Henry (Harry) Taylor was born 16 August 1896. He was the son of Albert and Margaret Taylor. In 1901, the family were living at 3F, Model Dwellings, Salford. Albert was a labourer machinist. Henry had three brothers and two sisters. Model Dwelling was a lodging house. Albert Taylor died shortly after the census was taken, aged 34. Margaret must have struggled to cope as Henry was admitted to the Infant’s Class at Edgworth Methodist School, 7 January 1902.
His guardian, Henry Maycock, and his wife Sarah, were living at 85, Bury Road, Edgworth, Lancashire.

In 1901\(^1\) Henry Maycock was aged 67 and a Drainer. He and his wife, aged 54, had two adopted daughters, Dora E. Lawson, aged 14, from Farnworth Workhouse, Katy Bedford, aged 13, birthplace unknown and Rachel Haslem a boarder, aged 46, who was classed as feeble minded.

Unfortunately for them all, Sarah Maycock died mid 1902\(^3\).

Henry Maycock died mid-1911\(^3\).

Prior to the Adoption Act of 1926, adoption generally included fostering and guardianship with a verbal agreement, some poor law authorities saw ‘boarding out’ as an alternative to the workhouse or orphanage.\(^{18}\)

By 1911 \(^1\) Henry, also known as Harry, had moved to 22, Blackburn Road, Edgworth. He was aged 14, working as a little piecer in cotton spinning and was the adopted son of Samuel and Elizabeth Atkin. Samuel was a fitter at the calico print works. The couple had three sons of their own, Handel, aged 13 (See separate biography for Handel Atkin), Frank, aged 7 and John, aged 4. Harry was said to have been born in the Salford area.

**Service Record\(^2\)**

Harry Taylor enlisted at Bolton, for the duration of the War, 16 January 1915. His address was Holly Bank, Entwistle, the home of the Atkin family, his date of birth was given as 1896. He was 19 years old and he signed up for the 5\(^{th}\) (1\(^{st}\) Reserve) Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders, with the rank of Private, Regimental no. 3931. This was a Territorial Force. The 5\(^{th}\) was the Sutherland and Caithness Battalion and part of the 51\(^{st}\). (Highland) Division.
The hat badge Harry Taylor was wearing in his full highland uniform photograph is that of the 5th Battalion (19)

Samuel and Elizabeth Atkin, Handel, Frank and John (26)

Harry was “embodied”, (a term applied to enlistment into a Territorial Force) (20) into the regiment at Bedford, 21 January 1915. His physical condition was described as, height 5 feet 3 inches, chest 32 inches with an expansion of 2 ½ inches, vision and physical condition good and with no heart or lung problems found. “Fit for the Territorial Force”.

The Highland Division was in Bedford from August 1914 until May 1915.

At the outbreak of the First World War, the role of the Territorial Army was that of Home Defence, being further divided into “Coastal” and “Central” Defence. The Highland Division was part of the Central Force and was allocated to Bedford. Bedford was selected because of its strategic position, being centrally located and having a good transport infrastructure (21)
A possible coastal invasion of Great Britain was seen as a threat, therefore good road and rail transport links which could be used to quickly transport troops to defend any threatened part of the coastline or the country were essential. The need for reinforcements at the Front in France and Flanders soon became evident and training of men from the Territorial Army, for offensive service overseas, began. Men from the town’s battalions then started leaving for France in November 1914 following their training. The good transport links needed in case of invasion, allowed for the men to be transported speedily and efficiently to the south coast and then over to France by ship. As men from the battalions went overseas, their places were taken by the Reserve Battalions.

Harry was one of the men who, following the recruiting campaign of the winter of 1914/15, reinforced the town’s battalions in mid-January 1915.

It has been estimated that more than 20,000 men were billeted in Bedford at times between the winter of 1914 and mid-1915. The men of the 5th Battalion of Seaforth Highlanders were located in an area of town locally known as ‘Black Tom’. This was an area between Kimbolton and Bromham Roads, which was quite a self-contained little community in those days ... a village within the town.

While the soldiers were billeted in Bedford, the local people made them very welcome, many events took place and a variety of entertainment was provided. One couple, Mr. Percy Noel Binns, a local solicitor and his wife, entertained a party of soldiers on a regular basis.

Although the 5th Battalion of Seaforth Highlanders left Bedford and landed in France 2 May 1915, Harry remained at Home (England) from 16 January 1915 to 30 April 1917, he then joined the British Expeditionary Force in France. There is no information in his service record as to how the time at Home was spent but could be explained by illness.

While in Bedford many men succumbed to outbreaks of scarlet fever, diphtheria and measles. In the close living quarters of the billets, cross infection would be a problem. Men from the Highlands of Scotland had little resistance to these infections and as this was before the advent of antibiotic therapy, there were fatalities. Pneumonia could be a secondary infection to measles. Harry too, not having had the best start in life, may have contracted one or more of these illnesses and developed complications. He could then have been sent home to recuperate.
The service record for Harry does not show any posting to front line service once he arrived in France. He was transferred to The Labour Corps and posted to 245th Divisional Employ, 10 August 1917. This was Divisional Train of the 51st (Highland) Division. The Divisional Train supplied horse drawn transport and it was the “workhorse” of the Division in terms of carrying stores and supplies, often from a port near the theatre of war and was the main supply line to the transports of infantry, artillery and other attached units who in turn would supply their own troops and the Front Line.

The Labour Corps was manned by officers and other ranks who had been medically rated as below ‘A1’, the condition needed for front line service. The corps always suffered from its treatment as something of a second class organisation, although the men were often in range of enemy guns. Harry’s service number changed to 224238. This transfer to the Labour Corps reinforces the assumption that Harry’s deterioration in health status from A1 on enlistment, to below A1 on his arrival in France, occurred in England.

An interesting fact provided by Norman Atkin, son of Handel and adoptive nephew of Harry Taylor was that on one occasion, when Handel Atkin (Royal Engineers) was behind the lines, on a rest period from the Front, he met Harry quite by chance. Unfortunately nothing else is known of the encounter.

Harry returned to England, 6 August 1918, a page in his service records shows that he was in Fort Pitt, a military hospital at Chatham in August 1918, the day is illegible. The record then shows that Harry was posted (compulsory), 7 August 1918 but not where to, but as he may have been in hospital, it could refer to his permanent transfer to the A.S.C. (Army Service Corps). He assumed the rate of pay for the A.S.C., 29 September 1918. His service number changed to T/439031. The letter T as a prefix to a service number signified a soldier who served in the Horse Transport. He was posted to No. 2 Res. (HT), Horse Transport, Depot 239 Company. This was at Blackheath, Surrey. A later page in Harry’s record gave his rank as Driver.

Harry was “disembodied” on discharge from the R.A.S.C., the prefix Royal, was awarded to the A.S.C. late 1918. His discharge date was 11 April 1919; he had served for 4 years and 86 days and was then “surplus to military requirements”.

Harry’s dispersal unit was Heaton Park. He was given an advance of £2 and granted a furlough of 28 days during which he did not need to wear his uniform so was given a Certificate of Identity as he was no longer with the Colours.

The reason for his transfer to the Labour Corps and discharge from the army was given on his record’s pension sheet. He had been found to have “Heart Trouble”, which was attributable to war service. Cardiac problems can be a complication of illnesses such as pneumonia, although this cannot be proved in Harry’s case. His physical condition was then classed as B1. He was considered to have a reduction in fitness of 20 %. He was granted a pension of 5 shillings and 6 pence a week, payable from 12 April 1919, which was to be reviewed in 26 weeks time. Harry returned to 7, Holly Bank Entwistle. His records show that he received the British War and Victory Medals.
Family History

We are indebted to Mr. Norman Atkin, son of Handel Atkin, for supplying the background to Harry’s post war life.

Henry Taylor married Margaret Taylor in 1925; the marriage was registered in Bolton and is thought to have taken place at St. Anne’s Church, Turton. Margaret and her family lived in High Street, Chapeltown, she was born in 1894. There were no children from the marriage.

Harry, either from a sense of adventure or in pursuit of a better life, travelled to Canada. He left Liverpool, 2 September 1927, aboard the SS Andania of the Cunard Steamship Line. Harry was age 30 and an engineer. His address was 1, High Street, Turton. He sailed to Montreal and arrived there 10 September 1927. Margaret was not listed on the ship’s manifest but she did join Harry in Canada at some point not found.

Mr. Norman Atkin remembers Harry talking about the different climate in Canada and how in winter, the deep snow was not cleared but was driven over and in summer, the moths and insects were a problem. A big house near to where he was living had a big fan with a wind sock which drew in the insects but this was not very effective.

Harry and Margaret returned to England. They landed in Liverpool 13 August 1932, having left Montreal aboard the Duchess of Bedford of the Canadian Pacific Line. Harry’s occupation was now Printer. Their return address was 52, High Street, Turton.

In 1939 the couple were living in Turton, at 81A, High Street. This is remembered as being two doors from the Chetham Arms Inn.

Harry went to work at the Know Mill Printing Company’s Bevis Green works in Walmersley, Bury, he was a screen printer. During World War Two, camouflage material was printed at the works.

“Printing Camouflage Cloth”
Harold Workman (1897-1975)

A painting in Manchester City Galleries shows the printing of camouflage material at Know Mill, Walmersley during World War Two.
Harry Taylor died in June 1966, he was cremated. A possible death for Margaret Taylor, born about 1895, was registered in Bolton in 1955\(^3\).

**Research by:** Jocelyn C Russell

**Standard references:** 1, 2, 3, 30, plus:

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25. Copyright Harold Workman, 1945, oil on canvas. Photo credit: Manchester City Galleries. [www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/.../printing-camouflage-cloth-206447](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/.../printing-camouflage-cloth-206447)

26. Pictures from the collection of N. Atkin

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**Recommended Reading**

The Bedford Highlanders, a blog of facts and many photographs of Bedford and the Highland soldiers in World War One, written by Richard Galley. [www.bedfordhighlandersblogspot.co.uk](http://www.bedfordhighlandersblogspot.co.uk)