

Captain David Jones, 10th Battalion (1st Rhondda) Welch Regiment.

Captain David Jones was born in Llanddewi-Brefi, near Tregaron in 1893. After leaving Tregaron County School, he held teaching posts in schools in Llanddewi-Brefi and Pontrhydfendigaid, before going to Aberystwyth University. While he was at University he was a member of the Officer Training Corps, and joined the army in 1916. In a letter home to his mother, he explains why he felt compelled to join up:



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“Cofiwch da chwi fod y wlad hon bob munud yn disgwyl yr Almaenwyr i lanio yma, wedi hyny ni fyddwn ond fel y Belgians drueiniaid a’u cartrefi wedi eu rhwygo. Credaf ymhellach y buasai’n well gennych golli un mab na cholli’r holl deulu.”

[“Remember that this country is expecting the Germans to land at any moment, and that then we’ll be like the Belgians, with our homes destroyed. I think you’d rather lose one son than lose the whole family”.]

Captain Jones fought in the Mametz Wood offensive, and died on 12th July 1916, aged 25. He has no known grave, but his name is on the Thiepval Memorial to the missing of the Somme.

Trefor Lewis, Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC)

(Featured in the ‘Remembering for Peace’ exhibition)

Trefor was born in Aberystwyth and attended the County School / Ysgol Ardwyn, Aberystwyth. He was appointed as a ‘trainee librarian’ in the National Library in August 1912.



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On 27th October 1915 he left the Library and joined the Royal Army Medical Corps. He was transferred to France, where he was badly wounded on 8th August. He was then transferred to Hampstead Hospital but died on 20th September, aged 20 years.

He was the first World War I casualty from Aberystwyth and his funeral attracted the attention of the Cambrian News, where it was written:

‘Being the first local funeral of a hero from the front, considerable interest was taken and there was general manifestation of sorrow, the streets being lined along the route and the blinds of houses and businesses were drawn.’

He was buried in the town cemetery.



Ithel Davies

Ithel Davies was born in Aberystwyth and had qualified as a barrister. He became a prominent political activist after the Second World War.

He was conscripted into the R.W.F, 4th regiment in 1916 but refused to take military orders. When he was imprisoned as a conscientious objector between 1916 and 1919 he regularly wrote to his parents Benjamin and Anne Davies and his brother Goronwy, who lived at 'Glan-yr-afon', Cwm Tafolog, Montgomeryshire. He was given detentions, hard labour, faced Military Courts and sentenced to imprisonment numerous times during the war.

He stood as the candidate for the Welsh Republican Movement in the Ogwr constituency in the General Election of 1951.



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John Simpson Kirkpatrick

Born in South Shields in North East England, Jack Simpson Kirkpatrick was accepted into the Australian army on 23rd August 1914, and chosen as a field ambulance stretcher bearer. On the 25th April 1915 he, along with the rest of the Australian and New Zealand contingent landed at the wrong beach on a piece of wild, impossible and savage terrain now known as Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli peninsula.



Simpson with his donkey - Wikimedia Commons

Attack and counter attack began. During the morning hours of April 26th, along with his fellows, Jack was carrying casualties back to the beach over his shoulder – it was then that he saw the donkey. Jack knew what he had to do. From then on he became a part of the scene at Gallipoli walking along next to his donkey, forever singing and whistling as he held on to his wounded passengers, seemingly completely fatalistic and scornful of the extreme danger. He led a charmed life from 25th April 1915 until he was hit by a machine gun bullet in his back on 19th May 1915.

In these amazing 24 days he was to rescue over 300 men down the notorious Monash Valley. His prodigious, heroic feat was accomplished under constant and ferocious attack from artillery, field guns and sniper fire. He has been described as "the most respected and admired of all the heroes at Anzac."



Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz



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Patzek, Renate / CC-BY-SA 3.0 – via
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George Ferdinand Duckwitz was a member of the German forces during World War II. On 11 September 1943 he heard about the intended round-up of all Danish Jews on 1 October. He travelled to Berlin to attempt stopping the deportation through official channels. When that failed he flew to Stockholm two weeks later, ostensibly to discuss the passage of German merchant ships. While there, he contacted Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson and asked whether Sweden would be willing to receive Danish Jewish refugees. In a couple of days, Hansson promised them a favourable reception.

Back in Denmark, Duckwitz contacted Danish social democrat Hans Hedtoft and notified him of the intended deportation.

Hedtoft warned the head of the Jewish community C.B. Henriques and the acting chief rabbi Marcus Melchior, who spread the warning. Sympathetic Danes in all walks of life organized a mass escape of over 7,200 Jews and 700 of their non-Jewish relatives by sea to Sweden.

Duckwitz, apparently assuming that he had done everything he could and possibly fearing exposure to the Gestapo, went back to his official duties.

Simon Weston

Originally from Caerphilly, Simon Weston joined the Welsh Guards in 1978. On 9 June 1982, he was boarded with other members of his regiment on *RFA Sir Galahad* in Port Pleasant near Fitzroy, just off the Falkland Islands. It was bombed and set on fire by Argentine Skyhawk fighters during the Bluff Cove Air Attacks. His ship was carrying ammunition as well as phosphorus bombs and thousands of gallons of diesel and petrol. Out of his platoon of 30 men, 22 were killed. The Welsh Guards lost a total of 48 men killed and 97 wounded aboard the *Sir Galahad*.



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Weston survived with 46% burns, following which his face was barely recognisable. Following reconstructive surgery over a number of years, he has become famous for his charity work and political activism.

He was a critic of the Iraq War, believing Tony Blair's argument for invasion simply did not hold water. He has also met and become friends with First Lieutenant Carlos Cachon, the Argentine pilot who dropped the bomb which caused his injuries, and has defended this action, despite criticism from families of those who fought in the Falklands War.





Veterans for Peace UK - logo

Ben Griffin

Ben Griffin founded *Veterans for Peace* in 2011 after discovering many war veterans supported his disillusion towards war. A former serviceman in the Parachute Regiment and Special Air Service division, he was discharged from the army in 2005 for refusing to continue serving in Iraq. In 2008 he spoke to an anti-war rally about UK involvement in extraordinary rendition. The following day he was served with a lifetime injunction by the Ministry of Defence, preventing him from speaking publicly about his time in the SAS.

He describes *Veterans for Peace* as an organisation of former servicemen and women who have come to the realisation that war is irrational and immoral and want to campaign against it. The organisation works to educate the general population on the true nature of warfare and to resist war and militarism through nonviolent action.

Ben claims that he has been raided and arrested in his home by the Metropolitan Police on two occasions during which no charges were made, and that he has been harassed on the street by members of the Metropolitan Police on many occasions.

The *Shministim* (12th Graders)

It is hard to resist military service in Israeli society. It is near-impossible to declare conscientious objector status, and refusers are often jailed for multiple consecutive terms for refusing an order. However, this is just what 60 Israeli young people did in March 2014 when they signed an open letter to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declaring their refusal of compulsory service in the Israeli military.



Maya Wind, young Israeli refuser – Wikimedia Commons

In the Palestinian territories, the letter stated, "human rights are violated, and acts defined under international law as war-crimes are perpetuated on a daily basis. These include assassinations (extrajudicial killings), the construction of settlements on occupied lands, administrative detentions, torture, collective punishment and the unequal allocation of resources such as electricity and water." Entitled '*We Refuse to Serve in the Occupation Army*' the letter claims that this dehumanization hurts Israelis as well.

The authors of the letter stated: "We refuse to forsake our principles as a condition to being accepted in our society. We have thought about our refusal deeply and we stand by our decisions." Dafna Rothstein Landman, one of the signatories, stated in an interview with the press: "If necessary, I will go to jail."



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Rosa Parks

On December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks, a 42-year old African- American seamstress and civil rights activist quietly yet firmly refused to obey the bus driver's order to give up her seat in the coloured section to a white passenger, after the white section was filled.

She was arrested and convicted of violating the laws of segregation, known as "Jim Crow laws." Mrs. Parks appealed her conviction and thus formally challenged the legality of segregation.

Rosa Parks' act of defiance and the following Montgomery Bus Boycott which her act sparked off became important symbols of the modern Civil Rights Movement. She organized and collaborated with civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr.



Rosa Parks with Martin Luther King, Wikimedia Commons



Posted by DFID via Wikimedia Commons

Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai was born on July 12, 1997, in Mingora, Pakistan. She attended a school that her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, had founded. After the Taliban began attacking girls' schools in Swat, Malala gave a speech in Peshawar, Pakistan, in September 2008.

The title of her talk was, "How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to education?"

In early 2009, Yousafzai began blogging for the BBC about living under the Taliban's threats to deny her an education. In order to hide her identity, she used the name Gul Makai. However, she was revealed to be the BBC blogger in December of that year.

When she was 14, Malala and her family learned that the Taliban had issued a death threat against her. Though Malala was frightened for the safety of her father—an anti-Taliban activist—she and her family initially felt that the fundamentalist group would not actually harm a child. However, on October 9, 2012, on her way home from school, a man boarded the bus Malala was riding in and demanded to know which girl was Malala. When her friends looked toward Malala, her location was given away. The gunman fired at her, hitting Malala in the left side of her head; the bullet then traveled down her neck. Two other girls were also injured in the attack.

Since recovering from her injury, Malala has become an international spokesperson for children's right to education. She addressed the United Nations on this topic on her 16th birthday. In 2014 she won the Nobel Peace Prize.

