



Tales from the Boards

By *Geoffrey Haskins (40-43)*

Continuing a series of tales culled from research into names inscribed on the Memorial and Honours Boards now located in the Conway Chapel at Birkenhead Priory. All the information has come from the public domain, including various web-sites and publications. Other sources are the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and London Gazette, together with numerous Associations and specialised sites.

A CONWAY HERO DISCOVERED - HAMO HUNT (12-14)



The name **Hunt HLB**, inscribed on the Conway War Memorial Board, was the starting point. First stop was the CWGC website revealing only one HLB Hunt who lost his life when serving as a Corporal in the 2nd Battalion, the Leinster Regiment; he died on 15th April 1918 and is buried in Wimereux Communal Cemetery in the Pas de Calais in France. Unusually, the entry does not list his forenames, age, nor his next of kin. These sparse details were entered into our first-run WW1 Memorial list compilation with a category C identification and posted on the Conway website.

In July 2011 an email arrived from a cyber contact who, while researching Cpl Hunt and the family, discovered he had been in Conway, and that he had been awarded the Military Medal, gazetted in the August after his death. Also provided was an obituary notice showing the names of his parents: Lieut Cdr HB

Hunt RNR and Lady Ernestine Hunt of the Lusty Islands, Fermanagh. A grandson of the 5th Marquis of Ailesbury, Hunt was aged 19 when he died of wounds sustained in action.

Hunt's Military Medal was not shown on our WW1 Honours Boards, so more research was needed: what transpired is an intriguing tale of adventure, romance and feminism. A young Irish mariner, Harry Hunt, up for Masters in Liverpool in 1898, was apparently much taken by a fellow student: a feisty 28-year-old aristocratic lady who was aiming to be the first woman to hold a Yachtmaster's Certificate. They married and young Hamo Lewis Brady Hunt was born on 1st November 1898. The life story of his mother, Lady Ernestine Hunt (née Brudenell-Bruce), entrepreneur, horse breeder, rancher and dealer, intrepid ocean-going yachtswoman, Boer War auxiliary nurse, and founding member of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) in 1909 is material for a book in its own right.

After attending St Martin's School, Long Ashton near Bristol, Hamo Hunt was sent to Conway in 1912. At the age of 15, in 1914, he abandoned life at sea and joined the Prince of Wales' Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) as a boy soldier on a seven-year enlistment with the rank of Drummer. When war came, he was deemed too young for the front line, so served with the Leinsters' reserve battalion until November 1917 and was then sent to France with the 2nd Battalion and promoted to Corporal. The Leinsters, as part of the 16th Irish Division, took the whole force of a German onslaught, as described by the contact thus: