



Preston & Central Lancashire WFA

Reveille - No.2 July 2020

Our Quarterly Newsletter



Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter. This month our featured contribution is from **Paul Knight** and we have contributions from **Stan Grosvenor MA**, **Stephen Roberts** and a small piece by me on nursing in Preston during the Great War.

If you would like to contribute to the next edition of the newsletter (due October) then please email us with your piece together with any illustrations.

A note about meetings. Our meetings up to July 2020 have been cancelled due to Covid-19 and the meetings we have scheduled from September to November are subject to cancellation - we will make a decision about those next month. However we now have the opportunity to hold virtual meetings & webinars through the Western Front Association Zoom account. Before we go ahead and organise a virtual meeting we would like to ask members if this is something they would be interested in? Please email us at preston.lancs.wfa@gmail.com with your views and what you would like to see.

Charlie O'Donnell, Branch Chair

“A really good show” – The Battle of Ramadi, 27 – 29 September 1917

by **Paul Knight**

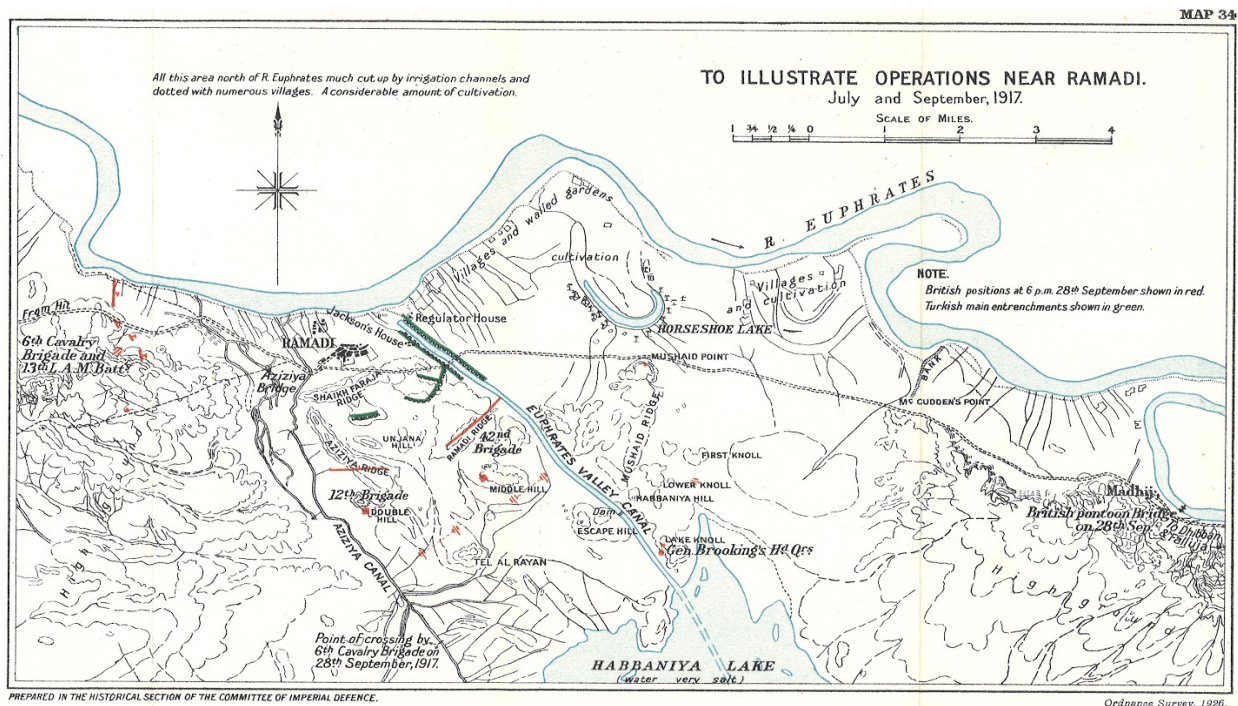


Image: Operations near Ramadi. From the Official History.

Introduction

The Mesopotamia Campaign could be subtitled The Greatest Sideshow. At its peak, the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force consisted of some 440,000 servicemen which, although dwarfed by the Western Front, was still a significant undertaking. The campaign was mostly fought by the Indian Army who, unfortunately, have not left any written accounts of their experiences. Consequently, Mesopotamia lacks the exposure of, for example, Gallipoli. Unlike contemporaneous operations in Palestine, Mesopotamia also lacks personalities with a high public profile: everyone knows Lawrence of Arabia, but Gertrude Bell's less well known contribution to Mesopotamia (and later Iraq) were far more wide reaching; similarly Allenby's victories in Palestine and Syria came only after he was sacked from the Western Front whereas Maude, Commander-in-Chief Mesopotamia from 1916 until his death in 1917, was the complete antithesis of the 'Donkeys' theory.

The popular impression of the Mesopotamia Campaign is generally around the failure of the Relief of Kut. The period from the collapse in the medical evacuation chain following the Battle of Ctesiphon (22 – 25 November 1915) until Townsend's surrender at the Siege of Kut (29 April 1916) overshadows what was otherwise a highly successful campaign. 'Townsend's Regatta' of May – June 1915, for example, was the most successful British advance of the entire war.

The Battle of Ramadi was a well-planned, well-executed battle which showed what could be achieved when the generals were given the opportunity and resources to fight the war they had trained for.

Background

Following the surrender of General Townsend at Kut, there was a clearing out of the failed generals who had failed. In their place was appointed Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Stanley Maude. Maude had only become a divisional commander the previous August. Following the sacking of generals after the Suvla Bay landings, Maude took command of 13th Division. The division was successfully evacuating from Suvla Bay and sent to Helles to support that withdrawal. Maude was in the last party to leave Helles; his escort was commanded by a young subaltern in the South Lancashire Regiment and future Prime Minister, Clement Attlee. While refitting in Egypt, Maude and 13th Division was ordered to Mesopotamia to join the Relief of Kut. The division arrived in time for the final, futile relief efforts.¹

Maude took advantage of the summer months to rebuild his battered army – the extreme summer temperatures precluded any operations. He also benefited from the (belated) arrival in theatre of logistical supplies. The port of Basra was expanded to handle the quantities needed to supply the army. Railway track and rolling stock arrive from India and was laid across the desert. River steamers and barges arrived to increase the river capacity, together with an expanded Inland Waterways Service to manage the river systems. More gunboats arrived for the Royal Navy and more aircraft for the Royal Flying Corps which started aerial photography for mapping. Motor vehicles were also starting to arrive in large numbers which could make use of petrol from the British refinery at Abadan Island in the Shatt-al-Arab. The security of this facility was the original objective of the invasion of Basra. As there was very little fodder available in Mesopotamia, all

¹ Syk, *The Military Papers of Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Stanley Maude, 1914 – 1917*, Army Records Society, Vol. 32, pp. 120 – 147.



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR H. T. BROOKING,
K.C.B., K.C.M.G., G.O.C. 15th Division.

animal foodstuffs had to be imported from India which placed an additional burden on the already overwhelmed logistic infrastructure. The replacement of animals for motor vehicles powered by locally sourced fuel became a priority.²

Over the night of 13th/14th December 1916, Maude launched his offensive. Kut was re-captured – a point not lost on the local Arab tribes: the Ottomans had lost Kut to the British twice while the Ottomans had only re-covered Kut by starving out the Anglo-Indian defenders. Baghdad was occupied on 11 March 1917 in what was arguably the most peaceful capture of the city in its long and turbulent history.³

Beyond Bagdad, the river systems diverge in three directions. The Diyala river runs north east to the Persian border and Imperial Russian troops. Contact with the Russians was essential to sever the route used by German agents to reach Afghanistan where they attempted to foment jihad across the North West Frontier. This threat was already tying up thousands of Anglo-Indian troops on the East Persia Cordon and on the North West Frontier, but a jihad from Afghanistan would have required the re-deployment of British troops from other theatres to safeguard the Raj.⁴ North from Baghdad along the Tigris were the main Ottoman Army. North West from Baghdad ran the Euphrates into Syria.⁵

March and April 1917 had just seen the Egyptian Expeditionary Force defeated twice at Gaza. With that front secured but having lost a major city, the initial deployment of the Ottoman Army's new Yildirim Army was expected to be from its Syrian base along the Euphrates to Baghdad. This threat never materialised because of the EEF's eventual success at Beersheba and Gaza in October 1917, but it was still deemed prudent to advance the British front line along the Euphrates away from Baghdad.

The First Battle of Ramadi 8 – 13 July 1917

The British occupied Falluja but as the Ottoman Army retreated to Ramadi, they breached a dam at Sakhlawiya between the two towns. Mesopotamia is the land of the Biblical Flood and floods were still a major feature between Baghdad and Basra. It was essential that the dam was captured and repaired before the floods. Maude ordered the capture of the nearby town of Dhibban and a strike against, but not the capture of, Ramadi.

² Syk, *Maude*, pp. 159 – 183; Townshend, *When God Made Hell*, pp. 288 – 303; Wilson, A.T., *Loyalties Mesopotamia 1914 – 1917*, Vol. I, pp. 184 – 205

³ Syke, *Maude*, pp. 225 – 8; Wilson, *Loyalties*, I, p. 233 – 4.

⁴ See Hopkirk, *On Secret Service East of Constantinople*.

⁵ Moberly, *Mesopotamia*, IV, p. 35.

Summer was not the campaigning season in Mesopotamia, and the summer of 1917 was the hottest in living memory. Midday temperatures in the shade hit 50C (123F), and were recorded over 70C (160F) in the direct sun. Attempts were made to mitigate the extreme heat. Lorries were used for the first time to ferry large numbers of men and ice by night. The infantry were supported by aircraft and Rolls-Royce armoured cars.⁶

The attack on Ramadi was launched on 11 July but started late. The attacking infantry had to advance in the full daytime heat. Air support failed when most of the aircraft developed mechanical problems - their radiators boiled too quickly in the extreme temperatures. Then a dust storm obscured the Ottoman artillery which prevented effective counter-battery fire. Finally, communications broke down.

Anglo-Indian casualties were reported as 566 of whom over half - 321 - were heat related. Some men were reported to have died of heat stroke, thirst or simply gone mad in the dust and heat.

They returned to Dhibban on the evening of the 13th. That town provided a base to repair the dam and to launch another attack on Ramadi.⁷

The Second Battle of Ramadi 27 - 28 September 1917

The decision to launch a second attack on Ramadi - and the first intended to take and hold it - was planned for the relatively cool September months. The formation chosen for the task - 15th Indian Division - was a new one. Formed in 1916, it had garrisoned the Euphrates and missed Maude's campaign on the Tigris. For the battle, the division's 12th and 42nd Indian Brigades were supported by the 6th Cavalry Brigade. Air support was provided by B Flight, 30 Squadron, RFC.

The divisional commander was Major-General Harry Brooking.

Due to the lack of drinking water away from the Euphrates, the Ottoman defenders assumed that the attack would come along the river road, as in July. They dug in to the east of the town. To the west of Ramadi ran the Aziziya Canal, and a single bridge over it. The loss of that bridge would trap the Ottoman Army in Ramadi.⁸

⁶ Barker *The First Iraq War*, p. 342; Downham, P. ed. *Diary of an Old contemptable*, pp. 272 - 278. Begg's *Surgery on Trestles* described in great detail the summers of 1916 and 1917.

⁷ Wilson, *Loyalties*, I, pp. 262, 270.

⁸ Moberely, *Mesopotamia*, IV, p. 51.

Brooking played on Ottoman assumptions by camping his troops near to the Euphrates and building a pontoon bridge across it. He also paid friendly Arab tribes to stockpile supplies on the far bank of the river, in full knowledge that this information would make its way to the defenders of Ramadi.

Brooking was also more fortunate with the weather. On the morning of the 27th, the Royal Flying Corps took aerial photographs of the Ottoman defences. These were developed and turned into maps and distributed before the troops marched out that evening. This was real-time intelligence 1917 standard. Finally, his troops were supported by 350 Ford vans and 10 Fiat lorries. These were not intended to ferry the men, but to carry water for the men and horses. On the 28th alone, these vehicles would transport 14,000 gallons of water.⁹

Brooking's plan was relatively straight forward. Setting off in the evening of 27 September, Brooking would march two brigades round the south of Ramadi. They would by-pass the Ottoman defences to occupy positions across the Euphrates Valley Canal. At 0530 hours on the 28th, two companies of the 2nd/6th Gurkhas attacked Mushaid Ridge with artillery support, which they occupied by 0700 hours. Half an hour later, 6th Cavalry Brigade set off for the Aziziya Canal where they drove off Ottoman detachments. The Canal was largely dry, but with steep banks 20 feet high, ramps and a bridge had to be constructed. When the Canal was crossed at midday they pushed on, driving off two cavalry squadrons to occupy the Hit road by 1600 hours.

Meanwhile, the infantry commenced their attacks over a series of small 'hill's to occupy Ramadi Ridge (42nd Brigade) and Aziziya Ridge (12th Brigade). Candler described Ramadi Ridge as a 'low, pebbly rise... perfectly smooth, a long and gentle gradient, a bare seventeen feet above plain level. It offered no cover of any kind, and our infantry became visible to the Turks a full two hundred yards before they reached the top of the rise.' By 1800 hours, both brigades were in possession of the ridges, although the 42nd Brigade pulled back after dark to a more defensible position in case of an Ottoman counter-attack.

By 1800 hours the Cavalry had also completed their dispositions. Three squadrons of the 14th Hussars blocked the road, with two squadrons of the 22nd Cavalry on their right, thrown slightly forward. On their right, thrown slightly forward again were two squadrons of 21st Cavalry with 15th Machine Gun Squadron and V Battery, Royal Horse Artillery.

⁹ Tennant, J.E., *In the Clouds above Baghdad*, p. 200; Moberley, *Mesopotamia*, IV, pp. 5, 52, 59.

The cavalry were not equipped with bayonets and, with their horses some distance to the rear, were vulnerable to a concerted infantry attack.

At about 0300 hours on the 29th, the head of an Ottoman retreating column was seen approaching. At a range of 200 – 300 yards, the Cavalry Brigade opened fire with V Battery sinking two gun barges on the river. For an hour and a half, the Ottomans attempted to work through the cavalry without success and then fell back on the Aziziya Canal. At dawn, the 21st Cavalry, 15th Machine Gun Squadron and 13th LAMB drove ten miles towards Hit to track down any escapees, but all they saw were a few cavalry who had swum the river.

12th Brigade advanced at dawn from the Aziziya Ridge to occupy the Shaikh Faraja Ridge from where they expected to dominate the bridge over the Aziziya Canal, but their view was blocked by walled gardens. Captain Rodgerson, 2nd/39th Gahrwalis, led a party to capture the bridge and three Ottoman guns positioned there. Candler, again, described their charge 'over the open from Sheikh Faraja Ridge, the three guns in front of them, firing point-blank over their sights, poured in shrapnel, raking the ground, churning up the sand in a deadly spray.' About half way across, a nullah provided cover and from there the Gahrwalis set up their Lewis guns on the artillerymen, allowing a final charge.

With the bridge lost and all hope of escape gone, the Ottoman troops began to surrender from about 0930 hours, and by 1100 hours, the Ottoman commander, Ahmed Bey, and his entire force had surrendered.¹⁰

The battle was so completely successful that the Ottoman authorities were not aware the town had fallen. The following day, an Ottoman aircraft attempted to land, but, realising something was wrong at the last minute, escaped.¹¹

The casualties reflected this. Anglo-Indian casualties were 995, mostly light from high bursting shrapnel although the Garhwalis suffered 166 casualties, mostly during their capture of the bridge. For the Ottoman forces, 120 were killed and 190 wounded with almost 3500 taken prisoner.¹²

¹⁰ Moberley, *Mesopotamia*, IV, pp. 49 - Wilson, *Loyalties*, I, pp. 271 - 2; Candler, *Long Road to Baghdad*, II, pp. 225 - 35; Tennant, *In the Clouds*, pp. 200 - 4; Holland, *With a 14th Hussar through Mesopotamia 1914 - 1918*, pp.

¹¹ Tennant, *In the Clouds*, p. 204; Candler, *Long Road to Baghdad*, II, p. 234.

¹² Moberley, *Mesopotamia*, IV, p. 59.

Contemporary Opinion

Brooking's actions were universally applauded. By the standards of late 1917, it was nothing short of a miracle.

Lieutenant-Colonel Tennant, commanding the RFC in Mesopotamia, landed close to General Brooking:

the little General was even more cheerful than usual; by superb tactics he had washed the Turkish force off the map; the success had been made possible by the arrangements to supply water to the troops by car, for the days were still hot; but the magnificent ride and stubborn tenacity of [6th Cavalry Brigade] was the decisive factor in the achievement of a brilliant plan.¹³

Maude more even more glowing in his compliments, to no lesser a person than Lieutenant-General Sir William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, on 6 October 1917:

Brooking.... did splendidly and handled his troops with the greatest ability, whilst the troops themselves fought with that dash and gallantry which distinguished the efforts of the regimental units so consistently during last winter's campaign. The arrangements for the supply of water during the fighting were simply perfect.¹⁴

And a fortnight later to a colleague in England, on the 20th, he wrote:

Ramadi will be ancient history by the time you get this let, but it was a real good show. It required a lot of preparation owing to the distance from Baghdad and the absence of decent communications pending the completion of our railway to Feluja [sic]..... Brooking handled the troops splendidly and just as I wanted him to, making his preliminary dispositions methodically and them moving with vigour and dash.¹⁵

Tactical Evolution

The success at Ramadi should not have been a surprise to anyone. The tactics were in use by the Anglo-Indian troops in Mesopotamia from 1915, by both Townsend during his 1915

¹³ Tennant, *In the Clouds*, pp. 203 - 204.

¹⁴ Syk, *Maude*, pp. 282 - 284.

¹⁵ Syk, *Maude*, pp. 284 - 285.

advance to up the Tigris which ended at Ctesiphon, and by Maude's renewed advance leading to the capture of Baghdad.

Townsend autobiography *My Campaign* is seen as excusing his errors at and after Kut. However, it does explain in great detail the tactics used and his aims in his battles. In summary, he deployed a Minimum Force to 'fix' the enemy in place while his Main Force (Principle Mass) conducted a turning attack to strike the enemy in the flank. Another force attempted to get behind the enemy's positions and cut off their retreat. Although Brooking at Ramadi did not deploy a Minimum Force, his use of deception did fix the enemy while his Main Force attacked the enemy's flank. Townsend used cavalry within the Minimum Force to execute a wider turn and cut off the enemy's retreat.¹⁶

Townsend used this tactic at Kut-al-Amara (27 - 28 September 1915) and also at Ctesiphon. Maude used the same tactic during his initial advance up the Tigris. But in these earlier battles, the Ottoman defenders escaped to fight another day - those who escaped from Kut-al-Amara fought Townsend at Ctesiphon, and those from Ctesiphon besieged him at Kut.¹⁷ Maude was operating on both sides of the Tigris. Those Ottoman defenders on the right bank were ordered to fight to the last on the Shumran Bend, which delayed his advance. Those on the left bank, who were fixed by the need to defend Kut, managed to escape and fought again on the Diyala river, the final obstacle before Baghdad. The problem experienced by Townsend and Maude, but overcome by Brooking, was that their logistics (primarily the supply of water, but including the speed of movement of their troops), communications and intelligence (including maps) were insufficient for the task in hand.

Townsend's battles included night marches through unmapped terrain without roads or similar identifying features. His only means of communication to his attacking brigades, telephone cable, had insufficient cable for the route of the march. Aviation was ineffective at night, and the few available aircraft were unreliable and without cameras for reconnaissance. As the assaulting troops were traveling through the waterless desert, they were invariably dehydrated and exhausted before the attack commenced. After one attack, they were in no position to conduct any follow-up operations.

Maude was in a slightly better position. He had more aircraft whose photographs provided the first accurate maps of the country. His aircraft were also equipped to spot for the artillery, a vital requirement in a flat country where the mirage obscured the view of the

¹⁶ Townsend, *My Campaign*, pp. 13 - 32.

¹⁷ Townsend, *My Campaign*, pp. 116 - 135, 171 - 184.

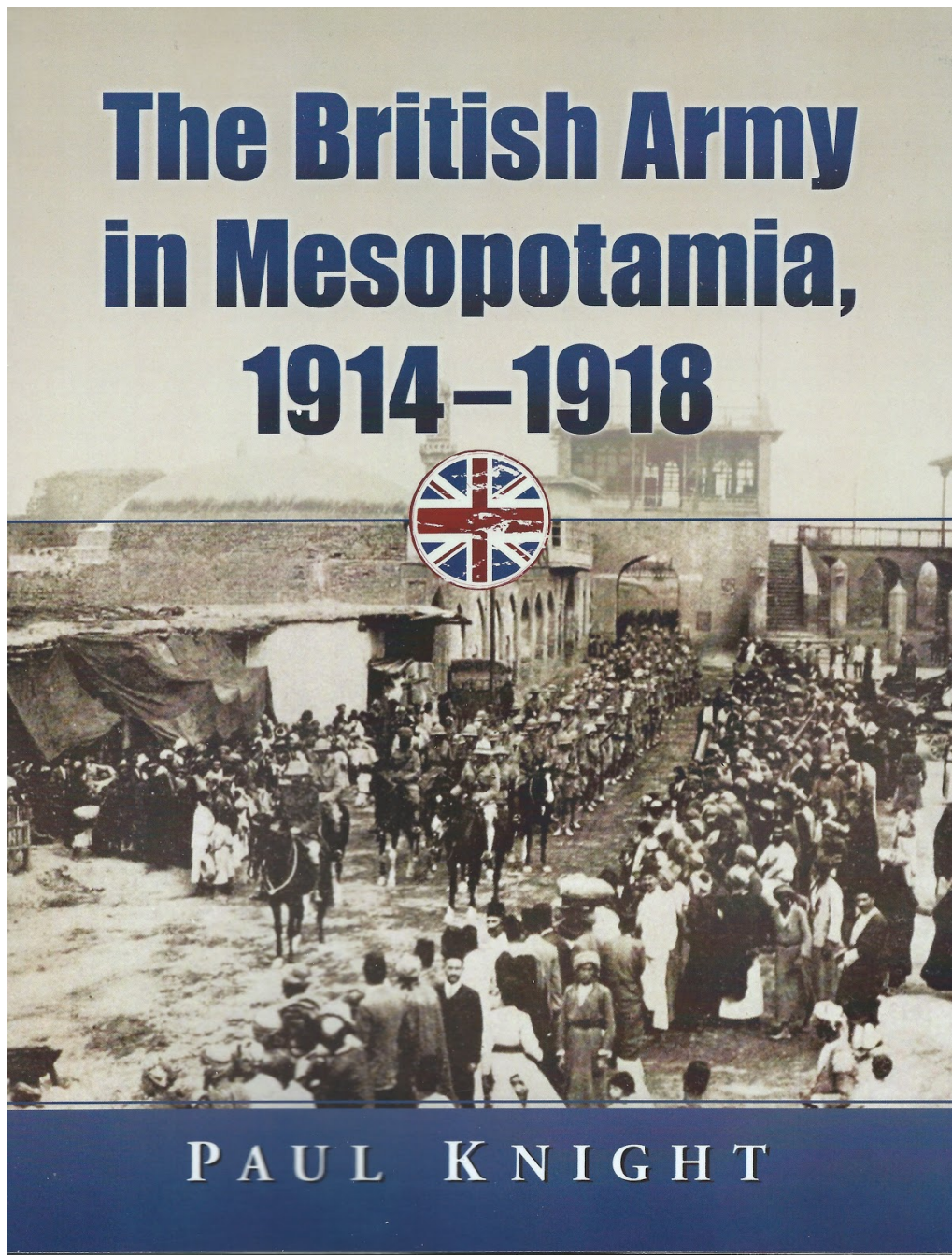
Anglo-Indian troops at the Second Battle of Ramadi									
15th Division							Army Service Corps	6th Cavalry Brigade	Royal Flying Corps
Cavalry and Signals	Artillery	Engineers and Pioneers	12th Brigade	42nd Brigade	Medical	Supply and Transport, Veterinary			
D Sqn, Hertfordshire Yeomanry	8th Brigade, RFA (372, 373, 374 and 72 Batteries)	448, 450 and 451 Companies, RE	1/5th Queens	1/4th Dorsets	12, 23, 105 and 108 Field Ambulances	12th and 42nd brigade Companies	729, 730, 783 and 784 Motor Transport Companies	14th Hussars	B Flight, 30 Sqn
15th Divisional Signal Company	222nd Brigade, RFA (375, 1070, 1072 and 72 Batteries)	48th Pioneers	2/39th Gahrwal Rifles	1/5th Gurkhas	16th Sanitary Section	15th Divisional Troops Company		21st Cavalry	
			1/43rd Erinpura Regiment	2/5th Gurkhas		No. 6 Mobile Veterinary Section.		22nd Cavalry	
			90th Punjabis	3/5th Gurkhas				15th Machine Gun Squadron	
			128th Machine Gun Company	130th Machine Gun Company				V Battery, RHA	
								13th Light Armoured Motor Battery (four vehicles)	

observers. He had better communications, some by aircraft dropping messages and by increased use of wireless. His logistics were greatly improved. There were more river steamers to bring supplies forward, railways had been laid at least as far forward as the camps and he was increasingly supplied with motor vehicles. But even Maude found it difficult to move his troops fast enough to cut off the enemy's retreat.

For Brooking, these problems were ironed out. He had accurate maps of the enemy's positions. The use of motor vehicles to carry drinking water allowed his troops to march deep through the desert to approach undetected. He also had Rolls-Royce armoured cars from 13th LAMB who were not constrained by lack of water. Communications were assisted by wireless and aircraft delivering messages to the Cavalry.

The application of technology allowed Ramadi to be a complete success, but that technology just supported otherwise sound tactics. The difficulties in maximising the tactical effectiveness experienced by Townsend and Maude arose from operating in extreme conditions. Yet, they showed skill in attempting to overcome those difficulties within the limitations of the equipment available to them, and applied new technology to overcome new problems. Far from being unimaginative, old-fashioned 'Colonel Blimps',

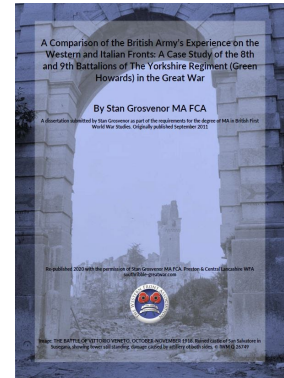
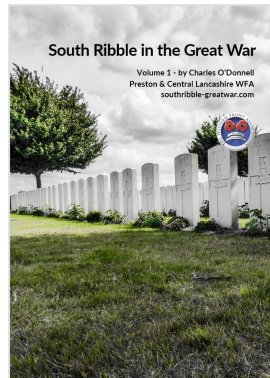
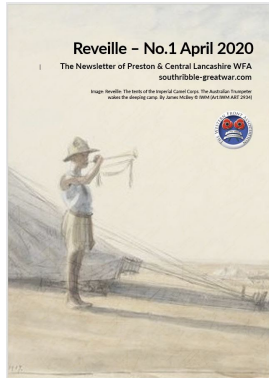
these were professional officers operating in extreme conditions but working diligently to overcome the difficulties they experienced in Mesopotamia.



To buy a signed copy of Paul's book 'The British Army in Mesopotamia, 1914-1918' please email him at: p.a.knight@hotmail.co.uk

Preston & Central Lancashire WFA Publications

We have made a number of publications available through our branch page on the Western Front Association website. They are all in PDF format. We hope you enjoy them.



1. [Reveille No.1 April 2020](#). Articles by Peter Hart, Stan Grosvenor MA FCA, Stephen Roberts, Stuart Clewlow and Charlie O'Donnell.
2. [South Ribble in The Great War Volume 1](#). The stories of 36 people from the South Ribble area during The Great War. 82 pages and packed with 56 illustrations from our own collection and IWM
3. [South Ribble WW1 Memorial](#). The story of how the memorial was built and the 2018 review undertaken by Preston and Central Lancashire WFA. Includes full Roll of Honour.
4. [A Comparison of the British Army's Experience on the Western and Italian Fronts: A Case Study of the 8th and 9th Battalions of The Yorkshire Regiment \(Green Howards\) in the Great War](#). MA dissertation by our Secretary Stan Grosvenor MA FCA.

Great War – Home Front – Votes for Women

by **Stan Grosvenor MA**

In the Beginning

The first women's suffrage societies were formed in 1867. In 1903 a new women's organisation came into being – The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in which the Pankhurst family played a major part as did a lassie from Lancashire, Annie Kenney. 1908 saw Asquith as Prime Minister; he was against the idea of giving women the vote so there was no support from the Government. By 1910 the situation resulted in the beginnings of the violence that most of us have read about. A particularly well-known event was the death of Emily Davison at the 1913 Derby. It was also around this time that the word 'suffragette', the title of a WSPU newspaper, began to be commonly used in the UK.

Only Men Could Vote – But!

Whilst women ratepayers had the right to vote in municipal elections from 1869 and the first woman mayor was elected at Aldeburgh in 1908 the franchise in 1914 was still governed by the provisions of the third Reform Act of 1884. The main qualification to vote in parliamentary elections was that of being a male householder who had unbroken occupation for 12 months. In 1914 some seven million men qualified for the vote. Other qualifications gave a further million men the right to vote, gave half a million rich men two or more votes and gave no rights for any woman to vote. Over 50% of the adult male population had the vote.

The suffrage societies mostly comprised upper and middle-class women who were looking to obtain the vote on the same terms as men – a narrow target. This aim developed and expanded over the years to include both men and women without property ownership.

Another factor in the steady movement towards change was that the men who served overseas, the bulk of the volunteers and conscripts, had lost the right to vote through the 'unbroken occupation' rule.

"The Suffragette," June 13, 1913. *Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper*

The Suffragette

Edited by Christabel Pankhurst. The Official Organ of the
Women's Social and Political Union

No. 35—Vol. 1. FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1913. Price 1d. Weekly (*Post Free*)



**IN HONOUR AND IN LOVING, REVERENT MEMORY
OF
EMILY WILDING DAVISON.
SHE DIED FOR WOMEN.**

"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

Miss Davison, who made a protest at the Derby against the denial of Votes to Women, was knocked down by the King's horse and sustained terrible injuries of which she died on Sunday, June 8th, 1913.

The Road to Misunderstanding

Just over two years ago on 8 February 2018, the Lancashire Evening post claimed that “The struggle to win the vote was long and arduous, but in 1918 brave Suffragettes up and down the country won” thus perpetuating the myth that Suffragettes had all continued to fight throughout the Great War for the enfranchisement of women: they hadn’t!

A grand ‘Suffragette Soirée and Tea Party’ was held at St Andrew’s Church in Leyland to celebrate ‘100 years since women won the right to vote’ and was reported in the same edition. It helped to perpetuate another myth – that Suffragists and Suffragettes were one and the same thing: they were not! Suffragettes were an offshoot of the Suffragist movement which had its roots in the early 19th century. A Suffragist was an advocate of the extension of the political franchise. In the U.S. this included black freed slaves. It is true that since around 1885 the term related especially to women, but not exclusively.

The wearing of the colours, Purple for loyalty, White for Purity and Green for Hope, was a Suffragist emblem that people, including some men, wore to show their support for their aims. The Suffragettes did not adopt anything different. As this emblem continued to be worn by both groups, it cannot be claimed to solely belong to one or the other.

The passage of time does affect definitions within English language usage and today the difference between these two terms has largely become that Suffragettes were militant activists whereas Suffragists pursued a peaceful strategy.

Suffragette Activity in the Great War

The outbreak of war had led to a suspension of politics, including the Suffragette campaigns. That is, most suffragettes agreed to this. Few women believed that there was any chance of extension of the franchise during a time of war. One who opposed this suspension was Ada Chew, an organiser for the Women’s Trade Union League. She became the organiser for the National Union of Women’s Suffrage societies (NUWS) for the Rossendale constituency.

In the early days of the war suffragettes played an important role in encouraging women to go for the many jobs that had previously been done by men. The NUWS also pressed for equal opportunities for women and especially for equal pay. Whilst this latter generally



Image: Annie Kenney

failed there was some varying success in obtaining more reasonable pay rates for women. Within some sectors of industry the trades unions ensured equality could not happen. In the engineering industry all sorts of restrictive practices were put in place to ensure that wage differentials were maintained. In many factories the conditions were in any case unsuitable for the employment of women, although the drain on manpower throughout the war did result in consequential changes to the workplace, making employment of women more practical.

In Parliament

It is frequently forgotten that discussions in Parliament continued throughout the war and that there was notable support for the idea of enfranchising women. The Speaker held a number of conferences on the subject. There was also male support outside of Parliament for the idea. A major stumbling block to including women and one which slowed down

development, was the inequality in numbers of the sexes. The 1911 census showed that in the age group 20 – 45 there were 1095 females to every 1000 males. By the 1921 census there were 1172 females for every 1000 males.

Representation of the People Act 1918

On 6 February 1918, the Representation of the People Act was passed which allowed women over the age of 30 who met a property qualification, to vote. Although 8.5 million women qualified, it was only about two-thirds of the total population of women in the UK.

The same Act abolished property and other restrictions for men and extended the vote to virtually all men over the age of 21: Conscientious objectors lost their vote. Additionally, men in the armed forces could vote from the age of 19. The electorate increased from 8 to 21 million, but there was still huge inequality between women and men. MPs simply could not countenance a situation where female voters would outnumber male voters.

The first opportunity for the newly enfranchised men and women came in the December 1918 general election.

Votes for Women due to War Work?

The coincidence of the end of the war with the granting of the vote to women over 30 made some see wartime occupations as emancipatory – but the vote was given under the same conditions to all men of 21 years of age. The conditions included minimum property qualifications. It was in any case mostly women under 30 who had carried out what was otherwise man's work and most of them were too young to vote until the 1924 election. Furthermore, the 1918 Representation of the People Act gave the vote largely to middle class women whereas it was the working class who had made up the bulk of working women: very few middle-class women took up factory work.

Changes accelerated

Many changes perceived in the post-war period can be traced back to before 1914. The war did not initiate change but did accelerate and intensify changes that were already under way. Other societies that were hardly affected by the war showed similar patterns of development after 1918. It can also be argued that the action of the Suffragettes before the outbreak of the Great War showed its effect in the small extension of the franchise in

1918. Britain was also merely following the international trend to full democracy - the women of Finland, New Zealand, Australia, Denmark and Norway had already been enfranchised.



Image: From the Suffragist Magazine: At Last

Equal Franchise Act 1928

Changes to the rights of women in UK society came gradually over the next 12 years. The first notable change was in 1919 when Parliament passed the Sex Disqualification Removal Act which made it illegal to exclude women from jobs because of their sex.

A bill was introduced in March 1928 to give women the vote on the same terms as men. There was little opposition in Parliament to the bill and the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act became law on 2nd July. As a result, all women over the age of 21 could now vote in elections. This act increased the number of women eligible to vote to 15 million.

Many of the women who had fought for this right were now dead

A Tommy's record and Great War myths

by **Stephen Roberts**

In common with most British people, I used to believe in the Great War myths encapsulated in such phrases as 'Lions Led by Donkeys' and 'Butchers and Bunglers'. I believed that the Great War had been a futile waste which ended because everybody became too disillusioned and too tired to carry on. For at least two years, I even taught my GCSE History students these interpretations as though they were incontrovertible truth. Essentially, I was telling them what I had learned from older family members, from friends and neighbours, from popular culture and books such as Graves's *Goodbye to All That*. Only when I joined the Western Front Association in the 1990s and began to read the many nuanced articles by such luminaries as John Terraine did the scales begin to fall from my eyes and I begin to acquire a more nuanced understanding of the conflict, which, later on, thankfully, I tried to convey to my school students.



One of the most important shapers of my early understanding of both world wars was my Grandmother, Gladys (née Yoxall, 1906-1993), who lived through both of them. She used to tell me about her father, Tommy Yoxall (1884-1962), who had fought in the Great War and who had told her about the horrors of the trenches and how he was haunted by the sounds of wounded men calling for their mothers whilst dying in No Man's Land. Tommy had been wounded at least once and used to let his grandson, my Uncle Alan, touch the top of his head and find the piece of 'shrapnel' which had been permanently lodged in his

scalp. My Grandma also hinted that, during the post-war years, Tommy was a heavy drinker and she recalled having to wait at the pub door in order to extract some of his weekly wages from his hands before he spent them all on beer. Tommy is absent from my parents' post-wedding photographs, dated to 1956, because he had already departed to

the Dee Hotel in West Kirby in order presumably to celebrate the occasion in a manner which he found more fitting than posing woodenly in front of the bride's front door.

In my myth-infested brain, such behaviour was clearly the result of my Great Grandfather's time 'in the trenches'. To me, he must have been so traumatised and then, along with everyone else, so disillusioned that he was trying to anaesthetise himself with alcohol. After all, that is what most veterans did didn't they? Many years later, the National Archives made Great War Soldiers' Service Papers available on-line and I found those belonging to my Great Grandfather. They are truly remarkable and, by themselves, undermine many Great War myths, as well as my preconceptions about Tommy Yoxall's military service and post-war experiences. Analysis of the forty-two pages of his file on their own would produce sufficient data for an academic article or short book, but here I will concentrate on only a few of them. They show that Tommy had been a pre-war artilleryman who had been called up in 1914 and released in 1915. He re-joined in that year and served in a total of four infantry battalions, with three separate service numbers until his discharge with twenty per-cent disability resulting from wounds on 19th March 1919. He had clearly seen a lot of action and probably suffered a great deal, but two specific incidents attract special attention – his involvement in a mutiny and the names he gave to his children born during the war.

The mutiny occurred whilst he was serving with 1/5/Northumberland Fusiliers in April 1918. It is not clear what it was about, but Tommy was sentenced to five years penal servitude suspended. The sentence was cancelled in 1919. Believers in the Great War disillusionment myth might conclude that Tommy and his mates had rebelled against the war itself and were no longer willing to fight for their country. In view of other evidence from his papers, this seems highly unlikely and suggests that the mutiny was probably about conditions such as rations, leave or overwork, rather than the rightness of the war itself.

Here we come to the naming of his children: in July 1916 Tommy's wife Edith gave birth to their fourth child and third son. They named him George Verdun Yoxall. In September 1917, the couple produced another son and named him Douglas Haig Yoxall; he died just over a year later during the Influenza Pandemic. Such names would not have been chosen by people disillusioned with the war or who despised their generals as 'donkeys' or 'butchers and bunglers'. I have since researched many other examples of children being named after Great War generals and battles and noticed how popular was the first name

Douglas, often accompanied by the surname Haig (as a middle name). One of my favourite examples is Douglas Victory Roberts (no relation), who was born the son of a Port Sunlight soap worker, on 11th November 1918. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission database shows that many of the young men called Douglas (and/or Haig) went on to die whilst serving in the Second World War, which is a topic worthy of study in its own right.

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF DEATH.
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Acts, 1836 to

Registration District. *Winal*

Death in the Sub-district of *Woodchurch* in the County of *Essex*

2	3	4	5	6	7
Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description and Residence of Informant.
<i>Douglas Haig Yoxall</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>16 months</i>	<i>Son of Thomas Yoxall No 57775 Private 1/4th York and Lancaster Regiment Coal. Barter</i>	<i>1 Influenza 4 days 2/ Convulsions 1 day Certified by W^m M^c Afee M.D.</i>	<i>Edith Yoxall Mother Present at the death 10. Hilton Grove West Kirby</i>

Image: Part of the Death Certificate for the Infant Douglas Haig Yoxall from Tommy Yoxall's Service Papers

The second piece of evidence in Tommy's service file is a letter he wrote to the War Office, probably in the early 1920s, enquiring about the whereabouts of his campaign medals. In it he seems to express nothing but pride about his wartime service and clearly wants to receive the same reward for his sacrifices as his friends and neighbours had probably received at this time - tokens which were doubtless being worn on proud chests at annual commemorations at the Grange Hill War Memorial and other local sites. A man who was either ashamed or indifferent about his war experiences or had become disillusioned with the war itself would not, in my view, have bothered to write such a letter. In view of this discovery it seems to me entirely plausible, if not definitely proven, that if Tommy Yoxall did have alcoholic tendencies during the rest of his life, they might not have resulted solely from his traumatic war experiences or from a sense of disillusionment with the war into which he had invested so much of his energy: he could equally well have been insulating

himself from the growing disillusionment of society at large, which probably made veterans like himself feel rejected.

The above story makes some important points about the British people's experiences of the Great War. It emphasises that the old simplistic myths, which many but not all of us have rejected, about lions being led by donkeys and futility are invalid and shows the inadvisability of generalising about the past. It also demonstrates the importance of 'bottom up' history and how the micro disciplines of family and local history complement the macro disciplines of military and national history in the worthy and essential project of analysing the human condition. I am motivated to write more about two topics introduced above – the importance of Great War Personal Names and Working Class Patriotism – in subsequent articles.

Dear Sir
 I write in reference
 to medals I am entitled
 to I have had my 1914
 star, but I have not
 had other general service or
 Victory medals also Bar for
 1914 Medal My last unit
 was the York & Lancs
 Regt number 57775 I went
 to France Aug 1914 was
 time expiring 1915 and
 rejoined the infantry

with which I went
 to France again
 hoping to hear soon
 I Remain
 Yours Truly
 Thomas Gotall

Voluntary Aid & Medical Services in Preston during the Great War (Part 1)

by **Charlie O'Donnell**

Introduction

In two dusty old boxes in Lancashire Archives there lie a number of documents pertaining to the time when Cuerden Hall was used as a Military Auxiliary Hospital from 1915 to 1919. The mansion is close to Bamber Bridge and belonged to Reginald Arthur Tatton (1857 to 1926). Tatton adapted the Hall for use as a hospital and during its use as such over seven hundred casualties were treated there in their convalescence. One of the documents is a comprehensive admission and discharge book giving the basic service details of each man treated, their injuries, the treatment that they received and sometimes personal information. There are details on the setting up of the hospital and the names of many of the staff who worked there.

The fact that Cuerden Hall was used as a hospital is not widely known, whereas the Auxiliary Military Hospital at Moor Park in Preston has been written about many times.

The discovery of the records led me to start to research the staff and the patients of both Cuerden and Moor Park Hospital. For the staff, the Red Cross website has been invaluable. The Red Cross personnel record cards for nursing staff and volunteers were made available in full over the centenary period. The cards show basic details such as names and addresses, periods of service, ranks and hospitals in which they worked. There will often be remarks as to the character of the person and details of awards.

In part 1 I begin by telling the stories of two remarkable women who served at Cuerden and Moor Park respectively both of whom were decorated for their services.

Sister Emma Clare Murray ARRC

A staff register gives the names of nurses, doctors, cooks and auxiliary staff at Cuerden. Some of the staff came from the Preston area, but some were from further afield, including Emma Clare Murray (usually just written as Clare Murray) from Ardavon in

Derry / Londonderry. Clare served as a Ward Sister at Princess Christian's Military Hospital, Englefield Green, Surrey from 15 February 1916 to 25 July 1916, then at Cuerden from 6 September 1916 to 4 October 1916 before returning to Surrey from 7 October 1916 to 31 March 1917. However, her longest period of service was at Cuerden from 26 April 1917 to her discharge on 31 January 1919. By the time of her termination she was the Officer In Command at Cuerden.



Image: An example of a Royal Red Cross 2nd Class (ARRC) medal [By Auckland Museum, CC BY 4.0.](#)

Clare was awarded the Royal Red Cross (2nd Class) which enabled her to use the letters ARRC after her name as an Associate. The award was established in 1883 by Queen Victoria with a single class of Member and the first recipient was Florence Nightingale. The second class of Associate was added from November 1915. The award is made to a fully trained nurse of an officially recognized nursing service, military or civilian, who has shown exceptional devotion and competence in the performance of nursing duties, over a continuous and long period, or who has performed an exceptional act of bravery and

devotion at her or his post of duty. It is conferred on members of the nursing services regardless of rank.

Rec'd 17 FEB 1919

Surname Murray

Christian Names Clare (~~Mr., Mrs. or Miss~~)

Permanent Address: Ardabon
Northland Rd London Army Detach

Date of Engagement April 26th 1917 Rank band Sister Pay 30/- per week

Date of Termination Jan 31st 1919 Rank 0 9/c. Pay 12/- per week

Particulars of Duties

Whether whole or part time, and if latter No. of hours served Whole

Previous engagements under Joint War Committee, if any, and where
Princess Christian's Military Hospital

Honours awarded R.R.C. 2nd Class Englefield Green Surrey

Image: Front of record card for Clare Murray

Clare continued in the nursing profession after the war. In December 1919, Nurses Registration Acts were passed for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The registration of nurses was opened on 30 September 1921. Clare was one of the first to register.

The February, 1927 edition of The British Journal of Nursing reported "Mr. Reginald Arthur Tatton, of Cuerden Hall, Lancashire, left an annuity of £50 to Sister Esther Danford of Westminster Hospital, "in recognition of devoted attention" during his illness, also an annuity of £50 to Sister Clare Murray."

Quartermaster Marion Ferguson Foster MBE

Marion Ferguson Foster was born 26 May 1881 to James Yates Foster, an engineer born in Preston and Elizabeth Stuart Foster born in Scotland. She was baptized 31 July 1881 in Fulwood. The church in which she was baptized is not given in the records.

By 1891 she was living at Whitefriars, Liverpool Road, Penwortham with her parents, siblings and staff. James was 35 and a printer's engineer and Elizabeth was 33. Marion had two younger brothers John H. (7) and Frank (6) both born like her in Fulwood. Lily C Franklin (27) was their school governess born in London, Jane Johnstone (20) a housemaid born in Scotland and Annie Preston, a cook (23) born in St. Michaels on Wyre.



Image: Nurses and injured soldiers pose for the camera at Moor Park Hospital ([Lancashire Evening Post](#) 1 February 2019).

In 1901 Marion was living at North Street, Daventry with her Uncle Harold W Johnson (36), a clergyman / school master and Aunt Sarah A Johnson (34), both from Preston. As well as Aunt and Uncle, her cousins Muriel (10), Phyllis (8) and Harold (6), all born in Daventry. There was also a schoolmaster and a matron, 20 boys and four other staff.

Marion began work at the Moor Park Hospital on 4 August 1914 with the rank of Quartermaster. Her duties were varied but included canteen duty, depot duty and she was also the head clerk of the hospital. To begin with she was working part time on canteen duty until 11 August 1914 then moved to depot duty, also part time until 4 January 1915 when she became a full-time member of staff. Marion had the entire charge of the Admission and Discharge Books. She was still serving 15 May 1919 when her VAD certificates were completed and her service was voluntary unpaid throughout.

Marion was awarded the MBE, specifically for her work in Moor Park Hospital. The London Gazette dated 26 March 1920 p.3831 reads: "Miss Marion Ferguson Foster. X-Ray Worker at Preston Infirmary and Moor Park Auxiliary Hospital." The London Gazette dated 27 July 1920 p.7854 reads "Miss Marion Ferguson Foster. Secretarial services at Moor Park Auxiliary Hospital."

Become a Western Front Association Member

The Western Front Association was formed in 1980 to maintain interest in the period 1914-1918, to perpetuate the memory, courage and comradeship of those on all sides who served their countries in France and Flanders and their own countries during the Great War. It does not seek to glorify war and is non-political.

For a modest annual subscription, our members receive a wide range of benefits. In particular, belonging to The Western Front Association provides you with the opportunity of meeting like-minded people to learn, share, explore and exchange information and knowledge in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. You will also receive our regular, high-quality publications in total six times a year.



Stand To! & Bulletin from the WFA

Stand To! the WFA's prestige journal, is posted to all members three times a year. Its editorial policy increases our knowledge and understanding of the Great War. Articles include:

- previously unpublished accounts of the Great War
- original research and previously unpublished photographs
- regular features include book reviews and a correspondence column.
- Bulletin is also published three times a year. It carries reports on the Association's activities and future events. It gives details of meetings at national and local level.

Pension Records



Pension Records free to access on Ancestry's Fold3 via WFA Member Login. The WFA has been instrumental in saving a number of important records. The Medal Index Cards were saved from destruction some years ago, but more recently approximately six million sets of pension records were saved. Had the WFA not stepped in, this valuable resource would have been lost forever. These records are available for WFA members to view as part of their membership package via the WFA web site.

Remembrance

11 November 2019 The Cenotaph, Whitehall. To remember those who died in the Great War, the Association:

- meets in Whitehall at 11 o'clock on Armistice Day for wreaths to be laid at the Cenotaph
- lays wreaths on memorials at home and abroad

- encourages people to tour the battlefields
- has an active education and research function
- has a wide range of branded goods available to buy
- participates in the Royal British Legion Parade on Remembrance Day.

Regional Seminars

All Day Seminars are held around the country, often with internationally-renowned speakers.

Local Branches

The Association supports a broad range of local WFA Branches in the United Kingdom, in other European countries, in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere. Many of our Branches produce their local newsletters; many arrange tours to the battlefields at reasonable prices, and all welcome new members warmly. Please see the Events section of the website to find out more about what is happening at a Branch near you.

Trench Maps

The Western Front Association, together with the Imperial War Museum (IWM) in London, took part in a joint project to produce a series of DVDs of trench maps and aerial photographs from the IWM archives. This project called 'Mapping the Front', created a set of themed DVDs of Great War maps and photographs covering significant and interesting aspects of The Great War. The quality of the maps allows high resolution and colour depth images as good as the originals. The DVDs are themed by area with maps of different scales detailing the changes to landscape over months and years.

Locations include the Somme, Ypres (this DVD is unfortunately no longer in stock, having been sold out), Arras, Loos, Gallipoli. Other themes also include Haig's personal maps, German army maps and The Official History of the War.

Each themed DVD contains:

Maps.

Aerial photographs (where available).

A standard set of index maps.

Help on how to read the military maps of the period.

Other contemporary and modern documents of relevance or interest such as the 'Report on Survey on the Western Front, 1914-1918.'

Online

The WFA is alive to the value of the Internet, and it has an ever-expanding website, which offers numerous ways to research the Great War.

WFA Branded Goods

The WFA e-shop sells branded WFA goods, back issues and collected volumes of our publications.

To join visit [The Western Front Association](#) website