



THE WESTERN FRONT
ASSOCIATION

Lancashire North Branch

Despatch

Issue 12: Nov 2013



This month's frontispiece is thanks to Barrie Bertram's cancelled summer holiday and his interest in the UUWW1 involvement of, for some, a summer holiday location. Read more (starting Page 3) about the photo and also about: a Preston freeman with possibly a unique epitaph; the South Lancashire Colonel who prepared the most important tactical manual for the BEF in WW1; the first Kentish tale about getting men their entitlement of rum; the Armistice prize winners in 2013 and more.

Editor's Musing

My embryonic musing for last May's Despatch concerned the themes for marking the WW1 centenary, some of which I felt were politically motivated. My thoughts were broken by Baroness Thatcher's death.

Over the past six months I have pleasingly seen various initiatives including the Sunday Telegraph's first two excellent supplements sponsored by Lord Ashcroft entitled "*Inside the First World War*" and the BBC's "*Wipers Times*". Also various WFA initiatives have emerged at branch and national level which will help put WW1 into its proper perspective.

The second conference of the WFA President entitled "Prelude to War" was an event I enjoyed attending with a significant presentation by Dr Adrian Gregory. I will monitor the WFA's national website and watch again when the video appears.

In Issue 8 (November 2011) I mentioned how coincidences have tinged my productions of Despatch. In this Issue I report on Major General Arthur Solly Flood's contribution to training of the BEF (Page 6) and Chris Payne reports on Hal Egerton's generous donation of his book collection to help our Branch funds (Page 22). The most expensive book I bought from Hal's collection was "*Alarms & Excursions - Reminiscences of a Soldier*" by Lieut Gen Sir Tom Bridges who, famously, used a tin whistle and drum to rouse British troops in St Quentin during the retreat from Mons. When I checked the Army List I found that both he and Solly Flood were appointed Major in the 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards on 19th August 1908! See also the coincidence re Kentish on Page 8

My thanks to contributors to Despatch; it could not continue without your help.

MORE INFORMATION FOR ARTICLES WHEN:

(+P) : photos, maps in Photo Gallery,

(+S) : supplementary information report

See our website www.wfanlancs.co.uk and look against this Despatch

JOSEPH THOMAS LIVESEY, PRIVATE DEAL/3761/S, ROYAL NAVAL DIVISION: Terry Dean

My first talk to the Branch ("A Bantam's War") was about the shorthand war diary kept by Sidney Barnes in the 17th Lancashire Fusiliers. In his diary Sid accounts the awful experiences at Houthulst Forest in October 1917 during the Passchendaele offensive. He refers to his pal



Joe Livesey of the Royal Naval Division Medical Corps who died on 6th November 1917 of wounds received in action at Passchendaele and of visiting Joe's grave when returning from leave in January 1918.

Sid and Joe were brought up in the same street. Joe was born 3 July 1895, the only son of Henry and Elizabeth Livesey; he was one of the youngest freemen of the Borough of Preston at the age of 7; he attended Preston Grammar School, then worked in the County Surveyors Department (my first employer) and served in the John's Ambulance.

He enlisted on 6th April 1915 and was posted to the Royal Naval Division which had left England at the end of February 1915 to take part in the Gallipoli campaign. Joe went to Gallipoli with a draft for the 1st (RN) Field Ambulance on 9th May 1915 and joined his unit on the 29th of the same month at Cape Helles. Following the unsuccessful campaign Joe was evacuated along with the rest of the RN Division in January 1916.

According to records at the National Archives he embarked at Mudros on 15th May 1916 and disembarked at Marseilles 6 days later. By July the Division had been transferred to Army control and became

known as the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division. The brigades of the Division were numbered 188 - 190, with 188 & 189 being ex navy battalions and 190 comprised 4 infantry battalions.

Joe would be involved in actions on the Ancre in November 1916 and early 1917 before participating in the battles of Arras in April 1917. On 30th April he was attached to XIII Corps School of Instruction at Pernes. He joined 149th (RN) Field Ambulance (which was 2 (RN) FA renumbered) on 28th September 1917 in time for 63rd Division's participation in the second Battle of Passchendaele between 26th October and 5th November

A letter from his Colonel to his parents states that: *"He was wounded at the most advanced post during an attack and was being carried to the rear by comrades with whom he was working when a shell burst near them killing one and wounding three stretcher bearers and again wounding Private Livesey. This happened near the end of the action, and all five had done good work together all through. He was loved by all in the ambulance and will be sadly missed. I looked upon him as one of my best boys."*

He was taken to No 4 Casualty Clearing Station at Dozinghem where he died on 6th November. The Royal Naval Division records give his cause of death *"SW Multiple, left arm amputated"*.

He was buried at Dozinghem Military Cemetery and his name appears on 5 memorials in Preston.

Not having a photo of his grave I sought the help of TWGPP (The War Graves Photographic Project) but they had not photographed Dozinghem. Consequently a visit there was high priority when next in the vicinity. With pouring rain Emmie stayed in the car and I went forth hoping to find something special. The chosen words of his parents and sweetheart, Gladys Armitage did

not disappoint, in what I think might be a unique inscription:

THEN THROUGH OUR DARKNESS CAME HIS LOVING VOICE. "BEHOLD I'M OFTEN NEAR YOU SO REJOICE"

After visiting the cemetery I responded to a request from a local whose family had lived near there in WW1. Luc Inion, as a child, could see the cemetery from his bedroom window and sought information about the soldiers buried there so that he could help the remembering of them. I gave Luc information about Joe and subsequently obtained for him the War Diaries of the 3 Casualty Clearing Stations that were based there. He gave me a photo so I can show how Joe's grave would have looked then and now.



EXTRA RESERVE: Barrie Bertram

A few days in Staffordshire does not sound as compensation for a cancelled fortnight on the Somme last June and July, but one had to make do! Yet, our stay spent just outside Lichfield enabled the memsahib and me to visit a few sites with Great War connections, including the National Memorial Arboretum and Cannock Chase. However, it was a visit to the Staffordshire Regiment Museum that reaped major dividends as will be seen.

Members know my Jersey background and my interest in the Island's involvement in the

Great War, and so I was interested to find out what I could about the presence there of the South Staffordshire Regiment between 1914 and 1916. Furthermore some 50+ Islanders served with that Regiment (and another 20 or so with its northern counterpart) during the War. So, the question was asked, 'What does the Museum have in terms of the 4th Battalion's time in Jersey?'

A few weeks later, the answer was a disk in a jiffy bag that contained just over 200 remarkable images, which one suspects, has never been published.

These images chart the Battalion's time in Jersey from arrival to departure, and shows many of the officers who passed through. 'Unique' is often a much-banded word, but this electronic album of images is very close to meriting that description.

Mobilisation! Call out the Reserves! Muster the Militia! Increase Recruiting! These calls seemed to course through the veins of the French and British Empires in August, 1914. Jersey was not excluded. French reservists were soon on their way to Granville and St Malo, set to report to their Regiments while their British counterparts did likewise, heading off to Plymouth, Southampton and Weymouth. Jersey's garrison battalion, the 1st Devonshire Regiment would find itself vacating Fort Regent, St Peter's Barracks and other locations, to head off to France, via Exeter and Plymouth where it first collected its reservists. Meanwhile, the 20th Company, RGA was not far behind. Now seemingly, apart from Jersey's Militia and the HQ, Jersey District Staff, all under the command of the Lieutenant-Governor, there was no other military presence.

But mailboats were heading in the opposite direction, and on the 9th August, the South Staffordshire Regiment's 4th (Extra Reserve) Battalion landed at St Helier's Harbour at 5.00 am, being led off by their CO, Lieutenant-Colonel Edward AE Bulwer (on

the right) and his 2ic, Major Douglas T Seckham.



In these early days of the War, divisions, units and the men were moving hither and thither, in what probably appeared to be utter chaos to the casual onlooker. The barracks were being emptied as the resident infantry Battalions moved to their divisional assembly areas and, from there, onto the ports of disembarkation for France. But the Special Reserve was flocking back to the colours, and with Depots unable to cope with the numbers, infantry reserve Battalions (generally the 3rd and 4th Battalions) were sent to occupy 'empty premises' in those few days following mobilisation. In the South Staffordshire Regiment's case, both of its reserve Battalions had formed up at Lichfield on the 4th August, with the 3rd Battalion then heading off to Plymouth, while the 4th, as we see, turned up in Jersey. Kitchener's recruiting drives for 100,000 men would soon create a further accommodation problem for the military, but that is another story, while the shuffling of the Reserves' pack may not have been so chaotic after all!

Establishing themselves at the Fort and elsewhere in Jersey, the Battalion now required two things so that they could get down to the important business of training men for war. The second seems to be the men themselves, but the first requirement was for the officers' chargers, and thus they embarked upon buying remounts during that month.

In the photograph above we see, from left

much of the scenery during route marches and rifle range practice.



to right, the CO, the Lieutenant-Governor, General Sir Alexander Rochfort, the Battalion's Adjutant, Jersey-born Captain William JJ Collas, and Jersey's Commander Royal Artillery, Colonel Evelyn Pollock, It is unclear where it was taken, but it is thought to be the RJH&AS (Royal Jersey Horticultural and Agricultural Society) Showground at Springfield. The photograph below, with the



2ic and the Adjutant, up in the saddle and road testing their new steeds, are passing the Pomme d'Or and Southampton Hotels at the Weighbridge.

Now the men would turn up, as the next three photographs show, to be greeted by a welcoming party of senior NCOs more bent on whipping their new charges into shape, than showing them the beautiful side of Jersey. In any case, they would soon see

If the Kaiser had seen the last photograph, one suspects that it would have confirmed his view that his reference to the BEF being a 'contemptible little army' was not too wide of the mark. Certainly the men drawn up on parade appear to look like Fred Karno's Army in their mixed dress of khaki and cloth caps, and one has to look twice to check that the chap in the foreground, wearing the derby bowler, was not Charlie Chaplin! But, these

men were reservists and had probably retained their uniforms from the period of their colour service, and would have been advised to leave as much of their civilian clothes at home as possible when picking up their travel warrants. In hindsight, sensible advice as it was unlikely that 'civvies' were needed where they were eventually bound, and the burden on the Post Office and the Exchequer might prove unwelcome.

As an aside, these photographs are a vivid reminder of the days when every male wore a hat!

By late October, 1914, the Battalion was



beginning to cut a dash as a military unit as opposed to appearing like a rag, tag and bobtail outfit. The above photograph shows the officers and men drawn up on St Aubin's Bay, having been given the order 'Right Incline' (This is a 45° Right Turn as opposed to the full 90° one). One can pick out, here and there, those officers who were mounted, while the Quartermaster's GS Wagon is at the rear. And, is that the CO's dog sat in front of the right-hand marker? **To be continued.**

(All the photographs have been kindly provided by the Staffordshire Regiment Museum)

THINK ONLY THIS OF ME THAT
THERE'S SOME CORNER OF A
FOREIGN FIELD THAT IS FOREVER
ENGLAND - Second Lieutenant A C
Foster Grenadier Guards

MAJOR GENERAL ARTHUR SOLLY FLOOD (+S) : Terry Dean

The first publication of the South Lancashire Regimental Chronicle (SLRC) in July 1925 contains a photograph and short summary about their Colonel who performed in number of significant roles during WW1.



"Major General A. SOLLY-FLOOD was appointed to the South Lancashire Regiment in 1891, becoming Adjutant of the 1st Battalion in 1895. On promotion to Major he was transferred to the 4th Dragoon Guards being promoted Lieut. Colonel in November, 1914. He became Brevet Colonel in January, 1917, and was promoted to his present rank in June, 1919, having served as (Temp) Major General for two years during the war.

He saw service in South Africa during the war of 1899–1902 and for distinguished service in that campaign was awarded the D.S.O.

The opening months of the Great War saw him in command of his Squadron of the 4th Dragoon Guards in France, and later in the year he commanded that Regiment until promoted Brigade Commander of the 35th Infantry Brigade, early in 1915. In 1917, after nine months as Brigadier General on the General Staff at General Headquarters, British Armies in France, he was given command of the 42nd Infantry Division which command he retained until March, 1919, when he took over command of the 3rd Brigade, Lancashire Division, British Armies of the Rhine.

He was wounded in France, was mentioned in Despatches seven times, awarded Brevets of Lieut. Colonel and Colonel, and was decorated with both the C.B. and C.M.G. for distinguished service. In addition he was awarded the following foreign orders: The Belgian Order of the Crown, the Belgian War Cross, and the French War Cross.

At present he is Divisional Commander of the 42nd (The East Lancashire) Division T.A., his old division.

He became Colonel of the Regiment on May 1st, 1921, in succession to Major General S. H. Sartorius, V.C., C.B. (since deceased)."

In 1927 he was appointed Deputy Adjutant-General, Army Headquarters, India and from 1927 to 1931 (when he retired) was Major General of cavalry in India and Commandant of the School of Equitation.

He was born 28 January 1871 (son of Maj-Gen Sir F. R. Solly Flood) and died 14th November 1940.

It was an article in the WFA's eNews in July which sparked my interest in him and resulted in this item for Despatch. The article was entitled "*Haig and the Implementation of Tactical Doctrine on the Western Front*" by Dr Christopher Pugsley of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. In it Pugsley describes how Haig assessed the calibre of commanders at every level, was central to tactical doctrine and how Haig's GHQ took a leading role in the dissemination of information. This was given special impetus with the appointment of Brigadier General Arthur Solly Flood to command the new Training Directorate of GHQ on 30 January 1917.

On reading the article I recalled from my digitisation of the Regimental journals at the Lancashire Infantry Museum in Preston the many reference to Solly Flood in the SLRCs. A Google search revealed that Alistair

Geddes had given a presentation in 2009 to the Yorkshire branch of the WFA about him and the presentation had been usefully summarised by Peter Palmer and posted on the WFA's website.

From Palmer's summary I learned that in late 1916 he was appointed acting Commander of Third Army School and went, along with a party of British officers, to investigate French methods at their Fourth Army training school at Chalons in November 1916. On his return he worked with the French approach to develop SS143, 'Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action', the most important tactical manual for the BEF of the whole war. On 30 January 1917 Haig appointed Solly-Flood to command the new Training Directorate at GHQ. In addition to codifying the BEF's tactical doctrine, Solly-Flood unified the training which had been carried out by the separate army schools, abolished the divisional training schools and put the newly emerging Corps schools on a sound footing.

According to Geddes (and Palmer) when Solly Flood moved to command 42nd Division in October 1917 his "*contribution to training was consigned to a dusty corner; his name was forgotten and he was lost in the shadow of Ivor Maxse. The contrary should be the case: he should be remembered as the man who preceded Maxse in authorising SS143, unifying the BEF's schools system and promulgating good practice with the excellent training manuals he was responsible for.*

(For convenience of Despatch readers copies of the articles by Dr Christopher Pugsley and Peter Palmer have been placed as supplements to this Despatch on our website. In both articles Arthur Solly Flood is wrongly indicated to have been created a Knight)

**THE BOY WE LOST IS LYING HERE
BUT HIS MEMORY IS AT HOME -
Private M Hood Suffolk Regiment**

BRIGADIER GENERAL REGINALD JOHN KENTISH (RJK) & HIS TALES: Terry Dean

Kentish Tales



In mid July I visited the Imperial War Museum (IWM) with the backing of a letter from RJK's family to the IWM giving them authority to allow me unlimited access to RJK's documents. I had made contact with the family in 2010 when preparing my presentation about RJK entitled "*Leadership Morale and Esprit de Corps - The Winning Factor?*".

The IWM was officially closed for renovation but thankfully a suitable room was made available for me. Primarily my purpose was to photograph "*Notes for Commandants of and Instructors in Army Schools and Training Establishments*" written by RJK in July 1917 when he was Commandant of the Senior Officers' School at Aldershot but I also took the opportunity examine the 2 boxes containing RJK's documents which his nephew had given to the IWM some years ago.

I never contemplated that my visit to the IWM would result in an article for this Despatch which would connect with an article in WFA's eNews two weeks later and a sequence of tales for Despatch.

In the previous article I refer to Solly Flood, in late 1916, being appointed Commander of the Third Army School which had been set up by RJK in November 1915. Also on Solly Flood reorganising the army schools in 1917 I can imagine the value of RJK's "Notes" produced in July 1917 for the Commandants and Instructors of Solly Flood's newly emerging schools. RJK would probably have had discussions with Solly Flood about training matters.

In one of the RJK's boxes was a bundle of papers containing accounts he had drafted around 1940 describing humorous incidents he had experienced. His thoughts in drafting them were that they might be published but this did not happen (until now?). Each incident starts by describing the scene, time, place, and "Dramatis Personae". Most are too long to be carried word for word in Despatch (unless the Editor is short of copy) but I thought readers might find a summarised version interesting, so here goes.

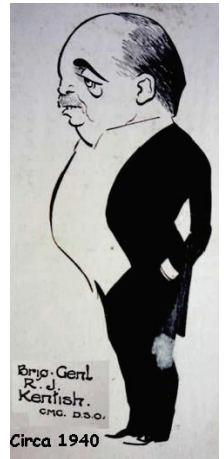
A GENERAL WHO DIDN'T LIKE RUM

PART I.

SCENE: TIME: PLACE: Stand to in the trenches under Messines in the winter of 1914-15.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE: Brig. General (afterwards Lieut. General Sir Aylmer) A S. Haldane, commanding the 10th Infantry Brigade in 4th Division which included my Battalion, the 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers and me, a Captain, commanding 'A' Company

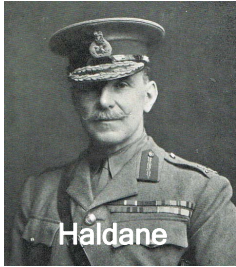
We had all been having a terrible hard time of it, chiefly because of the weather, the men nearly perished with the cold. But the weather was not the only cause of our troubles, for, to make matters worse, we were shelled to hell from dawn to dusk and sometimes all through the night too. Such was the life we were leading the men were much 'bucked up' when they saw in Battalion



Orders that the Commander-in-Chief had authorised the issue of rum to all troops in the trenches, the issue to be made at 'Stand to' in the morning.

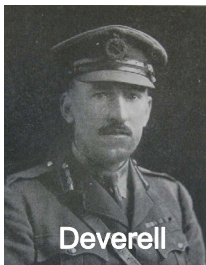
This was all very cheering news, but unfortunately our Brigadier happened to be like Gallio of Biblical fame, who "cared for none of those things", for immediately after it had appeared in Battalion Orders, a Brigade Order came out forbidding the issue of rum to the units in the 10th Brigade,

The order, naturally, was very much resented by all ranks, and especially by flank companies, where they joined up with the flank companies of the Brigades on



their right and left, and it was galling for them to see the men alongside them receiving their rum each morning, whilst they were only able to get a "whiff" of it!!

It was of course all wrong and fate was to be unkind to me, for, when a year later, I was appointed to command a Brigade, I found that my Divisional Commander was no less a person than my old Brigadier, who had in no way changed his views, with the result that instead of 4000 men not having the rum to which they were entitled, no less than 20,000 men a whole Division, including my own Brigade, was compelled to go 'rumless', all to satisfy the whim of one man.



This state of things continued until General Haldane left to command a Corps, and his successor General Deverell, afterwards Field Marshal Sir Cyril Deverell and Chief of the Imperial General Staff, at once cancelled General Haldane's order and the men got their rum.

PART II

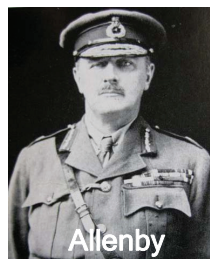
SCENE: TIME: PLACE: A chateau west of Arras, May 1917, the Headquarters of III Army

DRAMATIS PERSONAE: General Sir Edmond (afterwards Field Marshall Lord) Allenby commanding III Army: his M.G.G.S., Major General Sir Louis Bols: Lieut General Sir Aylmer Haldane, commanding X Corps: a Colonel commanding one of my old battalions and me, a Brigadier General and at the time Commandant of the Senior Officers' School, Aldershot

The day of reckoning was to come, as indeed it always does to malefactors and I place a General, who deprives his soldiers of their rum as a malefactor of the very first order. As fate would have it, I was to find myself one of the principal actors in the final scene.

After commanding my Brigade for over one year in France, I was selected by Sir Douglas Haig to organise and be Commandant of The Senior Officers' School, which he had decided to establish for the training of Majors and senior Captains for command. To keep myself in touch with all that was going on, I used to cross to France at the end of each course and visit each of the Armies in turn, and then return in time for the next course.

On this particular occasion I had come across and I happened to be the guest of



General Allenby, then commanding the III Army, and finding my old Brigade in his Army I went up to the line and spent a most enjoyable day with them, and just as I was leaving I said to

the Colonel commanding one of my old battalions:

"Well, is there anything I can do for you at Army Headquarters for I'm going back there now?"

"Only one thing sir, get the men their rum in the trenches" he said.

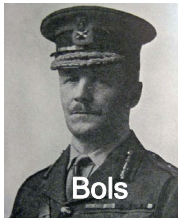
"But aren't you getting it?"

"No sir," said the Colonel.

"Because sir," he said, "General Haldane is commanding our Corps, and as you know sir, when you were commanding the Brigade when it was in the 3rd Division, which he was commanding, he wouldn't allow us to have our rum then, and now he's commanding the Corps, he won't allow a single man in the Corps to have it." "Apart from this," added Smith, "we've everything we want sir, and we're all very happy!"

"Right," I said, "I'll see what I can do," and wishing him 'Good luck', left the line and made my way back to Army Headquarters.

That evening at dinner, I was sitting between General Allenby and General Bols, and during a lull in the conversation, General Bois said to me:



"Well, how did you find your old Brigade to-day, Kentish?"

"I found 'em all in excellent fettle, except for one thing," I said.

"What was that?" said the Army Commander.

"Oh, they can't get any rum in the trenches, sir," I said.

"Why not?" said the Army Commander.

"Because their Corps Commander doesn't approve of rum in the trenches."

"Who's their Corps Commander?" he said.

"General Haldane, sir."

"Oh!" he grunted, "he doesn't approve of rum doesn't he?" and that's all he said at the time, but when dinner was over and we were leaving the table, he said: "Come along to my room, Kentish, and have a cigar," and following him to his room he gave me a cigar and then saying: "Take a seat" he said, "Now

tell me all about your old Brigade not getting its rum."

On this I told him the whole story from start to finish beginning with the 10th Brigade in the trenches in 1914. Directly I had finished, he picked up the telephone and said: "Get me General Haldane on the phone"

In a few moments the telephone rang, the Army Commander picked up the receiver and this is the conversation, as well as I can remember it, that followed, or at least it's what I heard the Army Commander say:-

"Is that you Haldane? Good evening. I just wanted a word with you about your men and their rum. I understand you're having some difficulty in getting them their issue? What is your difficulty? Can I help you?" and then a pause. "Oh, there's no difficulty? Then why aren't they getting it?"

Then another pause during which General Haldane presumably was explaining to the Army Commander that he didn't approve of rum and that it was by his 'orders' that they weren't getting it, for the Army Commander, after listening to what he had to say, said somewhat sharply:

"But Haldane, I don't understand. It isn't a question of you or even of me approving or disapproving the issue of rum to the men. It's the Commander-in-Chief's order!"

And then: "Will you please see that from now onwards every man in your Corps gets his rum at 'Stand to' every morning," and with a "Thank you" and a "Good night" he hung up his receiver and turning to me said:

"Thank you very much Kentish for bringing this to my notice" and then I left him to deal with his papers and correspondence.

I rejoined the rest of the Staff in the Mess, feeling that my visit to France had been worthwhile with 60,000 men in X Corps now getting their rum.

**TO SEE DESPATCH WITH LARGER
TYPE AND PHOTOS IN COLOUR.
VIEW AT: www.wfanlancs.co.uk**

WW1 MEDALS - THE 1914-15 STAR: Bill Myers

My survey of the medals of the First World War started by looking at the 1914 or Mons Star issued for service in the early months of the conflict. This article explores the very similar looking 1914-15 Star. It was issued to all those who saw service in a theatre of war between August 5 in 1914 and December 31 in 1915, except those already eligible for the 1914 Star.

It was popularly known as "Pip" in the standard trio of medals awarded to millions of soldiers and called "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred". The expression "Pip" came from a Daily Mirror cartoon dog devised by the



illustrator Austin B Payne whose army batman went by the nickname of Pip-Squeak. In the cartoon Pip, Squeak and Wilfred were a dog, a penguin and a rabbit.

They appeared in many spin-off products, including annuals, games and souvenir pottery.

Qualification for the 1914-15 Star was automatically followed by the award of the Silver War Medal and the Victory Medal. A total of 2,366,000 1914-15 Stars were issued - around 283,500 of which went to the Royal Navy. The ribbon is identical on both the 1914 Star and 1914-15 Star - red, white and blue watered silk.

The bronze four-pointed star is 50mm in height with a width of 45mm and has "1914-15" on a scroll



on crossed swords within a wreath.

Stamped on the back in capital letters is the name, rank, number and regiment of the recipient. Single examples can still be found for £25 - and many First World War medals groups seem to have been broken up through the decades - but the price at least doubles for casualties.

It was awarded to officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the British, Dominion, Colonial and Indian forces. It also went to civilian medical practitioners, nurses and others employed with military hospitals.

To complicate matters, there are some exceptions to these rules. It was not awarded to those who passed through a theatre of war as a passenger, or as a visitor on inspections. Nor was it awarded to those who, between the relevant dates, only saw service for which the Sudan Medal (1910) or the Africa General Service Medal was awarded. Those who served on the Indian Frontier between 28 November 1914 and 27 October 1915 did qualify, as no bar to the Indian General Service Medal was issued for operations there during that period.

Many men of the 1/4th Battalion of the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment - which drew many of its soldiers from Furness - would have qualified for the 1914-15 Star. They were stationed in Southern England during the first winter of the war before arriving in France on May 3 in 1915 in time for the Battle of Festubert on June 15. Men of the 2nd, 1/5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Battalions of The King's Own were also engaged in France and Flanders, Gallipoli or Salonika before the end of 1915. Some of the 1st Battalion, who had not already qualified for the 1914 Star, would also be entitled.

One more unusual Lancashire recipient of the 1914-15 Star was a volunteer nurse from Grange-over-Sands, now part of Cumbria. Her trio of medals, plus an oak leaf clasp for

being mentioned in despatches, sold on an internet auction site this summer for £620. Normally a trio of medals would be worth



around £75 but these were special because they were to a woman and included the rare bravery award - her name was included in the official despatches of Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig on January 4 in 1917.

Agnes Mary Fletcher was born in 1885 in Atherton, Lancashire and was the fifth child of

Ralph Fletcher - a colliery owner with five servants at home. The 1901 Census showed the 16-year-old Agnes as a boarder in a



private school in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. By the 1911 census Agnes is shown as a 26-year-old single woman living on private means in Grange-over Sands. She lived with three other women, one being listed as a hospital nurse. Her father had now died and she could live in comfort on her inheritance. Three years later she joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment as a nurse and served in France from 1915. A slip of paper with the medals had "Deliver to: 7 Thornfield Terrace, Grange-over- Sands, Ulverston, Lancashire" written in pencil.

Another Lancashire recipient of the 1914-15 Star never lived to receive it. He was Charles Drinnan Robertson, who served as a junior officer with the 4th Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers and was killed at the age of 23 on the first day of the



Battle of the Somme. According to the 1911 Census he was the eldest son of Charles and Jessie Robertson and lived at 12 Cavendish Park, Barrow. He had 2 younger brothers and 2 younger sisters. His father's occupation was listed as Manager, Marine Engine Dept. of Ship Builder. The second-lieutenant is buried at Euston Road Cemetery, Colincamps.

He was a former pupil at the Municipal Secondary School of Boys in Barrow and at the Clifton Bank public school in St Andrews. The Barrow school's magazine noted: "The Somme Battle had just commenced when we heard that Charlie Robertson had fallen leading his men against the enemy." During sixth form studies at Barrow, he was the Fell Essay Prizeman and was captain of the cricket team. The Barrovian magazine noted: "High-minded and honourable, he was the type of our English manhood which in these days has so gloriously upheld British traditions."

The officer's 1914-15 Star sold on ebay last October for £372.60. The reason for the high price on his medal is purely the day he died on - First Day of the Somme deaths carry a huge premium - despite it being by far the "least rare" day to be killed.

WE CALLED HIM "SUNBEAM": Lieut Rex Pryce-Jones 50th Bn Canadian Inf.

A FAVOURITE POSTCARD: Andrew Brooks

This large postcard (7 by 5 inches) was posted in 1917 by a dry cleaning firm to Mrs Crear who lived at 43 Hotspur Street, Tynemouth (Northumberland). It has been part of my collection for almost 50 years and it certainly ranks in the top ten of my favourites.

The picture postcard satisfies my collecting interests for more than one reason; obviously the main focus is World War 1 and then there is my previous interest as a stamp collector. It is a superb advertising postcard and finally this larger than normal size postcard has passed through the mail, which always increases the social aspect. Jas. Smith & Sons obviously sent the card out to potential customers to remind them,

as good housewives, that now the winter was over it was time to clean the house from top to bottom! The card states 'One final word of advice - Spring is our busy season and many

STAMPS OF OUR ALLIES

FRANCE SERBIA JAPAN ITALY PORTUGAL
RUSSIA BELGIUM INDIA MONTENEGRO
AUSTRALIA CANADA NEW ZEALAND AFRICA

SMITH'S
The Stamp of
EFFICIENCY

Every order despatched from Smith's carries with it a recommendation for real efficiency in dyeing and cleaning.

EFFICIENCY IN EVERY DEPARTMENT.

SEND your House Fabrics—your own and the Children's Dresses—to SMITH'S this Spring. You can rely upon a thoroughly efficient service in each and every department.

Our dyeing and cleaning processes are of greater saving value than ever—our work quick and sure, and of unequalled quality—our prices as eminently fair and just as they have always been.

During the past twelve months only one of our tiny dyeing and cleaning departments failed to give the usual prompt deliveries: it is now up to standard.

Not one department failed in giving the highest possible quality of work.

One final word of advice—Spring is our busy season, and many of our workers are serving their country. You will both help us and help yourselves by sending your orders as early as you conveniently can, to

JAS. SMITH & SONS,
The New Patent Dry Cleaners & Art Dyers
5a ESPLANADE,
WHITLEY BAY.

BOOK POST.

Mrs Crear
43 Hotspur Street
Tynemouth

TYNMOUTH
21 MAR 1917

of our workers are serving their country. You will both help us and help yourselves by sending your orders as early as you conveniently can.' The card was posted on the 20th March 1917.

MUSEUM REPORTS

King's Regiment (New Museum of Liverpool): Karen O'Rourke (Curator)

Things continue to go from strength to strength at the Museum of Liverpool, the home of the King's Regiment Collection. The museum celebrated its second birthday in July with overall visitor figures now reaching over 2 million.

The gallery and exhibition dedicated to the King's Regiment continue to get very positive feedback. The Devereux database, our database of many of the Kingsmen who served during the First World War, also continues to be very popular. Many family history researchers have been able to visit the gallery and view the database.

Our second family history research day to be held in the new museum attracted over a thousand visitors. Our King's Regiment First

World War experts were, this year, joined by experts from a number of other societies in the region. These included The Western Front Association, The Liverpool and South West Lancs. Family History Society and the newly formed Liverpool First World War Research Committee. In addition we had a section of recreated trench in our foyer



manned by two very capable 'Tommies', the launch of an embroidery project inspired by the beautiful embroidered postcards in our collections and we had music supplied by the Liverpool Welsh Choral.

The event was held on Saturday 28 September and was a free event for anyone wishing to find out about an ancestor, create a postcard, or just listen to tales and songs from The First World War.

National Museums Liverpool is on the process of establishing a programme of events to commemorate the First World War Centenary period and details of our events will be released as they are confirmed. At the moment, we have plans to launch a collecting project aimed at uncovering the hidden history of the Black and Minority Ethnic Community in Liverpool during the First World War. And we are making plans for an exhibition about life on the Home Front. But we are also investigating the potential for many events and some smaller displays throughout the coming five years or so.

Please keep checking out our website for further details of future events and displays: www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Liverpool Scottish Regimental Museum Trust - October 2012 to September 2013: Ian Riley (Honorary Secretary)

In the last twelve months we have made great progress in photographing our main archive; there are now over 60,000 images. We have spent nearly £1500 (including a 25% grant from the Army Museums Ogilby Trust) to continue with this work with the contents of our filing cabinets. Using student labour available during the summer and through turning the Secretary's house in a studio, we have a further 25,000 images making that aspect of the task nearly 50% complete. A purchase of a Miniscan' camera will allow us to photograph our collection of regimental journals to produce searchable images.

So far this year we have dealt with nearly 150 queries and have made a start on establishing 'virtual museum' pages on our website at www.liverpoolscottish.org.uk. Follow the link to the pages dedicated to 'The Museum'.

We also hold a most interesting WW1 memorial scroll connected with the Liverpool



Meat Trade that names thirty-nine workers from the Gill Street Abattoir in Liverpool, a predecessor of the Stanley Abattoir. This framed scroll is painted in simple style, possibly by a skilled amateur artist. The interest lies in its unsophisticated appearance; it clearly represents an act of remembrance by workmates and colleagues rather than a grand civic enterprise: it is a memorial of the people. It had been at Gill Street in Liverpool and then in the snooker room of the Stanley Abattoir social club until at least the 1980s, later being found in a skip by the cousin the donor, both of them from the meat trade. The donor was the great-nephew of Robert Francis Eyres, named fourth from the bottom of the right hand column. Five soldiers of the Liverpool Scottish (10th King's) are named. We are seeking a suitable permanent home that the memorial deserves.

A wooden Liverpool Scottish memorial of the Great War is now installed in the Church of St Alban at Fulwood Barracks; its bronze counterpart is in St George's Hall in Liverpool.

**ABSENCE IS UNSPEAKABLE
SORROW BUT LOVE'S GREATEST
GIFT IS REMEMBRANCE - 3rd Air
Mechanic G S Mc Millan Royal Air
Force**

**Fusiliers Museum: Mike Glover (Curator) and
Regimental Secretary (Lancashire)**

The North West and the British Army

Following Imperial Germany's invasion of Belgium in August 1914, Great Britain witnessed a huge expansion of its armed forces; largely concentrated on the British Army and the infantry in particular. Between 1914 and 1918 the nation was able to recruit, train and equip some 6,000,000 servicemen and a small corps of women. This extremely

successful logistical exercise is often forgotten and the fact that Great Britain was able to generate a war winning army in four years is a little short of astounding.

To put this into context, the British Army of today is currently undertaking a reorganisation which will take some six years to implement to be completed by 2020. Rather than a massive expansion, the regular army will reduce in size from 110,000 to 82,000 personnel, while the Territorial Army (re-branded the Reserve Army) will be encouraged to generate 30,000 fully



deployable reservists. The Army will then have 32 regular infantry battalions and on a good day field two divisions. In contrast, during the four years of the First World War the British Army grew from 148 regular and 399 Territorial Battalions to 1761 battalions of infantry, including the New Army (Pals) Battalions and more specialist units including labour battalions. These were organised into 76 Divisions!

This was a national effort, but the North West had an important part to play in all this, contributing some 14% of the strength of the infantry in the British Army. This compared well with Scotland, which generated some 11.5%. There were nine regiments who recruited only from the North West, the Border Regiment from Cumberland and Westmorland, the Kings Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, the Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire), the East Lancashire and South Lancashire Regiments, the King's

Liverpool Regiment, the Cheshire Regiment and from what is now the heart land of Greater Manchester, the Lancashire Fusiliers and the Manchester Regiment.

It is worth considering the contribution of these regiments in a little more detail. It was the Kings' Liverpool Regiment that generated the most battalions with 49, including 14 Territorial Battalions. (Under the current plans to reorganise and expand the Territorial/Reserve Army there will no longer be any infantry in Liverpool!). The Manchester Regiment with 44 was second, in terms of generating infantry battalions, the Cheshire Regiment followed with 38. The Regiment awarded the most battle honours was the Cheshire Regiment with 75, followed by the Manchester Regiment with 72 and the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment with 68. The Lancashire Fusiliers were awarded 17 Victoria Crosses, more than any other infantry regiment in the British Army. This of course included the famous, "Six VCs before



breakfast," awarded for their beach assault at Gallipoli. The Fusiliers were followed by the Manchester Regiment with 11 and the Royal Lancaster Regiment with 8.

Finally, the saddest statistic is the cost. The Liverpool Regiment lost 14,200 killed, the Manchester Regiment 13,770 and the Lancashire Fusiliers 13,642. North West regiments between them lost some 83,022 killed in action and if you multiply this figure by three it will give a rough approximation of the number of wounded. Thus over 330, 000

households in the North West had to suffer the impact of the death or wounding of a father or son. As the Lancashire Fusiliers and the Manchester Regiment recruited predominately in what is now known as Greater Manchester, it would be fair to conclude that a third of this total would have been found in this area. This does not mean that entire streets lost their men folk but it does mean that at least everyone knew someone who had to cope with the consequences of the Great War.

**HE IS NOT HERE HE IS RISEN - Private
Roy Slater Notts & Derby Regiment**

**Ernest Rokesby Collins DSO - Lancashire
Infantry Museum: Claire York**

In October a relative of Ernest donated to the museum his medals, a miniature and the bullet that injured him on 26th August 1914 near Ligny. This latest donation adds to the museum's considerable collection of his artefacts, personal records and war diaries. A brief summary of his military service is outlined below, with particular focus placed upon how he came to receive his injury and what happened during his early recovery.



Ernest Rokesby Collins was born on the 12th October 1870. He studied at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant into the East Lancashire Regiment on the 19th November 1892, age 22. Collins was

promoted to lieutenant in 1894 and to captain in 1900, in which year he was sent to Cape Colony on the southern tip of Africa as company commander of the 8th mounted infantry during the Boer War (1899-1902). Whilst stationed in Africa he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order medal in 1900 and mentioned in Lord Kitchener's despatches on 8th August 1901: "Captain ER Collins at Bloemfontein Farm, Orange River Colony, July 28 led his Company against a very strong position and under heavy fire seized the key of it and forced the enemy to retire," and by name in Lord Robert's despatch on 4th September 1901. Collins chose to remain with the regiment post-war and was promoted to the rank of major on the 14th May 1913.

On the outbreak of the First World War on the 4th August 1914, Collins was placed in command of 'C' company 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment, landing in France on August 22nd. His war diary tells of his arrival at Le Havre, transfer to a rest camp and set off towards the front late on the 23rd August and then stops. The next correspondence received by his family regarding Collins came as a telegraph from the War Office dated the 8th September: "Regret to inform you that Major E. R. Collins, East Lancashire Regiment, is reported wounded. Further information when received will be telegraphed immediately." Collins and a number of other soldiers were not present at the next roll call around a week after his last diary entry. Collins' family were understandably concerned and attempted over the following weeks to locate the whereabouts of their son via correspondence with other members of his regiment, their families, and various people in and around military hospitals in both England and France. They were able to gradually gather enough information to suspect that he had not been returned with other wounded to England and was certainly no longer with his

regiment. They were told from various sources that he had injured his arm badly whilst retreating from the front line, but would not allow his men to carry him to safety saying "No lads, you take care of yourselves, I'm all right." He had been treated at least minimally by a doctor, Private Flood, who had later been taken prisoner by the Germans as evidenced by one of many notes for family members given to a man whose release had been secured. It was therefore assumed that he too was a prisoner of war at one of the French run German supervised hospitals.

A letter from Collins was finally received by his family on the 22nd October: "I am in a German hospital, well cared for. My right arm is broken above the elbow but progresses favourably. It was just four weeks ago. I write this with my left hand... Bad luck being a prisoner but it could not be helped." His following correspondence detailed what had happened to him - early on the 26th August when attempting to retire with his men from their position he was struck on the right arm and knocked to the ground. A passing soldier placed a field dressing on his wound but it was not until this man left that Collins realised that he could not stand up. After some time he managed to run back until he reached his supports, the Somersets, who moved him to a place of safety, redressed the wound and reset his arm temporarily. He was moved with other wounded to a sloped area within a wood and left whilst the fight raged on. Once it became dark he decided to attempt to reach the lines or an ambulance. Himself and another wounded man after quite a journey made it to Ligny where they were placed into a French hospital. The Germans however soon entered the town and took everyone prisoner. They remained under garrison at the hospital for a time and his wounded arm was treated, though he was informed he may not regain use of it for six months or more. In one of his letters home Collins discusses his injury and treatment

given around this time: "My humerus is badly smashed and my forearm partially paralysed and my hand also. The wound healed quickly, a bullet was by good luck found and extracted 11 days after I was hit. On Monday next I am to be operated on so as to put my arm in proper condition for healing." Around the 11th November the wounded prisoners were moved to a collecting station in Halle via railway where Collins stayed in a hospital with wounded men from both sides. Once healthy, Collins was placed in various prisoner of war camps, moving around Germany for the following three years.

On the 31st October 1917 Collins was selected for prisoner exchange and moved to Switzerland on the 28th November, where he spent the remainder of the war in relative comfort. He was returned home on the 12th November 1918 and retired from service in 1920. Collins remained an active member of the Regimental Association and commanded a Home Guard unit from 1940-42 during World War II. He died aged 93 on the 25th February 1963.

The bullet removed from Ernest Rokesby Collins' arm and his medals are on display in the Somme Room exhibition at the Lancashire Infantry Museum. For opening times please visit our website at: www.lancashireinfantrymuseum.org.uk.

Manchester Regiment Collection: Larysa Bolton, Archivist

Tameside Local Studies and Archives will be taking part in a Greater Manchester-wide volunteering project to commemorate the First World War. As readers already know, 2014 is the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. This devastating conflict had enormous impact upon the lives of local people. In Greater Manchester we want to remember the impact of the Great War on our communities and our people by exploring the archives and discovering stories.

We need people who can offer some time to look through the records, search local newspapers, find great images, scan fascinating items and write up the stories which will go onto a dedicated blog: <http://gm1914.wordpress.com/>. Training will be provided in document handling, scanning and social media. Each of the Greater Manchester Districts will have a specific task for volunteers to get involved with. Tameside's project will be to summarise and transcribe our First World War oral history tapes, which include interviews with people on the home front and men who served in the armed forces.

If you would like to be involved with Tameside's transcription project, please contact Larysa Bolton on 0161 342 4242. If you would prefer to be involved with a project in another part of Greater Manchester, please contact Nicky Crewe on n.crewe@manchester.gov.uk and she will put you in touch with the relevant person.

**OUR BRIGHTEST HOPE REUNION: Pte
H Taylor E Yorks**

Museum of Lancashire: Micahla.Jackson-Smith

An exhibition entitled "Somewhere in France" is planned as part of the Museum Service WW1 events for next year. It takes a look at some of the post cards and letters sent from soldiers to their families, during the First World War. The exhibition has been gathered from the collections of Lancashire Museums and various supporters and has highlighted that much of our collection reflects those men that were stationed in France.

To give the exhibition a little more of a personal feel, (and naturally because I am a Social Historian) it focuses more on the messages and the role of the post card, along with the difficulties of communication, including censorship, and more. I hope to be

able to share a little part of the lives of these soldiers through their own words and remember them as the husbands, brothers, sons, etc that they were.

The exhibition opens at Gawthorpe Hall, Burnley in Spring 2014 and tours some of our Museums around the County. For more information people are more than welcome to contact me.

POSTSCRIPTS (+S): Terry Dean

When returning from the Dordogne at the end of last May we motored via some of the places travelled by the 1st East Lancashire Regiment (1EL) between August and November 1914. We sought the location of photos taken by Major Lambert reported in last November's Despatch. Before and after our overnight stop in Compiègne we had little success, partly due to reconstruction of WW1 damage, and at Ham headed leisurely towards our hotel near Hazebrouck in our



“Race to the Sea”.

Next day our first visit was to Fletre where 1EL had a billet in the church. We struggled to negotiate roadworks littering the village and I moved barriers to stand on the ground trod by 1ELs in October 1914. I tried to persuade Emmie to move wheel barrows and cement mixer to stand where Lambert took his photo but she declined.

We then visited Gerard Lemaire at his home in Bailleul. I wrote about Gerard in last

May's Despatch and had sent him a copy. He was delighted with the frontispiece of “Old Bill” and gave me a copy of a Bailleul History



Association publication containing an article he had written about Bruce Bairnsfather (BB) and Outtersteene. It contained a photo of BB which he had tracked-down.

The photo had been dedicated by BB to Zoe (Suzette) in 1917. Gerard's article (in French but with some interesting photos) is a supplement on our website).

Gerard then showed me a photo album of Bailleul in WW1. One photo was of New Zealand troops moving through Bailleul on 15th May 1917. I told Gerard it might have included the Sutherland brothers who were mentioned in last May's Despatch.

On our journey to the ferry at Zeebrugge we placed poppy crosses for the Sutherland brothers at the New Zealand memorial at Messines and at the New Zealand Memorial Apse in Tyne Cot Cemetery. Also likewise for Private J W Huggonson at Hyde Park Corner cemetery (Page 2, Nov 2012 Despatch).

LANCASHIRE'S BEST KEPT WAR MEMORIAL IN 2013

The winner this year is Wrea Green War Memorial which last won in 2009. Freckleton Cenotaph was awarded Highly Commended, they last won in 2010

TWO WAR MEMORIALS WORTH A VISIT: Peter Denby

Goscombe John being accused of 'unpatriotic sentimentality'.

1 Port Sunlight



The recently restored War Memorial at Lever Brothers' garden village of Port Sunlight is the second largest war memorial in the country (after the Cenotaph in Whitehall), and was first unveiled in December 1921.

It was commissioned to commemorate those residents of Port Sunlight village, and the worldwide employees of Lever Brothers, who fell in the Great War. Names added after World War



2 also included civilians who had died in bombing raids on the Port Sunlight factory and village.

The memorial was designed by the Welsh sculptor Sir William Goscombe John and is made of granite surrounded by bronze sculptures.

The nearby Port Sunlight museum has a small display on Port Sunlight at war, and there is a short film series about the war memorial.

The memorial's theme of 'Defence of the Home' initially attracted much criticism,



For my part I think it is probably the nicest war memorial I have seen. Not only is the memorial itself highly impressive, but its location in the lovely Port Sunlight village adds to its impact. A walk up its steps gives a splendid view down a rose lined avenue towards the lovely Lady Lever art gallery.

Well worth a visit.

2 Towneley Hall



Also worth a visit is another recently restored war memorial, also set in lovely grounds, this time at Towneley Hall, Burnley.

This Portland stone memorial has carved figures of a soldier, airman and sailor, flanked by bronze figures of wives and mothers. Symbols used in the sculpture include a rosemary bush for remembrance and a cricket bat to represent boyhood. In front of the memorial is a small garden with reflective pool.

Designed by Walter Henry Gilbert and Louis Weingartner, the memorial, in memory of Burnley men who fell in The Great War, was unveiled in 1926 before over 30,000 people. Gilbert said that the memorial should breathe nothing of slaughter, but only fulfilment of duty and the comfort and thankfulness brought to those who remain.

DEAR EDITOR

Congratulations on another Despatch, up to the usual high standard and full of interest. Other than the misspelling of Cadorna a couple of times on p.27 there is just one instance on p.4 where Hemming's memory seems to have betrayed him. He attributes the name 'Woodbine Willie' to **Tubby Clayton**, rather



than to **G.A. Studdert Kennedy**. In "The Unutterable Beauty", the collected poetry of G.A.S., the first poem in the book is:

WOODBINE WILLIE

They gave me this name like their nature,
 Compacted of laughter and tears,
 A sweet that was born of the bitter,
 A joke that was torn from the years

Of their travail and torture, Christ's fools,
 Atoning my sins with their blood,
 Who gloried in their agony sharing
 The glorious madness of God.

Their name! Let me hear it - the symbol
 Of unpaid - unpayable debt,
 For the men to whom I owed God's Peace,
 I put off with a cigarette.

Regards, Clive Holden. (8th May 2013)

BRANCH AFFAIRS



Supported by

The National Lottery
 through Awards for All

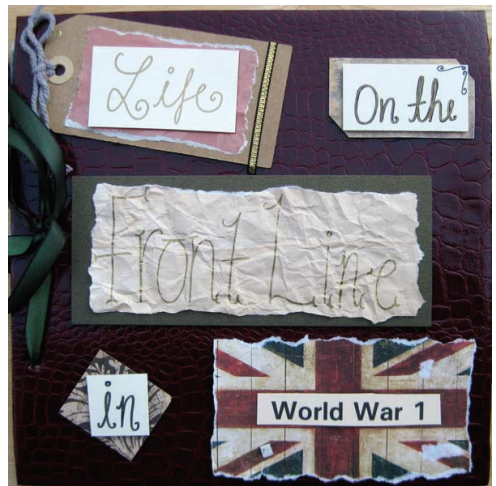


ARMISTICE PRIZE 2013 (+S)

Five schools submitted a total of 74 entries. Some of the entries were in computer formats and were converted to PDFs for consideration with the remainder being written or typed text, models or artwork. Photographs were taken of the larger models and artwork whilst small models and text/folders were collected for consideration.

Entries were marked separately by Paul Conlon, Peter Denby and TD and the scores collated. The most common flaws noted in some entries were occasional inclusion of WW2 imagery, and the 'lifting' of text directly from published material. However the degree of research undertaken, thought and writing skills seemed to have improved compared to last year.

The collated scores gave the winner of the 2013 Armistice Prize as Alice Burns of Tarleton Academy (see back page) for her entry entitled *Life on the Front Line in World War 1*. This is a well researched and beautifully presented booklet mixing



factual and fictional prose items, and Alice's own poetry describing trench life and related topics. It is dedicated to Alice's Great Great Uncle Harry Adams; Died of Wounds 9th September 1918.

Alice was presented with the trophy, a WW1 book and a £100 cheque at the school assembly on 25th October 2013, before the half term break.

For the first time three area prizes were granted in the form of a WW1 book and £25 cheque. These prizes were also presented before the October 2013 half term break:

Central and South Lancashire: Matilda Hadcock (St Cecilia's Roman Catholic Technology College, Longridge) *Richard Neville Hadcock's World War 1 Experiences*. An intriguing account of Richard Neville Hadcock's experiences on both the Western and Eastern fronts in the war, proudly and well presented by his Great Granddaughter.

West and North Lancashire: Emma Cutting (Lancaster Girls Grammar School) *Reality of War*. An intelligent critique of five well known paintings of the Great War, presented along with a thoughtful piece of her own artwork.

East Lancashire: Eli Smith (Ribblesdale High School) *Trench Warfare 1914-1918*. A commendable piece from a year 8 pupil featuring Eli's Great Great Uncle **Pte Reginald Kelly**, Killed in Action 27th May 1917. It was good to see that Eli had recently visited his grave in France.



A Press Release concerning the results of the 2013 competition accompanied by a photograph and entry of winner was issued on 1st November 2013 so that the media could consider using the information in advance of Remembrance Sunday. Photos of all prize winners and their entries can be seen on the Armistice Prize pages of our website.

**WILL SOME KIND HAND IN A
FOREIGN LAND PLACE A
FLOWER ON MY SON'S GRAVE -
Private G T Palmer Leicestershire
Regiment**

Books Donated By Hal Egerton: Chris Payne, Branch Treasurer

In July 2013, we received a very generous donation of about 350 books (mostly covering aspects of The Great War) from Hal Egerton, to help support Branch funding. One of our Branch members, Paul Conlon, has very kindly housed the collection, prepared an inventory and estimated the value of each book, in preparation for their sale. In a procedure agreed by our membership, a total of £310 has been raised so far from the sale of 65 books. We are now planning to extend our marketing of the remaining books more widely. We would like to express our thanks to Hal Egerton as the money raised will be invaluable in helping to support our outreach activities including the Armistice Prize, the publication and distribution of our newsletter *Despatch*, and activities associated with the Centenary of The Great War.

MEETING REPORTS

"The Little Digger" - the impact of William Morris Hughes (Australian Prime Minister) on the Great War and its aftermath: May 2013
(26 attended)

Chris Payne has previously given talks to the Branch on his grandfather, Charlie Payne's, war service. While researching these talks, Chris discovered that the family knew William "Billy" Morris Hughes, who was the Prime Minister of Australia from 1915 to 1923 and he decided to investigate this further.

George Payne (Chris's great grandfather) and Billy were at school together in London and remained friends after Billy emigrated to Australia in 1884, staying in touch by letter.

After an assortment of jobs, Billy became involved in politics and was elected to the New South Wales Assembly in 1894. Over the following years, Billy advanced through various posts, finally becoming Prime Minister in October 1915.

Billy and his family travelled to Britain in March 1916 where he spoke at many events, was well received and also met up with the Payne family. In May 1916 he visited France and his nickname "Little Digger" started around this time.

Chris talked about Australia's foreign policies during the war and described Billy's return visit to England in June 1918. Using the letters written between the Payne family and Billy (and now in the Australian archives) this fascinating and well-illustrated talk brought to life a political figure and explained a great deal about Australia's involvement in the Great War. (Gaynor Greenwood)

'Carry on up the Tigris' - the Experience of British and Indian Soldiers in Mesopotamia 1914-1918: June 2013 (29 attended)

Alan Wakefield, from the Imperial-war Museum London, presented a comprehensive and well-illustrated talk about the little-known Mesopotamia



campaign. At the start of the First World War, Mesopotamia was a province of the Ottoman Empire. The principal British objectives were to protect the Anglo-Persian oil works at Abadan, and the associated oil fields; important at a time when the British Navy were in the process of modifying the fuelling of their ships from coal to oil. The

area was also politically sensitive with regard to British interests in India. With operations directed from India, an Indian Expeditionary Force (IEF) consisting of one Division was initially sent to Mesopotamia (now Iraq) in the autumn of 1914. Basra was occupied on the 21st November and the oil fields were successfully secured within 3 months, with the loss of 'only' 2000 casualties.

The fact that little resistance was initially encountered from the Ottoman Empire troops encouraged 'mission creep' and decisions were made to attack to the north with one objective being to capture Baghdad. Between 1915 and 1918, 5 British-Indian divisions plus cavalry were involved. Basra was used as the main base for the British Empire troops and, in the initial absence of rail and road links between Basra and Baghdad (400 miles to the north), the principal transport link was the River Tigris, deploying a diverse range of local boats ranging in size from 'bellums' (native boats holding about 8 people) to river steamers. Despite some initial success with their northward progress, as morale, and technical skills improved in the Ottoman army (bolstered by their experience in Gallipoli during 1915), the British Empire Forces encountered increasing resistance, together with major logistical problems. In December 1915, under the command of Major-General Charles Townsend the 6th Indian Division were forced to abandon their plan to capture Baghdad and retreated to Kut Al Amara where, after a protracted siege, and unsuccessful attempts to relieve the garrison, Townsend surrendered to the Ottoman troops on April 29th 1916. About 12,000 troops were captured, many later dying in captivity (though not Townsend, who survived in some luxury). After this humiliating loss, General Frederick Maude was given command of the British Empire Forces. Under his authority, the logistical problems were steadily sorted out and the deployment of 'bite and hold' tactics delivered a Turkish

abandonment of Baghdad on the 11th March 1917. The next months were spent chasing the Turkish forces in northern Mesopotamia using mobile units including cavalry and armoured cars.

In the second half of his talk, Alan Wakefield presented a clear picture of the challenges facing the British Empire forces during the campaign, including transport problems (e.g. the difficulties of building and operating a railway between Basra and Baghdad), climate (cold in winter, swelteringly hot in summer), terrain (often flat, offering little or no cover), disease and medical provision (malaria, dysentery etc; improvised and inadequate field ambulance services), poor artillery provision, inadequate accommodation (mainly tents); rations (little local provision), and dealing with a volatile civilian population. Ultimately, the British Empire forces won the protracted campaign but only after suffering about 100,000 casualties of whom 25,700 died.

The talk was warmly received and there was no shortage of questions on topics including the involvement of the Royal Flying Corps, and the management of the local Arab population during the conflict. (Chris Payne)

Treading the Duckboards: July 2013 (27 attended)



Well, the room was not quite packed to the rafters, while the warm up acts of a stand-up

comedian and a monologist were not that hot either. Fortunately the star turn, Northampton's own ascending lark (or the Warbling **Kate Wills** as she is better known to the troops) gave a first rate talk to the Branch that was replete with 'the smell of the greasepaint and the roar of the crowd', by describing the history of concert parties at the various fronts during the Great War.

The talk, well supported by an excellent collection of rarely seen photographs, recounted the skills, creativity and ingenuity that went into the production and supply of outfits, stages, scenery and the myriad other items that were required to put on a good show for an audience of men whose daily routine was invariably a combination of danger and drudgery. Kate reminded us that those few hours of entertainment, with actors, musicians, singers, dancers, comedians, and indeed, the full gamut of serious and vaudeville acts, were a great morale booster for the troops so far from home. She went even so far as to make the suggestion, a good one at that, that the many concert parties (she has accounted for more than 900, with the combined casts running into several thousand) were a vital safety valve for the men who turned up, forestalling any risk of mutiny.

Some of the artistes who performed were already household names, but there was also latent talent in others, who, having cleared the hurdle of an audition (how does a panto horse achieve that?), appeared before footlights fashioned out of tin cans, and who would make their way professionally after the war. Meanwhile, Kate indicated that not every concert party could have an available Glycerine and Vaseline close by, and so it proved to be necessary for the troupes to create their own. Personally, I doubt this, for these 'creations' looked to me to be the genuine article in those photographs that were shown, being in the front row of the

stalls as I was (Those gels were damned fine fillies, what?).

We learnt that the concert parties also furthered the *esprit de corps* within Divisions, each formation rivalling the others as to who might have had the best troupe who also had names to match the circumstances of the time or their roots. The 56th Division had the 'Bow Bells', 20th the 'Very Lights', 38th the 'Welsh Walls', and so on.

In summary, it was a highly fascinating talk and Kate certainly entertained and definitely educated the members present, all the while conveying the 'smell of the greasepaint', if not the 'smell of the crowd'! (Barrie Bertram)

**LOVE FOLLOWS YOU WHERE YOU
ROAM LADDIE OVER THE HILLS OF
GOD - Corporal N Richardson MM 5th
Can Mounted Rifles**

Stories of the RN fight against the U boat: August 2013 (22 attended)

In his inimitable style **Graham Kemp** gave an excellent account of how the Royal Navy's war against the U boat unfolded



during WW1. Starting with the objective of destroying U boats the mines initially used by the RN were largely ineffective with only 20% working and the British eventually produced mines based on the German's design. The largely in-effective mine barrage between Folkestone and Cap Gris Nez was described together with plans for the American/British barrage across the North Sea and barrages in the Mediterranean.

Churchill issued instructions to treat U Boat personnel as felons and kill them. The Germans captured Captain Fryatt who had tried to ram a U Boat when in charge of SS Brussels and after a Court Martial he was executed.

In 1915 armed decoys, known as Q-ships, manned by naval crews and fitted with hidden guns, were introduced to deceive, trap and destroy U-boats. Some 330 Q-Ships went into operation but they had limited success sinking less than 14 U Boats. Patrol boats were very unsuccessful.

Graham spoke about ramming, depth charges, hydrophones and paravanes as means of destroying U boats. The plan to attack U boat bases at Zeebrugge and Ostend also came to nothing. He concluded by describing how the introduction of convoys, particularly with aircraft cover, was the most successful means of countering the U boat threat without necessarily destroying them. (Terry Dean)

Double Eagles - Americans killed while serving with the Royal Flying Corps 1914- 1918: September 2013 (28 attended)

At the outset of war the US Neutrality Act stipulated that any US citizen joining an overseas governmental armed force would 'expatriate' themselves. Despite this discouragement some did wish to join the fight and those wishing to join the Allies would either go to Canada to join the Canadian forces (but not as flyers - Canada's air force was not established until 1919); go to France to join the Foreign Legion (which did not contravene the Neutrality Act); or cross the Atlantic and enlist in the British forces. Of course after the US joined the war in April 1917 the Neutrality Act was no longer relevant. However because the US airforce was still in its infancy the US relied on Britain to train its pilots, and so it was now made easy for US citizens to join the Royal Flying

Corps (RFC), with training bases near Toronto and later near Fort Worth in Texas. Towards the very end of the war Americans did join their own flying service, although those already with the British usually remained with the RFC (by now the RAF).

Most of the US citizens who joined the RFC were from the North East, with fewer from the South and West.

Some 41 were killed in action, 13 died of sickness and 55 died in accidents.



Michael O'Brien

took us through a list of some of the Americans - and many of them were colourful characters - who died whilst with the RFC. A selection follows.

The first US flyer to die with the RFC was the poorly trained Frank Arthur Garlick, who was shot down in France on 20 February 1916.

Frank Edward Goodrich, from Maine, went to Canada to initially join the Canadian infantry, later becoming a flyer and winning the MC in 1916 for daring reconnaissance flights. Whilst on a meteorological flight on 12 September 1916 he was killed when his plane stalled and crashed. His friend Thomas Tillard, from another Baltimore family, initially joined the Norfolk Yeomanry before transferring to the RFC. He died in a test flight crash on 6 December 1916.

On 14 September 1917 David Kit Billings fell from his aircraft when doing a loop. He was trained, and is buried at, Castle Bromwich.

In a 1938 musical Fred Astaire played the RFC pilot Vernon Castle. Often thought of as an American, he was actually born in Norwich and never took US citizenship. After gaining three 'kills' on the Western Front, Castle was sent back to Texas to become a

trainer. A crash during a flying lesson killed his student pilot but he survived. In the habit of flying with a pet monkey, he continued as a trainer, but on 15 February 1918 his plane stalled and Vernon Castle was killed, although his student and his monkey survived.

On 27 March 1918 von Richtofen gained his 73rd 'kill', and his third that day, when he shot down George Helliwell Harding's new Dolphin aeroplane. Harding, from Minneapolis, was the only US victim of von Richtofen. Harding's sister Ruth, an actress, had her brother's body exhumed from his French grave and relocated to Dive Copse cemetery.

William Becker Hagen, from Massachusetts, was a volunteer ambulance driver early in the war (this did not fall foul of the Neutrality Act). When the US entered the war he went to Canada to join the RFC, although he - like many of his US fellows, bearing in mind the behaviour of a previous King George - was not overkeen on swearing the oath to King George. On 11 May 1918 he died of pneumonia during training.

Elliott Chapin, also from Massachusetts, was shot down by a German interceptor when returning from a bombing raid on German railways. He is said to have been seen shaking the hand of his observer as the two men plummeted to their deaths.

Van Dyke Fernald had studied at Oxford University, and, annoyed at US neutrality, became a naturalised Briton in 1916. When flying reconnaissance in Italy he was jumped by six Austrian planes and killed along with his observer Watkins.

Frank Henry Beauford, from Montgomery, Alabama, had a Liverpool born mother. Trained with a bombing squadron in Canada, he was - unusually - shot down by ground fire when returning from a mission. He fell from his upturned plane onto another British plane which also fatally crashed.

Louis Bennett from Western Virginia shot down nine balloons, before being killed. After the war his mother had a stained glass window installed in his memory in Westminster Abbey.

For the record, the other men discussed were Theodore Marburg, Victor Chapman, Henry Dayton Simpson, Charles Edwin Lloyd Skedden, Mortimer Crane, Gus Touchard, Theodore Ricky Hostetter and Alvin Callender. (Peter Denby)

**AND WITH GIFT OF THEIR TO-DAY
BOUGHT FOR US TOMORROW -
Captain V O Todd Royal Lancaster
Regiment**

Women in World War 1: October 2013 (31 attended)

This short but interesting talk by **Dr Lesley Wright** was really about the life of Flora S. Sandes (1872-1956) although we were given an insight into a few other women who had unusual experiences during the fighting in the Great War; Madame Arno organised a group of women in Paris who fought in the war and Loretta Perfectus Walsh became the first Petty officer in the US Navy.

Flora was the only British woman to serve as a soldier in the war albeit in the Serbian army. Although she went to Serbia as a nurse she took up arms during the retreat to Albania rapidly rising to the rank of Sgt. Major. She was treated as a man and known by a Serbian term as a 'sworn virgin'. During the war she was wounded when a hand grenade shattered her right arm.

After the war she raised money for Serbia by writing and giving talks. She married Yurie Yudenitch but they had no children. She worked as a taxi driver in Bulgaria and in World War 2 looked after the ladies of the Folly Bergere. Flora was born in Poppleton near York and died in Suffolk. (Andrew Brooks)

2014 PROGRAMME

(ALL MEETINGS ON FIRST MONDAY IN MONTH AT 7.30 PM EXCEPT WHERE STATED OTHERWISE)

Dec 2nd: *A.G.M. and Christmas Social* - An invitation to members to speak for ten minutes on any WW1 topic

Jan 6th: *"How British Conscripts helped to win the War"* - Chris Payne (N Lancs W.F.A.)

Feb 3rd: *"La Compagnie Americaine... and other "foreigners" in the service of France"* - Dave O'Mara (Burnley W.F.A.)

March 3rd: *"Shall I never dance again?"* - Richard Paczko (Wolverhampton W.F.A.)

April 7th: *"German Tanks at Villers - Brettonex"* - Chris John (Birmingham W.F.A.)

May 6th TUESDAY: *"WW1 Home Guard"* - Tim Lynch (West Yorkshire)

June 2nd: *"British Cavalry in the Great War - the myth and reality"* - Dr Graham Winton (Ludlow)

July 7th: *"WHY DID I DO IT? - answering my grandfather's question"* - Graham Kemp (N Lancs W.F.A.)

Aug 4th: *"Your Remembrance"* - An invitation for members to speak on the subject

Sept 1st: *"The Pirate of Buccari - Gabriele d'Annunzio's adventures on the Italian Front"* - Michael O'Brien (Stockport W.F.A.)

Oct 6th: *"Room 40"* - David Wright (Liverpool)

Nov 3rd: *"No Labour, No Food, No War"* - Richard Preston (Cumbria W.F.A.)

Dec 1st: *A.G.M. and Christmas Social* - An invitation to members to speak for ten minutes on any WW1 topic.

2013 Armistice Prize Winner

As reported on Page 22, **Alice Burns** who attends Tarleton Academy is this year's winner for her entry entitled *Life on the Front Line in World War 1*. Her history teacher has indicated that her entry had not been directed by him. It was in response to a poster he displayed publicising the competition and an announcement in class.

The booklet she produced is dedicated to



her Great Great Uncle **Harry Adams** who died aged 18 years 5 months on 9th September 1918. He served with the 24th Battalion Royal Fusiliers and is buried in Bac-Du-Sud British

Cemetery, Bailleulval



Preston Cenotaph Renovation

This photo, taken on 22nd October, shows the "state of play on the renovation project which is supported by a Heritage Lottery grant of £835,600. The outstanding work, including planting, is planned to take place before our meeting on 4th November. The work will be completed within the approved cost estimate of £959,000. The cost above the Heritage Lottery grant (£123,400) will be met by Preston City Council and in-kind sponsorship from partners.

Western Front Association, North Lancashire Branch

Chairman: Stan Wilkinson

Tel: 01524 262302

Secretary: Dr. Graham Kemp

Tel: 01524 310649

email: graham.kemp@nasuwt.net

Treasurer: Chris Payne

Tel: 01539 561980

Editor: Terry Dean

Tel: 01772 864182 Mob: 07866 493210

email: editor@wfanlancs.co.uk

Website: www.wfanlancs.co.uk