



THE WESTERN FRONT
ASSOCIATION

Lancashire North Branch

Despatch

Issue 4: Nov 2009



Private Rigg (see Page 4) was one of the early victims of the war during the Retreat from Mons. He does not lie with fallen comrades in the corridor of the retreat neither is he named on the Ferte sous Jouarre Memorial. He lies in Argentan Communal Cemetery, Normandy as a sole British sentinel lest the town population forget the legion of British soldiers who died for France in WW1. The early morning sunlight blessed his grave when we called to say hello and leave our token of remembrance.

Editor's Musing

As I put together Despatch with November approaching I often ponder on its content and contribution to remembering. Every article, letter, museum and meeting report, text box and photo contributes to meeting the Association's motto in different ways and degrees.

My frontispiece focussing on Private Rigg was a chance happening. He is probably not remembered by anyone and there will be many like him. However the many un-remembered who lie in battlefield cemeteries have their graves viewed by en-passant "remembering" visitors. Not so for D'Arcy and this is my attempt to redress the imbalance.

I am pleased to report the results of the Armistice Prize competition for 2009 and hope this year's true competition and prizes generates more entries in 2010. My thanks to all who have contributed to this Issue and I wonder whether Despatch will travel further than Afghanistan in 2010.

MORE INFORMATION FOR ARTICLES WHEN:

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

(+S) : supplementary information report

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

QUEEN ELIZABETH GRAMMAR SCHOOL, KIRBY LONSDALE, ROLL OF HONOUR: c/o Oliver Wilkinson

Private (L-Cpl) Henry Cecil Clarke, 23rd Northumberland Fusiliers (4th Tyneside Scottish)

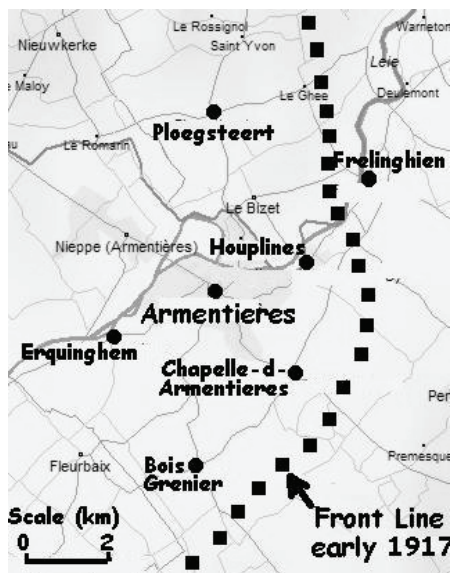
The experience of Pte Henry Cecil Clarke reveals a further, yet often overlooked element of the World War One experience: The Trench Raid. Life

on the Western Front is stereotypically presented as one of stalemate and inactivity. However, this image is misleading. Many dynamics functioned and developed during the course of the Great War, which meant that the war was in fact a constantly evolving conflict, especially in terms of tactics and technologies, despite the fact that men remained 'dug-in' along hundreds of miles of defences. The trench raid (usually carried out at night) was one such feature, designed specifically to keep men sharp, as well as providing a vital function in gathering information. Intelligence on enemy trenches, positions, and numbers would be gathered, and often raiders would try to take prisoners, who could be interrogated to reveal information on forthcoming enemy attacks and movements. On the 11th February 1917, Clarke took his place in such a raiding party.

This was a far cry from the Manchester and Liverpool District Bank, in Sedbergh, where Clarke had been employed in civilian life. He had studied at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School for two years, his official leaving date being recorded as Christmas 1906. When war broke out Clarke was only 18 and had thus not joined up for service in the 'short' continental war that was purportedly going to be over by Christmas. Things were clearly different by April 1916, and Clarke enlisted in the West Riding Regiment. In July he was sent to France, and soon afterwards was transferred to the 23rd Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers (Tyneside Scottish). This unit had been devastated by fighting on the Somme (1st July 1916) and men like Clarke, who had only been in the army a matter of months, were brought in to get the Battalion back to fighting strength. The reinforced Battalion took up position

at Erquinghem, near Armentieres, and until the end of the year trench raiding of various scales were conducted. General Sir Henry Plummer personally congratulated the 23rd Battalion on the outcome of a raid carried out on the 30th September. In October the weather turned wet, and as Christmas approached it grew steadily worse. Raids continued, but an increasing amount of time had to be given over to 'trench fatigues' repairing the trenches, dugouts and barbed wire. Clarke wrote home during the winter of 1916, and confirmed the poor conditions, yet he also revealed the unbreakable spirit of the British 'Tommy':

"I am quite well and not having such a bad time under the circumstances. The trenches are very wretched in wet weather, but we make the best of things and keep smiling"



The New Year thus saw Clarke settling into a unit that was becoming proficient in trench raiding. He must also have been promoted at the end of 1916, so he began 1917 as a Lance Corporal.

In late January, the battalion began training for another raid South East of Armentieres, which was to be the largest undertaken by the division. The party, numbering over 250 men including Clarke, practiced behind the lines in mock-up trenches. On the 11th February, at 10:30p.m., the men were organized into four companies (left to right 'A', 'D', 'C', & 'B' companies) and moved across No-Mans land towards the enemy trenches. It is not known which company Clarke was in, each one having varying degrees of success. 'A' Company, despite meeting heavy fire, made it into the enemy trenches. Trench dugouts were bombed, but German machine-gun fire forced a retreat. 'D' Company, again met heavy fire, and was unable to enter the German trenches before withdrawing. 'C' Company was the most successful. They got as far as the German support trenches, killing and bombing the enemy en-route, and withdrawing with 7 German prisoners. In addition, with the assistance of a contingent of Royal Engineers, they succeed in blowing up a German ammunition store and a company Head Quarters. Meanwhile, 'B' Company was pinned down by heavy artillery fire and forced to withdraw. Casualties numbered 1 officer missing, 6 officers wounded, 12 Other Ranks (ORs) killed, 13 ORs missing, and 37 ORs wounded. Clarke was one of the 13 ORs missing.

According to a letter written to his family by an officer of Clarke's regiment, a thorough search was made for him but no trace was found. The letter held out hope that perhaps he has been taken prisoner. His comrades expressed affection and respect for Clarke, describing him as a "splendid soldier and a very efficient NCO." Similar sentiments of affection were expressed by Queen Elizabeth School in the Christmas (1917)

magazine, which remembered Clarke's interest in games, and especially football. The surviving raiders were steeped in congratulations for the raid. Medals were awarded in large numbers including 2 Distinguished Service Orders, 5 Military Crosses, a bar to the Distinguished Conduct Medal of Segt. A.F. Jackson, 3 Distinguished Conduct Medals, a bar to the Military Medal of Pte. Wearmouth, and 12 other Military Medals. Unfortunately L-Cpl Henry Cecil Clarke was not there to share in any of the glory. When no word was received from him it became clear that he was not a prisoner, but had been killed during the raid. His body was never found, and he is remembered on Ploegsteert Memorial.

**HE ONLY SLEEPS SUCH SPIRITS NEVER
DIE – Lancs Corp G L Sackett E Yorks**

REMEMBERING PRIVATE RIGG: Terry Dean (+S)

One of the final tasks in preparing Part 1 of the Lancashire Contemptibles (see Programme of Future Meetings on page 23) was to examine the CWGC statistics. This revealed that of the 314 deaths in Lancashire Regiments in the period 4th August to 5th September 1914 243 men have no known grave and are commemorated on the Ferte sous Jouarre Memorial, 69 are buried in the corridor of the retreat from Mons to Coulommiers, 1 is buried at St Sever, Rouen and Private Rigg is buried in Argentan Communal Cemetery in Normandy.

Seeing the CWGC information for Private 7893 John William D'Arcy Rigg of the 1st Battalion King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) I decided to try and piece together his story. What follows is mainly fact with a little speculation by me

(in italics) to complete the story where information is thin or non-existent.

John William D'Arcy Rigg was born in the 2nd quarter 1887 in Openshaw, Manchester. He was the only son of Robert William and Elizabeth Rigg but by virtue of his father's and mother's previous marriages he had two step-sisters and three step-brothers. His father was a railway goods loader. D'Arcy would have a hard childhood with his mother dying in 1892 (aged 42) when he was 5 and his father dying in 1899 (aged 51) when he was 12.

In August 1903 D'Arcy, then aged 16 and 5ft 5½ inches tall, enlisted in the Royal Lancaster Regiment. He declared himself to be a labourer, aged 18 and gave his eldest step-brother as his next of kin. After 3 months at Depot in Lancaster he was posted to the 2nd Battalion at Blackdown, Surrey. He was not perfect with 9 entries in the defaulter book for such things as: late on parade, improper dress and dirty rifle. He transferred to the Army Reserve on 18th August 1906.

D'Arcy clearly felt that army life was preferable to Civvy Street and on 8th December 1908 enlisted in the Manchester Regiment as Robert Rigg giving his correct age as 21 years 7 months. He then stood at 5ft 8½ inches. However he was quickly recognised and on 11th December 1908 signed a confession to his commanding officer.

In February 1911 D'Arcy married Margaret Ann Openshaw and 5 months later Stanley D'Arcy Rigg was born. At the time of the 1911 Census D'Arcy lived with his in-laws and worked as a "Daily Mail Cyclist".

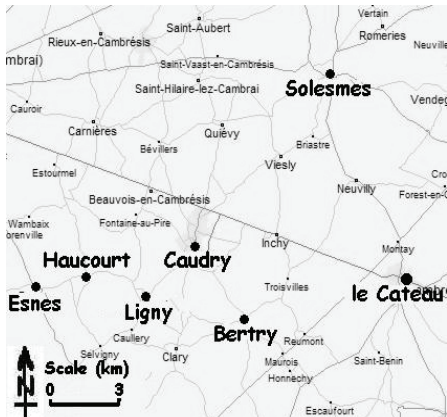
When mobilisation orders were issued on 4th August 1914 D'Arcy was one of many reservists to flood back to depot prior to joining 1st Battalion Kings Own

Royal Lancaster (1KORL) at Dover.



Whilst there D'Arcy had his photo taken and sent this group photo to a relative.

Kitchener did not trust Territorials with the role of Home Defence and to the exasperation of Army planners initially only allowed 4 infantry divisions to go France. Therefore D'Arcy did not embark for France until 21st August and disembarked at Boulogne on the 23rd just before the battle got underway at Mons. That evening 1KORL moved by train towards the fighting and detained in the morning of the 24th at Bertry, SW of le Cateau. That night they moved north to help protect the important Solesmes thoroughfare for the west flank of the BEF's retreat on the 25th.



On the night of the 25th/26th, with the BEF moving south through Solesmes, D'Arcy and 1KORL moved to take up their allotted position SW of Caudry and Smith-Dorrien decided to fight rather than continue retreating on the 26th. Due to

congestion on the roads it was not until 6.00 am on the 26th that 1KORL reached their allotted position on the ridge 1km north of Haucourt.

As they awaited their breakfast prior to digging-in 1KORL were surprised and hit by tremendous fire from German machine-guns and artillery. Very heavy casualties were suffered by 1KORL and other adjacent battalions. The British line was pulled back to the line of the Ligny-Esnes road and later in the morning attempts were made to recover the wounded. *One of the many wounded was D'Arcy* and he may have been rescued by Lt Bernard Law Montgomery from the Warwicks in reserve who assisted 1KORL.

Severely wounded were taken from the battlefield via Rouen thence le Havre for evacuation but the German advance through France caused St Nazaire to be chosen as the new base on August 29th. *The rail route from Rouen to St Nazaire would take the wounded D'Arcy via Argentan..*

Thanks to help from Marie Flais in the Argentan Archives I have a copy of an "Acte de Deces" dated 9th June 1919. It commences with the heading "**John William Rigg who gave his life for France**" it goes on to say that on "31st August 1914 at ten thirty in the morning, John William Rigg, soldier of the English army, passing through Argentan, died in the outbuildings of Argentan station."

THE WORK OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS IN THE GREAT WAR: Maj-Gen Sir Gerard Moore Heath... Continued from May 2009

Railways

The history of railway communications in the front zone is interesting. The spectacle of streams of weary and mud-

soaked men treading their way along the communication trenches stumbling under loads of all sorts, which varied from ammunition to corrugated iron, was a pitiable one; also, this system entailed the employment of large numbers of men who should have been resting. It was obvious that something had to be done. We began with wooden tramlines and push trucks; many miles of these were laid, and were quite successful. They were gradually replaced by steel tracks (9lbs) for push and animal-drawn trucks. It was a long time before we could get heavier rails and properly designed mechanical tractors - we improvised one or two from motor-cars.

Early in 1916 we took over some French light railways behind the Vimy Ridge, and worked them successfully almost into the front trenches. It took the battle of the Somme and all its lessons to drive home the obvious fact, that large numbers of men and guns, in the dense concentrations required by modern war, are useless without a highly-organized system of transportation to supply their needs, The light railway (60 centimetre) organization started in 1916 by the late Major-General Sir G. Twining, under Sir Eric Geddes, and carried on later by

Brigadier-General Harrison, was an enormous asset to us.

By the spring of 1917 our front was served by a veritable network of light railways, but the problem of bringing up the huge weight of ammunition required for the guns during a continued advance was a difficult one to solve, and set many minds working. We experimented with ropeways and various forms of mono-rail, but these systems were never used, except in short lengths. A rough type of mono-rail carried on wooden trestles proved useful for branch lines to batteries. One inventor got out a scheme for the pneumatic despatch of ammunition through miles of pipe-line; these lines were to spread out all over the battlefield from a central station. The difficulties were thought to be too great to warrant success. In the end we had to trust to pack animals, and hastily made roads, backed by the 60-centimetre and standard-gauge railways. It is to be noted, however, that in cases of a limited advance the 60-centimetre construction parties sometimes beat the road-makers.

About 2,000 miles of normal gauge railways, partly new construction and partly doubling and deviations were built. *(A separate report for a future Despatch)*

A FAVOURITE POSTCARD:

Andrew Brooks (+P)

In my collection of WW1 postcards there has always been a bias towards those cards linked with the North-East of England, simply because all of my collecting life was spent in this part of the world. If we add to this my special interest in Christmas cards of the Great War one can



see why the illustrated card is one of my favourites.

It is a rather plain black/white card and the amateur artist shows his battalion working in some devastated French village on the Somme. Pioneer battalions were expected to perform many tasks such as digging trench systems and as we see here clearing the roads to allow the passage of men and materials. The men are filling in shell holes and clearing debris from the road and one can see a roadside Calvary, which has escaped any damage on the right hand side of the card. An inscription alongside the badge of the D.L.I. reads 'With Best Wishes for Xmas 1916 From the 7th D.L.I. Pioneers.' The artist, Jim Hays, has signed the card in the bottom right hand corner. He was a private in 7th D.L.I. No. 2383275411 and went to France with the battalion in April 1915. He was wounded on the 28/3/18 (German Spring Offensive) but survived the war.

Christmas 1916 must have been a difficult time for the 7th D.L.I. as in November their sister battalions the 6th, 8th and 9th suffered heavy casualties in the fighting for the Butte de Warlencourt. The 7th were in support and would have seen the fighting at first hand.

MUSEUM REPORTS

**King's Own Royal Regiment Museum,
Lancaster: Peter Donnelly**

As mentioned in the last 'Despatch' the King's Own Museum in partnership with G H Smith & Son have produced seven 7/10 scale reproductions of trench maps from the museum's collection. Each costs £3.75 including postage from the museum. The maps are: Belgium Sheet 28 NW (Zillebeke, Ypres & Poperinghe, 1916); Wieltje, Frezenberg & Zonnebeke,

1917; Givenchy Section June 1918, hand-drawn sketch map; Neuville, Vitasse & Bullecourt, 1918; Illies, Violaines & Festubert, 1915; Couronne, Aug 1918; and Lake Dojran from June 1917, the latter two relating to Salonika/Macedonia. The most popular so far are the two relating to Salonika.

To mark the museum's 80th Anniversary this December an exhibition has been launched on the Mezzanine Floor looking back at how the museum has changed over the years. The exhibition includes photographs of the museum and some objects which have not recently been on display. Admission is free and the museum is open Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm.

The Regimental Museum is undertaking a review of the talks programme following disappointing numbers at the past four talks. The free talks, held in the museum's meeting room, including subjects such as Gallantry Awards in Two World Wars and the King's Own in the Edwardian Period, illustrated with images rarely seen from the collection.

**SPLENDID IS DEATH WHEN THOU
FALLEST COURAGEOUS LEADING THE
ONSLAUGHT –Lt Col J N Marshall VC
Lancs Fus**

**Fusilier Museum: Mike Glover (Curator
(+P))**

Following the official opening of the new £4.2 million Fusilier Museum in Bury on Friday, 25th September by Field Marshall His Royal Highness, The Duke of Kent a small ceremony took place the following Sunday in the adjacent Gallipoli Garden. Viscount Ridley KG GCMG TD unveiled the restored Regimental Memorial. This had echoes of a similar

ceremony that took place on Tuesday, 25th April 1922 when Lieutenant General Sir Beauvoir de Lisle first unveiled the Regimental Memorial on Bolton Road just outside of Bury.

The Regimental Monument was originally located at the gates to Wellington Barracks that was then the Depot of the Lancashire Fusiliers. The date was significant as it was the 7th Anniversary of the landings at Gallipoli where the regiment was awarded the now famous "Six VCs before breakfast." The Lancashire Fusiliers finished the war with more Victoria Crosses than any other infantry regiment in the British Army but in doing so lost 13,642 men.



Memorial and New Museum

It was popularly agreed that something should be done in Lancashire to honour this achievement and sacrifice. So at a meeting held in Salford on 9th January 1919 chaired by Colonel George E Wike a committee was formed that agreed to establish an appeal that would raise funds to achieve two things firstly establish a compassionate fund and secondly create a permanent memorial.

It was eventually decided that the memorial that would eventually consist of a Role of Honour listing the 13,642 killed in the Great War, a fine set of silver drums and a monument in bronze or stone at the Regimental Headquarters. The architect chosen was Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens RA. However Sir

Edwin was not chosen at random as he was already part of the regimental family. He was the son of Captain Charles Lutyens who had served in the Regiment throughout the latter half of the 19th Century. The uncle of Captain Charles Lutyens, Major Englebert Lutyens had also served in the Regiment during the Napoleonic Wars and attended Napoleon during his last days in exile on St Helena. As a consequence of this deep family connection with the Regiment Sir Edwin gave his services," freely, ungrudgingly, and without fee or reward."

For some 40 years the Memorial remained at the entrance to the Depot on Bolton Road. However as the Army shrank in the 1960s, Wellington Barracks became surplus to requirements and was sold off for redevelopment. The Regimental Headquarters and Monument had to move and were consequently relocated to a small remaining part of the old Depot site. In 1968 the Lancashire Fusiliers amalgamated with the three other English Fusilier Regiments to form what is celebrated today as the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. Thus on 23rd April 1968 the Monument passed from being a memorial to The Lancashire Fusiliers to one commemorating the deeds, accomplishments and sacrifice of The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and remains so to this day.

In its current tour of duty in Afghanistan between March and November, the Second Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers has lost seven soldiers in action and suffered many more wounded. This tragic loss is a powerful reminder to those who would regard the memorial as merely an attractive piece of architecture. The reality is that this is a living monument the focus for annual commemoration and the paying of tribute

to Fusiliers killed in the service of their country today.

The original plan to relocate the Museum Headquarters and Monument had been formulated in 1956 but abandoned in 1958 due to lack of funding. In 2004 the plan was revived and a major project to relocate and redisplay the Lancashire Fusilier Collection and establish a Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Collection started. In May 2009 as a result of five years hard work and the collection of £4.2million the Museum and Collections moved into the Grade 2 Listed former Bury Technical School in the centre of Bury.

The Lancashire Headquarters of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers followed and as the Monument is part of the Headquarters plans were made to move it too. The Monument was taken to pieces for restoration/conservation and rebuilt in a small park next to the museum that has been renamed Gallipoli Garden. Here it is now seen by all those who not only visit the Museum but all those who come into the town centre. Its future is bright as it becomes the centre of attention in a busy part of town rather than a forgotten relic only appreciated by those stuck in a traffic jam on Bolton Road.

Inside the new Museum two other local memorials commemorating service in WW1 have prominent new locations. Both memorials originated in Rochdale. The Honours Board was originally made for a Rochdale mill but when it closed the Honours Board was transferred to the TA Drill Hall. The board proudly displays all the Lancashire Fusilier Battle Honours and recipients of the VC. However when the Drill Hall was closed the Honours Board went into storage as there was nowhere in Rochdale big enough to display it. Following restoration it now

resides in the Normandy Room of the Fusilier Museum. Alongside now sits an interesting memorial from what was the Two Ships Hotel, Queens Street Rochdale. The pub no longer exists but the memorial was saved by the developer who donated it to the museum. The memorial lists over 250 men who it would appear frequented the public house. This is a fascinating piece of social history and needs more investigation.

I THOUGHT NOT WHEN I CRADLED THEE
IN BATTLE YOU'D FALL FAR FROM ME -
Pte W T Menzies AIF

Manchester Regiment Archive: Laraysa Bolton - Archivist Tameside (+P)

A recent donation to the Manchester Regiment Archive comprised material relating to the 8th (Jullundur) Brigade (accession number 3739). This includes a Regimental History of the 6th Royal Battalion 13th Frontier Force Rifles (Scinde) 1843-1923 (later the 59th Royal Scinde Rifles Frontier Force), the 47th Sikhs War Records for the Great War and a number of photographs of the Jullundur Association's reunion on the 60th Anniversary of Neuve Chapelle. It supplements two items already in the collection relating to the Jullundur Brigade, specifically "The Jullundur Brigade in France and Flanders" (archives reference number MR4/3/1/91) and another bundle of photographs relating to the a Jullundur Brigade Reunion in 1989 (archives reference number MR4/23/88).

The 8th (Jullundur) Brigade was part of the 3rd Lahore Division which was mobilised to France in August 1914. The constituent battalions of the brigade were the 1st Manchester Regiment, the 47th Sikhs and 59th Scinde Rifles (Frontier

Force). The brigade fought on the Western Front between 1914 and 1915. There is an extremely useful chronology of the brigade's movements at this time in "The Jullundur Brigade in France and Flanders". Amongst the brigade's battle honours are Neuve Chappelle, Givenchy and Ypres.

Of particular interest to historians of the Western Front are the sketch maps of the position of the 59th Scinde Rifles included in the regimental history. A section of one of the maps is reproduced in the photo gallery on our website. The map was drawn by B Cler, Captain attd. 59th Rifles F.F. and is dated 22 February 1915.

A small number of fascinating photographs of the brigade are also reproduced in the volume. An example is reproduced here, showing the brigade refilling point at La Calonne in 1915.



The War Record of the 47th Sikhs is a typed and bound volume which records the campaign day by day. It also contains extensive appendices detailing lists of officers of the regiment on mobilisation showing how they stood on Armistice Day, the depot on mobilisation, battle order 3rd Lahore Division on mobilisation, strengths etc. during the campaign, list of officers including dates of joining or rejoining etc., and a list of casualties.

Researchers may also be interested to hear that the Manchester Regiment Gazettes have also proved a useful resource for researching soldiers from the Indian subcontinent. For example, a record of service for Subedar Major Sher Bahadur Khan, I.D.S.M, was recently found in Volume VIII, No. 8 (October 1931). This revealed that he served with the Second Battalion in France from September 1914 until 1918.

More information on the Jullundur Association is available at <http://www.jullundurassociation.org>

The Manchester Regiment Archive is available for consultation at the Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre. For more information on the collection, please go to <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/archives/manchesterregiment>

**MAY GOD TEACH MAN TO RULE THE
WORLD WITH HUMANITY AND ABOLISH
WAR FOREVER – Pte P Cheesewright
Cheshire Regt**

**Major General John Gregson Halsted:
Jane Davies (Curator, QLR Museum)**

Amongst the many items the Museum of the Queen's Lancashire Regiment holds in its collection are a number of artefacts associated with Major General John Gregson Halsted.

Although Halsted eventually became Vice Quartermaster General in 1945, his early career was very much spent with the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. He joined the 1st Battalion as a Second Lieutenant in 1910



and was one of the Old Contemptibles, landing in France in August 1914. In 1917 he was awarded the Military Cross.

A number of items were donated by the Halsted family to the museum during the 1980s. The items included the usual things that one would expect to find such as an Identity Card, Regimental cane and service records. The most unusual items though are three pieces of shell fragment that were removed from Halsted during an operation that took place at St Agnes' Hospital, London in 1916. According to the small note on the case that the fragments were kept in, these shell fragments were 'received' by Halsted during his time on the Aisne.

In September 1914 the 1st Battalion was heavily involved in the action to prevent the German army crossing the Marne. It was during the process of securing the numerous bridges in the area that Lieutenant J.G. Halsted was injured. A Second Lieutenant with the Battalion describes the action as such

'Push off in a hurry in the early dawn and advance until about 10am...We are told that the Germans are in front and advance to attack. I am anxious about waterproof sheets the men are wearing (it was raining), so order my platoon to remove theirs and carry them on their backs; none of the others did this, with fatal results. We move forward in artillery formation, and soon come under fire; the wonder is that we escape being hit. I am fired at by our own Horse Gunners who mistake us for the enemy on the account of the men of other platoons wearing waterproof sheets.'

During this altercation three men were killed and 27 men were injured, including Halsted (the CO of the 1st Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel G.C. Knight, was killed). According to Halsted's service record, he received initial treatment in

France and was then moved to Woolwich to recover from his wounds. He was granted sick leave from the 1st October 1914 to 20th October 1914. After recovering he returned to the Battalion where he was severely injured by an exploding shell in April 1915. This time he spent 3 months in hospital. The following year he required more surgery and this was when the fragments were taken out and kept as a 'memento'.

The shell fragments, cane and identity card are currently on display in the Somme Room at the museum.

Museum of Lancashire, Preston: Stephen Bull (Curator)

Open since the 1980s the Museum of Lancashire, in the 'Old Sessions House' on Stanley Street Preston, contains a surprising amount of military and regimental history. The displays include the collections of the 14th/20th King's Hussars and the Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry, as well as a selection of material relating to the Queen's Lancashire Regiment and its predecessors. Naturally in a county which recruited almost 200 infantry battalions and quite a few mounted and artillery units during the Great War there is plenty to see that relates to the cataclysm of 1914-1918. It is also particularly fitting since the museum building was once a Royal Artillery Territorial drill hall.

Though amalgamated in 1922, during the First World War the 14th (King's) and 20th Hussars were two separate regiments. The 14th were in India at the outbreak of war in 1914, but in November 1915 were ferried to Mesopotamia for combat against the Turks - the first of three occasions in the twentieth century when the regiment would be on active

service in this part of the world. The 20th, by contrast, were amongst the first British troops into action on the Western Front. From their base at Colchester they had reached Le Havre by 17 August 1914, and were soon riding alongside the Scots Greys and 12th Royal Lancers as part of 5th Cavalry Brigade. In their ranks was the signalling officer Captain Darling - no flight of Blackadder buffonery - but a genuine and soon to be very experienced officer, and later author of the unit's Great War history. Artefacts in the museum display include the Union flag lance pennant carried by Sergeant Clifford of the 20th when acting as mounted escort to Field Marshal French, Webley and Mauser pistols.

Arguably the prize Great War exhibits of the Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry are a few scraps of handwritten paperwork dating to September 1916. For these are not any hurried notes of an observation officer, but a blow by blow timed account of the first tank attack - documents of unique historical significance. Two squadrons of the yeomanry fought on the Western Front, a third in North Africa and with Allenby in Palestine. Another piece of great significance is the Victoria Cross of William Young, a native of Preston who served on the Western Front with the East Lancashire Regiment. Young's award, like many of the period, was awarded for rescuing colleagues under fire. Though himself badly wounded Young was well enough to be given a civic reception in Preston in April 1916 - though sadly he died not long afterwards.

One thing visitors should not miss is the trench reconstruction, for though relatively modest it contains a number of unusual and original artefacts. These include a German Granatenwerfer, a form of small spigot mortar in general use

on the Western Front, and a rare British 'tube helmet' type gas mask. Near to the trench is a photograph of Lieutenant Henry Webber, remarkable in that he is claimed to have been the oldest British soldier to be killed in action. At the time of his death on the Somme he was 68 years old.

**MEMORY IS THE ONLY FRIEND THAT
GRIEF CAN CALL ITS OWN - Corp H H
Kitchen, Royal Lancaster Regt**

2009 ON THE SOMME: David & Pat Shackleton

Remembered in France - 2nd Lieut. E.A.G. Coules (+P)

In November, our nation remembers with gratitude all those who have made the supreme sacrifice in WW1 and conflicts since. If you are ever in France on 8th May, Liberation Day, you may notice, in even the smallest village, a large floral wreath on the war memorial; their nation's sacrifice, never to be forgotten.

In May, we went to Fienvillers British Cemetery, on the outskirts of the village and not much visited. On the cross of sacrifice was a beautiful floral tribute, placed there by the Commune. It is gratifying to realise that the villagers there, as in other places in France, care enough to include our war dead in their remembrance.

Thanks to the perseverance of John Orr, an Englishman who lives in France, another remembrance service now takes place in November each year. Several of you may have visited the grave of 2nd Lieut. E.A.G. Coules in Roisel Communal Cemetery near Peronne.

The intriguing inscription "*Never mind me, get on with the work*" on the



2nd Lieut Coules Grave

imposing granite cross caught John's attention on a visit to the cemetery. Curiosity as to why 2nd Lieut. Coules was not in the large adjacent British cemetery prompted him to visit the Public Record Office and write to the CWGC.

Eric Allan Gifford Coules, a prize cadet of Woolwich Royal Military Academy, was commissioned into the Royal Engineers and went to France on 19th September 1917. He joined the 129th Field Company (REs) attached to 24th Division at Roisel on 12th October 1917. The majority of their work was improving the front line around Hargicourt.

Sadly after only 2 weeks, his army life was cut short, when he was killed on 28th October by an enemy sniper. He was 19 years old and his body was interred in Roisel Communal Cemetery.

In 1921, the CWGC wished to have his body moved to the adjoining military cemetery. His father refused this request on the grounds that, as his son had been buried without a coffin, he would not risk any part of his body being left behind. He therefore purchased three grave spaces to ensure all of the body was within the plot and a private granite memorial was erected.

On 11th November each year, the Remembrance parade at Roisel proceeds, after a church service, for wreath laying at the French memorial and in the adjacent British Cemetery.

Unknowingly, for years, the procession has passed this grave, but thanks to John Orr, the story was brought to the attention of the mayor of Roisel and since 2004 a wreath is now placed on the grave of 2nd Lieut. Coules.

New Memorial Plaque

On the 3rd of September 1916, Lieutenant John Vincent Holland, Private Thomas Hughes and Sergeant David Jones were each awarded the Victoria Cross.

In recognition of their achievements, on the same date this year, after the annual commemoration ceremony at the 16th (Irish) Division Memorial at Guillemont, The Somme Association & Somme Remembrance Association invited everyone to the unveiling of a new Memorial Plaque inside the church.



Amongst the guests were family members of each of the men. They had come from Tasmania, Liverpool and Ireland. A packed audience listened to the biographical notes of the recipients, after which the citations were read by Mr David Holland, great grandson of J V Holland VC, Mr Peter Hughes, great nephew of T Hughes VC, and Mrs Barbara Potter, great niece of D Jones VC.

The plaque was unveiled by Monsieur Didier Samain, Mayor of Guillemont. There is also a replica plaque on the exterior wall of the church.

John Vincent Holland survived the war and emigrated to Tasmania. His medals are still in the possession of his family. Thomas Hughes also survived, but David Jones was killed on 7th October 1916 and is buried in Bancourt British Cemetery.

**LOVING THOUGHTS WILL ALWAYS
WANDER AROUND THE GRAVE WHERE
HE IS LAID – Corp W Durbin RFA**

LANCASHIRE'S BEST KEPT WAR MEMORIAL - 2009 (+P)

Wrea Green has won the award for the best kept War Memorial (WM) for 2009. They also won the award for the Best Kept Village. (see back page for photo)

A total of 32 villages entered their WMs in the 2009 competition and they were judged using the same criteria reported in November 2008, Despatch namely:

- 1) Condition of memorial
- 2) Condition of surrounds, i.e. grass, flower beds & railings
- 3) Absence of litter and graffiti
- 4) Degree of maintenance required (this means that a WM which is difficult to maintain is given a high mark & one that is fairly easy to maintain is given a lower mark to be fair to everyone).

Up to 10 marks were awarded against each criterion giving a maximum mark for each WM of 40.

Adlington were the runners-up and WMs at Bilsborrow, Freckleton and Longridge were highly commended.

LANCASHIRE AT WAR - 1914-1918: Lytham Heritage Group

At the October meeting Grant Smith, a member of the Lytham Heritage Group (LHG), mentioned the “Lancashire at War” exhibition in their Heritage Centre until 8th November. The exhibition had been mounted using local material provided by members and friends of the LHG and supplemented by material from the Queen’s Lancashire Regiment Museum in Preston.

As well as depicting the local aspects of recruiting and training soldiers, it gave details of service in different theatres of the War and provision of hospital services in the local area. The contribution of the local area to the war effort included munitions factories, ship and aircraft building.

The war service of several local individuals was outlined and supplemented by several splendid exhibits.

2nd Lieut Percy Warburton served with the Royal Fusiliers before being commissioned.

He was awarded the Military Cross in April 1917. A month later he was captured and whilst in Bad Coburg prisoner of war camp he carved a wooden bookcase which was on display.



Also on display was a gramophone which was used in the trenches. It does not have a volume control and to reduce the sound a sock was put in the mouth of the

horn thus coining the phrase "put a sock in it!"

Grant had contributed significantly to the exhibits on display with examples being a Soldier's Diary, British helmets, German Picklehaube, Iron Cross and Wooden Model Phoenix Flying Boat to name a few. He hoped the LHG exhibition would encourage other communities to see what is available in their areas. (TD)

BRANCH TRIP TO FLANDERS & THE SOMME: Roger Dix (+S)

On 9th June the Branch visit left for Flanders and N France calling at Bradford en route to pick up our experts, Harry Taylor and Jack Cavanagh. We were greeted by a heavy downpour on arrival at the Novotel in Ypres then walked to the Menin Gate for the 8.00pm ceremony.

The following day (Wednesday) our first stop was at Tyne Cot Cemetery to see the new Visitor Centre. From there we went via Broodseinde and Zonnebeke to Mount Kemmel. We visited the French National Ossuary containing the remains of 5,294 French soldiers and the French Memorial to soldiers killed in Belgium. After we explored the Lettenberg dugouts. Stan's grandfather, "Willie" Wilkinson, mentions these Shelters in his diary.

After a substantial lunch in Kemmel, we travelled via Wyschaete and Ploegsteert Wood to the Aubers Ridge, Fromelles area. Our first stop was at V.C. Corner, Australian Memorial Cemetery. This Cemetery is the only one devoted entirely to Australians; with no gravestones, the names of the missing being engraved on panels. Next to V.C. Corner is the Australian Memorial Park with the "Cobbers" Sculpture by Peter

Corlett showing Sgt. Simon Fraser carrying a wounded comrade.



We then proceeded to Fromelles village where we saw the huts housing the bodies recently discovered in a mass grave. On the opposite side of the road, work was taking place on the new Pheasant Wood Cemetery where the bodies will eventually be interred. The party split here, some going to the Fromelles Museum and a group of us going to see the "Real Hitler's Bunker" in the middle of a corn field.

Our resumed journey took us to the Holiday Inn in Arras for a 3 night stay. We travelled via Neuve-Chapelle and past the Indian and Portuguese Memorials, the Vimy Ridge Memorial and Dud Corner (Loos).

Thursday morning was spent in the Gavrelle area, scene of intense fighting during the Arras offensive of April 1917. Our first call was at Point du Jour Military Cemetery. Outside this Cemetery is the Memorial to the 9th Scottish Division and 26, 27, 28 and 197 Companies of the Machine Gun Corps. We next visited Orchard Dump Cemetery containing 3,000 graves; only one in five being named.

At Oppy Wood, scene of severe fighting until September 1918, we were given a talk by Karl Parr whose great-grandfather was killed here serving with the 4th. Btn. King's Liverpool Regt. We also viewed the Kingston-upon-Hull Memorial. Lt. John Harrison, V.C., who played Rugby League for Hull died here.

We continued to Gavrelle village seeing the 63rd. Royal Naval Division Memorial on the outskirts of the village. It takes the form of a ruined red brick house with a ship's anchor in the centre. In Gavrelle village some of us supported the local cafe and other more hardy souls visited other sites in the village.

We arrived in La Boisselle for an excellent lunch at Le Poppy after which a short stop was made at the Pozieres Memorial before arriving at the Thiepval Memorial. Here, our party split. One group visited the Memorial and the other party were taken on a short walk by Harry Taylor who described the attacks of 1st July 1916 against the German lines. On reuniting, we headed back to Arras to visit the Wellington Tunnels.

Friday was bright and warm and we split into two parties, one to visit Amiens and the other to take a walk over the Somme battlefields, led by Harry Taylor. Firstly we covered the cemeteries near Serre including Railway Hollow Cemetery containing many of the "Accrington Pals" then the Redan Ridge area. Lunch was taken at Frankfurt Trench Cemetery. Then on to Beaumont Hamel and the Sunken Road, White City and Jacob's Ladder; after which we visited the Hawthorn Ridge Crater and Cemetery.

The Amiens party also enjoyed a good day. Their first visit was to Amiens Prison and St. Pierre CWGC. Two notable graves were those of Captain "Pick" Pickard and Flight Lt. John Broadly, killed during a raid to allow French prisoners to escape from Amiens Prison during WW2. A visit was made to Amiens Cathedral and a boat trip was also enjoyed.

Our return to England went without a hitch. We were all very grateful to Harry Taylor and Jack Cavanagh for their knowledgeable talks and instructive visits, to our helpful driver Andrew

Middleton and especially to Andrew Brooks for organising the trip.

**DO NOT ASK US IF WE MISS HIM AND
THAT DEAR FAMILIAR FACE Gunner W H
Jerome RFA**

**BOB'S CORNER: Bob Matthews -
Chairman, Cumbria Branch WFA**

In writing this report I feel a bit like one of the strategists in WWI, who plans a battle and then has to abandon it just as the troops are about to go over the top. I'm referring here to Cumbria Branch's reciprocal visit to Alnwick and meeting up with friends and colleagues from North Northumberland.

Owing to a last minute message via the RAF at Boulmer, who discovered that the bunker we were due to visit on 19 September was no longer available as it was closed for maintenance, our trip had to be aborted at the 11th hour and rescheduled for next Spring.

On a more positive note, the talks and lunch in June at the Hundith Hill Hotel, Lorton, Cockermouth proved a great success. Our speakers, Peter Hart (Haig) and Bryn Hammond (Cambrai), were on top form, and the venue and food were excellent. So I hope it can be repeated in 2010!

Our Branch AGM on 6 December is again at the "George & Dragon," Dent; followed by a talk by David Raw on "the Bradford Pals." So please note your diaries!

This is probably my last contribution as Branch Chairman, as I am proposing to "step down" after 7 years in the post. I've enjoyed being Chairman, but feel it is now time for someone else to "take the reins." I will however continue as a member of both Cumbria and North Lancashire Branches.

DEAR EDITOR (+P)

Afghanistan.

My Uncle (Alan Lenord) sent me a copy of your May edition of Despatch to my Platoon out at Camp Bastion serving on Op Herrick 10 in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is probably worlds apart from what our forefathers endured in the trenches in World War I, however I imagine that the humour of the British Tommy (or Squaddie in modern parlance) is no doubt very similar.

My role in Afghanistan is as a platoon commander for 3 Platoon, Normandy Coy, 4 Mercian. We have the role of Force Protection for Camp Bastion. Our role is camp security. We staff the MEP (main entry / exit point) into and out of Bastion, patrol the desert alongside US Marines and the ANA (Afghan National Army), taking part in Key Leader Engagement and protecting the many aircraft that fly into and out of Camp Bastion every day and night.

The temperatures here are up to 55 degrees in the sun during the day, patrolling in that kind of heat wearing up 90 lbs of equipment certainly does take it out of you, however it is all for a good cause. The soldiers over here are working hard, and everyone appreciates the kind words and support for the troops from the UK.

I hope that you like the pictures from Afghanistan and that they are of interest to your readers. *(see back page for one)*

Sjt Gordon Kaye
Cmnder, 3
Platoon
Normandy Coy,
4 Mercian
Op Herrick
BFPO 792



Ypres Reservoir Cemetery

Last July I went with the Friends of the Queen's Lancashire Regiment on their visit to Belgium. We covered the Ypres Salient, Messines and Plugstreet and I became a belated casualty at Zonnebeke where I fell and broke my humerus just below the shoulder.

However before that I paid a private visit to the Ypres Reservoir Cemetery to see the graves of Border Regiment soldiers. Whilst there I came across the grave of Brigadier General Frank Maxwell V.C. who you featured on the front photo of the May Despatch with the winning polo team of the 18th King George's Own Lancers in 1913. Inside Despatch you summarised his life ending with the notice which was carried for many years on the front page of the Times "Frank Maxwell, the bravest of the brave".

Maybe his final resting place was



specially chosen lying as it does in line with the Stone of Remembrance and Cross of Sacrifice. His epitaph "AN IDEAL SOLDIER AND VERY PERFECT GENTLEMAN BELOVED BY ALL HIS MEN".

Joe Hodgson

BRANCH AFFAIRS



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take place on 3rd November at the two schools

A copy of Dane Smith's and Jessica Hale's entries have been put on our website and made available to the press. A one day extract from the soldier's diary submitted by Dane Smith is as follows:

ARMISTICE PRIZE

By the closing date of 1st October three schools had submitted a total of 14 entries for the Armistice Prize. These were as follows:

St Cecilia's, Longridge: 8 Poems
Bispham High School: 5 Soldier's Diaries
Archbishop Temple, Preston: 1
Narrative/Poem

Graham Kemp, Oliver Wilkinson, Peter Bamford and I each marked the 14 entries awarding 20 marks for the following: content, structure, presentation, reasoning/understanding, and grammar/diction which gave a total potential mark for each entry of 100. By aggregating this marking the top 5 entries were from:

Dane Smith: Bispham High
Jessica Hale: St Cecilia's
David Pearce: Bispham High
Rachel Lenehan: St Cecilia's
Samantha Walkden Archbishop Temple

Dane Smith has been awarded £100 and a book (H P Willmotts's "WORLD WAR 1") and his school will hold the Armistice Prize trophy for the coming year. Jessica Hale has been awarded £25 and the same book. David Pearce, Rachel Lenehan and Samantha Walkden have been commended for their entries. Presentation of the 1st and 2nd prize will

"1916 Friday September 15th Private P. Jones (Rifleman)

I was just tucking into my breakfast when I heard a screeching so loud the ground shook. I jumped up and ran to investigate. What I saw was something out of a science fiction book. An enormous metal heap, clumsily stuck in no mans land. This was the secret weapon that had been talked about, the mighty tank. It must have been heading towards Flers-Courcelette. But suddenly it exploded, leaving nothing more than a crater, the victim of a howitzer.

A letter arrived today from dad. He says that Asquith will resign in December. There's no news on when the war will end though. I was shocked to find that Kitchener had died last June.

I just got back from stacking sandbags, my backs aching. I've heard that Asquith's son was shot and killed earlier today in Flers. He would still be alive, if his dad hadn't declared war on Germany. I don't know how much longer I can take of this. I hope Kitchener was wrong when he said the war would last 4 four years.

Jimmy finally got his finger shot off today; he's been talking about doing it since Wednesday. I didn't think he'd actually do it! Poor Jimmy."

But we've all got our problems. I can't stop thinking about gas attacks. I never leave my gas mask further than a couple of feet away. Everyone's scared of mustard gas in the night, if it doesn't kill you it, it sends you home as a cripple."

With competitive entries this year and press publicity in Armistice week it is hoped that more schools will be encouraged to submit in 2010. The arrangements for next year will be broadly unchanged with all public and private High Schools in Lancashire and the southern part of Cumbria up to the northern boundary of the County Palatine being encouraged to enter submissions. The only change is to bring forward the closing date to 1st August which will allow more time for marking. Full details of the arrangements are on our website.

During the past few weeks it has been mentioned to me that WW1 coursework at one school recently involved the digging of a WW1 trench in their school grounds. A similar entry next year would certainly test our marking scheme!

**HE SAID HE'D DO HIS DUTY AND HE DID IT
- Corp A E Abbott KOYLI**

MEETING REPORTS

Several Battalion Commanders: May 2009 (34 attended)

This was a wonderful talk by **Terry Dean**, supremely presented using the medium of power point. It contained excellent audio-visual effects including topographical and trench maps, assisted by 'linesman technology'. Archive video was included when necessary and the audio material was presented by using guest narrators.

All this was overshadowed by the meticulous research, both through the use of existing records and with follow up 'in the field'. Terry tackled the story in a highly original manner and it was a talk that could only have succeeded with the use of computer technology. The

interlocking stories of the Commanders of the 17th Service (Bantam) Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers necessitated switching from one man to another and the back again. It was made easy to follow by the use of maps and graphics being constantly updated. Gone are the days when a speaker can say 'I'll just go back five slides to the map of the Somme'.

The five officers, McWhinnie, Mills, Crook, Mackereth and Jones came from different backgrounds and regiments before becoming the battalion C.O. of the 17th L.F. Each officer was introduced in the talk and a brief resume was given, including those who had had considerable pre-war service. Their military careers were very varied and some were involved (and wounded) from the early stages of the war. Their paths crossed on occasion and their fortunes were followed throughout the war, with an equal emphasis being given to each man.

On a personal level I was interested in CSM Jones (the only one not to survive the war). As a CSM in the 2DLI he must have known a Lt. W.E.Parke 2DLI (an officer I have researched) quite well. Jones received his commission on the 1st October 1914 and Parke was KIA on the 13th Oct. It is worth noting that another sergeant who received his commission on the same day as Jones, 2LT H.H.Storey was killed in the same action as Parke.

Very little has been written in the published texts about the Officer Cadet Battalions (OCB) and it was interesting to hear how Mackereth fared on his course with the Balliol College OCB.

This talk showed very clearly how men, if they had talent, could progress during the course of a long war. It was not always down to a public school education but to a combination of being in the right

place at the right time and having proved to others that they were competent leaders of men. (Andrew Brooks)

Hindenburg and Ludendorff - A Brilliant Partnership: June 2009 (36 attended)

Prof John Derry gave an excellent talk on “Hindenburg and Ludendorff - a brilliant partnership?”



Both men were Prussians. Hindenburg was born in 1847, attending military school from age 11. He retired in 1909, after service including fighting in the Franco-Prussian War. He was recalled three weeks after the outbreak of war in 1914. Ludendorff, born in 1865, won a scholarship to a military academy followed by a commission in a Guards regiment. His first experience of war was in 1914 when he distinguished himself in the fighting in Belgium, taking the surrender at Liege.

Hindenburg and Ludendorff first met on the way to the Eastern Front, where Ludendorff was to serve as Hindenburg’s chief of staff. Their names became associated with victories such as Tannenberg. They were critical of Falkenhayn and the conduct of the war in the west. After Verdun and the Somme, they replaced Falkenhayn and came to realise the problems of the Western Front. When Russia was out of the war, Ludendorff decided it was time for a decisive battle, so the Germans attacked on 21 March 1918. However the breakthrough never came and Allied attacks resulted in the Armistice.

John Derry stressed that Hindenburg and Ludendorff were great soldiers who made serious misjudgements in military and political matters. Due to their

interference in politics, there was no coherent German political strategy for the last fifteen months of the war.

After the war Ludendorff fled to Sweden and, in his writings, is considered to be responsible for the “stab in the back” myth. He returned to Germany, became involved in right wing politics and died in 1937. Hindenburg became Chancellor of Germany and died in 1934. (Gaynor Greenwood)

**THAT THEIR DUST MAY REBUILD A
NATION AND THEIR SOULS RELIGHT A
STAR – 2nd Lt G M Harding RFC**

Before the Music Sounded - The Naval Career of Baron Georg von Trapp: July 2009 (33 attended)

Michael O’Brien set out to correct the record of Baron Georg von Trapp’s career against the “gloss” formed in and after the famous musical and his own auto-biography which Michael felt did him no favours. Born 1880 in Croatia Georg followed his father into the Austro-Hungarian navy and travelled the world being present at the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. He then moved from torpedo boats to submarines and married Agatha Whitehead, whose grandfather hailed from Bolton and invented the torpedo.

After commanding the newly constructed U-6 which had been christened by Agatha he took command of U-5 and gained fame in 1915 by sinking the French cruiser Leon Gambetta, with heavy loss of life, followed by an Italian submarine off Pelagosa Island. In October 1915 he transferred to command the captured 400 tonne French submarine Marie Curie, renumbered U-14, which he took into the Eastern Mediterranean and sank 5 ships

in one 3 week voyage. Becoming depressed at the state of the war in 1918 he was downgraded to command the land base at Kotor.

He had 7 children with Agatha and after her death married Maria Augusta with whom he had 3 more. After losing all his wealth, Maria pursued singing as the means of family income. Fleeing Austria after the German annexation they moved via Italy to USA where Georg died in 1947. (TD)

The China Affair: August 2009 (25 att'd)

Cap'n Bob Matthew's talk was one that brought the spotlight on to a little discussed aspect of the Great War, namely the East African campaign waged by the Allies to dispose of the German forces led by General von Lettow-Vorbeck, a campaign that remained unsuccessful from the very first days of the war until a fortnight or more beyond the Armistice.

After the usual British cock-up at the outset with the Battle of Tanga, the Germans were steadily pressed back through scrub, jungle and marsh, conditions that were in themselves more murderous than rifle or machine gun fire in the sporadic encounters. Both sides placed considerable reliance on native forces and bearers, and these would suffer as much, if not more so than their European counterparts. Although pressed back, von Lettow-Vorbeck remained one or two steps in front of the Allied forces, consisting of the British, Belgian, Portuguese and South Africans, who all sought a share of the German African cake in post-war settlement.

Cap'n Bob set out the broad scene of the conflict in which to fly in his Zeppelins! The Germans, ever resourceful, had sought to fly supplies, by

the L57, a distance of 3,600 miles from Jamboli in Bulgaria to the Makonde Plateau, located in today's Tanzania (then German East Africa), to the north of the border with Mozambique (then Portuguese East Africa). Before it departed, the L57 was destroyed at its base and was soon replaced by L59, to be modified before setting out on 13th November, 1917. The mission was planned as a one-way trip and the airship would be broken up on arrival, and every item was assigned to a new use, one such example being the duralumin ribs destined to become wireless antennae!

Fortunately for the Allies, L59 failed to make its *rendez-vous* with von Lettow-Vorbeck, being recalled on 24th November with 1,000 miles or so to run. Today there is no one answer as to the reason, some say that the Plateau was largely in Allied hands by then, others claim that the recall signal was another fine example of British skulduggery by the Intelligence Services. Who knows?

This aspect of the talk poses the question of how did both sides communicate as they battled to and fro in the 'ulu'? How did Berlin communicate given that German territory was being captured? Accounts of action on the Western Front makes frequent references to Commanders not being aware of what was going on in countryside, comparatively benign compared to Africa. And, radios were very much larger than those used by the British platoon and company today.

Much reference was made by Cap'n Bob to Edward Paice's excellent book "Tip & Run", and having bought it a year or two aback, I can only endorse Bob's recommendation that it should be on everyone's bookshelf, though I would add that it needs to be read two or three times, if only to get those pronunciations

correct! Finally, he should be thanked for rising to the challenge of compressing four years of war, conducted in the African continent, into an interesting hour's talk. (Barrie Bertram)

Fields of Battle 1914-1918: September 2009 (36 attended)

'Stay low' and 'go French' was the advice given by professional photographer and battlefield guide Michael Sheil as his preface to our September talk which gave us an insight to his work to date on a project for a 2014 international exhibition.

'Stay low' involved lying on the ground to get a soldier's eye view of the battlefields giving better understanding of what could and could not be seen during battles. 'Go French' was his advice to see far more of the battlefields as they were, and get a better understanding of them, by visiting the French rather than British sectors. These sectors were far larger and many remain little disturbed, seldom visited and easily accessible.

We were then led through a tour of these lines, illustrated by Michael's stunning slides, starting at the southern sector of the Somme, through to the limestone areas of Noyon, Soissons and the Chemin des Dames in the Aisne region. We were shown extensive underground quarries which had been used by both French and German troops, sometimes at the same time! Artefacts, carvings & drawings abound in these ancient underground workings. This was the area of disastrous Nivelle offensive in May 1917 when the French suffered 140,000 casualties in the first 4 days and many units then refused to continue the assault.

From the Aisne and Marne regions we then passed through the gentle

countryside of Champagne visiting the site of a Langer Max naval gun at Semide, and then on to the Argonne, an area held by the French for 4 years and where the Americans experienced their first fighting in 1918. The hill top village of Butte de Vauquois was a scene of protracted fighting with much of the complex of tunnels, mines and craters, both French and German remaining today. 'A "battlescape" without comparison on the Western Front', according to Micheal.

We had a brief look at Verdun before moving into Alsace Lorraine, focussing on the Bois Le Pretre, a key feature in the fiercely contested 4 year battle for the St Miheil salient. There are many ruined villages, craters, trenches and remains of camps in the woods around this area but they little known about and seldom visited. The area was recaptured by the Americans in 1918.

Moving on up into the Vosges mountains we saw some of the best preserved trench & bunker systems in the area of Hartsmannswillerkopf, on the rock spur of Le Linge and the mountain top of Tete des Faux where there seemed to be a peaceful co-existence of opposing sides.

Michael finished his talk with a few slides of Gallipoli.

The slides used in the presentation and many more can be viewed online at www.westernfontphotography.com

**HE HAS JOINED THE INVINCIBLE ARMY
WHERE KHAKI GIVES PLACE TO PURE
WHITE – Pte A R Musk Suffolks**

The Trial of Willie Stones: October 2009 (32 attended)

David Tattersfield utilised roughly half those present at the meeting to re-enact

firstly the trial of Lance Sergeant Willie Stones and secondly the trials of other men of the 19th Durham Light Infantry (DLI) who were holding the front line near Roclincourt, north of Arras on the night of 25-26 November 1916. The front line trenches were very close together and thinly manned by the DLI. The DLI had planned a large raid for that night but this was pre-empted by a German raid.

Stones and Lieutenant Munday were carrying out an inspection of the DLI's posts in their front line when they encountered German raiders. Mundy was shot and Stones ran back to report the German raid. He claimed that Mundy had told him to go back for help and that he had he put his rifle across the trench to impede the German's advance. He was charged with shamefully casting away his rifle and running away. Following consideration of the statements and submissions made at the trial a show of hands at the meeting felt Stones to be innocent. In real life Stones was found guilty and shot.

The second trial concerned Lance Corporals Goggins, and McDonald together with other privates of the 19th DLI who faced court martial for leaving their posts without orders from a superior officer. Again statements and submissions made at the trial were re-enacted and the majority vote was that all were innocent. This contrasted with the actual court martial in December 1916 when all were found guilty and sentenced to be shot. The sentences of the privates were commuted but Goggins and McDonald shared their fate with Stones at St Pol on 18th January 1917. (TD)

(For full account of above see "Blindfold and Alone" by Cathryn Corns and John Hughes-Wilson, Pages 157-175. ISBN 0-304-36696-X)

PROGRAMME OF FUTURE MEETINGS

(ALL MEETINGS ON MONDAY, 7.30 PM

EXCEPT WHERE STATED OTHERWISE)

Dec 7th (7.15 pm): AGM then "*The Greater Game - Sportsmen who fell in the Great War*" - Clive Harris

Afterwards Christmas Social

Jan 4th: '*British Internees in Holland and Switzerland 1914 - 1918*' - Andrew Brooks (N. Lancs W.F.A.)

Feb 1st: '*Badges and Medals from the Western Front*' - Bill Myers (Cumbria W.F.A.)

Mar. 1st: '*Suvla Bay*' - Peter Hart (Oral Historian (IWM) and author)

April 6th (TUESDAY): '*Fromelles 1916*' - Michael Senior (Author of 'No Finer Courage')

May 4th (TUESDAY): '*The Lancashire Contemptibles- To France and the retreat from Mons*' - Terry Dean (N. Lancs W.F.A.)

June 7th: '*Punishment in the Great War*' - Bill Martindale (Cumbria and N.Lancs W.F.A.)

July 5th: '*The Rebuilding of Ypres*' - Denise North (W.F.A.)

Aug 2nd: '*Aeronauts and Balloonatics*' - Geoff. Barker (Bradford Mech. Inst. World War 1 Group.)

Sept 6th: '*German Commerce Raiders*' - Dr. Graham Kemp (N. Lancs W.F.A.)

Oct 4th: '*War Graves and things...*' - David Shackleton (N. Lancs. W.F.A.)

Nov. 1st: '*Chairman's Night*' - Stan Wilkinson.

Dec 6th: '*A.G.M. and Christmas Social.*' - An invitation to members to speak for ten minutes on any WW1 topic.

MINI PHOTO GALLERY

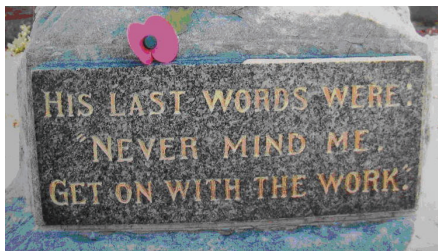
Wrea Green War Memorial: sited on the west side of the Green. A simple and effective memorial whose low maintenance costs no doubt help secure its winning position.



Despatch in Afghanistan:

American troops display the May Despatch with its frontispiece photo of the 18th King George's Own Lancers polo team who won the Indian Cavalry Tournament in 1913. I wonder if they are aware that the battle honours of the 18th Lancers included "Afghanistan 1879-80".

Roisel Communal Cemetery and the ceremony of remembrance which takes place at the grave of 2nd Lieut Coules each November. Below is the the plaque under the cross on his grave.



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