CHESTERFIELD WFA NEWSLETTER Number 21

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Welcome to Issue 21 the January 2017 Newsletter of Chesterfield WFA.

The next Chesterfield Branch Meeting will be held on Tuesday 7th February with a 7.30 start

Making a welcome return visit to the branch as our speaker will be Niall Cherry

Niall will be making a presentation entitled

"Battle of Cambrai 1917"

Church bells rang out in Britain to celebrate the success of the British attack, but the Germans countered and soon all was back to square one.

Why? – and what lessons were learned

The Branch meets at the Labour Club, Unity House, Saltergate, Chesterfield S40 1NF on the first Tuesday of each month. There is plenty of parking available on site and in the adjacent road. Access to the car park is in Tennyson Road, however, which is one way and cannot be accessed directly from Saltergate.

Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2017

Meetings start at 7.30pm and take place at the Labour Club, Unity House, Saltergate, Chesterfield S40 1NF

January	3rd	**Branch AGM** Tony Bolton- ***"1917 – an Overview of the Year"***. Book Sale – all at a pound !
February	7th	Niall Cherry – **Cambrai 1917.** Church bells rang out in Britain to celebrate the success of the British attack, but the Germans countered and soon all was back to square one. Why ? – and what lessons were learned
March	7th	Peter Hart ***"Guns of Passchendaele 1917"***. On his talk Peter will cover guns and the Royal Artillery during the Third Battle of Ypres.
April	4th	Richard Pullen – **"Munitionettes"** By June 1917, roughly 80% of the weaponry and ammunition used by the British army during World War I was being made by women who became known as munitionettes. Richard explains their story
May	2nd	Malcolm Sime - ***"Kaiserschlact"*** this presentation will examine the performance of the 66th (2nd East Lancs) Division and the British system of defence in depth on 21 and 22 March 1918, covering the political and military background, the quality and training of the troops involved, both British and German, the planning and implementation of the defences in that sector and the events of the first two days of the Kaiserschlacht.
June	6th	Rob Thompson – **Messines 1917**.It has been argued that the Battle of Messines was the most successful local operation of the war, certainly of the Western Front. Carried out by Plumer`s 2nd Army it was launched on 7 June 1917. Rob will explain why this offensive was a success.
July	4th	Charles Beresford - **The Forgotten Story of Derbyshire's Major Role in the Nation's Commemoration of the Great War.**
August	1st	Alan Atkinson – "Propaganda – The British Way !" Drawing on his researches for his MA, Alan will explain how the British exploited Propaganda to their advantage.
September	5th	Tony Bolton – " **Iraq Inquiry – 1917.** The Mesopotamia Campaign was a major defeat for the Imperial Forces – Tony will explain why and the outcome of the subsequent inquiry.
October	3rd	Murray McVey – **Battle of Broodseinde** was fought on 4 October 1917 near Ypres in Flanders, at the east end of the Gheluvelt plateau, by the British Second and Fifth armies and the German 4th Army. The battle was the most successful Allied attack of the Battle of Passchendaele.
November	7th	Arthur Lacey - **'Medical Anecdotes from the Great War**- what did the RAMC do?. An introduction to the RAMC history and organisation, but also about casualties, heroes and diseases with reference to individual soldiers stories as illustrations.
December	5th	Prof John Derry - **`Haig Reconsidered`** Sir Douglas Haig was the victorious commander of the BEF, but still divides opinion. Prof Derry will look at recent researches into his command.

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`The views and opinions expressed in this members` newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinion or views of the Western Front Association or the Chesterfield Branch Committee.'

A Personal note from the Chair (14)

My six year old granddaughter rang the other day to tell us that she had lost her first tooth and I discovered that she had been to Rainbows and had got a new badge. For those who are unfamiliar with the Scouting movement, Rainbows are junior Brownies and I mention the badge because as you can see from the picture it is a poppy remembrance badge awarded because she had attended the Remembrance Day service last November. This got me thinking about how we encourage or deter youngsters from taking an interest in the First World War. When I look around the meetings with one or two exceptions we are a fairly grey haired bunch and on the odd occasions when a younger person comes along are we a bit intimidating? I wonder if anyone has any ideas for reaching a younger audience. Anyway well done to the Scout movement for encouraging youngsters to be aware of what their great great grandfathers generation went through for them.

It was also encouraging to your Committee to see the support for the AGM at January's meeting and the willingness of volunteers to fill the ranks left by Pam and Malcolm's retirement. We will all miss their contribution. Picking up on Pam's last financial report I wondered if anyone would like to take on the task of investigating a sound system and/ or an illuminated lectern – which of course would have to be portable? If anyone has a suggestion please drop me an email my address is in Bulletin and on this newsletter. I look forward to receiving your thoughts.

Tony Bolton

Secretary`s Scribbles

Welcome to the first Branch Newsletter for 2017. February 7th sees our next meeting with Niall Cherry making a welcome return as speaker, this time to present on the ***Battle of Cambrai 1917.*** Our January meeting really got us off to a flyer with a record attendance for an AGM meeting – let us hope – and I see no reason why – it is a portent for attendances for the rest of the year. With the business of the AGM out of the way, Branch Chair, Tony Bolton gave us an excellent overview of 1917 which he had cleverly titled ***A Year of Crises***. The meeting wound up with a first class discussion with good contributions from members. These discussions at the conclusion of our speakers` presentations have been a feature of our meetings in the last year or so and it is great to see and hear so many of you participating, questioning, or putting your point of view across. It was also good to see one of our `veterans` Dave Mellors making a welcome return having missed out on quite a few meetings because of an eye problem. The minutes of the AGM accompany this newsletter and if there are omissions or corrections to which my attention should be drawn by anyone who was there, then please let me know. The programme of speakers for 2017 has been circulated but it is included again with this Newsletter. As well as several `Big Guns` - and yes Peter Hart is coming – there will be some new faces, Malcolm Sime, Murray McVey plus `debutantes` - Alan Atkinson and Arthur Lacey – both of whom are `regulars` at our Branch Meetings, whilst we finish of the year with a visit by Professor John Derry who will discuss

Douglas Haig – I am sure there will be a brisk discussion on that subject when John concludes his presentation. John is `old school` and he works without notes or visual aids. Again I have tried to mainly – but not exclusively – focus on events of 100 years ago.

To make room for new raffle prize items, once again, at the back of our meeting room there will be table with books for sale – pay what you think the book is worth!

Things are progressing – albeit slowly – with our plans to run a one day conference some time in 2018 – and I wish to thank the member who went to the trouble of sounding out a potential venue, including catering – thanks.

I have already approached several potential `Big Name` speakers and received a favourable response. Now that the speakers are in place for this year, indeed I already have two `signed up ` for 2018, we can start to seriously look at having the conference.

I have managed to continue with part six of the story of the Munitions Crisis which hindered the BEF in the early part of the war and ultimately led to a change in Government and with it a change in direction of the war itself which up until then had been very much conducted on a `business as usual` basis. Much of the copy is drawn from the War Memoirs of David Lloyd George which covers this period very well. With respect to DLG, I recently purchased the three DVD set of the 1981 BBC series `The Life and Times of David Lloyd George` which has only recently been made available in DVD format. The late Philip Madoc (he passed away in 2012) gives a masterful performance as DLG but all the supporting cast are excellent. DLG`s shenanigans with the ladies form (correctly) a backdrop to the story but don`t dominate – I am sure if such a series had to be made today the producers would focus on his bedroom antics to the dereliction of the politics and DLG`s contribution as Chancellor, Minister of Munitions and Prime Minister, during and after The Great War.

Charles Beresford, one of our Branch stalwarts has published a book (via Helion) on the Rev Bernard William Van VC MC & bar, Croix de Guerre (avec palme) – details elsewhere in this Newsletter.

You will see elsewhere our Vice Chair, Mark Macartney, who is the WFA`s Branded Goods Appointee, has added a new line of shirts to the range of WFA branded products. .

As always I am looking for content for future Newsletters…perhaps you visited a cemetery looking for a relative…maybe a museum…or indeed just some anecdotes to share.

Please send all items for inclusion to grantcullen@hotmail.com

Grant Cullen – Branch Secretary

From the BBC website on January 9th 2017 –Service for fallen WW1 hero Pte James McLaughlin 100 years on

When Private James McLaughlin lost his life during World War One there was no funeral, no memorial service and it is not even known where his body is. He was killed in action on 9 January 1917 fighting Turkish soldiers in Mesopotamia, in what is now known as Iraq. He left behind a baby daughter who never knew him.

His grandchildren were determined that the sacrifice of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment soldier should not be forgotten, so they held a remembrance service at Preston Minster exactly100 years after his death.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-38561338

January Meeting 2017

As has become customary, the January meeting commenced with the Branch AGM with Branch Chairman, Tony Bolton, welcoming everyone to the meeting, remarking on the excellent attendance, the largest ever for a Chesterfield Branch AGM. Before formally opening the AGM, the Chairman reminded all in attendance that only those who are paid up members of the WFA would be entitled to vote on any election or motion. Guests or visitors may not vote.

Branch AGM

Chairman reminded all that the minutes of the 2016 AGM had been included with a Newsletter and that neither he nor the Branch Secretary had received any comments subsequent to that issue or prior to this AGM. For the sake of regularity he asked for any comments, omissions or corrections to those minutes from those present and in the absence of there being no one otherwise minded the minutes of the AGM 2016 were unanimously adopted.

Chairman then called upon the Branch Treasurer, Pam Ackroyd, to deliver the financial report for year ended 31st December 2016. Prior to the start of the meeting all members were given a copy of the Branch Accounts for 2016. Pam commenced by thanking all present, members old and new for making 2016 an amazing year for the Branch. Before presenting accounts she reminded members of the excellent rate we get for renting the meeting room at Chesterfield Labour Club a fee which gives all those attending access to the Club bar facilities before and after (and sometimes during) the meeting. To comply with local licensing legislation all attending are obliged to become associate members of the club, for which a small annual fee is payable. The Branch pays this on behalf of each attendee, this cost being covered by the modest entrance donation which we ask all those attending to make upon entry prior to the meeting. The `door` income allows the Branch to attract good quality speakers and also covers any meeting whose attendance doesn`t reach expectation and Pam commented that we haven`t that situation for more than 18 months. She also paid tribute to the speakers whom she said had fully embraced the WFA ethic by only asking for expenses to cover their travel etc., none requesting a fee on top of expenses, a gesture greatly appreciated. Pam then drew members` attention to the Statement of Accounts , the front page of which relates to expenditure and included purchases of raffle books, website costs and the wreath which Branch Secretary, Grant Cullen laid on members behalf at Chesterfield War Memorial on July 1st at the Battle of the Somme Commemoration. Turning to the second page, income, attendances ranged from 19 to 32 with an average of 25 which Pam said was fantastic compared with the average of 17 during 2015 and paid tribute to the work of Branch Vice Chairman, Mark Macartney for making sure all our events are publicised in the local press and on the WFA website as well as running the Branch Facebook page. Pam also thanked other Committee members, Tony, Jane and Grant for attending various other events in the community and making people aware of who we are and what we do. The results of all these efforts are there for all to see in the attendances at Branch Meetings with new members and guests coming along in increasing numbers. Pam made special mention to Tony Bolton and John Beech, both of whom made presentations last year but waived any claim for expenses. In addition Tony Bolton passed over to the Branch fees he had received for making several presentations on Great War subjects to non WFA organisations. In conclusion Pam drew members` attention to the fact that our funds closing balance at the end of 2016 showed a healthy increase compared with the end of 2015. She said we need to give attention to this fund and said that we should look to be spending some of this money for the benefit of the branch. At a previous meeting approval had been sought and given for the acquisition of a sound system and our laptop is ageing, indeed its battery has `gone` something we need to look seriously at replacing. Pam appealed to members to come up with

ideas which could enhance and benefit the branch. Pam concluded by thanking members for their continued support, buying raffle tickets, donations of books etc., all of which has contributed to the success of the Branch.

Tony Bolton then carried on with the business of the AGM, the election of Office Bearers. Tony offered himself for re-election as Branch Chairman, there being no other candidates. Proposed by Pam Ackroyd, seconded by Grant Cullen and unanimously accepted (show of hands) by members. Subsequently Grant Cullen (Branch Secretary) and Mark Macartney (Vice Chairman) were similarly unanimously re-elected to their posts. Tony then moved on to the post of Branch Treasurer, a position held by Pam Ackroyd since the branch was founded back in 2010. As members had previously been advised that Pam wished to retire from this role and prior to seeking nominations for the post, Tony warmly thanked Pam for all her sterling work before presenting her with a bouquet of flowers, a small token of appreciation from the branch members. The members then thanked Pam in the traditional manner. Jane Lovatt was nominated by Tony Bolton for the post and there being no other candidates, was unanimously elected to the post of Branch Treasurer. That left a Committee post vacant and Grant Cullen proposed Jon-Paul Harding. Jon accepted the nomination and there being no other nominations from anyone willing to serve he was duly unanimously elected by the members.

The Branch Committee for 2017 is therefore,

Chairman – Tony Bolton anthony.bolton3@btinternet.com

Vice Chairman – Mark Macartney markmacartney48@gmail.com

Treasurer – Jane Lovatt fjl1966@live.co.uk

Secretary – Grant Cullen grantcullen@hotmail.com

Committee – Jon-Paul Harding jonpaul.harding@gmail.com

Branch Chairman Tony Bolton threw open the meeting should any member have any other competent business to raise under terms of the AGM. There was none so Chairman thanked everyone for their continued support and closed the meeting.

It has become somewhat of a Branch tradition that upon conclusion of the AGM, the Branch Chairman, Tony Bolton, makes a presentation, an overview of the year 100 years ago, and this year was no exception with Tony stepping up to give an overview of 1917.

1917 – A Year of Crises

Tony began by saying that if there was any year of the war epitomises that title `A Year of Crises` - then it was 1917. It was a year when all the belligerents, and even some of the neutrals went through their own crises. And the reasons for this is not hard to define.

War weariness was starting to affect the populations of not only the Entente Allies but those of the Central Powers as well. Losses were at a level unimaginable when the war began in August 1914. Not only were casualty numbers running into millions but for all sides there was nothing tangible to show for this. Germany had swept through Belgium and northern France, had been halted on the Marne and pushed back, but even for them there was nothing to be celebrating. The retreat by the Germans to the Hindenburg Line in February and March 1917

could hardly be viewed as a success by the Allies. Every country was starting to suffer shortages, fuel shortages, food shortages, manpower shortages and 1917 saw huge strikes across all the countries, including Britain.

The German Crisis. 1917 started off with the German Crisis. 1917 was actually a year of appalling weather, the winter of 1916-17 was one of the worst on record and the terrible frosts of that winter destroyed the potato crop and the German population was forced to survive on fodder and turnips, indeed in Germany it became known as `The Turnip Winter`. The hardship on the domestic front in Germany was far harder in either France or Britain, being compounded by the economic blockade of Germany which was becoming increasingly effective. Germany had huge manpower shortages and transport chaos, indeed Tony emphasised the point that despite the perception that Germany was very efficient that was simply not the case and indeed in 1917 the transport system almost completely broke down. Local authorities were literally hi-jacking trainloads of food so that they could fed their own populations at the expense of others. Despite the propaganda after Jutland is was perfectly obvious that the High Seas fleet had not scored a significant success against the British Grand Fleet and were not in a position to break the blockade. The maulings that the German army had taken on the Somme and Verdun in 1916 meant that by 1917 they were recruiting fifteen year olds into the army. The retreat to the Hindenburg Line shortened the line by 25 miles and freed up 13 divisions which made some positive impact on the manpower shortages in the German army. By 1917 Germany`s allies, Austria and to a lesser extent the Ottoman Empire were `wobbling`, indeed the Austrians under the new Archduke Karl were already putting feelers out the Allies. However, the main German crisis hinged upon the decision to adopt unrestricted submarine warfare.

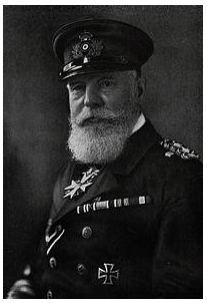
The Chancellor of the Reichstag Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg

Paul von Hindenburg German Army Chief of Staff

Erich Ludendorff – Quartermaster General German Army

Bethmann-Hollweg was totally opposed to the plans of Ludendorff and Hindenburg to go back to unrestricted submarine warfare. He considered that if the submarine campaign did not bring Britain to its knees before the next harvest then it would bring America into the war which

would almost certainly result in Germany losing. This `battle ` between the Chancellor and the Generals continued with Leudendorff and Hindenburg pushing vigorously that they could win if they could stranle Britains supply routes of food and raw materials. Bethmann-Hollweg reacted that if the submarine campaign failed to bring victory then Germany was in big trouble. On January 9th 1917 the Kaiser called a meeting at Pless on the German –Polish border with the idea of thrashing this out, once and for all



A Grand Admiral of the German Navy, Henning von Holtzendorff presented a 200 page dossier. This dossier covered every aspect of the submarine campaign, including how many submarines were available, when and where they could attack, even down to tiny details like the calorific value of the British breakfast, or how many yards of imported wool were required to manufacture ladies skirts ! It was incredibly detailed.

What it did not do was indicate how Britain would react to this U boat campaign and what action it would take. The Kaiser sided with Hindenburg and Ludendorff leaving Bethmann-Hollweg to reluctantly acquiesce and Germany embarked upon a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare which ultimately brought it to ruin. This , of course was the second unrestricted submarine warfare campaign, the first ending when the Americans made it clear in 1915 after the sinking of the Lusitania, that such a policy was unaceptable. During the time from the ending of that first campaign until the second started on the 1st of February 1917, Germany had built a fleet of new U-boats which Holtzendorff claimed would do much better than those available during the first campaign.

On 17th January 1917, room 40 at the Admiralty, which was the Bletchley Park of the First World War , intercepted a German wireless transmission from the ofice of the German Foreign Minister, Arthur Zimmermann, which the cryptographers realised was a variant on the normal German diplomatic codes and was quickly deciphered. Ominously, it confirmed the return to unrestricted submarine warfare comencing on February 1st. Amazingly, it also contained instructions to the German ambassador to the US, Bernsdorff, to engage with Mexico in an attempt to get Mexico to enter the war on the side of Germany and promised them the return of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. It also suggested to the Mexicans that they bring in the Japanese into this conspiracy. At that time Japan was growing in power and was becoming a rival to the US in the Pacific. To avoid a risk of exposing their sources and having Germany either deny the message or change it, Britain managed to shift the blame on to Bernsdorff AJ Balfour, First Lord of the Admiralty passed the note personally to the United States Ambassador on 23rd February 1917 and he immediately sent it off to Woodrow Wilson, the American President. Wilson was furious when he received the transcript, coming on top of the resumption of the submarine campaign. He released the document to the American press on March 1st and this sparked outrage across the US, whose mood started to change. Of course, doubts began to arise that the document was a fake or forgery but any doubt was dispelled when Zimmermann called a press conference at which he confirmed the authenticity of the telegram !

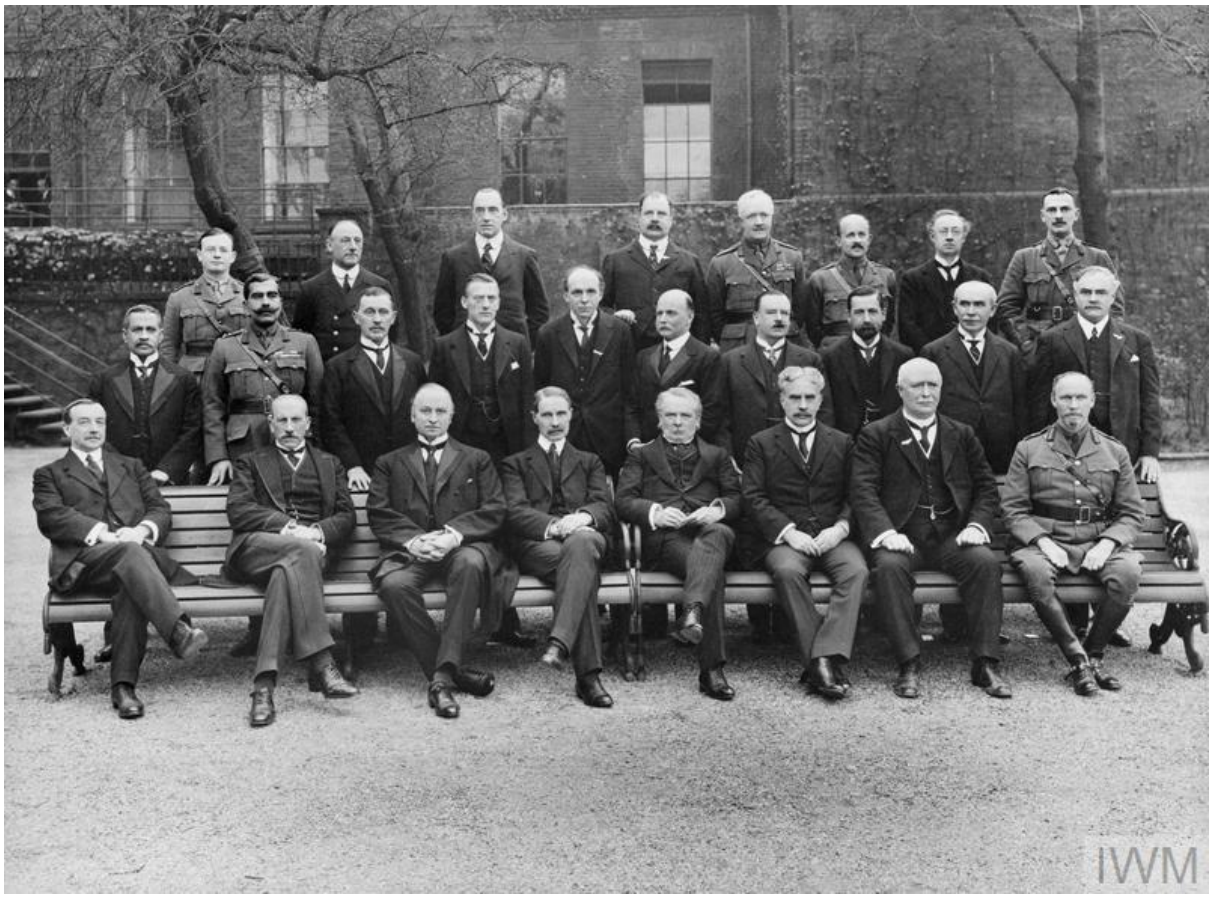
The American Crisis. The immediate reaction in the U.S. was a total subjugation of the anti-war campaign. It is a common assumption that it was the unrestricted submarine warfare that brought America into the war. It was not. America broke off diplomatic relations with Germany on 3rd February, and a number of US ships were torpedoed and sunk with some loss of American lives.On March 5th Wilson using his Presidential powers, announced a state of `Armed Neutrality` having failed to get Congressional approval. The Zimmermann telegram changed the

mood of the country and when Wilson met with his Cabinet on March 20th, they were unanimous for declaring war. Congress was recalled and debates were held in the House of Representatives and the Senate between 2nd and 4th April at the conclusion of which, both houses voted for war, although not unanimously,which on April 6th 1917 became fact when President Wilson signed the Declaration.

The American army at that point in 1917 stood at exactly 120000 a figure not dissimilar to that of the original BEF in 1914. It was obvious to all that it would take years for an American army to build up to be capable of doing anything. However, the first American division, the `Rainbow Division` so-called because it was made up of units from every state in the Union, started to arrive in France on June 25th 1917 thereby showing Holtzendorff`s promise to the Kaiser than he would never allow a single American to land in Europe to be a serious error of judgement. The arrival of these Americans gave a huge boost to the Allies even although the material advantage was in fact, pretty small.

The British Crisis. If the American Crisis had been a crisis of neutrality and belligerency , then the British crisis was one of survival and this commenced as soon as the unrestricted submarine warfare campaign began. Tony then showed a graph of shipping losses due to enemy action in home waters, before unrestricted submarine warfare in January 1917 compared with that of April 1917 when, if you include on a worldwide basis, 800000 tons of shipping had been sunk. This was the worst single moth for losses in *either* of the world wars. The Royal Navy appeared to be helpless. Lloyd-George in his memoirs published post war was particularly critical of the Admiralty and its Admirals for their refusal, at that time to consider a convoy system. There was however a cogent reason why convoys were not the immediate answer. For a country desperate for supplies, to hold back loaded ships from sailing until there were sufficient to constitute a convoy seemed counter-intuitive. Secondly, a convoy could only sail at the speed of its slowest ship whilst the navy had calculated that they would need two escorts for every merchant ship sailing. Additionally, there was the refusal of merchant ships, particularly American ships, to actually sail at all. Even those ships who were willing to sail couldn`t get loaded as ports along the entire eastern seaboard of the US were clogged with ships, loaded but not willing to sail. Almost at the same time the so-called `dollar crisis` occurred. The American ambassador to Britain, Walter Page, informed his government that Britain could no longer pay its way, but Wilson felt that Britain was `crying wolf` and that things were not that bad. Up until that time Britain had paid for all its purchases of food, munitions etc, as well as supporting France, Italy and Serbia, in cash and £190M in gold, and had by now exhausted its dollar reserves and securities. In April 1917, the first of its commercial loans, negotiated by JP Morgan, were due to be repaid and Britain did not have the wherewithall to do so.

Another element to the crisis occurred on May 25th, with the first fixed wing air attack on Britain by Gotha bombers. By August 1917 there had been 8 such daylight raids but the *Deutsche Luftstreitkräfte* - the German Air Service had begun to suffer heavy losses, not so much over Britain but whilst crossing France on their return. In September 1917 they switched to night raids, raids which foretold the `Blitz` of the Second World War. There were 13 major night raids during the rest of 1917 which resulted in 857 civilians, including 120 children, being killed and 2051 injured. As Tony pointed out, these were not huge numbers but the effect on an already shaky population was very, very severe. Britain also looked at the increasing vulnerability of its allies, so it turned to the Empire and in early 1917 Lloyd George formed the Imperial War Cabinet



Tony then put up a photograph of the Imperial War Cabinet taken in May 1917. Well known figures included Lloyd George (front row, 5th from left), Lord Curzon (front row, 3rd from left) Bonar Law (front row 4th from left) and Jan Smuts (front row,1st on right) from South Africa. At these meetings, basically, the Empire was asked to give more, particularly India but all this started to see the erosion of the Empire and a steady move towards nationhood and independence. Another interesting point was that in Africa and the Pacific, capturing of former German colonies had been done principally by Empire troops and those countries wanted to retain control over, for example German South West Africa (modern Namibia).

A start to solving the British crisis began on 10th May 1917 when the Royal Navy was prevailed upon to try convoying of shipping, the first sailing from Gibralter to Britain and return. Only one ship was lost. If the navy had been slow to consider the convoy system they were typically vigorous once they got it underway and Tony put up a slide showing the effect of convoying merchant ships, with losses reduced to only 1.2% of ship tonnage which sailed. The effect upon the U boat predators was also dramatic with 50 being lost from May to December 1917 although interestingly convoy escorts only accounted for about 10% of this number, the rest being sunk by striking tethered mines.

The British `crisis` was solved by a combination of these factors,

- Introduction of rationing. This was a very fair system and whilst there was still a black market it was tiny in comparison with which operated in Germany, indeed at one point a deputy in the German Reichstag (Parliament) stood up and said that the only thing that was working in the German economy was the black market !
- Massive shipbuilding programme
- Shipping Controller – this was acivilian appointment – Sir Joseph Maclay

- Convoy System
- Reduction in strikes by coming to a compromise with the strikers with coal mining efectively being nationalised in March 1917
- More state control
- Greater attention to the mood of the public.

Also on June 30th a Parliamentary Bill was passed giving women – but only those married and over 30 – the right to vote. This was to be implimented *after* the war.

Another major change came on 26th June 1917 when King George V, changed the name of Britain`s Royal House from `Saxe-Coburg and Gotha` to that of `Windsor` and of course the name `Mountbatten` rather than `Battenburg`

The French Crisis. France was a much more divided and fractured society compared with Britain, much of this stemming from the fall out from the Dreyfuss Affair of 1912. There was constant friction between the Monarchists, the Church and the Republican parties but the war united France whilst putting strains on it as it developed. By late 1916 many Deputies viewed Joseph Joffre as becoming arrogant and detached, but of course they could could not sack the saviour of France – the Victor of the Marne – so he was, as Tony put it - `kicked upstairs` and made a Marshal of France. He was replaced by Robert Nivelle, who , at 60 , was dapper, dynamic and above all was brimming with self confidence.

He was promoted over the heads of Foch, Petain and Castelnau and most importantly, he promised victory for only small losses. He quickly won over the politicians – not just the French – but others like the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George. Indeed so won over was Lloyd George that he wanted the BEF to be placed under French ie Nivelle`s control for the 1917 campaigns. Haig and Robertson (Chief of the Imperial General Staff) complained vigorously and in the end this `control` was restricted to the upcoming Nivelle offensive on the Aisne and in Champagne which commenced on 16th April1917. The offensive lasted from 16th April until 21st May and was a total failure. Lack of secrecy – the Germans knew of Nivelle`s plans in advance – contributed massively and when the offensive was finally called off, France had suffered another 200000 casualties which contributed greatly to a collapse in morale amongst French troops.
From the end of April until the middle of June 1917 there were mutinies by troops in 54 French Divisions with 151 incidents being reported of which 110 very viewed as being serious. News of the revolution in Russia and civilian agitators had stirred up trouble amongst the disgruntled *poilus* and on June 2nd there was only two reliable divisions between the Germans and Paris. These mutinies and the failure of the Nivelle offensives led to the replacement of Nivelle by Phillipe Petain.

Petain, who was nicknamed the `Lion of Verdun` quickly brought in reforms to quell the anger of the troops, better food, regular leave and a promise an end to wastage of troops on the battlefield in attacks which were doomed to failure. He held 3400 courts martial of mutineers of which 540 received the death penalty but over 90% of these were commuted. Fortunately for France the Germans never found out the true extent of dissaffection with the French Army.

The Russian Crisis This is probably the best known `crisis` because ultimately it saw Russia drop out of the war, benefitting the Germans greatly, but they had always ben the weak link of the Entente. On March 3rd 1917 the Putilov Munitions factory in St Petersburg, then the largest in Russia, and the main supplier of munitions to the Russian army, had to close and lay off all the workforce as it had run out of fuel to kep the factory operational and subsequently there were protests across St. Petersburg coincident with abreakdown in delivery of food supplies to the city. On March 9th the protests spread at there were 250000-300000 people on the streets. Soldiers were sent in to restore order but they too joined the demonstrators. 12th March saw Tsar Nicholas II return to St Petersburg to try and re-assert his authority but his train was diverted and he was forced to abdicate three days later. Tony pointed that at that time Russia still used the old Julian calendar so this is known as the February Revolution. A provisional government was formed, a sort of left-centrist body but it was chaos from the start and eventually Alexander Kerensky (pictured left) was appointed Prime Minister. His government was filed with different factions all puling in different directions and on July 16th the Bolsheviks made their first attempt to topple the government. Then four days later Kornilov started a new offensive and basically the army collapsed in confusion. Desertion was commonplace and many officers who tried to maintain order were kiled by their own men.

On November 7th the cruiser Aurora a blank shot was fired from her forecastle gun to signal the start of the assault on the Winter Palace, which was to be the beginning of the October Revolution (Russian calendar) which was the seat of Kerensky`s Provisional Government. It was almost a bloodless coup, indeed, although he had no hard facts to back it up, Tony told the members – to some amusement that more people died during a subsequent making of a film about the storming of the Winter Palace – why – when filming they had to use live ammunition as there were no blank cartridges available ! Lenin, who had returned to Russia on a sealed train which was allowed to pass through Germany *en route* from Zurich to St. Petersburg, assumed power after the fall of the Provisional Government and by December 2nd Russia called a cease fire and was out of the war much to the detriment of their allies.

Note. The cruiser `Aurora` can be visited today in St. Petersburg where it is fully restored as a museum ship

The Italian Crisis. On October 24th 1917 the twelfth battle of Isonzo – also known as the Battle of Caporetto began.

The Germans had been able to free up considerable numbers of troops from the Eastern Front as the Russians were no longer fighting and they used these troops to support the Austrians in their attack. Again the Italian army was routed and by the end of the battle on November 19th, the Austrians had captured almost 300000 Italian soldiers. The front was eventually stabilised along the River Piave.

Having looked at the crises affecting the belligerents Tony now turned his attention to the **Western Front.** On April 9th 1917 – Easter Monday – the first Battle of Arras and Vimy Ridge took place – as prelude to the ill fated Nivelle Offensives. For the BEF it was incredibly sucessful, indeed Arras was the BEF`s greatest success in the war to date, with the Canadians sweeping over Vimy Ridge. For historians it is now considered that the Battle of Arras to be the third great attritional battle, after The Somme and Passchendaele. Indeed because it was so short, the daily loss rate of 4076 men exceeded the average loss rate per day in the other two battles. What Arras did show was that the BEF had now got the hang of set piece battles. Haig wanted to break off after the first few days and consolidate his gains but he was prevailed upon because of the on going issues with the French to keep going and the net result was diminishing returns and higher losses.
Haig always favoured the Ypres area and he saw the success at the Battle of Messines – 7th to 14th June 1917 by Herbert Plumer (left) and Second Army. Even before the Messines mines were blown Second Army`s artillery had fired 3500000 shells and had taken out 50% of the German defensive artllery. To achieve these results the BEF artillery was using flash spotting and sound ranging to good effect and just after the 19 mines went off under the Wyschaete – Messines ridge 74 of the new Mark IV tanks went into action and substantial gains were made one that first day. Plumer asked Haig for three days and he would deliver the next ridge, that of Gheluvelt but Haig demurred and decided to `change horses` and go with Hubert Gough. (left lower)

Gough`s first day – July 31st - assault was successful, but the overall plan was too ambitious and soon became bogged down. After the Battle of Langemarck, 16th-18th August, Haig passed control of Second Army back to Plumer. Plumer then made three step by step attacks – Menin Road (September 20th), Polygon Wood (September 26th) and Broodseinde (October 4th) before heavy rain caused the whole movement to degenerate in a sea of mud. On November 6th the Canadians took the village of Passchendaele, which, of course, had been a first day objective. Lloyd George contemptuously called Passchendaele the `Battle in the Mud`. Autumn in Flanders is is generally a `wet` season but autumn in 1917 was the `wettest` in living memory. 1917 in Flanders was particularly notable for poor weather – a long winter, a late spring, a short summer and an *exceptionally* wet autumn. Wherever Haig had chosen to fight in 1917, mud would have been a problem. Whilst the plans for the Flanders battles of 1917 all began with plastering the German lines with a massive artillery bombardment on the first day created a morass through which the advance had to be made. Plumer`s `step by step` approach could only be made effective by a massive engineering back up to allow the advancing troops and their supplies and reserves, to cross the devastated land and get to the starting point for the next stage of the attack. The chief criticism of Haig for the Passchendaele attack is his choice of Hubert Gough as commander rather than sticking with the successful Plumer and probably keeping faith with Gough too long after he failed and failure to insist that Gough, as a preliminary to the main attack, take the Gheluvelt plateau. Tony continued by saying that, interestingly, when Gough argued his case with Haig, he was supported by Plumer which meant that when Haig was criticised, he was in fact backed by two of his most senior officers. It will probably never be known why Plumer took that view when he had previously asked Haig for time to take the Gheluvelt plateau when he was commanding Second Army back in June. Tony then made a point – standing to be corrected if proved otherwise – that no historian has ever argued that the Battles of Third Ypres did *not* go on too long. Clearly they did. Of course British Intelligence was always telling the BEF that the German army was just about to collapse – one more push and we`re there ! Of course, as so often happened before and subsequently, the intelligence was not good. Post war some evidence did emerge that the Germans were on the verge of collapse but they did manage to hang on untilm the offensives were called off.

20th November 1917 – Cambrai – a glimmer of hope in the wet and gloom as 1917 neared its end. 7000 yard penetration on a 13000 yard front, 7500 prisoners , 120 guns captured. The success at Cambrai is often put down to the use of 476 tanks. More importantly, the artillery had learned how to put down a predicted barrage , based upon accurate mapping, good aerial observation, by taking out of one gun in every battery for checking and calibration, ensuring that each gun in that same battery is set similarly and is firing shells from the same batch of ammunition, then you can reasonably expect that you can take out an enemy position without any warning at all or pre-registration fire. This success of this technique was due to the Royal Artilery taking a more scientific approach and a better understanding of ballistics. That the 476 tanks helped is acknowledged, particularly crushing and dragging away the belts of barbed wire entanglements without the need to blast these away with 18 pounder shells. Surprise had returned to the battlefield. The initial success at Cambrai can be summed up in one word – Surprise – the Germans did not know what was coming and allowed the BEF to penetrate so far in such a short period of time. What Cambrai – both the British attack and the German counter attack started to give evidence that the balance between ofence and defence, which had been

so much in favour of the defence for most of the war, was actually starting to change to favour the attackers, a very important factor for the early battles of 1918, when the Allies were doing the defending.

Away from the Western Front in the **Middle East** there were glimmers of hope, Baghdad was occupied on March 11th 1917 which, although of limited strategic value was of immense value to the population of Britain who viewed the taking of this city as a glimmer of success for the Allies. The GOC was Frederick Stanley Maude (left) but his opportunity to enjoy his success was short lived as he died of cholera on 18th November 1917. He was succeeded by Sir William Marshall – a Sherwood Forester and he became GOC Mesopotamia.

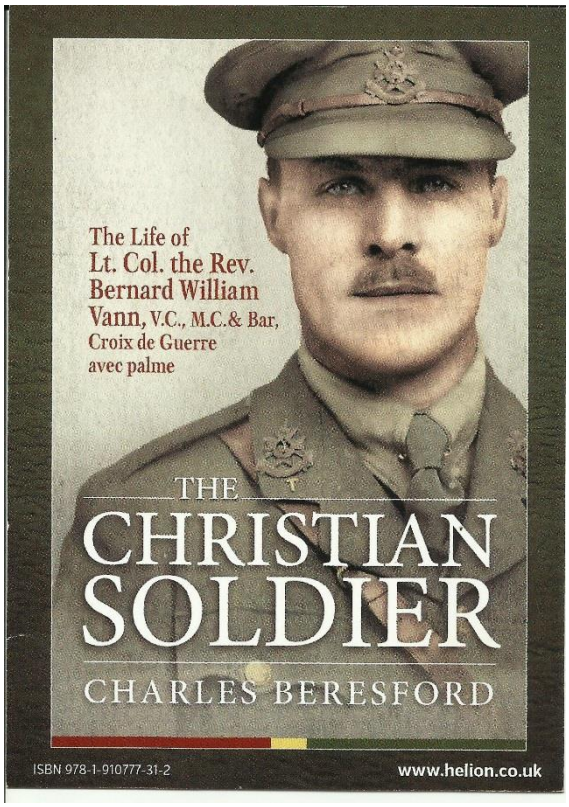
In the Hejaz, January 1917 saw the Arabs starting to attack a number of ports along the Red Sea coast with the help of the Royal Navy and on July 6th 1917, Aqaba was taken. The Lawrence of Arabia film had very dramatic sequences showing the taking of Aqaba. Archibald Murray advanced across Sinai, a slow process which involved building a railway and a water pipeline and he eventually reached Gaza where his forces were initally repulsed. He attacked again on April 16th with the support of six obsolete Mark 1 tanks, the only time tanks were used outside of the Western Front and in the heat of Palestine the conditions inside the tanks must have been absolutely horrendous. Again the attack stuttered toa standstill. Lloyd George wanted Murray replaced by the South African Jan Smuts who was part of the Imperial War cabinet but Smuts delined the appointment which was given to Edmund Allenby who arrived on 27th June 1917. Allenby quickly won the respect of his troops by making frequent visits to the EEF's front-line units, in a marked change from the leadership style of his predecessor Murray, who had commanded primarily from Cairo. Allenby moved the EEF's GHQ from the Egyptian capital city to Rafah near the front line at Gaza. Having reorganised his regular forces, Allenby won the Third Battle of Gaza (31 October – 7 November 1917) by surprising the defenders with an attack at Beersheba and Jerusalem fell on 11th December 1917, with Allenby making an entry to the ancient city on foot through the Jaffa Gate.

This concluded Tony`s overview of 1917, the crises in Britain, France and Italy were overcome. The United States more than compensated for the loss of Russia whilst in the Middle East Baghdad and Jerusalem both fell to the British. On the Western Front the British Army gained significant first day successes in four set-piece battles. By the end of 1917 on the Western Front, the British Army was the main opposition to the Germans. Lloyd George used this position of ascendancy to persuade the other Allied leaders that they should stand on the defensive in France and Flanders and await the build- up of American forces and to use 1918 to knock Turkey out of the war but that pre-supposed that the final battles of the war would be fought in 1919. 1919 was to be used to build up numbers of tanks, guns and aircraft so that, as Tony said, when we had plenty of American *boys* we had plenty of Entente *toys!*

And that concluded Tony`s overview of 1917 – the Year of Crises.

An excellent presentation delivered in a relaxed, confident manner by our Branch Chairman, getting across his points which covered the whole landscape of the war in 1917. The remainder of the meeting was taken up by a good discussion amongst members who had obviously taken on board what they had heard and raised some excellent questions.

Branch Stalwart, Charles Beresford, is having his latest book published by Helion in January. Very much a labour of love, meticulously researched on a unique soldier in the annals of the British Army of World War One.



Lieutenant Colonel the Rev Bernard William Vann, VC, MC & Bar, Croix de Guerre avec palme, was one of only three Anglican clergymen to command an infantry battalion on the Western Front in the Great War and he was the only Church of England cleric to win the Victoria Cross as a combatant. He excelled as a soldier setting a high standard for his men and his fearlessness was legendary in his Sherwood Forester Territorial Brigade and beyond. The accounts vary but he was wounded between eight and thirteen times but would only wear five wound stripes on his uniform. His strong personality left a lasting impression on those who came across him whether at university, in the church or in the army.

He became a talented sportsman. By the age of 19 he had played centre forward as an amateur for Northampton Town, Burton United and Derby County. He scored a goal against Wolverhampton Wanderers and led the attack against such sides as Chelsea, Burnley and Aston Villa. He was also a regular player in the Leicestershire and Cambridge University hockey sides. With his brother Harry he volunteered for the army in August 1914. Until his death on 3rd October 1918, four days after the crossing of the Hindenburg Line, for which action he received a posthumous Victoria Cross, he remained a committed Christian at the front, holding services and communion when the Brigade chaplain was unavailable. On at least one occasion he went out alone into no man's land to read the burial service over fallen comrades. His young widow did not pass on his papers to the family and this has led to speculation and assumptions about his life which are not borne out by the facts. In this overdue assessment of this many faceted and extraordinary man, the author has enjoyed the co-operation of Bernard Vann's family and conducted extensive research including tracing papers and diaries of his fellow officers, colleagues and acquaintances. One chapter is devoted to an assessment of the other five hundred ordained Anglican clergymen who volunteered for service in the British and Imperial armies other than as chaplains. Forty-three are known to have been killed or died in the conflict.

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December 2016 Meeting

Branch Chairman Tony Bolton opened the meeting in our traditional manner in front of what was a good attendance on an evening of inclement weather. Formalities over Tony then introduced our speaker for the evening, Nick Paul who, you may recall made an excellent presentation in 2015 on the subject of Gas Warfare. This time Nick was to talk about `Barbed Wire Disease` - the British POW experience in Germany.

Nick opened by saying that there are not many books on the subject although there is a large volume of information available in the National Archives. The presentation would be a broad ranging overview of the subject and would not focus on the personal experience any individuals. He would look at the rules governing POWs, the very act of surrendering, camps, camp life and finally repatriation.

German sources estimate that there was about 7 million combatants taken prisoner in world War One, of which approximately 2.4 million were held in Germany. So how many British troops were taken as Prisoners of War? The most reliable figures agree on 175624, of whom 12425 died in captivity. For comparison, 306593 German soldiers were taken prisoner of whom 9349 died, including approximately 2500 in the UK. These figures must be taken as best estimates given the poor record keeping of the belligerents, particularly as the war entered the last 100 days. That plus the loss of records during the London `blitz` of 1940

What was the likelihood of a combatant ending up as a POW – for British soldier in the 14-18 war, that figure was 6%, a German soldier 9% and for a Russian soldier the figure was a staggering 50% !

From start of the war to the end of December 1914, 19,000 British soldiers became prisoners. As the war settled into the stalemate of trench warfare, from 1915 through 1917 that figure was 20000, whilst in March 1918 in the German offensives the number was 100000 with 20000 alone being taken in a single day, 21st March 1918. Indeed that day, with respect to British soldiers being captured was the worst day in British army history and was not surpassed until the fall of Singapore in 1941 during World War Two.

Nick then posed the question, was it safer to be a combatant or to be a POW? From the statistics available, the overall death rate for the British army in 1914-18 was 12.9%, that of British POWs, 7.07%, so there was still significant danger to life as a prisoner despite being remote from combat. From 1st Oct 1917 until 30th September 1918 the death rate for British Other Ranks was 4% while for the same period the death rate of those in captivity was 5.2%. What these figures illustrate that is was dangerous being a POW but threat to life depended upon what period in the war a soldier was captured, or indeed where.

Nick then referred to his previous presentation to the Chesterfield Branch where he had mentioned quite extensively the Hague Peace Conference of 1907 which attempted to agree Conventions for the conduct of war on land which included rules conferring special status for the treatment of legitimate combatants taken as prisoners.

Briefly, the rules were,

- All prisoners to be treated humanely
- They were the responsibility of the capturing *government* not the *unit or army* who took them prisoner.
- Internment was meant to be a measure of safety
- Prisoners were not to be considered or treated as a criminal or convict
- Internment was not to be considered as punishment

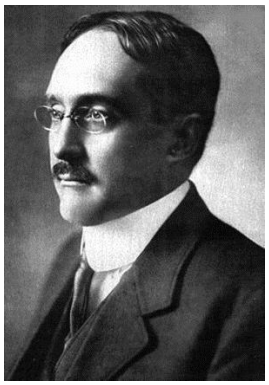
- Personal belongings were meant to be protected
- Prisoners to be clothed, fed and accommodated. Postal facilities, access to relief organisations and , as appropriate, prompt repatriation

There were obligations placed upon those taken prisoner,

- They were required to give their name and rank
- Subject to army law
- Could be used as `paid` labour unconnected with war related activities. Officers were excluded from this.
- Unsuccessful escapees could be punished i.e. close confinement
- Escapees who were successful but were subsequently recaptured were *not* to be punished.

It was not just the Hague Conference that set out rules for the treatment of prisoners, there was the 1906 Geneva Convention which laid out rules for the treatment of sick or wounded POWs, including possible repatriation or transfer to a neutral country, for example, Switzerland. Doctors, medics and chaplains were not to be treated as POWs. The government holding the prisoners was obliged to keep a roll of those sick and wounded prisoners and return to their home country identification details for prisoners who died whilst in captivity.

Dealing with all these conventions was big preoccupation with both the British and German governments and a major role was taken – at least upon until their entry into the war in 1917 – by the United States, who were known as the `Protecting Power`, headed by James W Gerard a lawyer and diplomat .At the outbreak of war in 1914, Gerard assumed the care of British interests in Germany, later visiting the camps where British prisoners were confined and doing much to alleviate their condition.



After the US entered the war, the role of `Protecting Power` was taken over by Holland. For Britain, responsibility for prisoners was split between the Foreign Office and the War Office but in reality the lead was taken by Lord Newton at the Foreign Office and in 1916 he was appointed Controller of the newly established Prisoner of War Department.

So what about `Surrendering` - what about the actual act of surrender.

In theory there was no information on *how* to surrender – nothing in Field Service Regulations. It was considered *dishonourable* to surrender and was proscribed by Military Law, indeed it was required of *all* officers who had been captured to submit a detailed report (after repatriation) on the circumstances of their surrender and at least in theory could be used in any subsequent Court Martial. An exception was the Canadian army who required a report by *every* soldier who surrendered from private upwards.

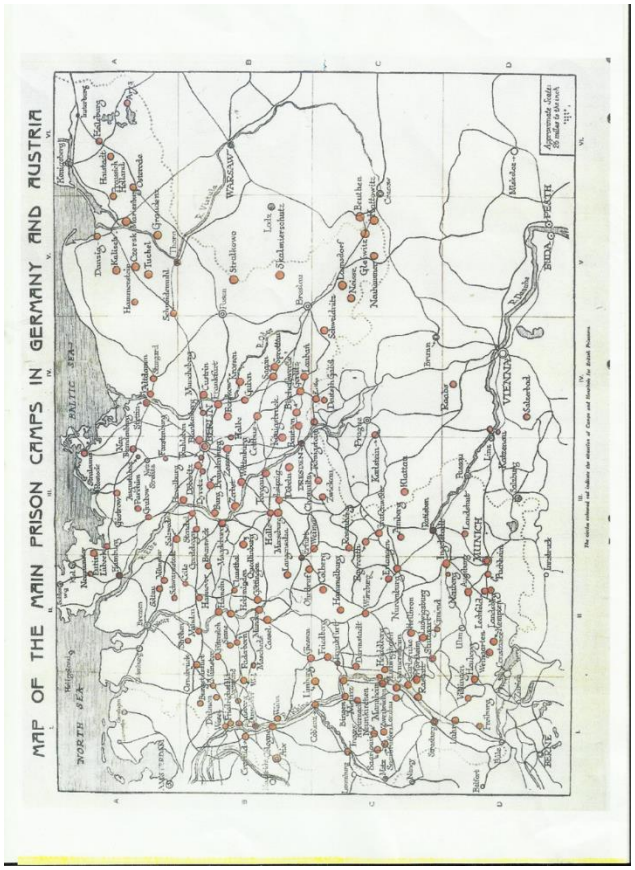
What then was the *reality* in the act of surrender and Nick explained that from his researches he had identified *confusion* and not *fear* which often precipitated the surrender of British soldiers and he summarised the key factors,

- Incapacity – by wounding – approximately 25% of British soldiers taken prisoner were wounded.
- Absence of leadership – men without officers were especially prone to surrender
- Shellshock
- Impossible odds – this was often a judgement made by officers who subsequently gave an order to surrender, generally to prevent unnecessary loss of life. Around 50% of surrenders by British army personnel were under orders
- Encirclement – similar to `impossible odds`

What signs could be made to the enemy that the intention was to surrender? Simply the raising of hands high in the air or waving something white, although previously a white flag had been taken as a sign of wanting to parley, a desire to talk. Again there was nothing in the FSR to be taken as guidance.

Not all soldiers survived the process of surrender and indeed prisoner killing on all sides did happen despite these acts being proscribed by the Hague Conference and both the British Manual of Military Law and its German equivalent although the latter did state that prisoners *could* be killed in cases of `extreme necessity` or to ensure the safety of the German state.

There are no reliable figures of numbers of prisoners, on any side, being killed upon surrendering, as quite obviously details of such acts were rarely written down, and certainly not by the perpetrators.
Moving on Nick talked about the POW camps and distributed a map showing the location of all POW camps in Germany and Austria. He specifically excluded camps in the occupied zones of, for example, France and Belgium.



The camps were divided into two main types, those for private soldiers and nco`s and those for officers, most of whom were allowed to have their orderly with them in the camp. He cited a couple of examples, Krefeld, for officers and Friedrichsfeld, the latter, which held about 30000 detainees, where Nick`s grandfather had been incarcerated for the last 8 months or so of the war. There were also transit camps where captured soldiers were held temporarily until arrangements could be made to move them on to more permanent establishments. There were also a few `reprisal` camps, often located near to the combat areas or in areas of harsh climate and were specifically designed for punishment. Proper established camps started to appear in early 1915 and by the end of the war there was about 300 of these. Site selection was based upon access to land and railways and often near industrial and agricultural enterprises where POWs could be used as labour, thus freeing up Germans for the military or other associated war effort uses. The Germans making full use of that part of the Hague Conference agreement which permitted the use of prisoners as `paid` labour.

Control of the camps, that was delegated to German Army Corps District Commanders and inevitably there were good and bad camps. There was generally one guard for every ten prisoners and camp guards were generally drawn from members of the Landsturmm, the older reserve soldiers. Friedrichsfeld, where Nick`s grandfather was held had a reasonably good reputation with acceptable food in terms of quality and quantity, a camp shop, regular deliveries of mail from home, educational facilities. Prisoners were `requested ` to do work and generally sick or wounded prisoners were well looked after. Such judgements were generally made by people like Gerard, and his team of inspectors from the US who up until 1917 when America entered the war, were the Protecting Power. By contrast, the camp at Minden had a bad reputation – leaking huts, trench latrines which were only emptied on an irregular basis leading to outbreaks of disease, poor deliveries of prisoners' mail, punishment barracks, no library and poor medical facilities. If a prisoner reported sick he was promptly sent to the punishment barracks!

An interesting variation on the theme of POW camps was the so called `seduction camps`, for example at Zossen which was used primarily to house, `muslims, Indians and blacks`. A mosque was provided and livestock for halal slaughter. By incarcerating these colonial soldiers together it was hoped by the Germans that they could be persuaded to turn against their Imperial rulers. About fifty Irish soldiers who were believed to strong harbour anti- British sentiments were housed at Zossen for a time and Roger Casement hoped that these men would form the basis of a German Irish Brigade. Of course Casement was captured by the British when he returned to Ireland on the eve of the Easter Rising and was subsequently tried and executed for treason.

Nick then turned his attention to daily life in the camps, relief of boredom being the major pre-occupation and this was addressed by sports, books, lectures and drama. In some of the officers' camps, the detainees were permitted to go for walks in the countryside outside the camp perimeter, the officers having been giving this parole against their word of honour as officers and gentlemen that they would not try to escape.

For OR's and NCOs their activities often revolved are camp and site cleaning, maintenance and building works or assisting in the camp hospital. There were also working parties `arbeitskommandos` where if a prisoner was lucky he could be sent to work in agriculture, hard work and long hours but you were working in the fresh air and often they would receive extra food from the farmers upon whose land they were working. If soldiers were very unlucky they were sent to form working parties in coal or salt mines which was in effect forced labour where brutality by the guards and overseers was routine and many British POWs suffered appallingly in these environments.

Mental illness became common as the war progressed - `Barbed Wire Disease` which manifested itself in forms of neurasthenia, that in itself an obsolete medical term, which was chronic fatigue,

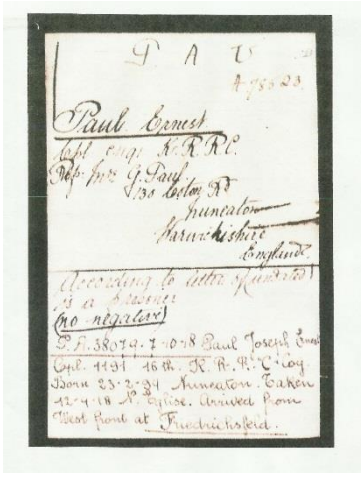
loss of appetite and insomnia. `Collapse of the soul` was particularly prevalent amongst officers who felt considerable dishonour at finding themselves as captives. Then there was depression and inertia. At least two books upon the subject of POWs use the term `Barbed Wire Disease` in their title.

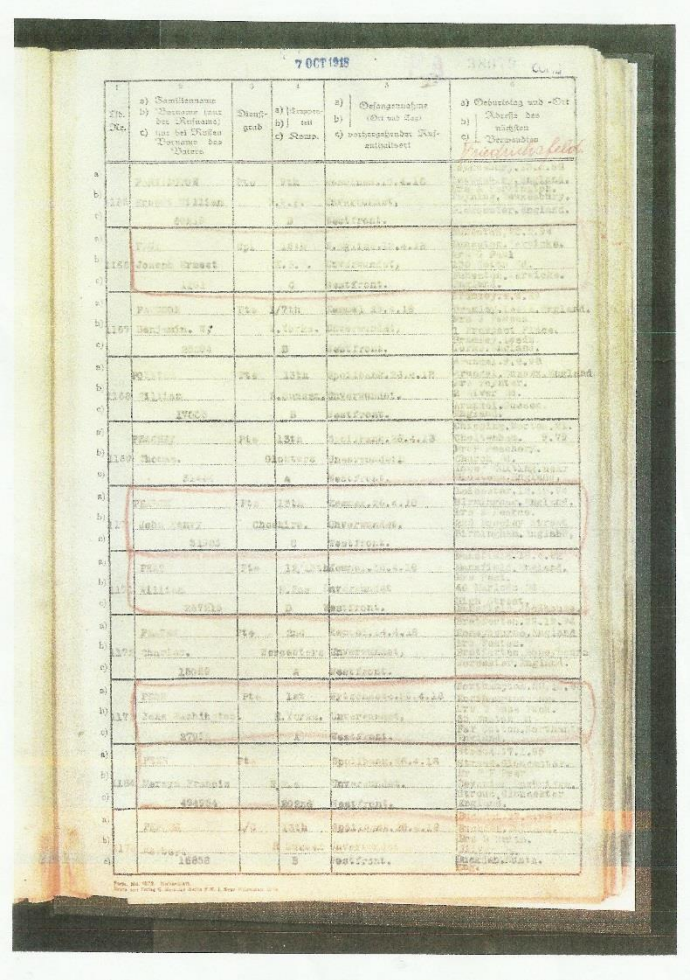
Armistice and Repatriation.

The British were very keen that any armistice should be accompanied by an immediate repatriation of all POWs without reciprocation and this intention was announced in parliament on October 29th 1918. In a lot of camps the prisoners were simply released without any procedure and of course once prisoners are released no food need be provided for them, food shortages themselves being blamed upon the allied blockade of the Central Powers. Thus more food could be made available to the German population. Many of these randomly released prisoners were found to be suffering from malnutrition when they made it back to the British lines. During the latter days of the war at times in many camps it was food aid – in the form of parcels from Britain that sustained the prisoners.

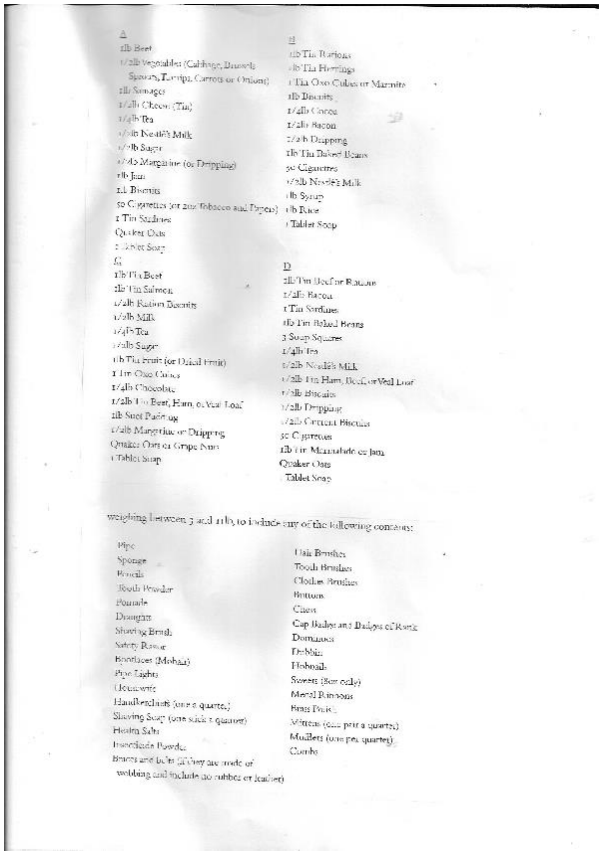
For repatriation a series of collection camps were established, Friedrichsfeld, Limburg, Darmstadt, Mannheim and Raastatt, for example and by 28th November 1918 formal repatriation of sick and wounded POWs began in earnest. Overall repatriation was slow and indeed was not completed until the end of January 1919.

Prisoners held south of the Rhine tended to return via Switzerland, those to the north by rail then by ship to ports like Dover, Leith and Hull. To give an indication of the scale of the repatriation process on 11th November 1918 there were 907000 non-Russian prisoners held by Germany, 467000 having been returned by 19th December, the remainder between then and the end of January. On arrival in the UK returning POWs were taken to reception centres where they normally remained for 24 to 48 hours before being sent on their way home, suitably cleaned up, new uniform, kit bag, coat, back pay, travel pass and identification papers. Former prisoners were interviewed to report on their treatment in the hands of the Germans. They were also encouraged to complete forms of application for a future pension should their health have been damaged in some way by captivity. Many returnees referred to take a £2 bounty and get on their way home rather than fill in the forms, thereby signing away their rights to future claims , something which many had cause to deeply regret in future years. During the 1920s and 30s the mortality rate amongst returning POWs was *five times* the rate of those who had not been prisoners.
In winding up his presentation, Nick again mentioned his grandfather, Corporal JE Paul who had been taken prisoner on 12th April 1918 and was subsequently incarcerated at Friedrichsfeld until the end of the war. Nick circulated a handout with a copy of the postcard sent to Cpl Paul`s family saying he was a prisoner, and another an extract from the German prisoner records – very interesting documents.





Another hand out was a list of items friends and family could send to prisoners in parcels, one parcel each per quarter year.



A

1lb Beef
1/2lb Vegetables (Cabbage, Brussels Sprouts, Turnips, Carrots or Onions)
1lb Sausages
1/4lb Cheese (Tin)
1/4lb Tea
1/2lb Nestlé's Milk
1/2lb Sugar
1/2lb Margarine (or Dripping)
1lb Jam
1 L. Biscuits
50 Cigarettes (or 2oz Tobacco and Papers)
1 Tin Sardines
Quaker Oats
2 Toilet Soap

B

1lb Tin Beef
1lb Tin Salmon
1/2lb Ration Biscuits
1/2lb Milk
1/4lb Tea
1/2lb Sugar
1lb Tin Fruit (or Dried Fruit)
1 Tin Oxo Cubes
1/4lb Chocolate
1/2lb Tin Beef, Ham, or Veal Loaf
1lb Suet Pudding
1/2lb Margarine or Dripping
Quaker Oats or Cripe Nuts
1 Tablet Soap

C

1lb Tin Rations
1lb Tin Herrings
1 Tin Oxo Cubes or Marmite
1lb Biscuits
1/4lb Cocoa
1/2lb Bacon
1/2lb Dripping
1lb Tin Baked Beans
50 Cigarettes
1/2lb Nestlé's Milk
1lb Syrup
1lb Rice
1 Tablet Soap

D

1lb Tin Beef or Rations
1/2lb Bacon
1 Tin Sardines
1lb Tin Baked Beans
3 Soup Squares
1/4lb Tea
1/2lb Nestlé's Milk
1/2lb Tin Ham, Beef, or Veal Loaf
1/2lb Biscuits
1/2lb Dripping
1/2lb Cerecal Biscuits
50 Cigarettes
1lb Tin Marmalade or Jam
Quaker Oats
Tablet Soap

weighing between 3 and 11lb, to include any of the following contents:

Pipe
Sponge
Pencils
Tooth Powder
Pomade
Detergent
Shaving Brush
Safety Razor
Boot laces (Mohair)
Pipe Lights
Hosiery
Hand Kerchiefs (one a quarter)
Shaving Soap (one stick a quarter)
Heating Tabs
Insecticide Powder
Braces and belts (if they are made of webbing and include no rubber or leather)

Nail Brushes
Tooth Brushes
Clothes Brushes
Buttons
Cleats
Cap Badges and Badges of Rank
Dominoes
Dubbin
Hobnails
Sewing (Boot only)
Metal Buttons
Hair Pins
Mittens (one pair a quarter)
Mufflers (one per quarter)
Combs

Moving on it was question / discussion time and Tony Bolton highlighted how relatively `civilised` prisoners taken on the Western Front were treated by the Germans compared by the horrific conditions endured by those taken by the Turks in the Mesopotamia campaign. Nick agreed but said that in the early days of the war the conditions many prisoners were held in were quite primitive and there had been typhus epidemics in several camps where British, French and Russian prisoners were held together in very unsanitary conditions.

Treatment of German prisoners held by the British was touched upon in this discussion with many being sent to internment camps in Canada where many worked in agriculture and enjoyed better food than many civilians in Britain at that time. Indeed some chose to remain in Canada after the end of the war.

A question was asked as to the percentage of British soldiers who upon capture were wounded, to which Nick answered approximately 25%.

With regards to successful escapes or `home runs` - that totaled 573, 54 officers and 519 Other Ranks. With regards to escaping, if you were successful your first duty was to get back to your unit otherwise you could be liable to Court Martial.

As Nick mentioned in his presentation in some camps for officers, prisoners were allowed out for walks in local towns and countryside, often had to accompanied by an armed guard – not to prevent escapes – officers were on parole – but to protect the internees from angry locals!

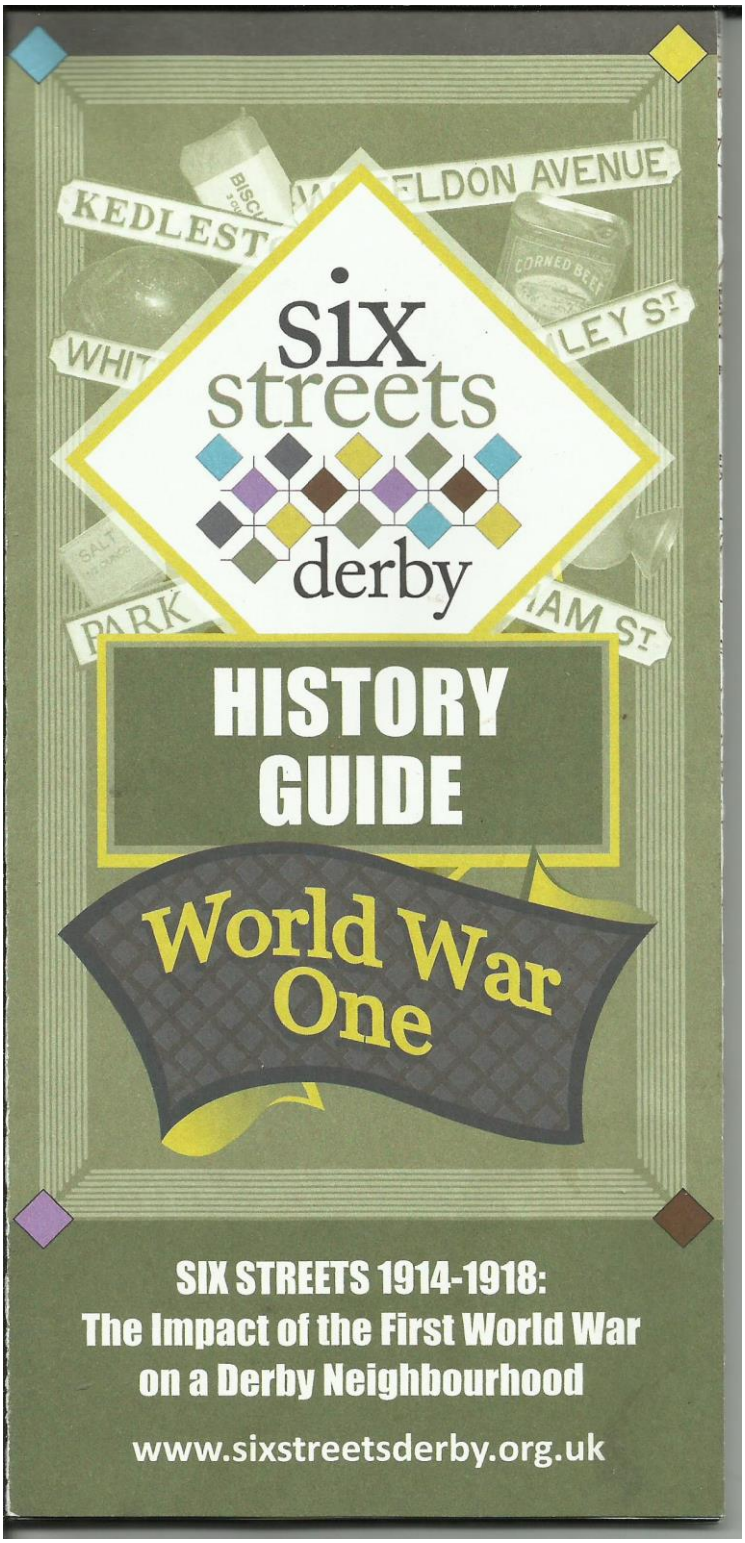
During the war parcels to a total value (at that time) of £6.5M was sent to POWs, of which the Red Cross contributed about one third, the balance being from monies raised by public subscription. Many towns and villages, churches etc. had Relief Committees to raise funds, gather goods etc., for POWs parcels and these were sent very quickly to Germany via Holland in an immense postal operation.

A question was asked about French prisoners being held in Germany receiving parcels from home, to which Nick responded that it was not on the same scale as that from Britain. Another question was regarding German prisoners in France – were they kept in France or shipped to French colonies in a manner like German prisoners of the British being sent to Canada. The answer was no they were all kept in France, in the south of the country well away from the war zones.

In answer to a question, Nick replied that post war little was done to bring to book those Germans who had been responsible for mistreatment of British prisoners. There was some trials but the accused were generally, even if found guilty were allowed to quietly disappear.

Upon conclusion of this good discussion, Branch Chairman Tony Bolton proposed a vote of thanks to Nick for his efforts, to which our attendees responded in the usual manner.

What follows now is a series of extracts from a pamphlet called **`Six Streets` 1914-1918-The Impact on a Derby Neighbourhood -** this refers to six streets in Derby where the current residents and others have got together to research and publish information on The Great War and its impact upon a small area of a city – no doubt replicated many times over in towns and cities all across Great Britain and Ireland.


six streets
derby
HISTORY GUIDE
World War One
SIX STREETS 1914-1918:
The Impact of the First World War
on a Derby Neighbourhood
www.sixstreetsderby.org.uk

SIX STREETS HISTORY, DERBY

To mark the centenary of the First World War a group of local residents have been exploring what effect the war had on the lives of people in this area. We have focused on the impact on local people, their families and the neighbourhood. This guide is the result of our research, funded for two years by the Heritage Lottery Fund. We would like to thank all those who have helped with our project.

All houses within the Six Streets area have been presented with a copy of this guide. We hope you will find it interesting and keep it as part of the history of your house – maybe with your house deeds?

Supported by
The National Lottery®
through the Heritage Lottery Fund

heritage lottery fund

ABOUT OUR RESEARCH

To tell the stories of local people during World War One we have searched newspapers, parish magazines, and consulted military records. From the 1918 electoral registers we identified about 100 men away on active service, but eligible to vote. A search of Commonwealth War Graves records gave us the names of nine men from our area killed in action.

We cannot be sure how many local women were involved in the war effort. Red Cross records helped us to track down those who volunteered as nurses, medical carers and home workers, but many women's contributions remain unrecorded.

We are grateful to descendants of Six Streets families who have been unfailing in their help – giving information and allowing us to use family photographs. From our local project we have made contact with people all over the world!

A large print version of this guide is available on request.

Email us: 6streetshistory@gmail.com

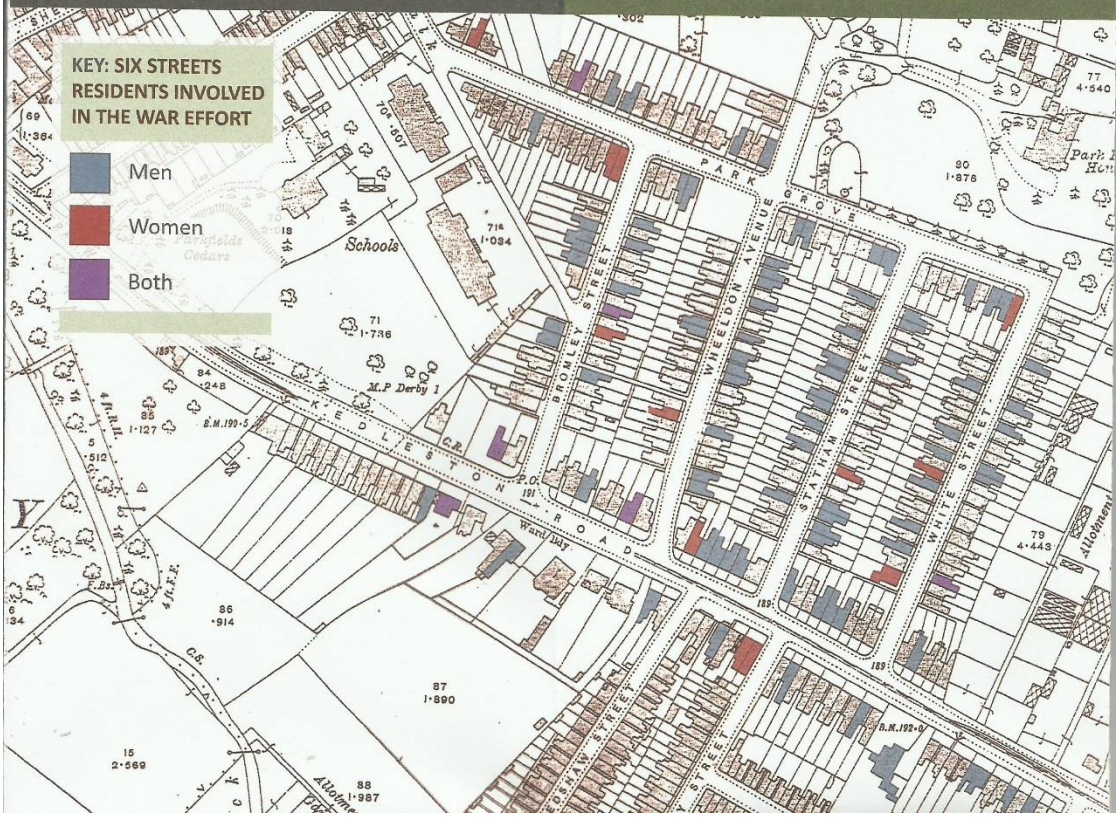
©Six Streets History Derby, June 2016.

VISITING OUR SIX STREETS

Marked on the map are houses where someone directly involved in the war effort lived. We have told the stories of some of the men from Six Streets who went away to fight.

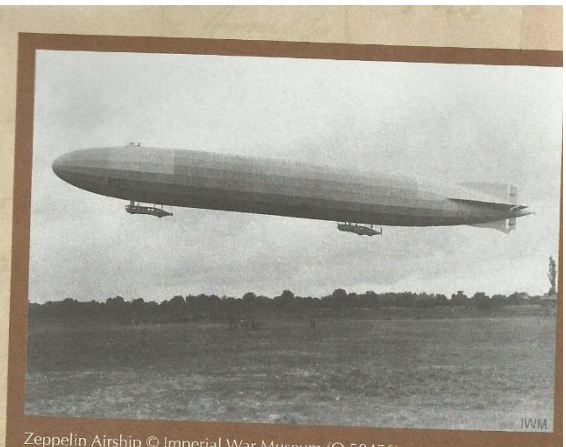
You can find out more at
www.sixstreetsderby.org.uk

Go to the **World War One** page ***"Lest we Forget"*** to view the life stories of the men and women involved.



ZEPPELIN RAID ON DERBY

In the early hours of 1 February 1916, Derby was awoken by bombs dropped from a Zeppelin airship. Three airships had been spotted overhead the evening before and a blackout imposed on the town. It is believed that the airship was headed for Liverpool but never reached its destination. On the home journey, the airship's captain may have been attracted by the lights that started to come back on around midnight and decided to drop the rest of his load on Derby. Twenty one high explosive bombs and four incendiaries were dropped. Three bombs hit **Rolls-Royce**, but the most serious damage was done by the nine bombs that landed on the **Midland Railway Loco Works**, killing three railwaymen and injuring two others, one of whom later died.



Zeppelin Airship © Imperial War Museum (Q 58456)

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU!

More than 110 men from this area went away to fight during the First World War, nine of whom never came back. In the first two years of the war the men were volunteers – after March 1916 conscription was introduced.

Some men were too young, old or medically unfit to fight but we think about 25% of local men served in the armed forces. Many men who did not fight were employed in jobs that were important to the war effort – working in transport or munitions, or keeping the home front supplied with essential goods. Six Streets men served in many different capacities and in all three branches of the armed forces – the Army, Navy and the newly formed Royal Air Force.
Many mothers, fathers and wider family faced the anguish of seeing one son go away to fight. There were ten families in our area that had two sons away fighting. From *55 Statham Street* three brothers – **Arthur, Eric and Alfred Taylor** were on active service. **The Statham family** at *90 Kedleston Road* had four sons away: **Jack** (invalided out after an injury), **Arthur and Harry. Arnold**, the youngest, was killed in action in November 1917, aged 19.

SPECIAL PERMISSION

Thomas George Clarke *(41 Statham St)* volunteered aged 23 and had to get special permission from the Midland Railway to be released from his job. He was posted with 5th Battalion Sherwood Foresters and in March 1916 set off for the trenches in France. Six months later he developed a heart condition, and after a spell in the Army Service Corps he was discharged in August 1918 deemed *"no longer fit for duty"* and returned to the Midland Railway as a foreman.

MACHINE GUN CORPS

Clifford Stoppard Grundy *(44 White St)* served in France as an officer in the Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby) Regiment, before transferring to the Machine Gun Corps in December 1916. Later in life Clifford lived at 36 Ashbourne Road where Mr Grundy's Tavern now trades.

Sydney Hurlstone *(5 Park Grove)*, volunteered for military service and was posted with the 19th Royal Fusiliers. In November 1915, aged 18, he began active service in France, and in August 1916 he was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. Surviving to the end of the war, he was luckier than most: the Machine Gun Corps lost many men, earning it the nickname *"The Suicide Club"*.

PROTECTED PROFESSIONS

Herbert Hurlstone *(5 Park Grove)*. Sydney's older brother, Bert, trained as a pharmacist with Davies Sons & Co in Derby, going on to work at Cope & Taylor in the Market Place from 1912-1914. We cannot find evidence that he enlisted and his occupation as a pharmacist may have been protected, exempting him from military service.

ARMY SERVICE CORPS

When war broke out **Robert Draper** *(26 Bromley St)* was working as a chauffeur for Lord Curzon at Kedleston Hall, living on the estate with his family. Robert volunteered for military service in August 1915 aged 34 and was posted to the Army Service Corps (Motorised Transport) – experienced motor vehicle drivers were still comparatively rare. He was posted to France in April 1916 with the 17th Divisional Supply Company, transferring supplies and equipment from railhead terminals to the front lines, but was killed in action on 28 May 1917. He is buried in a military cemetery in Belgium.

KILLED IN ACTION

Reginald Severn *(37 Statham St)* volunteered for the army in November 1915 at the age of 19. His first active service with the 2/5th Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters was a posting to Ireland, following the Easter Rising in 1916. In February 1917 he embarked for France for service in the trenches.

On 26 September 1917 he was killed by a splinter from an exploding shell. His grave was never found but he is remembered on Tyne Cot Memorial in Belgium.

SIX STREETS IN THE RAF

THROUGH ADVERSITY TO THE STARS

© Royal Aero Club Trust

George William Cantrell Eggleston *(124 Kedleston Road)* was drafted into the Lancashire Fusiliers in May 1917 after he turned 18. In June 1918 he started to train with the Royal Aero Club to become a pilot, receiving his aviator's certificate in December 1918. The club trained some of the first military and naval personnel to become pilots. In April 1918 the Royal Flying Corps (part of the British Army) and The Royal Naval Air Service (Royal Navy) combined to create the Royal Air Force.

Richard Hagley *(12 White Street)* served with the Royal Air Force, beginning his training in spring 1918, aged 18. In June 1918 he became an Observer Officer and shortly afterwards was posted to France. Serving with the 9th Squadron he would have been involved in bombing and reconnaissance missions. Only three weeks after his posting he was wounded, sent to back to hospital in England and demobilized in April 1919.

RIGGER WITH THE ROYAL FLYING CORPS

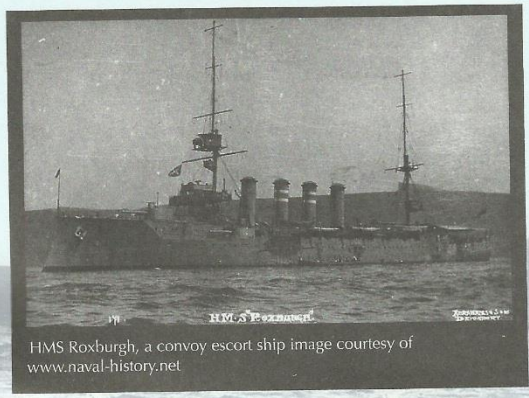
James Ernest Yeomans *(53 Park Grove)* was conscripted in June 1916, aged 36. An upholsterer by trade, he was posted with the Royal Flying Corps. It is likely that he served as a "rigger" – part of the ground crew who worked on the body of the aircraft. Many riggers had previous experience in woodwork, wiring and upholstery, essential for working with the flimsy canvas and wooden aircraft.

©IWM (Q 80680)

SIX STREETS AT SEA

IN THE NAVY

Stanley Holt *(42 Wheeldon Avenue)*. We knew nothing about Stanley's military service until we sent for his marriage certificate - in July 1918 he married Frances Piggin of Longford St, and on the certificate his occupation is listed as "Artificer, Royal Navy with HMS Roxburgh". In civilian life Stanley was an engineering draughtsman with the Midland Railway, so was well placed to take on the role of maintaining and operating marine engines and boilers.



HMS Roxburgh, a convoy escort ship image courtesy of www.naval-history.net

HMS Roxburgh was a convoy escort ship, accompanying cargo vessels and troop ships carrying vital supplies, first to the Russian front and then across the Atlantic. In February 1918 she rammed and sank a German U-boat just north of Ireland.

BROTHERS IN ARMS

Frank and Albert Wright *(44 Wheeldon Avenue)* both served with the Royal Navy. In May 1916 Albert enlisted with the Royal Naval Air Service. Previously an analytical chemist, he was posted to serve at the Navy's Experimental Station in Stratford, East London. Here a team worked on the production of the 'artificial fog' used in April 1918 in the Zeebrugge Raid, which aimed to stop German submarines from leaving the harbour by blocking the port.

Frank, the older brother, enlisted in April 1917. He was an Engine Room Artificer, which was similar to his civilian job as a fitter. One vessel is named on his record – HMS Collingwood - a dreadnought battleship.

Other Six Streets men who served with the Royal Navy or Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve:

- **EPL Hughes** *(100 Kedleston Rd)* – Ship's Surgeon
- **Reginald Wood** *(50 & 55 Statham St)* – Signaller
- **Frederick Ride** *(123 Kedleston Rd)* - Signaller
- **Robert Clayborn** *(14 Bromley St)*
- **John Power** *(108 Kedleston Rd)*

OUTSTANDING BRAVERY

Wilfred Hamp *(22 Statham St)* worked in Lincoln as a clerk before his family moved to Statham St. He volunteered in 1914 and by March 1915 he was posted to France with 1/5th Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment. He relished life in the army, writing letters to St Anne's Church that were printed in the parish magazine.

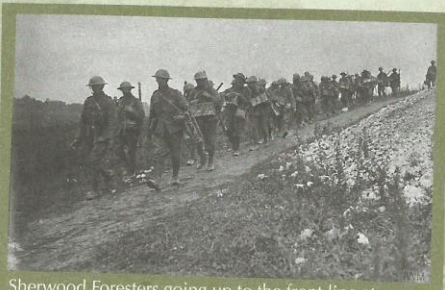
He was known as "Billy" to his comrades. On 12 June 1917, fighting to gain ground among the slag heaps round Lens in Northern France, he earned the **Distinguished Conduct Medal** for outstanding bravery. Sadly Billy never knew of this - on 26 June 1917 he was killed by a booby trap left by retreating German forces.

DIFFERENT FORTUNES

Brothers **William and Laurence Mills** *(33 Statham St)* both volunteered in spring 1915; Laurence (left) was posted with the King's Own Liverpool Regiment and William with the Sherwood Foresters.

Both brothers served in France, but Laurence received a gunshot wound which caused permanent damage to his jaw and affected his right eye, putting an end to his military career. He was awarded the **Croix de Guerre** *(see above the map)* by the French government – a medal for his bravery carrying messages between French and British officers.

William served throughout the war, transferring to the RAF in May 1918 to train as a pilot.



Sherwood Foresters going up to the front line at La Boisselle, July 1916. © IWM (Q780)

ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS

Jasper Fletcher (32 Wheeldon Ave) volunteered for military service and landed in France in November 1915. He served with the Army Ordnance Corps which had a wide remit of responsibility: weapons, ammunition, clothing, armoured vehicles and other military equipment, as well as laundry, mobile baths and photography. The Corps dealt with the repair of equipment and Jasper's early career as a shoeing blacksmith no doubt was useful.

Other men living on Wheeldon Avenue who served with the Army Ordnance Corps were **Herbert Bradley** *(No 4)* and **Ernest Garratt** *(No 28)*.

Troops of the Army Ordnance Corps re-assembling and repairing guns at a mobile workshop in France, 1918 © IWM (Q 347)

ROYAL ENGINEERS

Thomas Moreton Cooper *(94 Kedleston Rd)*, worked for the Midland Railway then served as a "Sapper" with the Royal Engineers, who played a vital role maintaining the railways, roads, water supply, bridges and transport. Thomas volunteered in November 1915 and was posted to France in February 1917. In April 1918 he received a bullet wound in one thigh. He was sent back to England, moved to various hospitals and finally discharged in February 1920. He returned to work at the Midland Railway.

DIED OF INFLUENZA IN FRANCE

John 'Jack' Hodgson *(45 White St)* was the only child of Flora Hodgson who was widowed when John was two. Jack worked as a clerk with the Midland Railway and volunteered for active service in autumn 1915. He served with the Royal Engineers Railway and Canal Troops throughout the war but died in France of influenza in November 1918, just five days after the Armistice. His name is on the Midland Railway war memorial near the railway station.

Conscription and non-combatants

In 1914, Britain was the only European country without a conscripted army. Following massive casualties in 1914 and 1915 there was an urgent need to recruit more men to the armed forces. With opposition to the war growing from socialists, trade unionists and people with religious or moral objections the government faced a shortage of new, fit volunteers.

© IWM (Art.IWM PST 12123)

From January 1916 the Military Service Act legally required men to serve. In March 1916 call-up papers were sent out to single men aged 18-41 and in May to married men who were eligible for conscription. The upper age was raised to 50 in spring 1918.

All applications for exemption from conscription were judged by local Military Service Tribunals. The *Derby Daily Telegraph* reported on cases heard in Derby with stories of grounds for exemption, and the decisions of the Tribunal panels. Very few claims for conscientious objection were accepted – the act included a *"conscience clause"* without offering a detailed definition. On 14 April 1916 the newspaper reported that the Appeals Tribunal Panel refused 3 claims in one minute.

The Derby branch of the No-Conscription Fellowship, which campaigned for the act to be repealed and fairer tribunals, offered support to Conscientious Objectors. Initially *"conchies"* were viewed as cowards, but as people became aware of unfair treatment, public sympathy grew. Tribunal records were so sensitive that in 1921 most were destroyed.

CONSCRIPTED IN 1916

Ernest William Hallam *(48 & 49 Statham St, from 1929 onwards 58 Park Grove)*, a married man with two children, was a teacher when war broke out. He was conscripted aged 38 in May 1916. Ernest served in France with the Royal Garrison Artillery 181 Siege Battery. After the war he returned to teaching, eventually becoming the headmaster at St Paul's School in Chester Green.

UNDERAGE VOLUNTEER

Charles Henry Steer *(92 Kedleston Rd)* volunteered in March 1916 when he was still 17, giving a false age. It is estimated that 250,000 underage recruits were enlisted during the war. In March 1917 when 18 he was posted to France, although the minimum age for service abroad was 19. The army did not discharge him and Charles was shuffled back and forth between the Labour Corps and the Royal Garrison Artillery. When demobilised in September 1919 he was based at an artillery fort in Weymouth. Charles went on to become a bank manager!

REFUSING TO BEAR ARMS

Frederick John Redfern *(83 Kedleston Rd, later 56 Statham St)* was one of some 80 Conscientious Objectors in Derby. Called up in March 1916 his enlistment was deferred until a Military Service Tribunal in July 1916. He was a member of the Plymouth Brethren Church who took a stand against bearing arms, preferring to be recognised as non-combatants rather than conscientious objectors. In October 1916 he was posted with the Non-Combatant Corps. He survived the war and lived locally until his death in 1973. Peter Clarke who lived at 54 Statham St, said: "Mr Redfern was one of the nicest people you could meet - a good neighbour to have and well liked by everyone…He was very religious".

World War One postcard ridiculing Conscientious Objectors (see www.worldwar1postcards.com)

THE HOME FRONT

Food shortages, rising prices, rationing, queuing for food, air raids and threat of invasion – these were some of the experiences of those on the Home Front.

After the bombardment of coastal towns in Yorkshire and Humberside in December 1914 there was a fear of enemy invasion, heightened by Zeppelin raids, which damaged factories, transport links and homes. Submarines patrolling the North Sea attacked shipping convoys bringing food supplies. Food shortages were a problem and in 1918 rationing was introduced.

Kedleston Road about 1910 from a postcard by F W Scarratt. On the left is Bromley Street with Daykin's Chemist on the corner. At this date a Sub-Post Office was located here from where local families sent letters and parcels off to their loved ones serving in the armed forces. ©www.picturethepast.org.uk

BELGIAN REFUGEES

As the German Army advanced into Belgium and Northern France, refugees began arriving in Derby in October 1914. In response to the emergency the Mayor of Derby set up a "shilling fund" and within a week £240 had been raised. About 320 Belgian refugees were housed in Derby throughout the war. One of our local churches, St Anne's, supported a family until 1918.

Broadway Baptist Church (at that time on St Mary's Gate) still uses a visitors' book given to them as a leaving gift by Olivier Platteau from Antwerp who was hosted by the church between 1914 and 1919. **Monsieur Platteau** became president of the Belgians' Refugee Club and acted as spokesman for the exiles.

Fund for Belgian Refugees

Fred Hamp *(22 Statham St)* was Treasurer of the fund for Belgian Refugees at St Anne's Church.

By the time Mr & Mrs Lintermans moved to Birmingham for work in June 1918, the church had raised £268 – worth around £28,000 today. The money paid for the rent of a house on Walter St and their living expenses.

THE VICAR'S LETTER.

My dear Friends,

I am glad to say we have obtained a house for a Belgian family, in the parish. It is at the corner of Walter and Leyland Streets. I am also glad to know how well you have responded to the appeal. We can still do with a little more help. Can anyone give any furniture, pictures, table linen, knives and forks, etc.? Anything will be welcome. Just drop me a line saying you can offer some article, and I will see that it is fetched, no matter how big or how small.

LOCAL GERMAN FAMILY

Life in World War One Derby cannot have been easy for the **Boettcher family** *(46 Park Grove)* who came here from Germany in about 1900 to work in the hosiery industry. The family gained British citizenship in 1912 and by 1916 they were living on Park Grove. In 1911 their oldest son, Walter, enlisted as a regular soldier in the British Army while still a German citizen. During his career he rose through the ranks to become a Sergeant, but

Otto Boettcher

"IT IS GOOD THAT WE ARE NOT FORGOTTEN"

This was the common phrase used in thank-you letters sent to **St Anne's Church** after Christmas 1917 when the church sent gifts to men at the front.

Receiving letters and parcels from home, and writing back, was very important for the morale of troops in the trenches. All mail was censored to keep troop movements secret and to suppress "bad news". The scale and speed of the postal service was remarkable: **12.5 million letters** were sent from the home front every week and **19,000 mail bags** crossed the Channel each day. Many women were employed for sorting, censoring and reading the mail.

William Mills *(33 Statham St)* wrote:

"I prize the gift very much not for its value but because it shows that the old boys are not, and never will be forgotten by those at home".

COMMUNITY LIFE DURING THE WAR

Church magazines from the time give a fascinating insight into the role churches played within the community - a full set of magazines for the war years have survived for **St Anne's Church** in the West End. For many people it was their nearest place of worship, along with **St Aidan's Church** on Kedleston Road.

St Aidan's Church on Kedleston Road which stood near "The Jonty Farmer". This Anglican Church was opened in 1896 to serve local residents. ©www.picturethepast.org.uk

The monthly magazines list the names of those away fighting, feature letters from soldiers describing conditions at the front, and touch on national and local events – like the Zeppelin raid on Derby.

The changing lives of women and children

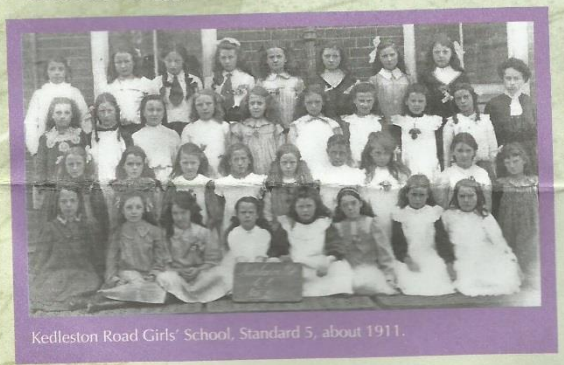
As men went off to war, there was an urgent need to recruit women into the workforce. Propaganda campaigns persuaded women to help the war effort by taking up jobs in agriculture, munitions and nursing, as well as supporting existing industry and commerce. There was fierce debate about the suitability of women for roles within heavy industry, as well as issues around rates of pay.

MIDLAND RAILWAY

At the insistence of the railway unions women were only taken on "for the duration of the war", but they worked successfully in many new roles including van drivers, porters, painters, and mechanics and as assistants to skilled men in the Works areas.

About 500 women were employed in munitions factories run by the **Midland Railway Locomotive Works** in Derby. Often railway companies tried to help out by employing relatives of serving men. They also made land available as allotments for railway families to grow food.

Unfortunately there are no records to identify if any local women were employed by the Midland Railway for the war effort. The girls below would have left school by the time war broke out and would have a far wider (and better paid) range of job opportunities than previous generations. Many girls preferred working in the munitions factories to going into domestic service.



Kedleston Road Girls' School, Standard 5, about 1911.

CHILDREN'S LIVES

Children's church organisations played their part in the war effort. At **St Michael's Church** *(Queen Street)* the Boy Scouts helped with welcoming soldiers during February 1916, when the church rooms were used for recreation by 3/5th South Staffordshire Regiment. Scouts collected newspapers for recycling and helped with other duties, such as flag day collections.

Patients and nurses at Burton upon Trent Red Cross Hospital ©British Red Cross Museum and Archives

NURSING AT HAYE LEIGH AUXILIARY HOSPITAL

Before the war even started plans were under way for the care of the wounded. **The Red Cross and Order of St John** joined forces as the Joint War Committee and organised auxiliary hospitals for the care of men who were not critically ill or wounded.

Between January 1916 and January 1919, a maximum of 24 men at any one time were nursed at **Haye Leigh**, 174-6 Duffield Road, mostly by volunteers (known as VADs). We have identified 11 women from the Six Streets area who were VADs – some at Haye Leigh, others at the **Derbyshire Royal Infirmary.**

Neighbours **Elizabeth Badderley** *(117 Kedleston Rd)* and **Eva Warwick** *(119)* both volunteered at Haye Leigh as nurses. Other local women working there were **Edith Aulton** *(112 Kedleston Rd)*, **Nina Whitaker** *(145 Kedleston Rd)*, **Lucy Impey** *(45 Bromley St)* and **Clara Lowe** *(22 Bromley St)*. Lucy, Nina and Edith were all cooks and Clara helped with nursing.

VAD hospital nurse widowed by war

Although a trained nurse **Constance Basford** *(118 Kedleston Rd)* was unpaid for the responsibility of *"Taking Charge of Sisters' off-duty time"* while she worked at the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary. She volunteered there from May 1915 until after the end of the war. In October 1917, her husband, **Bromley**, an officer with the Leicestershire Regiment, was killed while on active service.

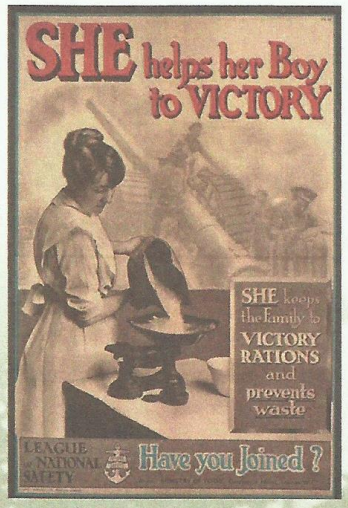
Staff at Haye Leigh Auxiliary Hospital, sent as a Christmas card in December 1917. (Image supplied by Rod Jewell)

NATIONAL KITCHEN

VOLUNTEER HOME WORKERS

Some women helped with sewing and knitting, often volunteering for Hospital Supply Depots that were set up around the country.

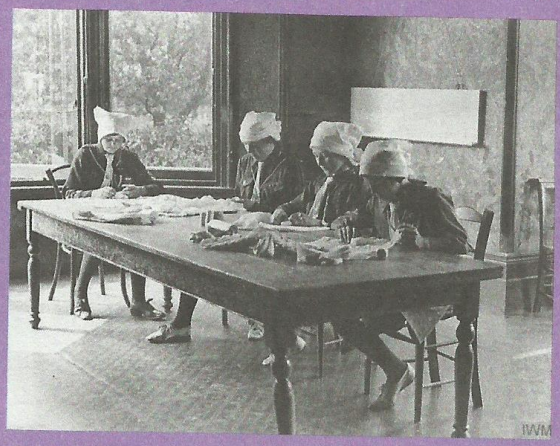
Leah Hagley *(12 White St)* mother of Richard in the RAF and his grandmother, **Mrs de Soiza,** were volunteer home workers for the Joint War Committee. Tasks were knitting, sewing and preparing war hospital supplies, such as dressings and bandages, and sewing nightshirts and hospital gowns for wounded soldiers.



© IWM (Art.IWM PST 6570)

In May 1916 **Ellen Draper** *(26 Bromley St)* volunteered to do home work "knitting, needlework and war hospital supplies" while her husband was serving abroad. In December 1917 she gave up this voluntary work after Robert was killed in action.

Other home workers in the area were: **Jennie Morris** *(82 Park Grove)*, **Bertha Neal** *(53 White St)*, and **Mary Richards** *(27 White St)*, **Ellen Pool** *(9 White St) and* **Florence Ward** *(132 Kedleston Rd).*



Girl Guides prepare hospital supplies. They are making swabs to apply to wounds © IWM (Q27923)

FROM THE CO-OPERATIVE DERBY RECORDS

From 1902 there was a Co-op store at 3 Bromley Street (now a newsagent's shop). The Co-operative Women's Guild in Derby was very active in campaigning and contributing in various ways to the war effort. The following snippets from their monthly magazine "The Co-operative Derby Record" give an insight into life at the time:

Women Patrols – May 1915:

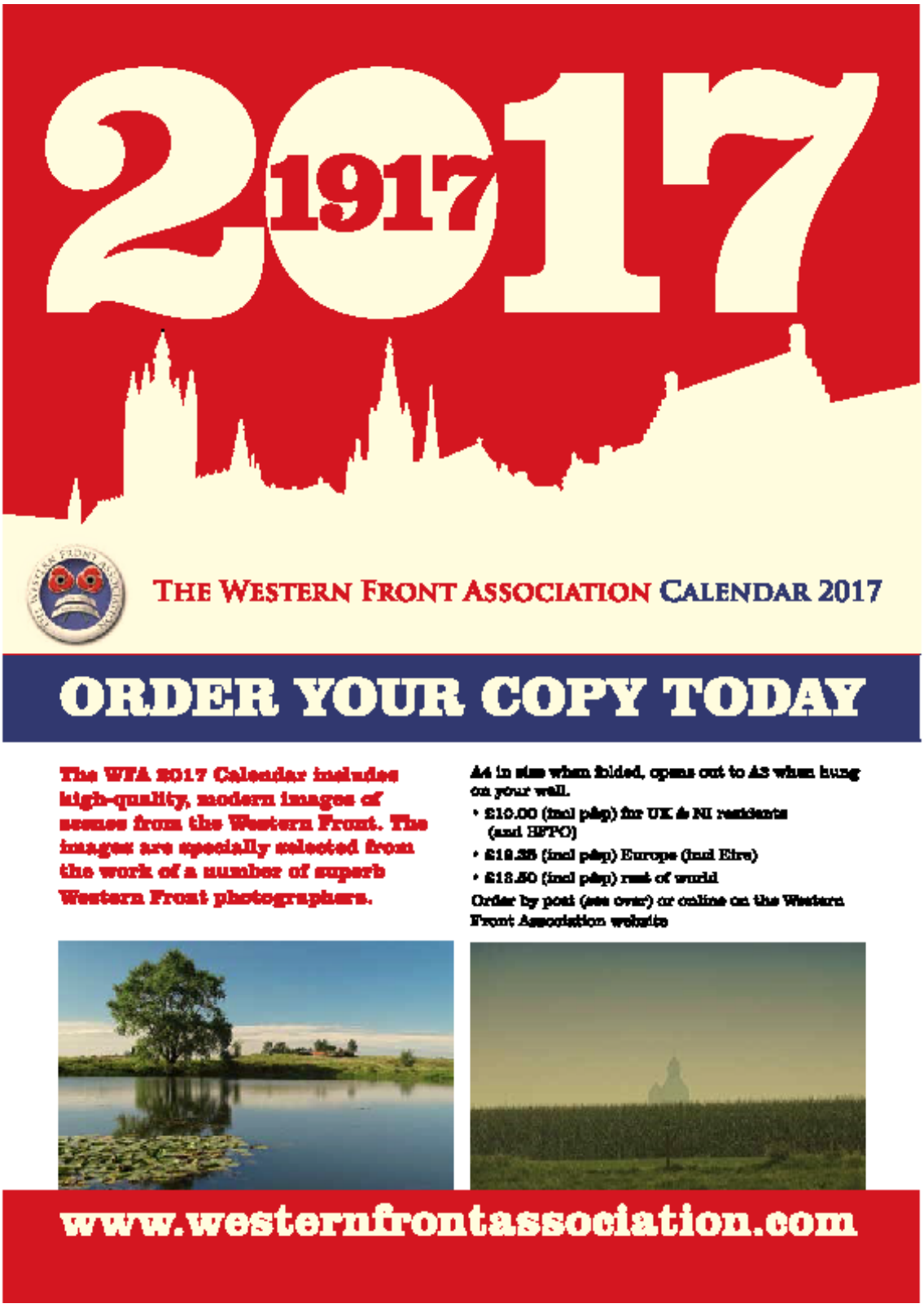
"At a Women's Guild Meeting, Mrs Russell gave a most interesting address on the need for "Women Patrols" while our town was so full of soldiers. Their duty was to guard young girls. They wore a black and white striped strap round one arm and a number."

Visiting wounded soldiers – August 1917:

"Women's Guild – Received and spent on goods for wounded soldiers £15. 10s. Members of the Committee visit the Infirmary, Temple House, and the Normanton Barracks Hospital. At the latter tea is always included in the goods we take... and sometimes fruit instead of cake."

Kedleston Road, about 1914, looking towards Derby. Showing George Ride, (Greengrocer), Howard & Co. (Grocers), and Robert Irish, (Butcher). Later in the war there were probably long queues outside these shops as people, usually women, had to queue for scarce food. In spring 1918 rationing was introduced for sugar, meat, flour, butter, margarine and milk. Each person had a ration card which could only be used at the shops where the card was registered. ©www.picturethepast.org.uk

Still available…….final call



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The Munitions Crisis – part six

The nature of the appeal made by the Minister to employers and workers alike was summed up in one made by Lloyd George at Manchester in June 1915.

`*I have only held this office for a few days, it is true. I had some insight before then into the position of things, but what I have seen has convinced me from overwhelming testimony that the nation has not yet concentrated one half of its industrial strength on the problem of carrying this great conflict through successfully. It is a year of munitions. We are fighting against the best organised community in the world; the best organised for war or peace and we have ben employing too much the haphazard, leisurely, go as you please methods, which, believe me, would not have enabled us to maintain our place as a nation, even in peace, very much longer. The nation now needs all the machinery that is capable of being used for turning out munitions or equipment, all the skill that is available for that purpose, all the industry, all the labour, and all the strength, power, and resource of everyone to the utmost, everything that would help us to overcome our difficulties and supply our shortages. We want to mobilise in such a way as to produce in the shortest space of time the greatest quantity of the best and most efficient war material. That means victory; it means a great saving of national strength and resources, for it shortens the war; it means an enormous saving of life…..*`

He went out to point out that the Government had taken powers under the Defence of the Realm Act to control the workshops of the country and to insist that Government work – the work of the country – must take precedence over all civil work. The position of relations between Government and labour was discussed which highlighted that two things were essential to the efficiency of the new organisation for munitions of war – the increase in the mobility of labour and securing greater subordination of labour to the direction and control of the State. He went on

`….*the state must be able to say where and under what conditions it required a man`s services – when the house is on fire, questions of procedure and precedence, of etiquette, and time and division of labour, must disappear…*`

Lloyd George appealed to the workmen to give up, for the period of the war, the `unwritten` rules by which output was limited, and he gave an undertaking that piece work rates would not be reduced. Similarly, he urged suspension of Trade Union rules forbidding dilution in order that unskilled men and women make up for the shortage of skilled men who had joined the military services, pointing out that the refusal of un-enlisted labour to submit to discipline contrasted with the position of the volunteer at the front.

`*The enlisted workman cannot choose his locality of action. He cannot say – I am quite prepared to fight at Neuve Chapelle but I won't fight at Festubert, and I am not going anywhere that place they call Wipers. He cannot say – I have been in the trenches for eight hours and my trade union won`t allow me to fight more than eight hours*`

The next day the Minister spoke in similar terms at Liverpool, where he repeated his assurances to the workers about the temporary nature of the relaxation of ordinary rules and practices which they were asked to accept. A resolution was carried pledging those present to do all they could do to increase the output of munitions. A Mr Clarke, representative of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, seconded the resolution, saying,

`*We have learned now that things are not going so well at the Front as we thought they were. Certain newspapers have hidden the truth from us and have presented too rosy a picture. It was only yesterday* when *we heard of Mr. Lloyd George`s speech in Manchester and we now realise the terrible urgency of the matter. Now that we know, I am sure there will be no difficulty….* `

This was summed up in a Press report,

`*The general feeling in representative trade union circles with regard to Mr Lloyd George`s speech in Manchester is one of unanimous agreement*

Concurrent with the Minister`s travels and speeches, the Ministry of Munitions Bill was carried through Parliament

Whilst this series of essays, *The Munitions Crisis,* is regarding the problems of supply, particularly of shells and other ammunition, to the BEF, it is perhaps interesting to look, for comparative purposes at the situation on the German side. The general perception is that the Germans had virtually unlimited supplies of munitions compared with the BEF who often could barely respond with only several rounds per day when under almost continuous shelling by the enemy.

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One of the stronger arguments put forward by those who say that there was no deliberate German intention to go to war in 1914 is the absence of anything resembling systematic preparation for even a short victorious conflict. That the military mobilisation proceeded with precision and efficiency is inarguable. Specifics directly connected with that mobilisation went well enough. At the start of the war, for example, the artillery had a thousand shells per gun – enough, according to Moltke, for thirty to forty days of sustained combat. By the elapse of that time the German guns had expended more ammunition than during the Franco-Prussian war of 40 years previous. Indeed by the end of October 1914 Falkenhayn declared that the army was on the verge of shells altogether. With 60 per cent of the state`s delivered by private contractors – Krupp was fulfilling foreign contracts even after the outbreak of war – Falkenhayn described an unlimited supply of ammunition as a matter of life and death, and the output increased 400% by December 1914. By December 1915 that figure was 1300%. There were, of course, a significantly larger number of guns to supply but a reasonable balance between barrels and rounds had nevertheless been achieved.

Why could the Germans ramp up production so quickly compared with Britain? Britain was dependent upon its Royal Ordnance factories who employed outdated methods both internally and externally where it practised only small amounts of sub-contracting. As has been previously described it took strong parliamentary action, resisted by the War Office to make the necessary changes. That and the fact that Germany had a larger military-industrial production industry to start with, much of whose production pre-war had been exported. Switching to manufacturing exclusively for Germany and her allies was much easier than the situation in Britain where new manufacturing facilities had to be built and commissioned – with all the problems that entails – from scratch.

Of course, in Germany shortages and bottlenecks plagued supplies of other crucial materials as well, ranging from copper through saltpetre to cotton. The War Ministry responded by contacting industrial magnate, Walter Rathenau. He had previously minuted the ministry on this issue and proposed establishing a Raw Materials Office (RMO) to register supplies available in a conquered territory. He now became head of an office under the War Ministry responsible for surveying and allocating raw material necessary for the war effort.

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The second reading of The Ministry of Munitions Bill in the House of Commons took place on June 7th 1915 with passage in the Lords two days later. This measure set up the new Ministry and gave it is powers which were laid down in Clause 2(1) of the Act

`The Minister of Munitions shall have such administrative powers and duties in relation to the supply of munitions for the present War as may be conferred upon him by his Majesty in Council and his Majesty may also, if he considers it expedient that, in connection with the supply of munitions any powers or duties of a Government Department or authority, whether conferred by statute or otherwise, should be transferred to or exercised or performed concurrently by, the Minister of Munitions, by Order of Council make the necessary provisions for the purpose, and any order made in pursuance of this section may include any supplemental provisions which appear necessary for giving full effect to the order`

In other words, the job of the new Ministry – the responsibilities hitherto held by the War Office or Admiralty which it was to take over and the new tasks it was to undertake, were not defined by Act of Parliament, but were left to be fixed by Orders in Council which, without the waste of valuable time involved in Parliamentary

procedure, could adapt the power to the need as it arose. At the outset it was broadly laid down that the new department should be guided by the `general requirements and specific regulations` of the Army Council. This might

have been taken to mean – and indeed the Army Council did its best to impose such an interpretation – that the Ministry was no more than a Supply Department unable to exercise any initiative and only empowered to act on programmes and orders transmitted to it from the military authorities. Fortunately, however, the Order in Council defining the Ministry`s function was more explicit.

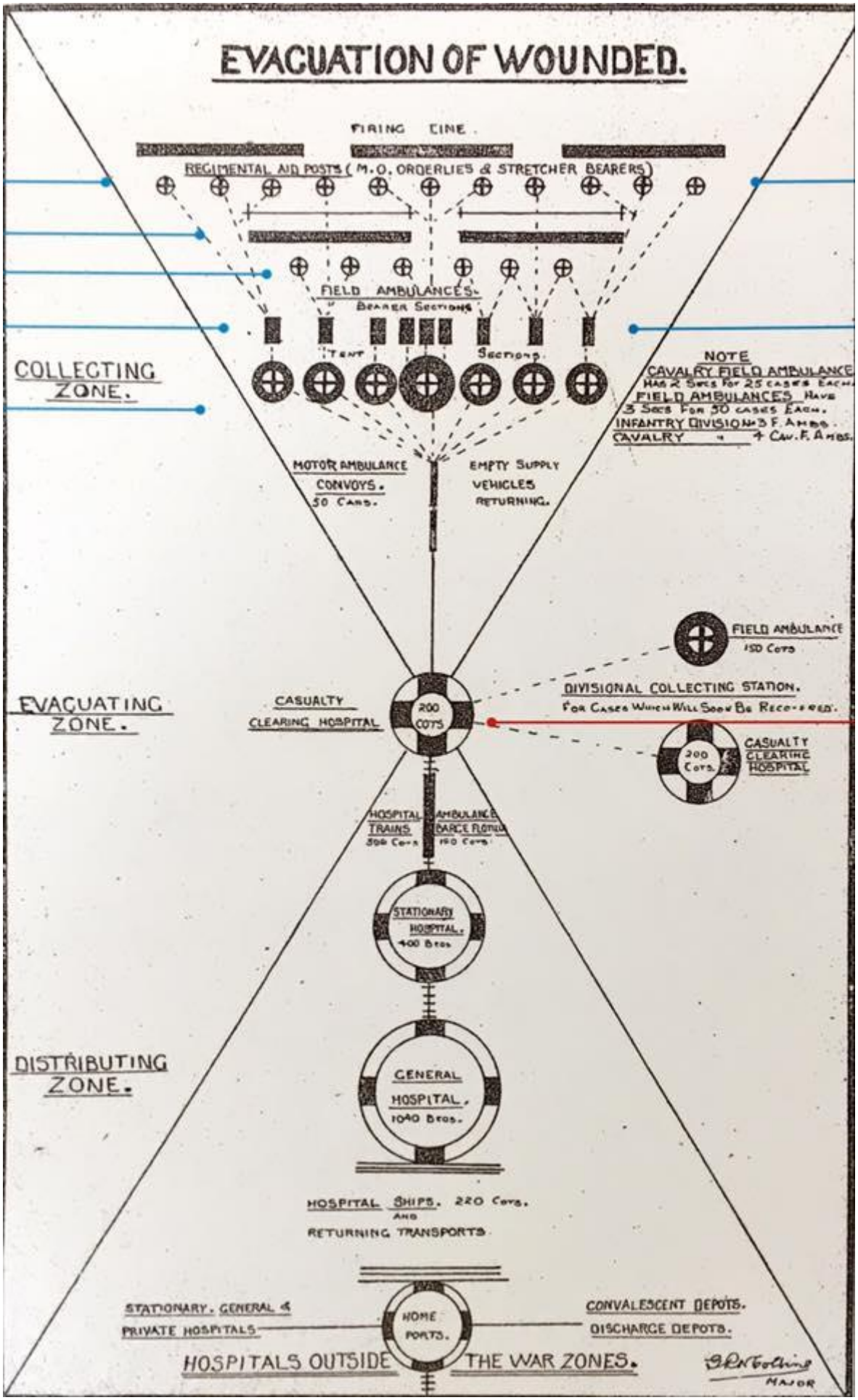
It set out the Minister`s duty

`*…to ensure such supply of munitions for the present War as may be required by the Army Council or the Admiralty,* ***or may otherwise be found necessary*****`**

Had the new Ministry of Munitions been limited by being controlled by the Army Council it is likely that come the end of the war in 1918, had the war indeed been brought to a successful conclusion by Britain and its allies at that time, supply would still have been in arrears to demand. Just to put this into perspective, by the time the Ministry of Munitions parliamentary Bill was passed at the beginning of June 1915, out of 5.8 million shell cases ordered by the War Office, barely 2 million had actually been delivered – and this after ten months of war. A further consideration is the fact that of the shells actually manufactured, a comparatively large number were neither filled with explosives nor fitted with fuses. Those steps taken by the new Ministry to reorganise the munitions industry and to speed up production in the first seven months of its existence saw delivery of orders placed originally by the War Office, of which 2 million had been delivered by 1st June 1915 increase to 14 million by the end of the year and for the first time adequate measures had been taken to complete these with explosive and fuse.

Why then, had the War Office fallen so far behind to the extent that demand exceeded their ability to supply ?, the situation hampering severely the BEF`s efforts in the field. Much can be placed at the door of stubborn adherence to the policy of dealing only with recognised armaments firms and leaving these firms to `organise` the rest of the engineering industry in the country. The Ordnance Department did have the rights to completely control the manufacturing resources of the country as they had the power conferred upon them by the Defence of the Realm Act, which was effective from 9th March 1915, but this authority they failed to make appropriate use of. The Ordnance Department was still of the opinion that it was too risky to entrust the manufacture of munitions to firms who, in their opinion were `inexperienced` and that the only `safe` course was to only give orders to those well- established armament manufacturers, leaving them to sub contract out only the simplest of components. As far as American orders were concerned, a departure from this principle was enforced by the Cabinet Committee, although control was impossible and supervision impossible over production in the US. At least in the UK both supervision and control was practicable but rarely did the War Office seek application. From its inception the Ministry of Munitions had taken the direct organisation of the outside firms and of the labour for munitions production and by August 15th 1915 it had also taken charge of the Government Ordnance factories, including the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich, which at that time was still responsible for nearly all of the shell filling an completion, and was carrying out these functions by tedious and antiquated pre-war methods, described by Albert Thomas, the French Munition Minister, (pictured)when he visited Woolwich as *" une vielle boit"* – "an old box"

To be continued


EVACUATION OF WOUNDED.
FIRING LINE.
REGIMENTAL AID POSTS (M.O. ORDERLIES & STRETCHER BEARERS)
FIELD AMBULANCES.
BEARER SECTIONS
TENT
SECTIONS
COLLECTING ZONE.
NOTE
CAVALRY FIELD AMBULANCE HAS 2 SECS FOR 25 CASES EACH.
FIELD AMBULANCES HAVE 3 SECS FOR 50 CASES EACH.
INFANTRY DIVISION = 3 F. AMBS.
CAVALRY " = 4 CAV. F. AMBS.
MOTOR AMBULANCE CONVOYS. 50 CARS.
EMPTY SUPPLY VEHICLES RETURNING.
FIELD AMBULANCE 150 COTS
DIVISIONAL COLLECTING STATION.
FOR CASES WHICH WILL SOON BE RECOVERED.
EVACUATING ZONE.
CASUALTY CLEARING HOSPITAL
200 COTS
200 COTS.
CASUALTY CLEARING HOSPITAL
HOSPITAL TRAINS 500 CARS
AMBULANCE BARGE FLOTILLA 150 CARS
STATIONARY HOSPITAL. 400 BEDS
DISTRIBUTING ZONE.
GENERAL HOSPITAL. 1040 BEDS.
HOSPITAL SHIPS. 220 CARS. AND RETURNING TRANSPORTS
STATIONARY. GENERAL & PRIVATE HOSPITALS
HOME PORTS.
CONVALESCENT DEPOTS.
DISCHARGE DEPOTS.
HOSPITALS OUTSIDE THE WAR ZONES.
MAJOR