the facts and the events which took place during his military service, it is necessary to look into the family background which must have shaped his future attitude and behaviour.

The Pre-War Years

Lorenzo Reginald (Laurie) Bell was born in Ramsgate, Kent, in December 1894. His father was Lorenzo George Bell and his mother Paulina Louise Bell, nee Behm. They were married on May 18th 1891 at All Saints Church, Islington, Middlesex. Lorenzo George is listed on the **1891 Census**, as a Railway Clerk, born in Gibraltar in 1868. He was lodging at 144, Huddlestone Road, Islington.

The **1901 Census** shows the family living at 42, Peters Street, Rochester, Kent. There are two sons, **Lorenzo Reginald**, aged 7, and **George Stanley**, aged 4. The father's (Lorenzo George) occupation is listed as Electrical Engineer.

By the time of the **1911 Census**, the family had split apart. Father (Lorenzo George) had been in Stafford Prison after being convicted at the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions of 1910 (Case no. 24). His mother was now running a lodging house in Smethwick, Birmingham. George Stanley was living with his mother and was employed in the Patent Screw Factory in Birmingham. A younger brother, John Leech Bell, was born on **April 4th 1910**. The eldest brother, Lorenzo Reginald was a boy crew worker on the ship, '**Black Cat**', skippered by John Eccles. The family had obviously had some difficulties and had been forced apart. This section will attempt to discover what happened during this early period of Lorenzo Reginald Bell's life.

The father, Lorenzo George, had a series of 'brushes' with the law, (**Figs. 1-4**) which were revealed by searching the British Newspaper Archives.

Fig. 1 *The Canterbury Journal* July 22nd 1899

Westgate-on-Sea. – Conflicting Evidence

Lorenzo George Bell, 31, agent, was indicted for criminally assaulting Ada Jarman, aged 14, at Westgate-on-Sea, between March 10th and June 13th. Mr. Clarke Hall prosecuted, and Mr. Tassel defended. Prosecutrix was in the service of prisoner and wife, and the allegation was that while his wife was absent on certain occasions prisoner committed the crimes complained of. The defence was that although the prisoner had in fact assaulted the girl, it was not true that he had done so within the dates in the indictment. The Judge summed up in his favour, and the jury acquitted the prisoner.

Fig. 2 *The Brighton Gazette* January 8th1903

HIS FIRST OFFENCE

A merciful application of the First Offenders Act was made by the Bench this morning, when a collector and canvasser, named Lorenzo George Bell, was charged with embezzling the sum of 8 pence on November 17th and 9 pence on November 19th, the moneys of his employer, Mr. Thomas Richard Barry, of 27, Queen's Road, who is the local agent to various insurance companies. The prisoner's duties, it seemed, were to collect from clients, but he had failed to account for the sums mentioned in the charge.

Prisoner, who pleaded not guilty, said he had no chance to make the entry, as his books were taken away from him some time before he collected the money.

The prosecutor said he did not wish to press the charge, but the Bench decided to convict, and dealt with the prisoner under the First Offenders Act, binding him over in the sum of £5 to come up for judgement if called upon.

Fig. 3 *The Advertiser* November 3rd1906

FALSE PRETENCES AT ROWLEY.

At Rowley Regis Police Court, last Friday, Lorenzo George Bell, agent, of Newstreet, Hill Top, was charged with obtaining 10 shillings, by means of false pretences, from Sarah Horton, of Portway, Rowley, on the 17th of August. Prosecutrix alleged that prisoner called at her house on the date named, and obtained 10 shillings from her by representing that he was an agent for the British Key and Property Register Ltd. He gave her a receipt for the money, and said that he would provide premiums for three years at 2shillings and six pence each. William Pegg, manager of the company, stated that the prisoner had been discharged on the 31st May last. Police Constable Bowers arrested the prisoner, who, in reply to the charge, said he did receive the money, but with no intention to defraud, and he had a perfect answer to the charge. Prisoner was also charged with obtaining 10 shillings, by false pretences, from Elizabeth Smith, of the Four Ways Inn, Rowley, and 2 shillings and sixpence from Olive Smith of the same address, on the 17th of August. The prisoner was sentenced to six months' hard labour

Fig. 4 *Birmingham Gazette* February 19th1909

INSURANCE AGENT CHARGED

A charge of obtaining 5 shillings by false pretences was preferred at West Bromwich Police Court yesterday against Lorenzo George Bell (40), insurance agent, of Totnes Road Smethwick, the prosecutor being Douglas Lee, licensee of the Albion Hotel, Paradise Street, West Bromwich. Mr. J. Clark defended. Prosecutor stated that in November last the defendant called at his house and represented that he was the District Superintendent for the Premier Insurance Company, of Birmingham, and agent for other companies. He asked if he could do any business with him, and prosecutor eventually arranged to insure a couple of servants against accidents, and paid the defendant 2 shilling and sixpence. On a later date he gave defendant another 2 shillings and sixpence, but he never received any policies, and eventually commenced these proceedings. It was stated by the Superintendent of the Premier Insurance Company that the defendant was formerly an agent to the company, and that they had not received from him any money on behalf of Mr. Lee. He admitted that at the date this proposal was made the defendant was their agent, and at a subsequent date they accepted business from him. The Magistrate's Clerk said that disposed of any false pretence, and that the defendant's failure to hand over the money to the company was a matter between him and them. The magistrates expressed the opinion that defendant had sailed close to the line. There was not sufficient evidence to convict him, and he would be discharged.

Although acquitted in this case, the following year he was in court again. In October 1910, Lorenzo George's criminal actions led to him being imprisoned for a second time. He was sentenced to 15 months Hard Labour for obtaining money by False Pretences. He was convicted at the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions of 1910 (Case no. 24) and was sent to Stafford Prison to serve his sentence.

Lorenzo Reginald Bell's childhood must have been affected by his father's behaviour. Did it have a lasting influence on his future development? It is hard to imagine that this was not the case. His father was involved in court cases between 1899, (when Lorenzo Reginald was 5 years of age), and 1910, when he was 16 years old. This may well have set the seeds for his disregard for authority throughout his life. There seems to have been little stability in his upbringing with a number of changes of residence, as can be seen in the Census Returns and the court cases.

Lorenzo also was in trouble with the authorities during this pre-war period, and he also appears number of times in the British Newspaper Archive. In January 1909, a story appeared in newspapers in many parts of the UK. *The Windsor, Eton and Slough Express* published a comprehensive account of the Windsor Petty Sessions on **Monday January 11th1909**. It is reproduced in full because it reveals so much about the situation he found himself in during the period 1907-1909.

“Windsor Petty Sessions Monday January 11th 1909

Extraordinary Story of Boy's Railway Travels.

Lorenzo Reginald Laurie Bell, 14, a smart looking lad, of 1, Totnes Road, Smethwick, Birmingham, was charged with travelling on the G.W.R. from Didcot to Windsor without paying his fare, with intent to avoid payment thereof, on 7th instant.

George Henry Beer, travelling ticket collector in the employ of the GWR said that on Thursday last he was examining the tickets in the train which came from Swansea, and started examining them at Reading. After waiting for some time the lad said he had a single third class ticket from Oxford to Didcot. Whilst between Reading and Twyford, the lad said he was travelling to Windsor. He had no ticket to Windsor, and witness asked him for 3s. 2d. for the fare. He replied that he only had 1s. 3d. for his fare, but he would wire to his father at Windsor to pay the fare. He told witness he lived at 44, Castle Street, Windsor and that his father was there. Witness doubted the statement, and came on with him to Windsor. When they arrived at Windsor, he asked several porters if they knew where Castle Street was, and they replied that they did not know such a street. The boy still persisted in his statement, and witness and a porter went into Windsor to try and find the street. He took them for a twenty minutes' walk around the town, but they could not find Castle Street. Eventually he said his home was in Birmingham, and he had run away because his father had been unkind to him. He also said his father was an agent for the One and All Insurance Company. Witness handed him over to the Stationmaster (Mr. Mann), and after inquiries had been made the lad was handed over to the police.

Police Constable Joyce, of the Great Western police, said that on returning from his tea on Thursday, he saw the defendant in the charge of the ticket collector, and he was charged with being on the train without a ticket. The stationmaster telegraphed the boy's father at Birmingham. A reply was received late at night.

Chief Constable Carter said the lad was given into his charge between 6 and 7 in the evening. The boy was detained until information was received from Paddington as to what should be done with the boy.

Asked if he had anything to say, the boy said only one thing, and that was that he understood he was to be remanded for a week. The clerk said that was with regard to another charge. The lad said he had nothing to say in regard to the travelling on the railway.

Before going any further, the Bench decided to wait for the arrival of the boy's father, who had missed a train at Slough.

In the interval the boy said he travelled from Birmingham to Leamington, slept the night at the latter place and then came on from Leamington to Oxford the next day. Chief Constable Carter said that the police had made inquiries, and that was not so. The lad stole a sovereign from his father's home on Monday last week and took the train to Wolverhampton. There he

engaged lodgings and spent his time until Thursday in seeing the sites and enjoying himself. He then took a train to Birmingham and was discovered there without a ticket. He paid the excess fare, and later on in the day took a train to Oxford, which journey he accomplished without a ticket, successfully evading the collector at Oxford railway station. On the same day he took a ticket to Didcot, and eventually travelled on to Windsor without a ticket. He had also stolen the blankets from his mother's bed and pawned them, and with the money went on to Manchester. With money he had taken from an employer he had also gone to see some living pictures at Birmingham and enjoyed himself at a Skating Rink in Wolverhampton. He had a pair of fancy stockings and sandal shoes on, which he said he had bought out of the sovereign he took from his home.

Defendant's father, Lorenzo George Bell, now arrived. He said he had been a Superintendent of the One and All Insurance Company at Smethwick. His boy had assisted him in delivering messages on one or two occasions. He had another boy three years younger than the defendant. (**George Stanley Bell**). On Monday last week, the defendant stole a purse off a table in the house, containing £1.1s., and a warrant. There was a long list of offences against him during the last two years. He first began by playing truant from school and sleeping out and committing petty offences at home. He had also stolen money from his grandmother. He had been in seven situations during the last two years, and had robbed two of his employers, bolting off with small sums of money. Witness said he had to repay these sums. He went to his grandmothers in Manchester, and after he had bolted, money was found to be missing. He was afterwards discovered at Wolverhampton and was brought home. He ran away and got onto the Manchester Express. He was discovered without a ticket, and went into the lavatory during the examination of tickets. Witness believed the lad wanted to be a sailor, because he had seen one of his mates at home in sailor's uniform, and he had an idea that sailors have a fine time. Witness had done everything he could possibly do to train him properly. He had been kind to him, also harsh, but neither method had proved successful. **His younger brother, who was 11, was as different as possible, and he handed up to the bench a letter from his little brother addressed to the boy in court, asking him to turn from his wicked ways and be a good boy.** He also handed up a letter received from the defendant while he was in Windsor police station, in which he said his father had been kind to him, and that he alone was to blame. The father added that he had had to take the rent in order to get to Windsor that morning.

The magistrates said that the lad might be sent to a training ship.

Chief Constable Carter, in answer to the Clerk, said that the railway company did not wish to press the charge, as the lad had been in custody two or three days.

The Chairman said the Bench had decided to discharge him on that charge, but he would remain in custody until instructions had been received from the Smethwick police as to another charge on which he was wanted.

Defendant: Thank you, sir."

Soon after this court appearance, he was sent to the Training Ship, '*Cornwall*'. The *Cornwall* was originally a Royal Navy 72-gun Frigate, launched in 1815. In 1859 the ship became a reformatory ship, moored on the River Thames off Purfleet in Essex (Fig.6). It could accommodate 250 boys aged between 13 and 15 who were sent there if the sentence was more than three years detention, and if they were physically fit. As well as learning nautical skills, boys on the *Cornwall* learned tailoring and carpentry.

Sometime during late 1911-1912, he was released under license, but he quickly offended again, as can be seen in the newspaper report from the *Kilburn Times* (Fig.5). His period on the Training Ship '*Cornwall*' seems to have had little effect on his behaviour.

Fig. 5 *Kilburn Times* October 11th 1912

<p style="text-align: center;">MONDAY</p> <p><i>Before Mr. W. B. Luke (Chairman), Mr. G. J. Furness and Mr. John Cash.</i></p> <p><i>YOUNG SEAMAN CHARGED. —Lorenzo Reginald Bell, 18, seaman, of Smethwick, was charged with travelling on the L. and N.W. Railway from Birmingham to Willsden without paying his fare, The prisoner concealed himself in the lavatory of the train, and when found by a collector he said that he had torn his ticket up. Later he said he never took one. He is stated to be on license from the Training ship "Cornwall," and was remanded for enquiries.</i></p>
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Fig. 6 The Training Ship '*Cornwall*'



1912-1919 British Army Service

On **January 3rd 1913** **Lorenzo Reginald Bell**, aged 19, enlisted with the Royal Artillery. His regimental number was 70850 and he listed his occupation as seaman. He joined his unit at Athlone, **January 12th 1913** and is listed as being a 'Driver' and posted **March 18th 1913**.

On **May 4th 1913** he went absent without leave and returned June 19th 1913 to face trial. He was tried on **June 30th 1913** and sentenced to 28 days detention. He returned to duty **July 28th 1913**. However, his service record shows that on the same day of his return, it was noted that he was 'awaiting trial'. The charge was that he improperly enlisted, giving a false answer on his attestation. The trial took place **August 19th 1913** and he was found guilty, sentenced to 21 days detention and dismissed from the Royal Artillery, **September 8th 1913**. It was noted that he had in fact enlisted into the Worcestershire Regiment, serving as Private L. Bell, no. 8474. He had been discharged as 'unfit for service', **January 8th 1912**.

Lorenzo Reginald Bell must have enlisted into the Worcestershire Regiment late in 1912 after having left the Training Ship 'Cornwall'.

Undeterred by his two previous failures, his records now show that he enlisted into the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, **January 30th 1914**, (Reg. No. 11113). It is interesting to note that in answer to the question which asks if he has ever served in any of the armed forces, he answers, "already serving". On **February 3rd 1914**, he was posted to the 1st Battalion King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment and on **March 28th 1914**, he was transferred to the 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders, army number 1371. On **May 13th 1914**, he deserted the regiment, but rejoined on **June 13th 1914**. He was tried **July 4th 1914**, and found guilty of loss of kit, conduct to the prejudice to the good order military discipline and absent without leave. He was sentenced to 74 days detention, starting the sentence at Gosport Detention Barracks **July 9th 1914**. (Fig.7)

Fig. 7 Liverpool Daily Post April 28th 1914

DESERTED TO SEE SICK FATHER

Lorenzo Reginald Bell, a smart young fellow, aged 20, attired in the uniform of the 1st Gordon Highlanders, was brought up at Wallasey yesterday charged with being a deserter from his regiment.

Prisoner, who was arrested by Detective Inspector Pearson, at his father's home in Ethel Road, Seacombe, said he was not a deserter, and he had come to see his father who was very ill.

The Clerk said that prisoner left his regiment on April 13th, and he became a deserter after 5 days.

He was remanded to await an escort.

His army records show that he deserted again, **August 29th1914**. Since that was before his Sentence ended, it can be assumed that he deserted from the Detention Barracks in Gosport.

The Post printed a special *Sunday Supplement*, **October 18th 1914**, detailing reports from soldiers serving at the front. **Lorenzo Reginald Bell** sent his report to the paper (**Fig.8**), using the name **Laurie Bell**. The letter had been sent to the Superintendent of the Training Ship 'Cornwall' (Captain H.W. Steele R.N.), and then it had been reproduced as a feature in the newspaper. The contents are completely false, but it indicates his state of mind during this period of his desertion. Two things mentioned in the article/story are worth noting: the sword and the Colt revolver. He stole an Officer's sword and belt whilst in Bradford, and later fraudulently obtained a Colt pistol from the Tower of London, **January 16th1915**. (**Fig.9**)

Fig. 8 *The Post Special Supplement* October 18th1914

HIGHLANDERS IN A CHURCH

Piper Laurie Bell of the Gordon Highlanders, who left the training ship Cornwall about two years ago, writing to the superintendent, says with reference to the great retirement on Paris :-

The Germans came on in great masse, driving us back all the time. In the fighting my sword snapped, leaving me only my Colt revolver. We crossed a river, and made a stand in a church. Eight hundred of us entered the church, the majority never to come out again. The Germans' big guns ("Jack Johnsons") shelled us out.

When the officer in charge saw how we were being knocked over, he gave the order for all men who could to bolt down the road and save themselves, saying – "The people at home will not think any the worse of you lads for it." I came out of the church with sixty more.

Private W. Greenhalgh of the King's Own Royal Lancasters, said to me, "Look out, you Jock, watch that German in front of you." I fired my revolver at him but being wet it only misfired. Before I could do anything there were two reports and I got hit in the left wrist and the left fore-arm.

A month later, the article below was printed in *The Bradford Weekly Telegraph*, **November 13th1914**. The article shows **Laurie Bell** in kilt with his left arm bandaged (as stated in the letter, Fig.8). Wounded at Cambrai and awarded the D.S.O., ...yet more incredible claims! To agree to have your photograph in the newspapers, along with false facts seems a risk too far for a deserter. Laurie Bell does not seem to fear consequences.

The Bradford Weekly Telegraph, November 13th 1914.



LANCE-CORPORAL LAURIE BELL

One of the 1st Gordon Highlanders, who was wounded at Cambrai, and has won the D.S.O. He is now convalescent in Bradford.

On **January 1st 1915**, an article appeared in The Shipley Times & Express The story he told is almost pure “Walter Mitty” (**Fig.9**) The article states that he was staying on Edmund Street, Horton, Bradford. The 1911 census shows that a number of the houses on Edmund Street were boarding houses, so it can be assumed that Laurie was boarding there at this time.

Fig. 9 Shipley Times and Express January 1st1915

Unique Record

BRADFORD HERO'S STRANGE FORTUNE

Lance-Corporal Laurie Bell of the 1st Gordon Highlanders, who is at present staying at Edmund Street, Horton Lane, Bradford, was wounded at the battle of Cambrai, and after hospital treatment came to Bradford to recuperate. Since then he has been back to the fighting on two occasions, and has twice been invalided home. He is now suffering from wounds in the head and hand, but fortunately these are not of a dangerous character, and he expects to go back again, for his fourth visit to France, in a few weeks' time when he was

On each of the three occasions on which he has been disabled, he had only been in the fighting line for a few days when he was either struck by bullets or injured by shrapnel.

The last occasion was one in which the Gordons were under a terrific fire from the German Artillery for twenty four hours. Bell was in the act of writing a letter to his sweetheart in Bradford, and had just concluded the sentence, “Am happy to say I have escaped in this horrible engagement so far,” when an enemy's shell burst in his trench.

The Lance-Corporal was struck on the forehead, and a drop of blood fell on the words quoted above.

The remarkable letter is being treasured by his friends at Bradford. The proverbial “third time” has not broken Corporal Bell's spirit, and he says he will go back again in good heart to try his luck for a fourth time.

Bell furnishes a striking example to those single young men who have not yet ventured to try their luck for the first time.

During this period of desertion, between August 1914 and March 1915, his offences became civil, rather than military. (See **Fig. 10**)

Fig. 10 *The Scotsman* April 9th1915

PRIVATE MASQUERADES AS AN OFFICER.

HARD LABOUR FOR A DESERTER

At the Thames (London) Police Court yesterday, Laurie Bell, alias Lorenzo Reginald Bell (21) of 31, Egremont Road, Liverpool, and a private in the 3rd Battalion Gordon Highlanders, was brought up in the custody of warders from Reading Prison to answer the charge of obtaining a revolver worth £2-16s. by false pretences.

Major Saunders stated that the revolver was the property of His Majesty's Government. On the 16th January prisoner came to the Tower of London with an order from the War Office sanctioning his having a revolver on payment. He selected a Colt's revolver, and then said he did not have a cheque form. He wrote out an order on Cox's Bank for the payment of £2-16s., and the witness presented him with a stamp. As the witness was fortified with the War Office order, witness accepted the written cheque. Prisoner also stated that he had just returned from the front wounded, and to give the story the appearance of being correct, he was wearing a hood over his eyes. The cheque was not honoured and Messrs Cox stated that nothing was known of the prisoner.

The Chief Constable of High Wycombe deposed that the prisoner was arrested in Aberdeen for obtaining military clothing by false pretences and wearing an officer's uniform. The revolver was then in his possession, and the accused stated that he told a Colonel at the War Office that he had got a commission in the Assam Field Force. By that means he obtained the order for the revolver. He was now undergoing a sentence of six months' hard labour.

Prisoner, witness continued, joined the Gordon Highlanders in May 1913 and deserted the following August. Since then, he had been travelling all over the country obtaining money by false pretences. At Bradford, he represented himself as a wounded officer, and was employed by the Recruiting Officer in the town. He afterwards decamped with an officer's belt and sword.

The Magistrates said it was an impudent fraud, and sentenced him to 3 months hard labour, the sentence to commence at the end of his present sentence.

Lorenzo Reginald Bell was convicted on March 18th 1915 and began his sentence of six months hard labour. He was discharged from the Gordon Highlanders, "Having been convicted by the civil power of (1) by false pretences obtaining a jacket value 10s.1d. (2) unlawfully wearing the uniform of an army officer".

On December 28th1915, he appears at St. Swithin's Lane, London, this time enlisting into the 3rd Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He attested using the name **Laurie Bell**, and in answer

to the question which asked if he had ever served in any branch of His Majesty's Forces, he wrote, "No". He gave his address as 119, Sidney Street, Bolton, Lancashire. He was given the Regimental No.37354 and began his service with his fifth Regiment within a three-year period.

He joined the 3rd Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, January 5th 1916. His army records note that a trial for 'Fraudulent enlistment was dispensed with, and he was held to serve with the R.W. Fusiliers.' It also noted that all former service was forfeited on the dispensation of the trial. The records also show that he signed a confession and in this, Lorenzo states that he deserted from **the Royal Horse Artillery Depot on December 10th 1915**. He said that he had served as a driver under the alias, '**John Leech**', **No.126411**. (Interestingly, this is the same name as his younger brother born in 1910, and his grandfather the Rev. John Leech Bell). He went on to say that he had a brother and a number of pals in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. This last statement could be true, since his brother, George Stanley Bell did enlist into the R.W.F. before transferring to the R.F.C. (See Postscript)

February 9th 1916, he was admonished for breaking out of barracks and absenting himself for 13 hours and 30 minutes.

Nine days later, **February 18th 1916**, he went absent for 6 days before presenting himself to the 2nd Battalion R.W.F. in France. His punishment was 14 days confined to barracks. How had he got to France? Why did he want to go? Did he want to join his brother? There is no mention in his records.

April 20th 1916 Lorenzo must have still been in France, probably attached to the 2nd Battalion R.W.F. He was charged with being absent from Tattoo for 21 days and fourteen hours, before reporting himself to St. Omer, France, **May 12th 1916**. The next day, May 22nd 1916 he was awarded 21 days detention by the C.O. for misconduct and he forfeited 23 days pay.

June 7th 1916, he was posted to the 8th Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers, which at that time was stationed in Mesopotamia, north of Baghdad, around Kirkuk and Kifri.

His records show that he was tried at a **District Court Martial** in Kirkuk, **February 17th 1917**. He was sentenced to '1 year's hard labour and put under stoppages of pay until he has made good the sum of 90 rupees. (1) Absence without leave. (2) Losing by neglect his clothing etc. (3) Offence of a fraudulent nature. (4) Altering a document (his pay book)'.

He served his sentence and was posted back to the battalion **December 21st 1917**, but before long he was in trouble again, being absent without leave between **February 9th 1918** and **March 9th 1918**.

8th July 1918, he was tried again at a D.C.M. at Kirkuk. He was sentenced to hard labour for one year and put under stoppages of pay until he has made good the sum of 100 rupees. (1) Absence without leave from 9/2/18 to 9/3/18. (2) Losing by neglect his clothing. (3&4) Offence of a fraudulent nature. (5) Altering a document. (6) Committing Civil offence, forgery.

He served his sentence until **December 5th1918**, when the authorities suspended the sentence.

Two days later, **December 7th1918**, Lorenzo appears on the Conduct sheet for the relatively minor offence of arriving 45 minutes late to the Tattoo and he was confined to Barracks for three days.


Following the end of the Great War, in 1919, the 8th Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers were stationed in India. Lorenzo faced yet another D.C.M. at Poona, **January 17th1919**. He was sentenced to hard labour for 18 months and put under stoppages of pay until he has made good the sum of 130 rupees. (1) Absent without leave from **17thJanuary 1919** until taken over from civil custody on **February 5th1919**. (2) Conduct prejudice of good order and Military Discipline. (3 & 4) Such an offence of fraudulent nature.

Lorenzo never served this sentence. In late June or early July 1919, he was admitted to St. George's War Hospital, Poona, with fever. His medical notes indicate a history of dysentery, but it was not diagnosed on this occasion. He was in hospital for 14 days before being diagnosed with hepatitis. On **July 4th 1919** he was given an emetic but there was no improvement in his condition. His liver was then explored under general anaesthetic, and an abscess the size of a cricket ball was discovered in the right lobe. This was drained, and he seemed to recover well, but at 9.00 pm **July 7th1919**, he became unconscious and died.

Telegrams were sent to his father in the UK informing him of his son's death. **Lorenzo Reginald Bell** died aged 25, after an eventful and problematic life.

Fig. 11 Commonwealth War Graves Commission details:

BELL	L R	07 July 1919	Royal Welsh
Private		Age 25	Fusiliers
37354		POONA (ST. SEPULCHRE'S)	United Kingdom
		CEMETERY	
		Grave 1797.	

Private BELL, L R	
Service Number 37354	
Died 07/07/1919	
Aged 25	
8th Bn. Royal Welsh Fusiliers	
Son of Lorenzo George and Pauline Louise Bell, of 31, Guildford St., Egremont, Merseyside.	



The Kirkee 1914-1918 War Memorial (Poona) India,

THE KIRKEE 1914-1918 MEMORIAL

THE ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS

SERJEANT

JENKINS B.
KELLY J.
PARSONS J.

CORPORAL

ARNOLD G.

LANCE-CORPORAL

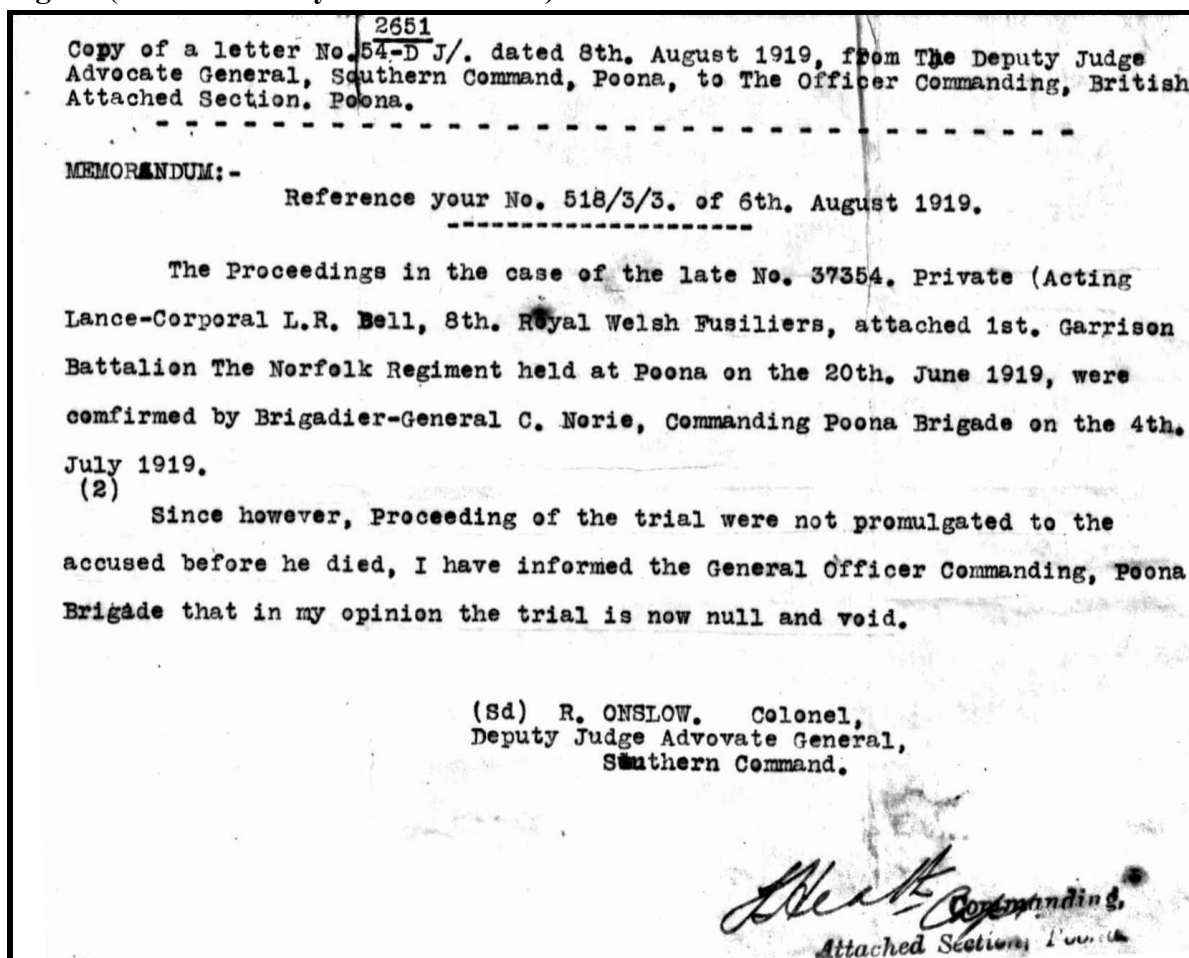
COOK W.
PLANT E.

PRIVATE

ASPY R.G.
BARNES A.
BELL L.R.
BUCK W.
DAVIES E.C.
DAVIES H.
EDWARDS A.
EVANS C.S.
EVANS F.
HEAL S.G.
HOWELLS F.
JONES T.
JONES W.
LEE L.

The Military District Court Martial at Poona, **January 17th 1919**, was declared null and void, August 8th 1919. (Fig.12)

Fig. 12 (From his Army Service Record)



His effects were delivered to his father in April 1920. Three belts, a whip (?), keys, letters, a leather wallet containing photos, three cloth wallets, cards, a bible, a prayer book, beads, pipe, badge, cigarette case, knife and cup.

In **August 1923**, his mother, **Pauline Louise Bell**, claimed a pension (**Fig.13**). Following the death of her husband **Lorenzo George Bell** in **July 1923**, she probably needed financial help and so claimed an army pension. With this last piece of paperwork, **Lorenzo Reginald Bell** disappears from the records. The only photograph of him which has been found, is the one in the 'Bradford Weekly Telegraph', **November 13th 1914**.

In his short life, Lorenzo Reginald Bell had little respect for the Law or authority. From the age of 14 (and probably earlier), he had no secure or stable family life, going from the Training Ship 'Cornwall' straight into the Army. In the days before computerisation of records, he must have found it relatively easy to move from Regiment to Regiment unchallenged. He certainly did not seem to have worried about the consequences of his actions.

Timeline for Lorenzo Reginald Bell, born Margate, Kent, December 1894.

1909 - 1911. On Training Ship '*Cornwall*'

1911. Boy crew worker **on the ship '*Black Cat*'**, skippered by John Eccles. (On license from '*Cornwall*')

February 8th1912. Attested Worcestershire Regiment Regimental No. 8474, and discharged as "Not being likely etc."

January 9th1913. Attested Royal Artillery Reg. No.78050.

September 13th1913. Discharged after false attestation information.

January 30th1914. Attested King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment Reg. No. 11113.

March 28th1914. Transferred to 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders Reg. No. 1371.

May 13th1914 Deserted Gordon Highlanders.

June 13th1914. Rejoined Gordon Highlanders.

August 28th1914. Deserted Gordon Highlanders.

November 13th1914. Report in *Bradford Weekly Telegraph* that L/Cpl. Laurie Bell, D.S.O. is convalescing in Bradford from wounds received in Cambrai, France whilst serving with the 1st Gordons.

January 1st 1915 *Shipley Times Report* (Jan.1st 1915). Laurie Bell living on Edmund Street, Horton, Bradford. Suffering from wounds to the head and hand.

March 18th1915. Following imprisonment with six months hard labour, he was dismissed from Army as being unfit for military service.

December 1915. Attested Royal Horse Artillery Depot. In his Confession, made in January 1916, (when 'Fraudulent enlistment was dispensed with, and he was held to serve with the R.W. Fusiliers. '), Lorenzo admitted that he had served as a driver under the alias, '**John Leech**', **Reg. No. 126411.** (John Leech Bell was the name of Lorenzo's Grandfather).

December 10th1915. Deserted Royal Horse Artillery.

December 28th1916. Attested Royal Welsh Fusiliers Reg. No. 37354.

January 5th1916. Posted to 3rd Bn R.W.F.

February 1916 (?) - June 1916 (?) 2nd Bn. R.W.F. in France.

June 1916 - December 1918. 8th Bn. R.W.F.in Mesopotamia.

July 7th1919. 8th Bn. R.W.F. in India. Died at Poona.

Postscript

The records for **George Stanley Bell's** (*Lorenzo's younger brother*) army service are sparse. Research done by John Ward, the President of the 49 Squadron, R.A.F., states that "*G. S. Bell was serving as a Territorial in a Lancashire Regiment in 1914. At Christmas 1914 he requested compassionate leave to visit his father who was dying of tuberculosis, but he was refused. He then took matters into his own hands and went absent without leave*". (His father died in July 1923, nine years later !). "*In January 1915, he re-enlisted into the Royal Welsh Fusiliers.*" The Medal Roll shows that he embarked with the R.W.F on **March 14th 1915**.

George Stanley Bell enlisted as **Frank William Bell**, and his Medal Card and Medal Roll are shown below.

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
BELL F. W.	B. W. Fus	Pte	7857
	B. A. F.		402108

Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY			
BRITISH			
15. STAR	BFC/17c	947	
Theatre of War first served in	/.		
Date of entry therein	14. 3. 15		

K. 1380

UK, World War I Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920 for FW Bell

1914-1915 Star > Royal Air Force > Piece 2930: Royal Air Force

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Regiment or Corps when Decoration was earned.

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Decoration granted under Army Order 20 of 1919.

947c

Regt. or corps when decoration was earned.	On date of Disembarkation		NAME		Date of Disembarkation	REMARKS (a) If non-effective:—Cause, etc. (b) If transferred:—Present Regt. No., Rank and Unit. (c) If forfeited:—Cause.	Record of disposal of decoration (a) Presented (b) Despatched by Post (c) Taken into Stock	To be left Blank for use in War Office
	Regt. No.	Rank						
R.F.A.	L/35178	Dvr	Allison	W.A.	27.11.15.	(1) 138323	X ✓	
10th Bn. Lond. Rgt.	5109	Pte	Belton	G.S.	10.3.15.	(1) 401797	X ✓	
Welsh Horse.	474	L/Sgt	Briant	G.E.	7.10.15.	(5) 39618 (Dis. COMM. 5.12.17)	X ✓	14. 2F2/O. 0/20. 12-22
R.W.Fus.	7857	Pte	Bell	F.W.	14.3.15.	(1) 402108	X ✓	
R.A.M.C.	885	Pte	Bartram	J.H.	13.4.15.	(1) 28086	X ✓	
W.Yorks Rgt.	1381	Pte	Beese	A.G.	20.12.15.	(5) 187027	X ✓	
Northd.Fus.	24830	Pte	Croft	F.	20.12.15.	(M.E.F) 107788	X ✓	
Hants Rgt.	9972	Pte	Cordery	T.	21.7.15.	(M.E.F) 26338	X ✓	
Manch. Rgt.	1932	Pte	Dixon	G.E.	16.9.15.	(5) 22675	X ✓	
K.L'pool R.	3043	Rfm	Dick	J.	6.8.15.	(1) 322003	X ✓	
Northd.Fus.	2424	Pte	Douglas	J.	21.4.15.	(1) 147846	X ✓	
R.War.Rgt.	1591	Pte	Dunkley	G.	4.1.15.	(1) 145689	X ✓	

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Decoration as detailed above.

Frank William Bell in the UK, Royal Air Force Airmen Records,

Name: Frank William Bell

Gender: Male

Age: 19

Birth Date: 23 Aug 1896

Birth Place: Margate, Margate, Kent, England

Service Date: 31 Dec 1914

Service Number: 402108

Mother: Pauline Lena Bell

Next of Kin: Pauline Lena Bell

Relation to Airman: Mother

F.W. Bell, Royal Air Force Records, last entry on the page, see below.

NAME.	R.N.A.S. or R.F.C. Trade Classification.	Remustered to Air Force Trade Classification.	R.N.A.S. Rating or R.F.C. Rank or Appointment.	New Rank in Air Force.	Date of Joining.	Date of last Promotion.	Normal rate Air Force Pay.	Terms of Enlistment.
Nolan, H.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	3/10/14	1/7/17	4 0	D.W.
Thompson, W. T.	Fitter (Eng.)	Fitter (Eng.)	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	30/11/14	6/12/16	2 0	D.W.
McLellan, W.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (A.E.)	Ac. Cpl. (pd.)	Cpl. Mech.	5/8/14	1/3/18	5 0	D.W.
Fellows, J.	Batman	Batman	A. Mech. 3.	Private 1	8/8/14	7/2/17	1 8	D.W.
Kiddle, C. E.	M. Cyc.	M. Cyc.	A. Mech. 3.	Private 1	8/9/14	8/2/17	1 8	D.W.
Carrigan, M.	K.B.S. (B.P.)	Labourer	A. Mech. 3.	Private 1	9/4/15	29/8/17	1 8	D.W.
Clarke, D. R.	M. Cyc.	M. Cyc.	A. Mech. 3.	Private 1	23/9/15	1/12/17	1 8	D.W.
Barker, E.	Batman	Batman	A. Mech. 1.	Private 1	13/1/15	8/9/16	1 8	D.W.
Waycott, J.	Wireless Op.	Wireless Op.	A. Mech. 2.	Private 1	3/9/14	15/4/17	2 0	D.W.
Hallford, R. H.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 3.	23/6/15	4/7/17	4 0	D.W.
Jackson, W.	Fitter (Eng.)	Fitter (A.E.)	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 1.	30/9/14	1/3/18	4 0	D.W.
Newton, S.	Fitter (Eng.)	Fitter (A.E.)	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	11/2/14	28/7/16	2 0	D.W.
Cowan, J.	Blacksmith	Blacksmith	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	5/8/14	11/9/16	2 0	D.W.
Sheekey, C.	Electrician	Electrician	Ac. Cpl. (pd.)	Cpl. Mech.	1/9/14	12/10/17	2 0	D.W.
Bulley, H. R.	Fitter (Eng.)	Fitter (A.E.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	8/9/14	1/3/18	5 0	D.W.
Hardy, A. H.	Wireless Mh.	Wireless Mh.	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	8/11/15	1/3/18	4 0	D.W.
Sydenham, W. H.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	31/8/14	1/2/18	4 0	D.W.
Dale, H.	Fitter (Eng.)	Fitter (A.E.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	12/11/14	27/8/17	2 0	D.W.
Ellis, A.	Fitter (Eng.)	Fitter (A.E.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	17/6/14	15/7/17	4 0	D.W.
Dorman, H.	Fitter (Eng.)	Fitter (A.E.)	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 1.	5/8/14	1/12/17	4 0	D.W.
Moore, C.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	Ac. Cpl. (pd.)	Cpl. Mech.	31/5/15	21/8/16	2 0	D.W.
Hossack, A.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	7/9/14	1/3/18	5 0	D.W.
Harman, C. E.	Draughtsman	Draughtsman	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	17/6/08	1/11/17	4 0	D.W.
Amery, H. W.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	10/12/15	15/7/17	4 0	D.W.
Forbes, P.	Carpenter	Carpenter	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	14/12/14	1/12/17	4 0	D.W.
Senior, J.	M. Cyc.	M. Cyc.	Corporal	Corporal	17/9/14	26/2/17	2 0	D.W.
Lawrence, J. H.	Fitter (Mach.)	Machinist	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	11/6/09	15/7/17	2 4	D.W.
Tomlinson, J. R.	Fitter (Mach.)	Machinist	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	30/11/11	1/12/17	4 0	D.W.
Orr, J.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	21/4/15	6/7/17	2 0	D.W.
Gale, A. W.	Fitter (Mach.)	Machinist	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	15/10/14	12/7/17	4 0	D.W.
Ingram, E.	Carp. (Pn.Mkr.)	Pattern Mkr.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	2/9/14	27/7/17	2 0	D.W.
McIvor, T.	Electrician	Electrician	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	2/9/14	12/8/17	2 0	D.W.
Scott, D. McQ.	Fitter (Eng.)	Fitter (A.E.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	10/11/13	19/8/16	2 0	D.W.
Lowe, A.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	14/4/13	1/10/17	4 0	D.W.
Johnston, W.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	7/5/12	1/12/17	4 0	D.W.
Comery, A.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	20/9/15	1/10/17	4 0	D.W.
Reddin, G. P.	M. Cyc.	M. Cyc.	A. Mech. 2.	Private 1	19/8/15	9/8/16	1 8	D.W.
Taylor, A. G.	Ph. Cam. Rep.	Cam. Rep.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	1/1/15	14/3/17	2 0	D.W.
Winyard, T. D.	Tin. S.M.W.	Tin. S.M.W.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	6/3/15	22/8/17	2 0	D.W.
Barnard, H.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	2/9/14	8/9/16	2 0	D.W.
Matthews, F. R.	K.B. WnchDF	Winch D.F.	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	4/2/15	1/12/17	4 0	D.W.
Roberts, H. K.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	30/11/15	1/12/17	4 0	D.W.
Marshall, H.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	21/3/11	1/3/18	4 0	D.W.
Bowman, H. W.	Fitter (Tnr.)	Turner	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	22/1/14	1/11/17	4 0	D.W.
Thomas, A. G.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	16/10/14	1/8/17	4 0	D.W.
Bell, J. A.	Carp. (Pn.Mkr.)	Pattern Mkr.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	11/4/12	8/3/17	2 0	D.W.
Walls, W.	Wireless Op.	Wireless Op.	Corporal	Cpl. Mech.	25/1/11	15/7/17	5 0	D.W.
Sutherland, W. D.	Wireless Op.	Wireless Op.	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	13/11/11	1/1/18	4 0	D.W.
Townsend, H.	Driver (M.T.)	Driver	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	2/11/14	9/2/17	2 0	D.W.
Robathan, C.	Electrician	Electrician	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	8/11/15	17/8/17	2 0	D.W.
Donaldson, J.	Wireless Op.	Wireless Op.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	27/2/13	11/1/18	2 0	D.W.
Raymond, W.	Wireless Op.	Wireless Op.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	30/6/13	11/1/18	2 0	D.W.
Murray, J.	Wireless Op.	Wireless Op.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	9/11/14	31/1/18	2 0	D.W.
Bisset, A. B.	Wireless Op.	Wireless Op.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	12/4/15	31/1/18	2 0	D.W.
Quinan, J.	Wireless Mh.	Wireless Mh.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	22/9/14	31/1/18	2 0	D.W.
McDonald, R.	Wireless Op.	Wireless Op.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	27/4/15	8/2/18	2 0	D.W.
Ferrie, M.	Wrsls. Op. Lnr.	Wrsls. Op. Lnr.	A. Mech. 2.	Private 2	9/10/14	9/10/17	1 6	D.W.
MacDonald, J.	Wireless Op.	Wireless Op.	A. Mech. 3.	Private 2	28/9/14	26/11/17	2 0	D.W.
Wilson, W.	Wireless Op.	Wireless Op.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	2/3/14	8/2/18	2 0	D.W.
Eccles, A. D.	Wireless Op.	Wireless Op.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	1/9/14	18/1/18	2 0	D.W.
Battershill, C.	Electrician	Electrician	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	15/3/16	27/10/17	2 0	D.W.
Fleming, A. A.	Wireless Mh.	Wireless Mh.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	11/1/15	27/10/17	2 0	D.W.
Teague, L. A.	Electrician	Electrician	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	12/2/14	27/10/17	2 0	D.W.
Sharrett, G.	Wrsls. Op. Lnr.	Wrsls. Op. Lnr.	A. Mech. 2.	A. Mech. 3.	17/5/15	27/10/17	1 6	D.W.
Prestwood, A.	Fitter (Eng.)	Fitter (A.E.)	A. Mech. 2.	Private 2	2/2/15	29/10/17	1 6	D.W.
Green, L. A.	Armourer	Rigger (Aero.)	A. Mech. 3.	Private 1	11/9/14	1/6/17	5 0	D.W.
Heycock, W. I.	Armourer	Rigger	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	9/5/11	1/11/17	6 0	D.W.
Cross, W. A.	Armourer	Armourer	Corporal	Sergt. Mech.	8/5/16	24/7/17	6 0	D.W.
Diggle, H. D.	Armourer	Armourer	Sergeant	Sergt. Mech.	15/10/14	1/12/17	5 0	D.W.
Plant, W.	Fitter (Eng.)	Fitter (A.E.)	Sergeant	Cpl. Mech.	25/10/15	1/11/17	4 0	D.W.
Sowman, H. E.	Electrician	Electrician	Corporal	Cpl. Mech.	24/3/11	1/11/17	4 0	D.W.
Dye, C. E.	Fitter (Gen.)	Fitter (Gen.)	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	5/8/14	1/12/17	4 0	D.W.
Hugginson, T.	Batman	Batman	A. Mech. 1.	A. Mech. 1.	7/5/14	1/12/17	1 8	D.W.
Egan, T.	Batman	Batman	A. Mech. 3.	Private 1	27/7/15	30/1/17	1 8	D.W.
Way, B.	Misc. (A.G.)	Aerial Gnr.	A. Mech. 1.	Private 1	7/4/15	5/9/17	1 8	D.W.
Carlet, G.	Misc. (A.G.)	Aerial Gnr.	A. Mech. 3.	Private 1	6/5/15	1/5/17	1 8	D.W.
Penn, W. J.	Misc. (A.G.)	Aerial Gnr.	A. Mech. 1.	Private 1	21/11/14	1/2/18	4 0	D.W.
Goffe, C. H.	Misc. (A.G.)	Aerial Gnr.	A. Mech. 1.	Private 1	11/1/15	1/8/17	3 3	D.W.
Bell, F. W.	Misc. (A.G.)	Aerial Gnr.	Sergeant	Corporal	2/9/14	1/12/17	2 4	D.W.

There is a marked similarity between the early army career of the brothers, both being in a Lancashire Territorial Regiment in 1914, and both going absent without leave to visit their sick father, Lorenzo George Bell. **George. S. Bell** allegedly deserting at Christmas 1914, and **Lorenzo Reginald Bell** deserting April 28th1915 (Fig.7). The similarity continues with both serving for a period in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

R. S. Richardson, 2023