

**Every year we feature one former pupil who lost their life in a war.
In 2015 we feature Frank Pocock, our most-decorated war hero**

Frank Pearce Pocock was born on the 15th May 1891. He was a nephew of Robert Pearce, the owner and headmaster and founder of Ripley Court. From here he went on to St Paul's and thence to Westminster Hospital on an open scholarship, where he became a surgeon.

On the outbreak of war he offered his services to the Navy and was on a battleship in the North Sea, but gained his first Military Cross in France with the Drake Battalion, who were naval men who volunteered to fight on land.

For those not in the know, the Military Cross is the third highest gallantry award, bettered only by a conspicuous gallantry cross and the Victoria Cross.

With chronic influenza he was invalided home in 1917 but returned to serve as surgeon on HMS Iris II in the Zeebrugge raid, where he gained a DSO, the citation reading: "By his devotion to duty he undoubtedly saved many lives when Iris II was hit. He at once commenced tending the wounded and as all the sick-berth staff were killed had all the work to do alone. After the dynamo was damaged he had to work by candle and torchlight".

He returned to Drake Battalion and was mortally wounded, gaining a bar to the MC with the citation "He attended to the wounded under very heavy fire & most adverse circumstances during operations lasting several days. His courage & self-sacrificing devotion to duty were a splendid example to his stretcher-bearers & his skill was instrumental in saving the lives of many wounded men."

Tragically, his wounds got the better of him on 18th September 1918, just a few months before the end of the war.

Not obviously a military person, this citation and the use of his medical skills marks him out as the most heroic of Ripley Court's war dead.

