

“Llanelly Couple’s Eight Sons With The Colours”

A short history of the lives of eight brothers from the Richards family of Llanelli who
were soldiers during the First World War

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Daniel & Elizabeth RICHARDS & their family

(Llanelli parents of 13 children; 8 who were soldiers during WW1)

Daniel RICHARDS was born in Llanelli on 9 October 1858. In 1871, he was already employed as a labourer for a mason even though he was only 12 years old. In 1881, he was 21 years old, still living with his parents at 8 Long Row, Swansea Road, Llanelli and working as a shearer in a copper works. He was to retain this occupation all of his working life.

Daniel RICHARDS married Elizabeth WILLIAMS (b. 30 October 1857) at the Zion Baptist Chapel in Llanelli on 12 June 1881. Between 1881 and 1903, a period of 22½ years, the couple had a large family of thirteen children (10 sons and 3 daughters); which means that on average a child was born about every 18 months.

Their children were: David RICHARDS (b. 21 April 1881); Daniel Thomas RICHARDS (b. March 1883); William John RICHARDS (b. 1885); Benjamin RICHARDS (b. June 1886); Henry Joseph RICHARDS (b. December 1887); Blodwen RICHARDS (b. 11 April 1889); Mary Ann RICHARDS (b. October 1890); Edward Elvet RICHARDS (b. 1 April 1893); Glyn RICHARDS (b. 8 February 1896); Ernest RICHARDS (b. 24 December 1897); Cyril RICHARDS (b. 8 March 1899); Brinley RICHARDS (b. June 1901); and Eileen RICHARDS (b. 3 November 1903).

In 1891 the family lived at 6 Llewellyn Street, Llanelli. At that time Daniel RICHARDS was described as a copper worker but in the "*Llanelli Directory 1897*" and on the 1901 census he was recorded as a copper shearer living at 47 Llewellyn Street (their house on Llewellyn Street had been re-numbered from No.6 to No.47).

By September 1906 the family had moved to live nearby in the same housing estate at 43 Dillwyn Street. In 1911, twelve family members were living there in 6 rooms.

Coincidental with the decline of some of Llanelli's industries, like the tinplate works, the onset of World War 1 saw many Llanelli men leaving their jobs to enlist with the armed forces. Throughout the UK, recruitment rallies were in full swing. During October 1914 a "Great Recruiting Rally" was held in Town Hall Square, Llanelli with the town band, the Engineers, Territorials, Red Cross, St John Ambulance, Boy Scouts, wives and the children of soldiers already at the front. Women carried banners proclaiming 'Our menfolk are at the Front, where are yours????'

The RICHARDS family was very well represented in this call to arms. Of Daniel and Elizabeth's ten sons, eight joined the armed forces: four of them David, Benjamin, Henry Joseph & Edward Elvet (FIG. 1) had been in the Territorial Army for many years and had transferred into the 4th Welsh Regiment; three more (William John, Glyn and Ernest) enlisted for the first time; one, Cyril, when he reached enlistment age, joined up before the end of the war.



FIG. 1 – l to r: Ben, David, Elvet and Joe RICHARDS in 4th Welsh Regiment (1915)

In 1918 both Daniel and Elizabeth were 61 years old. At about this time it appears that a portrait photograph of them was taken (FIG. 2) to celebrate the remarkable event of the safe return of these sons, seven of whom had been away in foreign theatres. This portrait was used in a collage of photographs of seven of their sons, all but one in military uniform, that was printed in a local paper (FIG. 3) with the caption: "*Llanelly Couple's Seven Sons With The Colours*"

The photograph of the newspaper article shows: Sapper Glyn RICHARDS (Royal Engineers) in the top row (between his mother and father); Bottom row (l to r): Corporal William John RICHARDS (Royal Engineers), Sergeant Benjamin RICHARDS (Welsh Regiment), Lance Corporal David RICHARDS (Welsh Regiment), Private Elvet RICHARDS (Welsh Regiment), Corporal Henry Joseph RICHARDS (Welsh Regiment) and Private Ernest RICHARDS (Welsh Regiment).



FIG. 2 - Daniel and Elizabeth RICHARDS in 1918

Another son Cyril RICHARDS (South Wales Borderers) also served in Germany and returned home safely but unfortunately is not included in the photograph. It is probable that he had not returned back home at the time the article appeared in the Llanelli press.



FIG. 3- "Llanelli Couple's Seven Sons With The Colours" newspaper cutting from a Llanelli newspaper ca. 1918

After suffering for 8 months with stomach cancer, Daniel RICHARDS died at age 62 years on 3 January 1921 at his home at 43 Dillwyn Street, Llanelli. He was buried at Box Cemetery, Llanelli (Sector 1 Row 21 No. 8). His wife Elizabeth WILLIAMS died of influenza and chronic bronchitis on 2 April 1924 aged 66 years.

1. David RICHARDS (1881-1954)



David RICHARDS was the first-born to Daniel RICHARDS and Elizabeth WILLIAMS on 21 April 1881.

On 11 October 1898, as a young man of 17 years, David RICHARDS joined the 1st Welsh Volunteer Battalion. His involvement involved training at weekends or in the evenings and annual training exercises. In 1901, David RICHARDS was 19 years old, living with his parents and employed as a behinder at the Copperworks of Nevill Druce Co Ltd in Llanelli; an employer he was to stay with for all of his working life.

On the 24 September 1906 in the Ebenezer Welsh Congregational Chapel, Inkerman Street, Llanelli David RICHARDS married Frances JONES (b 18 March 1883). The couple had only one child, a son, Idris Gwyn RICHARDS who was born on 12 June 1907 at 62 Swansea Road, Llanelli.

On 31 March 1908, after 9½ years, David RICHARDS ended his service with the Welsh Volunteer Battalion. It was at this time that all local volunteer army recruits were offered the opportunity to join an amalgamated and fully-fledged Territorial Force Battalion of the Welsh Regiment; in this case the 1/4th (Territorial) Battalion. David RICHARDS took up the offer on 14 April 1908 and was given the Regiment Number 3269; 1 more than his brother Ben, indicating they both signed-up on the same day. With the outbreak of World War 1, the 1/4th Welsh Battalion was mobilised on 5 August 1914. On 17 April 1915 the Battalion was attached to 159th Brigade in 53rd (Welsh) Division.



FIG. 4 – David RICHARDS
4th Welsh Regiment (1915)

The Battalion, with David RICHARDS (FIG. 4) and his younger brothers Benjamin RICHARDS, Edward Elvet RICHARDS and Ernest RICHARDS, sailed from Devonport, England on 17 July 1915 *en route* to the Balkans war theatre to participate in the Gallipoli (Dardanelles) campaign against the Ottoman/German enemy forces. They landed at Suvla Bay and started coming ashore on the morning of 9 August 1915. This period of the Gallipoli campaign is described in the following 1915 entries from his diary.

Disembarked from Ship on the morning of Aug 9 th and before we had actually landed were under Fire as the Turkish Artillery had spotted us landing In the Afternoon we went on the Field as supports and we were the second Division to land at Suvla Bay Aug 9 th Tuesday morning in the Firing Line as our Division had relieved the 10 th Division who acted as our supports a very heavy Day Hard fighting but our men did well but our losses were heavy a never to be forgotten day Aug 10 th	First casualty with S Bearers our own Doctor Aug 18 th Terrible Bombardment by our Navy and Artillery of the Turkish Position Aug 21 st Came back to Base for rest if it could be called rest as wherever we would go we would be under Shell Fire but it was a rest from Rifle Fire and we had been in the thick of the fighting for 19 days Aug 27 th Went back to Firing Line and were attached to 2 nd S W Borderers as we were only 330 Strong and in this number were 2 Drafts of Reinforcements Sept 7 th
Went up to Firing Line to fetch a wounded man and lost our way and were wandering about for over 6 Hours 2 Bearers of 4 th Welsh and 2 Bearers S W Borderers Sept 11 th Left 2 nd S W Borderers for Base C Beach Sept 23 rd 4 th and 5 th Welsh made into one Battalion and called the 1/4 Composite Battalion Sept 28 th Heavy Attack by Turks and the Bombardment by our Artillery was Terrific Sept 27 th Inoculated against Cholera Oct 1 st	2 nd Inoculation against Cholera Oct 20 th Went to Hospital suffering from Jaundice Oct 29 th Went on Hospital Boat another Captured German Liner German name Lanfranc Oct 31 st Stopped 2 nights at Lemnos and sailed Nov 2 nd Arrived at Alexandria Nov 5 th By train to Cairo where I was put into Hospital Kasr El Ainy Nov 5 th

As with so many men, the squalid and diseased conditions resulted in David RICHARDS being incapacitated by jaundice probably associated with extreme dysentery. His diary recorded that he was evacuated to Egypt for treatment. From the Kasr El Ainy hospital in Cairo he proceeded some 450 miles south to the ancient city of Luxor for convalescence.

On 10 April 1916, only months after his recovery and re-deployment to his Battalion in the Sinai, David RICHARDS who by then had achieved the rank of Corporal, returned to England. On the next day he presented himself at Army Headquarters in Carmarthen where he was issued with £17 7s to buy civilian clothes.

David RICHARDS was discharged from service on 8 May 1916 after 17 years 6 months and 27 days of service; first with Volunteer then the Territorial Army. He received the Territorial Force Efficiency (for long service), 1914/15 Star, British War and Victory medals (FIG. 5). His discharge before the end of the war must have been due to the termination of his term of engagement following his volunteer Territorial Force service.



FIG. 5 – 1 Whistle; 2 Penknife (engraved: front, D Richards 4 Welsh Regt; back, Lala Baba); 3 Territorial Force Efficiency Medal; 4 1914/15 Star; 5 British War Medal 1914-1920; 6 Victory Medal 1914-1919; 7 Dog tags (inscribed D RICHARDS 4 WEL R 3269); 8 Compass and its wallet.

Having returned to his family in Llanelli, David RICHARDS was employed at the Copperworks for the Nevil Druce Co Ltd for 57 years and became a foreman there. He was very active in the Llanelli community throughout his life and was highly regarded. He was a euphonium player and conductor of the Llanelli Silver Band and was especially active as a church member with the Ebenezer Welsh Congregational Chapel serving both as a deacon and a Sunday school teacher.

At the time of his death David RICHARDS and his wife still lived at 5 Box Terrace, Llanelli. He died suddenly of a cerebral haemorrhage at the age of 72 years on 1 March 1954 and was buried at Box Cemetery in Llanelli on 5 March 1954.

His wife Frances JONES died of congestive heart failure at Bryntirion Hospital, Llanelli on 29 September 1963, aged 80 years. She too was buried in Box Cemetery, Llanelli with her husband (Sector 5DSG Row 3 No.28, no monument).

2. William John RICHARDS (1885-1958)



William John RICHARDS was the third-born to Daniel RICHARDS and Elizabeth WILLIAMS in 1885.

In 1901 when he was aged 16 years, William John RICHARDS was living with his parents and employed as a labourer in a tinsplate works.

He married Mary WILLIAMS (b. 1886 in Llanelli), the daughter of Richard WILLIAMS, a copper worker, on 18 November 1905 in the Tabernacle Chapel, Union Terrace, Llanelli.

In 1911 the family were living at 10 Christopher Street, Llanelli and William John RICHARDS was then working as a doubler in a tinsplate works. They stayed at this address all of their lives.



FIG. 6 – William John RICHARDS Royal Engineers (1915)

The couple had seven children all born in Llanelli; five of them before World War 1. They were: Brinley RICHARDS (b. 5 November 1906), Jack RICHARDS (b. 14 October 1909), Eileen RICHARDS (b. 14 September 1910), Annie RICHARDS (b. 27 June 1913), Elizabeth RICHARDS (b. 19 June 1916), Glenys RICHARDS (b. 31 August 1919) and Daniel RICHARDS (b. 3 January 1925).

During World War 1, William John RICHARDS reached the rank of Corporal with the Royal Engineers (FIG. 6). However, no records have been found to determine where he served or when he returned from the war.

His wife, Mary WILLIAMS died at the age of 70 years and was buried on 29 March 1956 in the Box Cemetery, Llanelli.

William John RICHARDS died two years later on 20 May 1958 at the General Hospital in Llanelli at the age of 73 years. He was also buried at the Box Cemetery on 23 May 1958. There is no monument in the cemetery but the location of the burial was Sector 5DSG Row 6 No. 17.

It would appear from the Box Cemetery Register and the obituary that both William John RICHARDS and his wife Mary WILLIAMS were active members of the Caersalem Baptist Chapel.

3. Benjamin RICHARDS (1886-1962)



Benjamin RICHARDS was the fourth-born to Daniel RICHARDS and Elizabeth WILLIAMS in June 1886.

In 1901, at the age of 15 years, Benjamin RICHARDS was an apprentice “yellow metal moulder”, presumably working with copper at Nevill Druce and Co., Llanelli. Also in 1901, according to later newspaper articles, Benjamin joined-up as a part-time soldier and boy bandsman with the 1st Welsh Volunteer Battalion.

When he was 21 years old Benjamin RICHARDS married Hannah Maria HENSHAW (c. 8 September 1884) at St Paul’s Church, Llanelli on 17 August 1907. In 1908 Benjamin RICHARDS was still active in the Volunteer Army and transferred to become a member of the newly formed Territorial Forces; the 4th Battalion of the Welsh Regiment. His Regiment number was 3268 (1 less than his older brother David).



FIG. 7 – Benjamin RICHARDS 4th Welsh Regiment (1915)

Shortly after their marriage Benjamin RICHARDS and Hannah Maria HENSHAW lived at 29 Delabeche Street, Llanelli. The couple had four children. Their first two were: Bronwen RICHARDS (c. 24 January 1909) and Cyril Benjamin RICHARDS (b. December 1910). In 1911 this family of four were living at 11 Paddock Street, Llanelli and Benjamin RICHARDS was working as a copper cold roller with Nevill Druce and Co. Their next child Beatrice RICHARDS was born in Llanelli on 23 March 1915.

Just four months after the birth of their last child, Benjamin RICHARDS (FIG. 7) left England with his battalion, the 4th Welsh, to fight in Gallipoli and Palestine. Beginning as a Private, he rose through the ranks to acting-Corporal then Sergeant.

He returned from Palestine to England and was discharged on 8 May 1916, exactly the same date as his older brother David RICHARDS; confirming that they must have signed up on the same day and had both reached the completion of their term of engagement.

After his return to Llanelli, Benjamin RICHARDS and Hannah Maria HENSHAW had their next child Elvet RICHARDS who was born in January 1921. This child died at the age of 11 months and was buried in Box Cemetery, Llanelli on 31 December 1921. At some time the family took up residence at 13 Nevill Street, Llanelli which remained their home throughout their lives.

At about this time, Benjamin, at the age of 35 years, re-joined the Welsh Regiment (which had been renamed to its original spelling of Welch Regiment) and helped form the Battalion Band. In 1923, he became the Bandmaster and did not retire from that post until 16 years later in 1939 (BOX A). From all accounts he was very diligent and influential in this role and was both well respected and popular. Furthermore, there is an unconfirmed family story that he spent some time as a missionary in the Belgian Congo around 1937.

Hannah Maria HENSHAW died in Llanelli at the age of 48 years and was buried on 4 October 1932 at Box Terrace Cemetery in Llanelli.

Benjamin RICHARDS died on 27 January 1962 at the Morriston Hospital, Swansea at the age of 76 years and was also buried at the Box Terrace. However, there is no inscription recording this on the headstone.

It appears that throughout his life Benjamin RICHARDS worked for Nevill Druce and Co.

BOX A

LLANELLI STAR, SATURDAY, JULY 15th, 1939

HE WAS ONE OF EIGHT BROTHERS WHO SERVED IN WAR - ALL SURVIVED

4th Welch Bandmaster Retires

When the 4th Battalion the Welch Regiment go to camp at Porthcawl at the end of the month, they will have a new bandmaster. Recently Bandmaster Ben Richards, who joined up in 1901, retired; he has been succeeded by Bandmaster Ernie Hayward, who joined up in 1904. These two old hands and newly-appointed Regimental Quarter-master-Sergeant T.S. Edwards (25 years) have given nearly a century between them to national service. Ex-Bandmaster Ben Richards, who lives in Nevill Street, joined in 1901 as a boy bandsman in the 1st Welsh Volunteer Battalion.

His family can claim a remarkable war record, for he is one of eight brothers who served in the Great War and who all survived.

Five of them were in the 4th Welch, two in the Royal Engineers and one in the South Wales Borderers. One, Corporal Henry Joseph Richards, died after the war, but the other brothers are still living. They are Corporal Dd. Richards, who served with the 4th Welch, Corporal W.J. Richards, Royal Engineers; Bandsman Elvet Richards, 4th Welch; Sapper Glyn Richards, R.E.; Signaller Ernest Richards, 4th Welch; Private Cyril Richards, South Wales Borderers (now of Melbourne, Australia).

Mr Ernest Richards was taken prisoner by the Turks at Gaza and spent a year in the hands of the enemy.

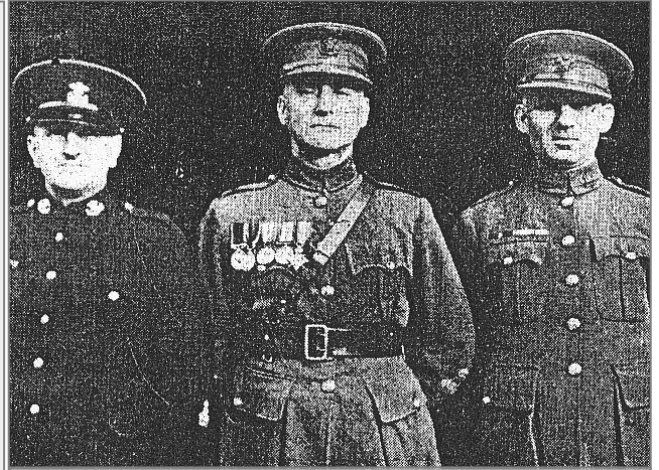
When bandmaster Ben Richards joined the old Volunteer Battalion the commanding officer was Col. Roberts Milford who was followed by Col. Buckley Roderick. In 1908 the Territorial army was formed, and the unit became the 4th Battalion the Welch Regiment, and commanding officers under whom Mr. Richards subsequently served were Col. Beddoe, Pembroke; Col. Bramwell Jones, Col. R.T. Bowen, Col. R.A. Nevill, Col. H.S. Burn, Col. W.T. Woods, Col. S.P. Jones, Col. Leslie Williams and Col. G.P. Phillips.

In the war Mr Richards served in Gallipoli and Palestine. He left the unit after demobilisation, but re-joined in 1921, and was then largely responsible for re-forming the battalion band.....

MISSED NO CAMPS.

In 1923 Mr. Ben Richards took over the bandsmanship from Mr. Williams, and has remained in charge for 16 years, a popular chief. In that time the band has made innumerable public appearances and has never failed to make a great impression. Mr. Richards has not missed any of the annual camps, and at Penally and Porthcawl he was as senior bandsmaster, in charge of the massed bands of the Shropshires, the 4th, 5th and 6th Welch.

A son is Mr. Cyril Richards, who was a boy bandsman with the 4th Welch and was formerly known as "Len Colvin", leader of the Denza Players dance band. He is now a member of the orchestra on the cruise liner Empress of India.....



Between them these three Llanelli men have given nearly 100 years service to the country's volunteer defence forces. Centre is Mr Ben Richards, who has just retired from the bandsmanship of the 4th Welch, and was one of eight brothers serving in the Great War; on the right is Bandmaster Ernie Hayward, who has succeeded him, and on the left is R.Q.M.S. T S Edwards who has just been promoted.

4. Henry Joseph RICHARDS (1887-1929)



Henry Joseph RICHARDS (always known as Joe) was the fifth-born to Daniel RICHARDS and Elizabeth WILLIAMS in December 1887.

On 1 April 1908, he enlisted with the 4th Battalion Welsh (Territorial) Regiment (Regt No. 3159) two weeks ahead of his two older brothers (David and Ben). He would have undertaken part-time training, attended annual summer camps and, like his brothers, was a participant in the 4th Welsh Regimental Band.

In 1911, when he was 23 years old, Joe was still single and lived with his parents. In addition to his volunteer army service he then worked as a corrugator in a tinplate factory (probably Dafen Tinplate and Galvanizing Co. Ltd developed from the Dafen tinplate works in Llanelli and owned by Phillips, Nunes and Co.).

At the outbreak of World War 1, Joe, with his brothers, would have moved with their battalion around the British Isles in preparation for overseas duties. However, unlike his brothers, Henry Joseph RICHARDS (FIG. 8) never left the UK. In fact, he was discharged on 15 March 1915 under King's Regulations (Para 392 xvi KR A.O. 265/17 para Bi)) as "*no longer physically fit for war*" and awarded the Silver War Badge. When he was discharged he had achieved the rank of Corporal and would have then been posted with the 4th Welsh to the Forth and Tay defences in Scotland.

Almost five years after his discharge from the army, Henry Joseph RICHARDS, at the age of 32 years, married Edith Maud PHILLIPS (b. December 1897) at Holy Trinity, Felinfoel on 2 December 1919.

The couple had a daughter Marjorie RICHARDS who was born in Llanelli on 3 June 1922. At that time the family lived at 15 Gelli Deg, off Capel Road, in the Dafen district of Llanelli. Henry Joseph RICHARDS was then working as a shearer at the Gorse Galvanizing Works in Dafen, Llanelli (opened in 1914).

Less than seven years after the birth of their daughter Henry Joseph RICHARDS died on 31 January 1929 at the age of 41 years. The cause of his death was valvular heart disease and this was probably the condition that led to his medical discharge from the army many years previously. His death notice and obituary, reported in the Llanelli Star, indicated that his health had been poor over a long period and he had been unable to work for some time as a foreman at the Galvanizing Works. He died at 6, Gelli Deg, Llanelli and was buried on 4 February 1929 at Holy Trinity churchyard in Felinfoel, Llanelli.

About three years after her husband's death the widowed Edith Maud PHILLIPS remarried in September 1931. Her second husband Anthony Tregurthen THOMAS, himself recently widowed, worked as a master painter and decorator. The couple lived at 21 Ralph Street, Llanelli.

Edith Maud PHILLIPS died on 23 February 1955 in the Llanelli General Hospital from the effects of an aortic aneurysm; she was 57 years old. She was buried with her first husband Henry Joseph RICHARDS at Holy Trinity churchyard in Felinfoel, Llanelli.



FIG. 8 – Joe RICHARDS 4th Welsh Regiment (1915)

5. Edward Elvet RICHARDS (1893-1960)



Edward Elvet RICHARDS (always known as Elvet) was the eighth-born to Daniel RICHARDS and Elizabeth WILLIAMS on 1 April 1893.

On 6 April 1910, like his older brothers David, Joe and Ben before him, Edward Elvet RICHARDS enlisted for a term of 4 years with the 4th Welsh Regiment as a Private and bandsman (Reg. No. 3686). At that time he was 5 days past his 17th birthday (FIG. 9), 5ft 5ins tall, certified fit and a Congregationalist.

His occupation was a behinder in the tinplate mills of Richard Thomas & Co. Ltd in the industrial estate on the Machynys peninsular near Llanelli.

His army obligations were only part-time and amongst other things required 2-week training sessions annually. At the end of his 4-year army term, before the outbreak of World War 1, Edward Elvet RICHARDS re-engaged for one year until 5 April 1915. Subsequently, although no record has been found, he must have extended this by one more year until 1916.



FIG. 9 – Elvet RICHARDS
4th Welsh Regiment (1910)

On 19 July 1915 their battalion, the 1/4th Welsh with Edward Elvet RICHARDS (and his two older brothers David and Ben) left England to fight in Gallipoli. The 1/4th Welsh Battalion as part of the 53rd British Army Division began to land on the Gallipoli beaches as reinforcements on the morning of 8-9 August 1915. Like the other entrenched allied troops they were quickly pinned down and suffered heavy casualties throughout the forthcoming months whilst making no substantial progress.

On 2 November 1915, about 3 months after arriving in Gallipoli, Edward Elvet RICHARDS was transferred on the hospital ship *HMHS Dongala* suffering from dysentery. He must have had a severe case because a week later he was expatriated to the island of Malta and was admitted to Ricasoli Hospital there. About 6 weeks later he was transferred to a convalescence camp at Ghajn Tuffieha on Malta. He re-joined his unit, who had withdrawn from Gallipoli to Alexandria, Egypt then to Palestine on 9 March 1916.

On 28 April 1916, a little over a month after arriving back from convalescence in Malta (and two days after his brothers David and Ben had arrived in England), he was himself transferred back to England aboard the *HM Northland*.

Edward Elvet RICHARDS was discharged on 19 May 1916 having served his term; a period of 6 years and 44 days. He received the 1914-15 Star, Victory and British War medals.

Back in Llanelli, Edward Elvet RICHARDS married Gladys JONES (b. 26 September 1896) on 22 December 1917 at Bryn Chapel in Llanelli. The family lived at 11 Frondeg Terrace in Llanelli.

The couple had only one child; a son Glanville John RICHARDS who was born on 14 May 1920.

Edward Elvet RICHARDS died on 28 November 1960 at age 68 years and was cremated at Morriston Crematorium, Llanelli.

His wife Gladys JONES died in December 1981 at the age of 85 years.

6. Glyn RICHARDS (1896-1953)



Glyn RICHARDS was the ninth-born to Daniel RICHARDS and Elizabeth WILLIAMS on 8 February 1896.

At the age of 15 years he was already working as a washer in a copper mill, probably the same one his father worked in.

Along with a number of his older brothers Glyn was a member of the Territorial Army even before the outbreak of World War 1. He was a Sapper in the 1st Welsh Field Company of the Royal Engineers (Territorials) with Regt. No. 335. When the war began, and still only 18 years old, he was transferred to active duty in the Royal Engineers with a new Regt. No. 448068.



FIG. 10 – Glyn RICHARDS
Royal Engineers (1919)

The 1st Welsh Field Company was attached to the 53rd (Welsh) Division of the British Army that sailed for the Mediterranean on 17 July 1915. Thus he was probably on the same ship as his older brothers David, Ben and Elvet. The 53rd British Army Division was bound for Gallipoli where they began to land on the beaches as reinforcements on the morning of 8-9 August 1915.

No detailed official or family records have been found for the subsequent war service of Glyn RICHARDS but it is known that he was not de-mobilised until 4 June 1919. It is likely, therefore, that he continued active service with the Royal Engineers embedded with the 53rd Division. His company was renumbered 436th Field Company on 4 February 1917 and served in Egypt and Palestine until the end of the war which included the three battles of Gaza and the capture of Jerusalem.

Shortly after his return from the war Glyn RICHARDS (FIG. 10) married Margaret Ann HAWKINS (b. 12 September 1896) on 15 November 1919 in the Llanelli Register Office. According to the marriage certificate Glyn was then living at 43 Dillwyn Street, Llanelli (his parents address at the time) and he worked as a pickler in a tin works. Margaret was then living at 26 Sandfield Terrace, Burry Port.

The couple had four children. They were: Brinley Gwyn RICHARDS (b. 7 September 1920, Burry Port); Desmond Edward RICHARDS (b. 24 August 1921, Burry Port); Eira Lilwen RICHARDS (b. 11 January 1926, Llanelli); and Freda Patricia RICHARDS (b. 30 March 1928, Llanelli).

For a time and up until about 1941 the family lived at "Prestbury", Glyn Terrace, Pan-teg in Felinfoel on the north-eastern outskirts of Llanelli. However, during the early years of World War 2, Glyn RICHARDS went to work in Coventry, Warwickshire under a scheme of "national importance" to help construct military hardware such as armoured vehicles, tanks, ammunition etc. for the war effort. After a time his wife and children moved from Llanelli to 248 Cross Road, Foleshill, Coventry to be with him.

Glyn RICHARDS worked in various industries including a time at Brico Engineering Ltd, Coventry and was later as a core-maker in a metal foundry. He died of throat cancer at his home in Cross Road, Foleshill, Coventry on 16 June 1953 aged 57 years.

His widow Margaret Ann HAWKINS re-married to George Sydney SMITH (b. 2 November 1892) in Coventry, Warwickshire on 11 February 1956. She died at age 74 years on 29 January 1971 in Frankston, Victoria, Australia where she had moved to be with two of her children who had previously emigrated there.

7. Ernest RICHARDS (1897-1959)



Ernest RICHARDS was the tenth-born to Daniel RICHARDS and Elizabeth WILLIAMS on 24 December 1897.

In 1911, when Ernest RICHARDS was only 13 years old, he was working in a tinplate works “catching cold rolls”; this job, often given to children, involved retrieving iron sheets from an unheated roll press in preparation for the tinning process.

After the outbreak of World War 1, Ernest RICHARDS enlisted in the 1/4th Welsh (Territorial) Regiment alongside four of his brothers. If he joined up in early 1915 he would have just turned 17 years old which was the minimum age for enlistment in the Territorial Army. However, it is probable that he overstated his age as young soldiers were not allowed to be posted overseas until they were 19 years old. According to his Medal Index Card, Ernest RICHARDS arrived on the shores of Gallipoli on 1 September 1915, when he was only 17 years and 8 months old. He was posted as a Signaller with the rank of Private (FIG. 11).



FIG. 11 – Ernest RICHARDS 4th Welsh Regiment (1915)

The main contingent of the 4th Welsh (including his brothers David, Benjamin and Elvet and his brother Glyn in the Royal Engineers) had landed at Gallipoli some twenty-five days earlier. It is likely that Ernest and his detachment had been kept in reserve in Alexandria, Egypt prior to their deployment as reinforcements.

After a bitterly cold November, with no progress but continuing heavy losses it was finally acknowledged that the Gallipoli offensive had failed. On 11 December 1915 the 1/4th Welsh had been evacuated and moved to Egypt. After recovering and re-assembling the 4th Welsh were put to operate alongside other British, Australian, New Zealand and Indian troops on the Sinai Peninsula initially to defend the Suez Canal from attack by Ottoman forces (the Palestine Campaign).

The 53rd Division, including the 4th Welsh, participated in a successful battle against Turkish forces about 80 kilometres east of the Suez on 4 August 1916 (Battle of Romani). After this success the British strategy changed from simply defending the Suez Canal to be refocussed on the defeat of the Turkish armies in the field. In particular, advances were planned on the Turkish held Gaza-Beersheba line (in present-day Israel) with the ultimate goal of capturing Jerusalem.

The 4th Welsh were active in the failed Second Battle of Gaza (17-19 April 1917) and the successful Third Battle of Gaza (27 October - 7 November, 1917). It was at the latter battle that Ernest RICHARDS was most likely to have been taken as a prisoner of war by the Turkish forces.

Ernest RICHARDS was to spend a year in the hands of the enemy and presumably was released after the Armistice with Turkey which took effect on 31 October 1918. Upon his release, he was the recipient of a goodwill message (dated 1918) from King George V of England (FIG. 12).

On his return from the war and imprisonment Ernest RICHARDS was demobilised on 3 March 1919 and was awarded the 1914/15 Star, Victory and British War medals.

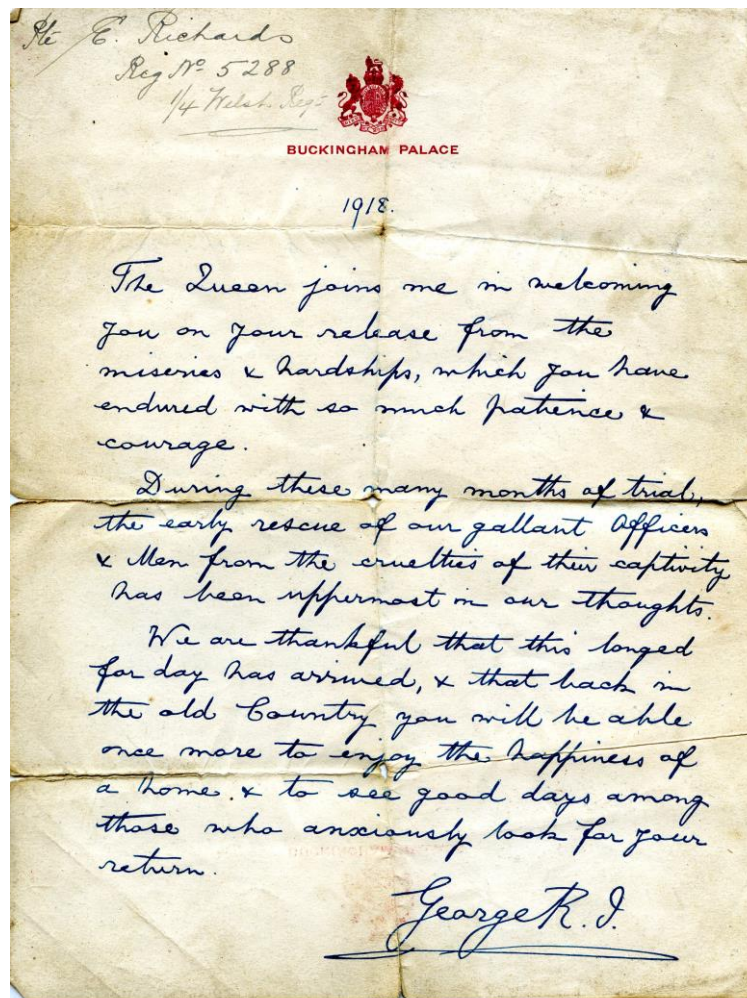


FIG. 12 – Goodwill letter from King George V to Ernest RICHARDS on his release as a Prisoner of War (dated 1918)

On 16 April 1919, only 6 weeks after his demobilisation and when he was still only 20 years old, Ernest RICHARDS married Muriel Mary FRANCIS (b. 26 October 1898 in Llanelli).

The couple had four children all born in Llanelli. They were: Mervyn Francis RICHARDS (b. 12 February 1920); Bessie Mary RICHARDS (b. 21 November 1922); Sarah Jane RICHARDS (b. 2 February 1924); and Dorothy M RICHARDS (b. 13 February 1925).

Ernest RICHARDS worked with the Llanelli Corporation (i.e. Llanelli Borough Council) for a period of thirty years from 1929 until his death in 1959 and was employed as a water mains head jointer. The role of a jointer was to join drainage, water or sewerage pipes together. The family lived at 5 Lledi Crescent in Llanelli.

His wife Muriel Mary FRANCIS died at home of a heart attack on 25 May 1957 at the age of 58 years. She was buried at the Box Cemetery, Llanelli.

A little over two years later, Ernest RICHARDS died of lung cancer on 15 September 1959 at the age of 61 years. He too was buried in the Box Cemetery, Llanelli.

8. Cyril RICHARDS (1899-1954)



Cyril RICHARDS was the eleventh-born to Daniel RICHARDS and Elizabeth WILLIAMS on 8 March 1899.

As a young boy aged 11 years he worked at the copper works (Nevill, Druce & Co).

Following the outbreak of World War 1 and the example of his older brothers, Cyril RICHARDS enlisted on 18 April 1916 when he was only 17 years and 1 month old.



FIG. 13 –Cyril RICHARDS South Wales Borderers (1919)

He was posted as a Private with the 53rd Battalion, South Wales Borderers. This battalion's full title was 53rd (Young Soldier) Battalion, named to reflect the very young age of these new recruits. Indeed across Britain there were many of these "53rd (Young Soldier) Battalions" attached to different regiments.

His battalion never saw action during war-time, but after the war was over, on 22 March 1919, they moved to Germany as part of Western Division of the Army of Occupation on the Rhine. At about this time he was photographed with the 9th Platoon, C Company 53rd Battalion in Germany (FIG. 13) and an outline of his service record is shown in (FIG. 14).



FIG. 14 – World War I & II medals and insignias held by Cyril RICHARDS (both his and brother probably Henry Joseph). Cyril's: 2. Australian Army badge; 4. South Wales Borderers badge; 6. British War Medal; 7. Victory Medal
Henry Joseph's: 1. Welch Regiment badge; 3. Welch Regiment insignia patch; 5. 1914/15 Star

Cyril RICHARDS - service records

WORLD WAR 1

53rd (YOUNG SOLDIER) BATTALION
SOUTH WALES BORDERES

RICHARDS CYRIL: Regimental Number: 49214;
Rank: Private; Enlisted: 18 April 1916; Attested on: 7 March 1917; Served: 9th Platoon, C Company 53rd Bn, Germany; Transferred to Reserve: 9 Nov 1919; Medals: Victory & British; Testimonial: "A very willing and reliable Soldier with an exemplary character"

WORLD WAR 2

23rd BATTALION

VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS, Victoria
RICHARDS CYRIL: Service No. - V388949: Date & place of birth - 08 Mar 1899, SOUTH WALES
BRITISH ISLES: Place & date of enlistment - KORUMBURRA VIC; 28/3/1942: Next of Kin - RICHARDS IVY Item barcode 6664651 Series number B884 Series Accession number 2002/05076801 Control symbol V388949; Discharge: 15/10/1945

After his return from Germany, Cyril RICHARDS returned to work at the Llanelli copper works as a mill man and, during 1920-21 played for their rugby football club. He finished working there as a furnace man on 6 Jan 1925 at age 26.

Some months later on 1 May 1926, Cyril RICHARDS immigrated to Australia arriving in Fremantle, Western Australia, after the 9½ week journey, on 6 July 1926.

In about 1928-29, Cyril RICHARDS eventually settled in South Gippsland at Ranceby, East Poowong, Victoria, Australia. Three years after his arrival in Australia he married Ivy Maud SONNET (b. 21 January 1909) in Warragul, Victoria on 28 November 1931.

The couple established a dairy farm in Ranceby and had four children. The first three children were born before World War 2. They were: Eileen Maie RICHARDS (b. 15 June 1932, Melbourne), Arthur Elvet RICHARDS (b. 4 June 1936, Melbourne) and Ronald RICHARDS (b. 13 November 1941, Korumburra).

With the outbreak of World War 2, Cyril RICHARDS enlisted on 28 March 1942 at Korumburra, Victoria in the 23rd Battalion of the Volunteer Defence Corps (**FIG. 14**). This corps was an Australia-wide home guard; paramilitary in nature, run by the government and the Returned Services League and composed of volunteers. Cyril was discharged on 15 October 1945.

Their last child Janice Ivy RICHARDS was born on 25 January 1949 at Korumburra.

Cyril RICHARDS, a heavy smoker, suffered from lung cancer. With a dire prognosis he travelled, alone, back to his hometown Llanelli on 8 June 1949 for a final visit to his land of birth. On his return, he died in the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Parkville in Melbourne on 8 June 1954 at the age of 55 years. He was cremated at Springvale Crematorium in Melbourne on 10 June 1954.

After many years, his widow Ivy Maud SONNET retired from the farm and moved to Korumburra where she re-married on 28 May 1977 to Robert David FERRES (b. 30 June 1909) at St Paul's Church, Korumburra. She died in Korumburra on 11 March 1987, aged 79 years and was cremated at Springvale Crematorium.