

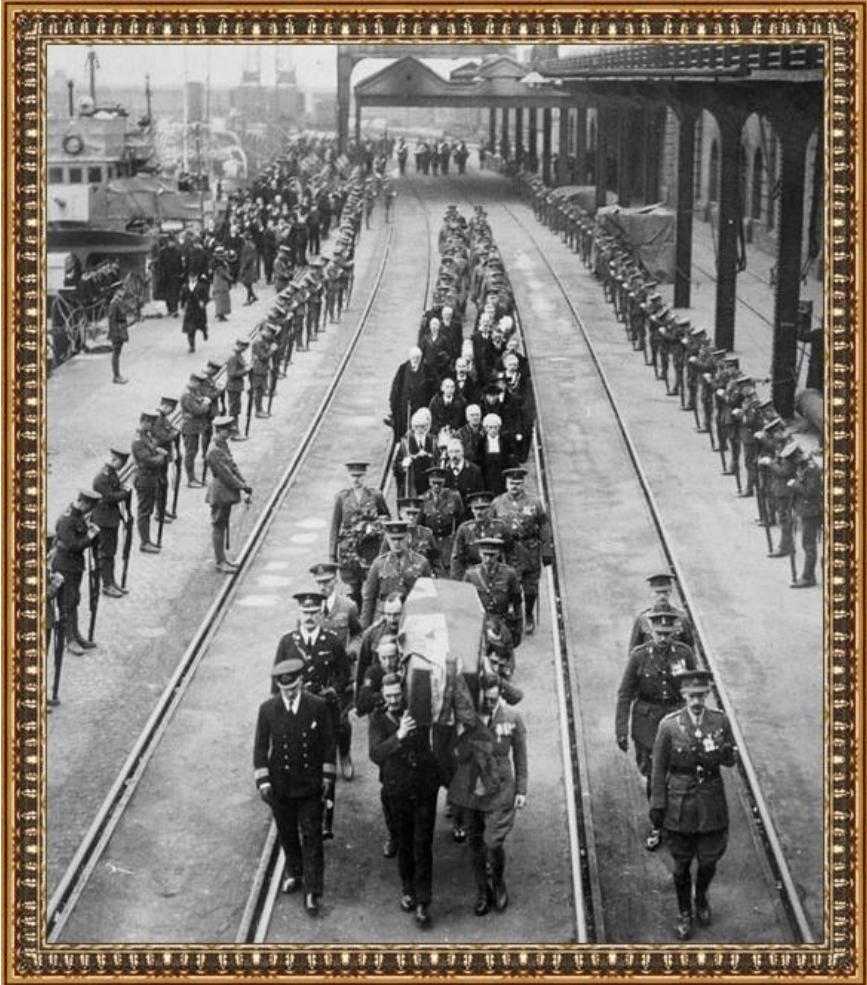


THE WESTERN FRONT
ASSOCIATION

Lancashire North Branch

Despatch

Issue 8: Nov 2011



On 10th November 1920 the above photo (IWM ref Q111468) shows the Unknown Warrior being borne along Admiralty Pier, Dover to be buried in Westminster Abbey next day. Michael Gavaghan on Page 7 revisits the writing of his book entitled "The Story of the UNKNOWN WARRIOR" which was first published in 1995. On Page 16 is the latest regarding Lieut Col Sir Gilbert Mackereth who was the next British soldier to be exhumed from his grave on the Continent and repatriated to England. The Remembrance Stone over his cremated remains in the Gallipoli Garden, Bury will be unveiled by his first cousin John Sloan on 11th November 2011.

Editor's Musing

Coincidences have tinged my productions of Despatch and they continue into Issue 8. The story of Sir Gilbert Mackereth's repatriation is the first since the Unknown Warrior's to Westminster Abbey and resulted in me locating ex-Preston postman Michael Gavaghan via my local postman Steven.

When John Sloan identified himself as Sir Gilbert's first cousin would he have dreamt that his service in Palestine after WW2 was a continuation of his cousin's unconventional work in 1936/37.

Congratulations to Andy Gregson on St Cecilia's, Longridge holding the Armistice Prize trophy for the 3rd year. I'm very grateful to Andy for his efforts to expand interest in the competition (see Page 22)

Thank you to all contributors to Despatch and special thanks to Mike Glover for help in the reverent delivery of "*Project Mackereth*".

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, KIRKBY LONSDALE, ROLL OF HONOUR: c/o Oliver Wilkinson

John William HAYGARTH Lance Corporal, 2876, 1/7th (City of London) Battalion



John William Haygarth's war service takes us back to a major offensive of the First World War; The Battle of Loos.

Additionally, in the incorporation of poison gas during this offensive, we learn about a further dynamic being developed during the war.

By September of 1915 the war had been running for over a year and it was decided by the French that a huge offensive was needed to break through the German defences. The French attack would be in the Artois area, and the British would support by attacking near Loos. Moreover, as adequate artillery was lacking the British pinned their hopes on the incorporation of poisoned gas. The Historian of the 47th Division, which incorporated Haygarth's Battalion, commented that the gas-cylinders containing this new weapon were treated "with a certain holy dread." In the opening days of September, Haygarth would have been involved in meticulous training behind the lines. Mock-up trenches were set out and the movements of each unit in the forthcoming attack were rehearsed. During this time Haygarth wrote home to tell his family that he was going into the trenches, and that they must not be alarmed if his letters were irregular. On the morning of 25th September at 'Zero-Hour' (5:50 a.m.) the Battle of Loos began with the release of the gas. The event was described as follows:

"The cloud rolled slowly forward, and its effect was apparent from the lessening force of the enemy rifle fire."

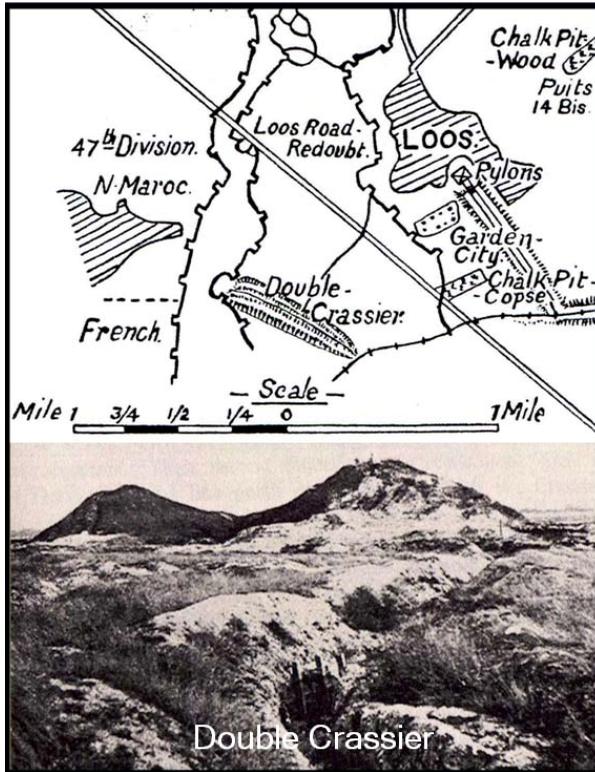
Interestingly, the attack on Haygarth's front, began with a diversion. 'Dummy' figures operated by wires were pulled up and down in front of the enemy in order to draw some of the fire. At 6:30 a.m. the infantry advanced. Haygarth, with the 7th (City of London) Battalion, advanced on the Double-Crassier, which was a twin set of mining slag heaps. The first objective was a front line trench near the

Double-Crassier, which was reached with few casualties. However the Germans soon re-mustered after the confusion that the gas had caused, and put up a massive resistance. Additionally, due to the lack of artillery fire the wire remained intact, resulting in many casualties. Despite this, all the objectives were achieved, and the 7th held off a sustained German counter-attack. Total casualties

educated at Dent Church School until he was 12. His academic ability, however, won him a scholarship at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, where he went for 5 years. At the school he was held in high esteem for his scholarly ability, his sporting prowess, especially at cricket and football, and his charismatic personality. Mr J.L. Johnson, who became Headmaster of the school in 1911, described how Haygarth had greeted him when he had first arrived:

“[John William Haygarth] was somewhat shorter and rotund with a round face and a merry twinkle in the eye, which plainly told the observer that the possessor of the said eye could laugh if an occasion arose.”

This cheerful and unassuming disposition was later said to have won him great respect wherever he went, and would certainly have been an asset during his war service. Upon leaving school he gained an appointment as a bank clerk at the banking house



of the 47 Division, were described as light, standing at 1,500. Haygarth was one of these casualties, most probably being killed during the initial assault on the Double-Crassier. He was the first lad who went directly from Dent to fall in the war, and he was just 21 years old.

The death of John William Haygarth was even more tragic due to the promise that the young man had shown in life. He was born on 30th January 1894, and

of Glyn, Mills, Currie and Co. of London, which he took up in 1911. When war broke out in August 1914, Haygarth was still working at the bank, but quickly responded to the call of his country, and by September he was training with the 7th City of London Regiment. The regiment spent some time training in England and did not go to France until March 1915. Haygarth, however, didn't reach theatre until the 18th August 1915, perhaps

reinforcing the Battalion ready for the upcoming attack at Loos. During his first year in service Haygarth's abilities had set him apart, and he joined the regiment in August with a promotion to Lance Corporal. Unfortunately before Haygarth's ability, apparent from his early school days onwards, could develop further he was killed in the shadow of the Double-Crassier at Loos. His body was never recovered, and he is remembered on the Loos Memorial alongside 20,000 other men. His friends from QES also remembered him, and a former 'old boy', Captain W. Haythornthwait, wrote to the headmaster thanking the school for their remembrance, and specifically drawing attention to the honourable sacrifice of John Haygarth.

Once again, however, John William's story reveals yet further tragedy. His brother Benjamin Haygarth joined up shortly after his younger sibling had been killed. He was transferred to the Royal Field Artillery and sent to serve in India. However, on the 5th October 1918 Benjamin was struck down by pneumonia and died. A father, Mr. R Haygarth, had now lost two sons. Benjamin also left a widow, Mrs Margaret Haygarth (nee Morphet), who had also lost her brother in the war. Through John William Haygarth's story a picture of the enormous impact of the First World War is glimpsed. Just one family had to bear the loss of three men in the prime of life, and unfortunately the Haygarth's story was not unique, and was instead replicated countless times between 1914 and 1918.

A DOUBLE ENTRY:

Barrie Bertram

With twenty-twenty hindsight it now seems so obvious that two adjacent entries in Jersey's 1919 Roll of Service (RoS) were one and the same man. But, perhaps the fact that one name which was spelt out as François Pierre Louis Desvergez could not have been



associated with the other being Francis Peter Desvergez not least because they also appeared to have come from different parishes

on the Island, François from Trinity, Francis from St Helier. Besides, many of the same forenames were oft-repeated across families, especially the French.

We'll take 'Francis' first, and although the RoS entry records him as belonging to the Bedfordshire Regiment, his Attestation Form indicates that he joined the Hampshire Regiment from Jersey on the 4th December, 1916, being given the number 32812. The Form shows that he went to the Hampshires' 3rd Battalion at Gosport five days later and that he was aged 18 years and 1 month, while his NOK was his mother, Selina Desvergez, who at that time resided at Varin Cottage in Vallée des Vaux. He does not appear to have been a strapping lad, being only 5 feet 1½ inches tall. Of course as they all do, he signed to say that all of his details were correct!

It may have been that he regarded the Great War as fun, or that he could not recognise a Drill Sergeant's irony on parade, with the script drawn from that little book that all such NCOs are given. For, while with the Hampshires, 'Francis'

...NO WEAKNESS NO CONTEMPT
DISPRAISE OR BLAME NOTHING BUT
WELL AND FAIR AND WHAT MAY
QUIET US IN A DEATH SO NOBLE -
Major R D Harrison, DSO, Royal Field
Artillery

received his first spell of 'jankers' for that most heinous of military crimes, 'Laughing on Parade' in March, 1917. A month or so later, ten days in hospital and further eighteen convalescing followed, thanks to a bout of influenza.

In mid-June a transfer was made to the 2nd/5th Battalion of the Bedfordshires, then located at Carburton adjacent to Clumber Park in the Dukeries, when he was now allocated a new number, 47030. His trail of military crime now continued, and further spells of 'jankers' ensued for being 'Dirty on Parade' and 'Neglecting his Duty as a Mess Orderly'. It is unclear why the transfer took place, and it might be that he was regarded as an unsuitable soldier, or that other factors were now emerging. Perhaps the following letter goes some way as a possible explanation:

Jersey, Aug. 13th 1917

*To The Colonel
Carburton Camp*

I beg to ask you to send back my son home. Enclosed his birth certificate, he is under age, being not yet 17, and has signed his enlistment too, without my permission. I have two sons in the Army, one is missing and the other one is [a] prisoner of war in Germany. François Pierre Louis is my youngest, he can assist me by his work, my husband being an invalid and I have no fortune at all. I hope you will comply to my request and that my son will be soon sent back home.

*For Madame Desvergez
Varin Cottage
Les Grands Vaux
St Helier, Jersey*

[PS] Please to let me have back his birth certificate.

At the end of the letter there followed detail much of it that has been covered above, yet it also clearly stated that his date of birth was the 12th December, 1900. One assumes this period was a trying time for Selina (Celine) Desvergez, and I suspect that her command of the English language was very limited, and that a friend wrote the letter on her behalf. Yet, it also seems that the Army, in the shape of the Hampshires, was also aware in late April, 1917, and like so many organisations, the military cogs grind exceedingly slow! Her piteous plea was answered eventually, for on the 17th September, 1917, our 'Francis' was discharged from the Army after a mere 288 days of service to become 'François' once more.



But before we continue to look further at 'François', we might like to consider the contents of Selina's letter in which she refers to her invalid husband and her two other sons. From the 1911 Census, when the family lived in a cottage at Mont au Prêtre, it appears that her husband was Etienne, while there were three sons, Auguste (18), Pierre (15) and the errant 'François' (then aged 10). There was also a daughter Marie (5). Pierre must have been the prisoner of war, for Auguste had been killed in action at La Harazée, Marne, while serving with the French 94^e Regiment d'Infanterie on 10th February, 1915, a fact that Selina had not had formally confirmed in 1917.

So, what happened to 'François'? His RoS entry records him as being in the Royal Navy and this is correct also. For, on 25th March, 1918 he again enlisted,

was given the service number J87016, and having learnt his lesson, cited his correct date of birth! At this stage, he had decided to make the Navy his life, and was serving onboard *HMS Mimosa*, an

survived this but was picked up, I was going to say rescued but it seems inappropriate, and was made a prisoner of war by the Japanese. Two years of privations and ill-treatment undoubtedly



followed, and on the 16th April, 1944, François would die, while his widow would later remarry a George Levy in 1946. Today, François' burial place is in the

Acacia-class sloop, at the Armistice. Given that, he would marry a Nellie May Atkins in the second quarter of 1932 at Plymouth, one can assume that he was still serving, given the wedding's location. Meanwhile, his naval service record up until the 31st December, 1928 does indicate that he was no longer a military criminal!

Ambon War Cemetery in one of the groups of islands that makes up Indonesia, and sadly a location, I suspect, that receives very few British war graves pilgrims today.

Yet, there is a more regrettable clue to his continuing naval service in that his name appears in the CWGC Debt of Honour Register as having died during World War 2. Shown as an Able Seaman, and now with the number D/87016 (the 'D' standing for Devonport presumably?), he was serving onboard *HMS Exeter*. Like many, I associate the *Exeter* with the Battle of the River Plate, in December, 1939, that saw the German *Graf Spee* engaged by the *Exeter*, along with the *Ajax* and the *Achilles*, and then subsequently scuttled outside Montevideo. Whether François was on board at the time, I do not know, but the *Exeter* was badly damaged and immediately required a major repair and refit, returning to the UK.

There is a puzzling little postscript to this account. The CWGC Debt of Honour Register correctly records that François' wife was Nellie May, but reports that his parents were Peter Louis and Yvonne Desvergez. Clearly this differs from the 1911 Census and the details that 'Francis' had provided in 1916. Was Peter Louis in fact the prisoner of war Pierre?

In conclusion, François Pierre Louis Desvergez was little different to many who saw the Great War as an adventure and a way-out from home into the big world, and his enforced return to Jersey lasted a mere six months. He was, most likely, a very ordinary, yet brave, Jersey-French lad, whose two entries on Jersey's RoS conceal an interesting tale that only becomes apparent when the paperwork is there to be read and the connections made.

In due course, with Japan entering the war, *Exeter* was sent to the Far East, and during the Second Battle of the Java Sea on 1st March, 1942, was sunk. François

THE MIDNIGHT STARS SHINE OVER
THE GRAVE OF ONE WE LOVED BUT
COULD NOT SAVE - Pte W Speed
Lancashire Fusiliers

A Favourite Postcard: Andrew Brooks

In collecting terms the picture postcard illustrated is known as a 'WW1 Military pull-out'. It copied the design of many pre-war cards where a flap on the card was lifted and a concertina strip of black and white views was revealed. In pre-war cards the b/w views would be of the town or resort mentioned on the card but during the war these images would usually be of a military camp or humorous depictions of soldiers enjoying camp life.

Each design (of which many are recorded) could be used for many places, with the name impressed on the front of the card e.g. Durrington Camp. The design is not seen 'On Active Service' and is confined to those troops training in the British Isles. Probably the most popular type was a rear view of a soldier with a knapsack on his back. The flap of the knapsack was lifted to reveal the views.

My favourite card shows two soldiers carrying a box and it states on the front of the card that you would need to look at the postmark to see from where it had been sent. The 'box' is in fact much smaller than shown on the postcard and is a Field Post Office. This black iron box was in use before the war and used on manoeuvres and other large military exercises. Many such boxes went with the B.E.F. to France. It was under the care of a corporal and two sappers and

held postal orders, stamps, cash, lead seals for mail-bags, rule books and scores of other items - not forgetting the red and white flag that was flying when



the office was open. This box could be lodged anywhere: in an open field, barn, tent or dug-out.

THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR REVISITED: Michael Gavaghan

'This book is written by an unknown about an unknown. I hope I have not done him an injustice.'

The words above were placed at the end of the acknowledgements of my book "The Story of the Unknown Warrior" and they still ring true today.

It is remarkable that the First World War still remains a topic for immense literary output, once one of works of sentimentality and now one of battlefield tourism and facts and figures, these books are a remarkable testimony to the enduring fascination among the British public for the war. By contrast the main objective of the Unknown Warrior was that sufficient money would be raised to allow a memorial to be placed at the village of St. Pol sur Ternoise where on

7-8 November 1920 the Unknown Warrior had been selected.

The Great War was, for the country a traumatic experience - and still remains an emotional one especially on 11 November. (In the years immediately after the war the main collection day for those soldiers wounded and in need was on 4 August the day war was declared.)



Boulogne: 10th November 1920

The bringing home of an unknown soldier quickly to be rechristened the Unknown Warrior, although the Unknown Comrade was a far popular choice with the military but not with the government, was for many the final ending of their sorry; more so to those families whose loved one's had no known grave and therefore no place to visit. The Unknown Warrior quickly passed into the footnotes of military history and it is the Cenotaph that remains the Nation's national memorial as it was planned to be.

In 1995, having returned from another visit to the Western Front I decided to write a book on this unknown soldier. The type of book, its contents, pages and pictures required were at that stage unknown, but the work had to cover the process of the selection and burial of this unknown man. The realization that within ten years and after numerous radio and press interviews five memorial's would be erected and dedicated to this sole event

was indeed a surprise. A copy of the book had also been sent to the Canadian government to assist in their own selection procedure and the book itself is listed in over thirty other works. All this is due to a book that I wrote and published. The outcome was, to say the least a surprise and a pleasant one at that.

MUSEUM REPORTS

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

Private William Hodgson's Diaries



Branch member Mrs Dorothy Maguire kindly lent to the museum the First World War diaries and letters of her nephew who served with the 2nd/5th Battalion of the King's Own from 1914 until his death on Empire Day 1917. The museum has now published the diaries and letters in book form telling the story of Private William Hodgson's training and active service on the Western Front. William Hodgson was 6ft 5 inches tall and this posed a problem in supplying him with uniform and in the first photographs of him with his comrades he's still in his civvies whilst everyone else is in khaki! The book contains his diaries, letters as well as the battalion's war diary for the period over seas. It is available from the museum for £9 including postage, or £7.50 from the museum shop. (See Page 20 for Howard Martin's review of book).

The museum has received as a donation the medals and collection of postcards relating to Sergeant James Greenwood of the 1st Battalion, King's Own. James Greenwood had served with the King's Own in the early 1900s, leaving in around 1907. He married Jane, a Bolton girl, and then he moved to Canada to find work in 1913, with his wife and daughter, Mary, following a year later. No sooner had they joined him, than he was recalled from the Reserve and he travelled back across the Atlantic and after a detour via Plymouth he arrived on the Western Front on 22nd October 1914. He was awarded the Military Medal but later killed exactly two years after he arrived in France, award being published in the London Gazette the following month. He is buried in London Cemetery and Extension, Longueval. James's wife and child remained in Canada and his daughter Mary died recently and had hoped to donate his medals and postcards to the Canadian War Museum, but as he was in the British Army they suggested that the King's Own Museum was a more appropriate home.

Forthcoming Events:

A Soldiers Christmas: Thursday 8th December 2011, 19.30 to 21.00.

Come along to our special evening event where curator, Peter Donnelly, will describe how soldiers celebrated Christmas through the years, using both objects and archives from the King's Own Museum's collection. Admission is free and seasonal refreshments are included. To be held in the museum's education room, access from New Street.

Green Fingered Fusiliers

The relationship between town and regiment has always been strong in Bury and this has been illustrated, in a very tangible way, in the form of two gardens to be opened to the public. These garden spaces will not only provide a permanent memorial to the Lancashire Fusiliers and Royal Regiment of Fusiliers but will also provide much needed green spaces for the public to enjoy in Bury. Funding the projects has not been easy but £100,000 grant funding has been secured for the two schemes. Both gardens will be formally unveiled on Friday 11th November 2011, which is significant as the 11th of the 11th of 2011.

Wellington Barracks Memorial Garden.

In May 2009 the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Regiment finally withdrew from what remained of Wellington Barracks in Bolton Road, Bury. The original barracks was built between 1842 and 1845 and was part of the Napier Scheme to garrison the industrial North West in order to prevent civil unrest. In 1873 the depot companies of the 20th Foot, the East Devonshire Regiment, arrived in Bury. In 1881 they were re-titled the Lancashire Fusiliers and thus began their link with the county. From then on Wellington Barracks was the centre of Regimental activity throughout the late 19th and 20th Centuries, despatching troops to the Boer War, the Great War and the Second World War. However following the Second World War, Wellington Barracks proved to be too small to be a viable training establishment and closed in 1961. As funding was not available to move the

Regimental Headquarters, Museum, Memorial and Association Club into Bury as originally planned, they remained in a small MoD enclave which itself came under scrutiny at the beginning of the 21st Century.

The Regiment decided to jump before it was pushed and following the £4.2 million Fusilier Museum Project, moved lock, stock and barrel into new accommodation in the centre of Bury. The move included the Fusilier Memorial which is officially



part of the Headquarters. However, the removal of the Memorial left a significant physical and mental gap on Bolton Road. It was therefore agreed with all interested parties that it would be appropriate to fill the gap by developing a memorial garden on the site of the original entrance to Wellington Barracks and also the original location of the Fusilier Memorial.

Through the Regimental Association a grant for £50,000 was obtained from a company called Viridor. This company allocates funds from land fill tax for community projects and was very supportive. The memorial garden project includes several interesting features including the restoration of the old cobbled surface at the entrance to the barracks, the installation of a three metre obelisk, based on the original Fusilier Memorial, and considerable replanting. The garden will also incorporate a limited facility to bury ashes of deceased Fusiliers. The end result will not only be a fitting memorial to Wellington Barracks and all the Fusiliers that passed through

but it will also considerably enhance the environment on Bolton Road, an important gateway into Bury.

Gallipoli Garden.

The second green space is Gallipoli Garden which is situated next to the Fusilier Museum on Silver Street in the centre of Bury. The garden was originally called Sparrow Park and was purchased by the council as the site for an extension to the Technical School which was built at the end of the 19th Century. The additional building work never took place and the area remained an open green space eventually being named Sparrow Park. In 2009, in honour of the Fusiliers, Bury Council renamed Sparrow Park as the Gallipoli Garden on the opening of the Fusilier Museum. During construction, part of Sparrow Park had been used as the location for a new entrance to the Fusilier Museum. To compensate for the loss of this community space the Fusilier Museum and Bury Council agreed to extend the formal garden into an area of scrub that occupied the north end of Sparrow Park.

The Friends of the Fusilier Museum made a bid to the Community Spaces scheme for financial assistance. This organisation is largely funded from Lottery money and its aim is to fund community based projects that improve the environment. The Friends were successful and a £50,000 grant was allocated to the project. The plan involved the removal of the scrub area which will be replaced by the planting of new trees and shrubs, many had been chosen to reflect the eastern Mediterranean. A new path would be laid and a granite garden feature engraved with detail reflecting the Regiment's history would be installed. Three

interpretation boards would also be erected that would explain the Gallipoli Campaign, the Fusilier Monument and lastly the story of Lt. Col. Sir Gilbert Mackereth MC (see Page 16) whose

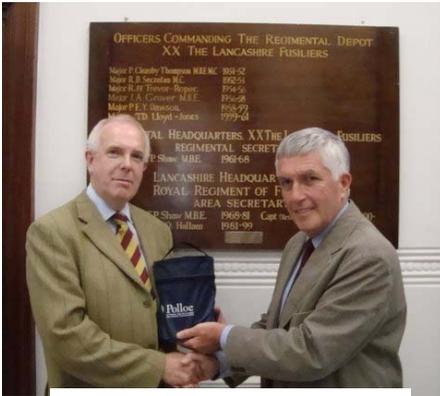
**Queen's Lancashire Regiment Museum
Lieutenant Colonel Rudolf Ord MBE:
Amy Coaker, Museum Assistant**

Lieutenant-Colonel Rudolf Ord of the 1/4th Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment (LNLR) was a serving officer in the First World War. The correspondence between Ord and his friends and relatives during this time has recently been donated to the Museum. In March 1913 he was a Lieutenant in the Battalion.

Ord was born to an English father, Clement Ord, and German mother, Johanna Anthes, on 5th July 1888 in Reichelsheim-im-Odenwald, Germany. In 1891, Clement returned to England, bringing his family with him, and they settled in Bristol where he served as a lecturer in English and German at University College.

Rudolf had four siblings: Evelyn, Mildred, Wilfrid, and Bernhard, the latter of whom is notable as having served as organist and choirmaster of King's College, Cambridge from 1929 to 1957. Described by the College's current incumbent, Stephen Cleobury, as 'one of those rare musicians who became a legend in his lifetime', he is lauded not only for his supreme technical skill and musicality, but also for bringing the King's College Choir to international prominence through foreign tours, recordings, and radio broadcasts. Rudolf's uncle, William Edward Ord, as Mayor of Preston from 1906-8 and the first life president of Preston North End Football Club, is also worthy of note.

Rudolf married Phyllis Wilkinson Newsholme at The Church of St Lawrence in Barton, Lancashire on 4th January 1915, but was permitted only four precious months with his new wife before leaving for France. He landed with his Battalion at Boulogne on 4th May



Mike Glover receives Sir Gilbert's remains from TD

remains will finally rest alongside the Fusilier Memorial. The Gallipoli Garden Project would not only enhance the overall garden environment but would also provide an external location for delivery of the museum education package.

Both gardens prove that the link between community and regiment is as strong as ever, at least in Bury. These green spaces will not only provide suitable recreational spaces for the local community but will also provide lasting memorials to the Fusiliers. These projects have been the product of the best efforts of the regimental family, with the Regimental Association leading on the Bolton Road bid and the Friends of the Museum on the Gallipoli Garden project. Finally I would like to thank Terry Dean for his sterling effort to return a Fusilier to his regimental family.

**WE SHALL KNOW HIS VOICE IN THAT
HEAVENLY THROG - Lt J B Sloan KOSB**

1915 as Lieutenant Ord, a 26-year-old signalling officer.



1/4LNL Officers, Bedford early 1915

On 25th May, the Battalion arrived in the trenches for the first time, finding them littered with the bodies of soldiers who had fallen in the Battle of Festubert. The Battalion were charged with finishing the consolidation of the newly taken ground - a task described in the regimental history as 'a pretty stiff beginning for raw troops.'

On 15th June, the Battalion were involved in an ultimately unsuccessful attack aimed at capturing the front line of German trenches east of Festubert. After telephone communications were obliterated by the enemy during the hostilities, Ord was in charge of organising messages to be sent by relays of orderlies. Despite heavy casualties and his position at strongpoint L8, where the Germans directed the brunt of their artillery fire, Ord was fortunate enough to survive the attack unharmed.

Just two days later, however, he was admitted to hospital; a letter to Rudolf's wife from his sister, Evelyn reads: 'We have just had a p.c. from Father telling us that Rudolf is in hospital and the 4th LNLs have had terrible casualties...For the moment I can feel nothing but deep thankfulness that he is safe and has been spared when so many have had to go.' Although no reason is given for Ord's hospitalisation in the regimental history, correspondence home suggests he was suffering from a combination of asthma

and hay fever - ills that would continue to plague him throughout his army career.

Rudolf later briefly rested with the Battalion's reserves at Weeton Camp in Kirkham, Lancashire before rejoining his comrades again in France during September 1915.

In the following few months, Rudolf received two pieces of heartening news: he was promoted to Acting Captain on 30th October, and became a father in December after the birth of his first child, Joan 'Peggy' Ord. Unfortunately, however, this good news was soon tempered by bad when on 24th February 1916, Rudolf was diagnosed with German measles and so again was forced to take leave from the front.

By the end of March 1916, Rudolf had returned back, as his wife put it, 'to the old beastly game.' During the next months, the Battalion saw action in the Somme and it is at this time that Rudolf affords some rare insights into his perception of the war and his involvement in it. Of the correspondence bequeathed to the museum, only two of Rudolf's letters reference the war in any detail, both of which are written to his father. In the first, dated 20th September, Rudolf characterises the racket of the enemy guns as the '*Kaiser's Death Knell* and describes surviving a reconnaissance through several distinct barrages without a scratch. The second letter, from 3rd October, moves to extolling the military might of the Allies: '*Our barrage fire is something too terrible for words. It resembles most a living moving wall of fire, like hell let loose, gradually creeping upon the enemy and has the most terrifying effect.*'

In October 1916, the Battalion moved up to Ypres, entering the trenches in the Railway Wood sector of the Salient on the 19th. The subsequent day, Ord was

appointed Commandant of 164th Brigade Officers' School, later transferring to the 55th Divisional School in around December. Although both schools were stationed in France, Rudolf was of course no longer embroiled in the perils of frontline fighting - a relief to his family, who rejoiced in his 'safe' and 'cushy' new job. It was during this time he was appointed temporary major.

On 5th July 1917, Ord returned to the brutality of warfare and rejoined the Battalion in the Ypres Salient. Rudolf received a letter from his mother some days later, expressing concern for his wellbeing: *'The copies from Phyllis today confirm what we have been fearing: that you are by no means in safe quarters. It must, indeed, be a very, very different life from that at the School; for Instruction - though it may be for war - is not War itself and preserves you more or less from all its horrors.'*

Her parental concern was not misplaced; on 31st July, the Battalion took part in the first assault of the Third Battle of Ypres, with Ord acting as Second in Command. Although the attack was partially successful, and some advances were made, the human cost was heavy and many men were killed or wounded. Rudolf's luck had run out, and although he escaped with his life, he suffered a total of 26 injuries, including a badly fractured arm; he was not to see active service again for the rest of the war. As Phyllis's brother, Leonard, darkly joked in an ensuing letter to Rudolf: *'You have really had a long run for your money, but now that you have got it in the neck, you appear to have got [it] right there...I suppose I ought to have my piece of shrapnel mounted for mother. For your little collection I think you ought to get a cabinet. It is too much to expect Phyllis to carry the 15 inch shell they took out of*

your left arm as well as the collection of whizzbangs and minnies that you are reputed to have coughed up.'

Rudolf was initially installed at No. 3 General Hospital in Le Tréport, France, where he was visited by his wife, Phyllis and sister, Evelyn. Evidently distraught at Rudolf's fate, his family were nevertheless overwhelmed with joy and relief for his survival; letters from Ord's mother to Phyllis read: *'Thank God that his life is preserved...it is good to know him alive. Nothing ought to be hard after that.'*

In September 1917, Rudolf was considered fit enough to make the journey back to England, where he was relocated to Queen Alexandra's Hospital for Officers in Highgate, London - the same institution in which Robert Graves, the famous war poet, had recovered from his injuries the preceding year. Here, Ord underwent a number of operations on his arm to correct the fracture and remove the worst of the shell fragments.

During mid-March 1918, much to his delight, Rudolf was transferred to the Officers' Convalescent Hospital in Broad Leys, Windermere; not only would he be safely away from the air raids in London, but he would also be closer to his wife in Preston. Between regular visits from his family and friends, Ord occupied himself by performing as a baritone singer in charity shows, raising money for injured troops.

In late September, Rudolf received more good news with the arrival of his second child, William 'Billie' Ord. In the same month, Rudolf was informed that he was to be removed again to another hospital; he hoped to be placed at Alder Hey in Liverpool,



which was renowned for its orthopaedic care, but instead was located to one of its branches: Dawpool Auxiliary Hospital in Thurstaston, Cheshire. He arrived at Dawpool in October and was there when the war finally ended the following month.

A year later, on 29th October 1919, Rudolf was at last discharged from hospital and instructed to proceed home. Given the ravages of the First World War, Ord and his immediate family had been remarkably fortunate in terms of their losses; both of Rudolf's brothers had survived, so too had his wife's. As Wilfrid, Rudolf's brother wrote to Phyllis: 'There is not one 'vacant chair' as a permanent saddening memory of this Great War.'

Returning to civilian life, Rudolf rejoined his wife in Barton and worked as a leather merchant, as his grandfather had before him. He became Managing Director of Satterthwaite and Company, a curriers and leather dealers based in Preston. He also enjoyed involvement in his local community, acting as a Justice of the Peace and as the District Commissioner of Preston Boy Scouts Association; in 1948, he was awarded a civil MBE. Rudolf passed away in 1982, aged 94, having led a long and fruitful life.

Ed: Pity donated photo of Ord with child is such poor quality that he cannot be identified in the excellent officer group photo taken at Bedford in early 1915.

AND OH T'WAS JOY IN THE DYING TO
KNOW WE WERE WINNING YOU PEACE
- Pte W F Bedell MM 21st Canadian
Infantry

Manchester Regiment Archive: Larysa Bolton

As readers can imagine, one of the most frequent requests of Regimental Archive collections is for photographs.

This can either be from family members searching for a military ancestor, writers looking to publish an illustrated book or media companies looking for images for print or broadcast. The Manchester Regiment has a superb image archive but until recently this has not be easy to access. The collection needed



2nd Battalion officers relaxing

considerable sorting and cataloguing. We made a conservative estimate that there are around 5,000 photographs in the collection, although regular donations of photographs from the public means this number is likely to be higher.

Back in 2009, we decided to address the problem and successfully applied for a grant from Tameside MBC to digitise the Manchester Regiment photograph archive. Work began in earnest and we've been sorting, classifying, identifying and scanning for the last couple of years. This summer we digitised the two thousandth photograph. This seemed like an appropriate time for a celebration of our work to date, so the Manchester Regiment Image Archive was formally launched by the Councillor Susan Quinn, Civic Mayor of Tameside on 8 September.

The Image Archive is very easy to search either by a free-text search, by keyword or by battalion. One of the best

features of the image archive is the facility for members of the public to make contributions of information about the photographs. This is where I hope readers of Despatch will be able to help us. There are numerous photographs of the Western Front on the image archive, and we are looking for any additional information, either about individuals, locations, equipment or artillery, to add to the site. Making a contribution is very easy as all you need to do is click on the Can You Help link which is below each image. More photographs are being uploaded every week so there is always something new on the site.

The Image Archive can be found at <http://www.manchester-regiment.org.uk>.

Liverpool Scottish Regimental Museum Trust, March to October 2011: Ian Riley

The trustees and other volunteers have had to undertake a considerable amount of work during the past six months in addition to taking on a substantial amount of recurrent expenditure. As mentioned briefly in the last Despatch, the entire archive has been moved from the old Duke of Lancaster's Regiment Liverpool Area office following its relocation in much smaller premises. We have been given access to two rooms in the Artists Club, just off Dale Street. Initially, it was hoped that just 'a lick of paint' was needed but because of some required building work and the necessity to pass a modern electric supply through forty yards and two floors of a very convoluted and very solid Victorian structure, the total cost, including professional removal, amounted to £4000. The professional removal was worth every penny: trustee backs are no longer so trusty. Thanks to plenty of preparation and labelling, removal (shelf to shelf) took place in one

day although there has been a lengthy period of adjustment. Although access is slightly more restricted than previously as a result of occasional functions in the club additional to its normal lunchtime operation (and there is a modest dress code after 12:30pm out of respect for that of our hosts), the arrangement is working well.

As soon as the archive office had been moved, it was necessary to shift stored artifacts (about forty packing cases) from one end of the Army camp in which they are located to the other (about a thousand yards). This is another major exercise for our small team. This process is continuing. In many ways, the new storage location is an improvement but we may well be asked to pay a small rental charge here.

Transfer of material to the Museum of Liverpool has come to a halt since the spring because of their commitments in opening the new museum on the Pier Head. We travelled to a meeting in Edinburgh to discuss our contribution to the Museum of the Highlanders at Fort George. The Liverpool Scottish Regimental Trustees (as opposed to the Museum trustees) have donated £1500 to the Highlanders £3.2m appeal.

The digitisation of our archives continues and we now have 38,000 photographic images and have been assisted by a grant of about £500 from the Army Museum Ogilby Trust to whom we are very grateful. Although scans might have given better images, time is not on our side: most images are fine (or better) for reference purposes and often more readable than those in the National Archives. The total cost of this during the last twelve months, using trained student labour as well as volunteers, has been about £2000. This phase is now about 90% complete and we are about to move

on to the contents of our filing cabinets both for photography and cataloguing.

The unfortunate aspect of the removals and in pressing ahead with digitisation before our small team of trained (but supervised) A Level students disappeared to university is that we have not had time to process queries for about six months. This has had a serious impact on donations to support expenditure. The Secretary and the Curator (both honorary and volunteer positions) are about to start working through the backlog of about eighty queries though it is not anticipated that this will be clear until Christmas.

**LT. COL. SIR GILBERT MACKERETH -
Interment of his remains in Gallipoli
Garden, Bury: Terry Dean (+S)**

(A summary of the full story about Sir Gilbert's repatriation should be in the October/November WFA Bulletin and a copy is on our website)

It seems ages ago now but in last May's Despatch I reported that I was endeavouring to establish whether Sir Gilbert made a Will in Spain which might indicate whether he specifically wished to be buried there. The outcome of my formal enquiry with Spain's Ministry of Justice established that no Will for Sir Gilbert exists in Spain. Therefore, having regard to all the factors associated with retention of Sir Gilbert's grave in Spain, John Sloan, Sir Gilbert's first cousin, decided that Sir G's remains should be exhumed from his grave in San Sebastian, cremated, transported to Bury and placed in the Gallipoli Garden in



a reverent manner. I then secured agreement that funding the cost of exhumation and cremation (596 Euros) would be shared by John Sloan, the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and WFA branches in Lancashire.

After completion of all the necessary arrangements I collected Sir Gilbert's cremated remains from Polloe cemetery, San Sebastian on 31st August and they commenced the journey to Bury. On 14th September I handed Sir G's remains to Mike Glover in the Fusiliers Museum in Bury (see photo on Page 11) and agreed the basis of an exhibition in the Museum that would tell Sir G's story.

Prior to me leaving for France on 9th October I advised some members of our Branch and the Chairmen of the East Lancashire and Cheshire/Lancashire WFA Branches of the exhibition.

Whilst away in France I was contacted from "Down Under" and perhaps the trail, which I thought had "gone cold" on the Executor of Sir G's brother-in-law's Will, is now warm again. I still have hopes that Sir G's medals and a cache of his WW1 photos in France will be found.

On 27th October, with construction work nearing completion on the refurbishment of the Gallipoli Garden in Bury I completed my mission to repatriate

Sir Gilbert by placing his remains in the allotted position near the Fusilier Memorial. Adjacent is an interpretive plaque (to



left of soldier & above my head) which briefly tells Sir G's story.

In a ceremony to commemorate the extended and refurbished Gallipoli Garden commencing shortly before 11.00 am on Armistice Day, 11th November John Sloan will unveil a Remembrance Stone to Sir Gilbert over the last (hopefully) resting place of his remains.

John Sloan has searched out his medals to wear on Armistice Day. He served as a tank driver/gunner in the King's Royal Hussars during WW2 and advanced into Germany whilst his cousin got no further than Grammont in Belgium during WW1. John then served in Palestine where Gilbert had attempted to stem Zionist Terrorists in the late 1930s by unconventional means. James Barr's "*A Line in the Sand*", which was published in August, tells that story as well as describing how the Middle East was carved up during WW1 and the exploits of Lawrence (see April 2012 meeting on page 27). As Sir Gilbert is laid to rest hopefully peace will shortly come in Palestine. The coincidences do not stop with my musing on Page 2. Last year I was invited to speak at the Lancashire/Cheshire Branch. The talk chosen was "Several Battalion Commanders" (of whom Sir Gilbert was one) and the date selected was 11th November 2011.

A SOLDIER'S GOOD NAME IS HIS BEST
MONUMENT - Sergt A Teasdale,
Northumberland Fusiliers

On the Somme 2011: David & Pat Shackleton (+P)

News from the Somme this year is dominated by the explorations of the Glory Hole at La Boisselle. Already several personal stories have been

highlighted, one of which is on the excellent website dedicated to the Lonsdales (Men could do no more). Access to the Glory Hole reveals just how intense the fighting was in this area. Kidney Trench, named by the French soldiers because of its shape, is just one example. Thanks to the owners, this area will hopefully, as a result of the survey, be preserved.

Following on from last year's dig at Mametz, an excellent exhibition is currently on at the Historial in Peronne. Next year a major exhibition entitled "The Missing of the Somme" will begin on 19 April until 25 November, a must for visitors to the area. 2012 is the 80th anniversary of the official opening of the Thiepval Memorial. The theme of the exhibition will be remembrance.

Personally our highlight for this year



was a private visit to the tunnels under the village of Bouzincourt. Dating from the 16th century, they were used by successive generations and during one very cold winter the whole village lived in them. Now they are much decayed, many passages inaccessible and not generally open to the public. As we expected, there are lots of names from WW1 soldiers who sheltered in them. The feeling of peace still remains and it was easy to sense how the soldiers must have felt in such a haven.

From the 100+ names we photographed, we have so far traced 16

who died and where possible have visited their graves and memorials. Some are as far away as Canada and Ireland, Killarney New Cemetery being the final resting place of 28755 Private Robert

pneumonia and was buried in the local cemetery.

The most emotional was one which says, "Some of 2 HLI, Honours in the Great War, 4612 Private D McAlpine, 3 times wounded. "A truly wonderful private and personal memorial from his pals. Daniel was killed on 16 July 1917 and is buried in Woburn Abbey Cemetery, Cuiinchy. Needless to say we shall be researching further. Photos of the others are on the Branch website.



McAlpine Inscription & Grave

Finally before

Kinchington, one of 5 Australian brothers, 4 of whom served and 2 died. In 1919 whilst on leave in UK, he visited Killarney, and became ill. Following influenza, he died in the International hotel from septic

leaving the Somme this year, we were able to pay our respects at the burials of 5 unknown soldiers in 3 cemeteries. May they rest in peace.

Somme July 2011 - Impressions from my first visit: Paul Conlon

I have been interested in WW1 for many years but only joined the WFA in May 2011 and my first visit to the battlefield was a solo undertaking and timed to coincide with the 95th anniversary of the "1st July". My pre-reading was: *Before Endeavours Fade*, Rose Coombs; *Walking the Somme*, Paul Reed; and Major & Mrs Holt's *The Western Front - South and Battle Map of the Somme*.

The Somme region seems an incongruous setting for the slaughter of 1916. The heavily farmed rolling countryside has fields full of healthy and a wide variety of crops. It contrasts with

my preference for countryside which is more mountainous and rugged.

I visited locations which will be familiar to many readers of *Despatch*: Hawthorn Ridge, Beaumont Hamel, Ulster Tower, Newfoundland Park and more. The Thiepval Memorial is a towering presence and in sight for much of the time when travelling around. My opinion of this iconic memorial was certainly changed on seeing it for real. Photographs do not do it justice as I had always considered it an unlovely construction. Seen in context the scale is awe inspiring, the memorial and its setting is a fitting tribute to the men who have no known grave and the world changing events that took place on this battlefield. I attended the moving ceremony on the 1st July and returned the

following day to spend some quiet time here.

I visited the Lochnagar Crater twice to try to get a feel for what went on here. I personally cannot envisage what went on when this huge mine was set off.

When visiting many small cemeteries I had them all to myself. The small cemeteries can have just as much impact as the larger ones. The mixture of beautiful settings and small number of graves carries a measure of intimacy which is hard to explain. Every time I stopped and took a few moments to reflect the sound of birdsong was ever present.

I was amazed by the sheer number of people determined or dedicated to keeping alive the memory of the Somme. From the people who have been visiting every July for the last 15-20 years, the large numbers that attend the services, the guys that re-enact events and the professionals spreading the knowledge to new people on lectures and tours.

Experiencing re-enactment was a complete and very pleasant surprise to me. On the morning of 1st July we accompanied the guys from Essex in full battle gear including Lee Enfields and bayonets. After a large tot of rum we all marched into no-mans-land at 7.30am. These guys did the trip the hard way, living under canvas for the duration. A great source of information and great company as well. Also attending was a small party of Germans also dressed fully in battle gear and they played a full role in the events and were also good company.

I went on one official tour headed up by Steve Roberts from the Imperial War Museum. The level of detail that this team had about the events on the 1 July as depicted in the film The Battle of the Somme was impressive. It was a pretty

intensive afternoon and evening finishing with Steve Roberts talking us through the film scene by scene. It finished at 11pm too late even for a nightcap but definitely worth the time spent

In concluding I must mention Avril Williams and her excellent establishment "Ocean Villas". The welcome, food, drink, accommodation and company added immeasurably to my first visit to the Somme. The trip has inspired me to plan more battlefield visits; with the Ypres Salient and Verdun high on my wish list.

HIS WORK IS DONE HERE BUT STILL
REMAINS WITH US THE MEMORY OF
HIS LIFE - Pte L Wild, RASC

July 2011 WFA Battlefield Trip: Gaynor Greenwood

On 3 July 2011, members of the Bradford Mechanics Institute joined North Lancashire WFA members for a battlefield tour.

After an overnight sailing from Hull to Zeebrugge, the first stop was a visit to Essex Farm Cemetery, which linked to our visit last year to John McRae's grave at Wimereux. Onwards to La Belle Alliance and New Irish Farm cemeteries. Here the story was told of Tom Stoves, killed by a shell and buried in the now non-existent Yorkshire Cemetery and then re-interred in New Irish Farm.

After lunch and a talk on the history of the Menin Gate, the walking party made their way to Ramparts Cemetery and then by coach to Palingbeek. Here they walked to Hedgerow Trench and First DCLI cemeteries. Meanwhile the non-walking party accompanied Denise North on a tour of Ypres, looking at how it was rebuilt. This was of great interest to those WFA members who had attended

Denise's talk on this subject at the Lancaster Branch a year ago.

On 5th July, the party travelled south, visiting Prowse Point, Hyde Park Corner and Fromelles cemeteries. After lunch at the Poppy, the group visited Lochnagar Crater, then the non-walkers travelled to Mansell Copse. The walkers were taken to Fricourt for a walk to Mansell Copse via field paths.

After an overnight stop in Arras, there was another visit to the Somme. First stop was Serre No 1 and Railway Hollow. After a short visit to the Thiepval Visitor Centre, the walking party were taken to the Ancre marshes from where they explored the route back to Thiepval via Authuille and the Granatloch. The rest of the party visited Ulster Tower.

An overnight crossing from Zeebrugge to Hull completed the trip. Many thanks to Alan Hartley for organising the trip and to Harry Taylor for leading the walks and providing his usual excellently researched talks on the places we visited and the men who served. Thanks also to Stan who assisted Alan.

BOOK REVIEW: Howard Martin

The First World War Diaries and Letters of Private William Hodgson 2nd/5th Battalion King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment.

Those of you who have been present at one of my talks at the North Lancashire Branch WFA meetings may be aware that I am most interested in the individual's experience of the Great War. These diaries, newly published by the King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, are a valuable addition to this area of knowledge.

Private Hodgson was a pre-war territorial with the 5th Battalion King's

Own, who's enlistment had expired in March 1914. He expected to be called up, but when this did not happen he re-enlisted in 2/5th KORLR in November 1914. The diaries are a literate and very readable account of his life in the army during his training in England, until February 1917 and service in France from that date until his death on May 24th.

The diary entries vary from the mundane, "Sunday March 5th 1916. Came off guard at 7 a.m. Never went to Church." The somewhat miffed, "May 14th. We were not allowed out. North Lancashire (Regiment) raided a shop." The quite relaxed, "April 2nd 1917. Got a good night's sleep. No Duties but to clean ourselves." To the terrifying, "March 20th. The night was pitch dark. 4 a.m. News came that 4 raiders had been through and tried to take Fred Harris off the fire step. We had a patrol out and at 4 a.m. a man stood up boldly on the parapet drawing attention of guard while 3 others got over unseen and pushed into the bay. Four of our guard grappled with them and they used leaded sticks smashing F Harris helmet and wounding him. Lance Corporal Slinger got a revolver bullet through his gas helmet. They were driven off."

The book also contains letters home and the 2/5th Bn. War Diaries covering Pte. Hodgson's tragically short time in France, ending with the brief, "May 24th. Thursday (Empire Day). Casualties:- Died of Wounds 1 Other Rank attached to 170th Light Trench Mortar Battery."

A worthwhile addition to anyone's Great War library.

MARTIN'S CORNER: Martin Simpson - Chairman, Cumbria Branch WFA

Our Christmas Lunch and AGM will be on **Sunday 4th December 2011** at the

Best Western Shap Wells Hotel which is on the A6 between Shap and Kendal not far from M6, Jct. 39. Post Code CA10 3QU. The day will commence between 11.30 am and 12.00 noon for a chat and drinks followed by lunch at 12.30. Lunch will be carvery style, with various choices of starter, main and dessert courses (inc vegetarian options).

The afternoon's programme will commence at 13.45 with the Branch AGM. Afterwards the speaker will be Peter Hart: subject to be finalised.

The cost of the day is £19.50 per person. Contact me for more details if you are interested in coming (tel: 01229 584141)

The programme for next year is as follows (all meetings at Penrith British Legion 7.45 for 8 pm, unless stated):

Feb 16th: *'Guillimont 1916'* - Sean Godfrey

April 19th: *'Lord Kitchener and the Territorial Force and his decision to ignore them'* - Malcolm Johnson

June 10th: Occasional Day at the Best Western Shap Wells. Speakers will be Prof John Derry, Rob Thompson and Peter Hart. Further details will be on the WFA website Cumbria Branch Page in due course

Aug 23rd: **The Basra Cemetery and Memorial** - Vern Littley

Oct 18th: *"The Court-Martial of the DLI 6"* - David Tattersfield

Dec 2nd: AGM and Christmas Lunch at the Best Western Shap Wells. Guest Speaker Dr Bryn Hammond. Further details will be on the WFA website Cumbria Branch Page in due course.

A GOOD LIFE IS OFTEN TOO SHORT
BUT A GOOD NAME ENDURETH FOR
EVER - Pte C Booth Manchester Regt

BRANCH AFFAIRS:

Remembering Joe Hodgson 1921 - 2011



Little did I realise when I agreed to produce Despatch that in 2008 it would bring Joe and I together. We had probably attended the same Branch meetings before his advancing years had limited his forays to Lancaster. However he was determined to tell me what he knew about Zeppelins raids on Lancashire and nearly filled our answer phone whilst we were away in France. It was the start of me learning so much from Joe and an all too brief friendship.

He was the veritable mine of information on all things military and an absolute gentleman. Emmie looked forward to his smiling face and chuckle when he arrived for tea and scone before I chauffeured him to our meetings (and took advantage of his blue disabled badge). On those journeys we were never short of conversation as I shared with Joe issues arising from my research or Despatch and he gave me his insights.

A memorable day was in March 2009 when I visited the National Arboretum to see the "Shot at Dawn" memorial in connection with my "Several Battalion Commanders" talk which covered the exploits of the 17th (Bantam) battalion Lancashire Fusiliers (LFs). Joe insisted he keep me company although he had

been several times. His religious nature determined we set off early to attend the daily act of remembrance. Like an inquisitive youngster he studied memorials and worked-up his appetite for lunch. On our return journey his archive memory remembered the postcard photos of Bantams in his collection at home. His home resembled an Aladdin's cave and he spirited out a rare group photo of the 17th LFs which included one of my battalion commanders, it was a magical moment.

In the short time we were friends I gleaned elements of his notable life and have read with interest the Funeral Address by Reverend Sheasby which told of his admirable life and deeds. In the week before his death I visited him and he listened as I told him the plans for our impending trip to Europe. In his inimitable way he countered "ship" when I referred to our "boat" crossing to Rotterdam - despite his deteriorating condition there was still the spark within him. I am privileged to have known Joe. (Terry Dean)



ARMISTICE PRIZE 2011 (+S)

Andrew Brooks, Barrie Bertram and Peter Denby have marked the entries for this year's competition and Barrie's general comments provide a good overview: "This year's competition has proved to be more challenging and fascinating. First, there has been a welcome increase in the number of entrants (18 as opposed to just 7 last year), the enthusiasm that has been shown, and the fact that not all of the entries were poems. In fact, there were

several pieces of prose text, a painting and a wooden model. Notwithstanding, regardless of the media used, most sought to convey a message of sacrifice and service. The entrants applied considerable imagination in their work."

Collation of the 3 sets of marks gives Stacie Byers of St Cecilia's, Roman Catholic Technology College as the winner of this year's competition. Balshaw C.E High School, Leyland and Bispham High School also submitted entries.

Of Stacie's winning entry Barrie writes: "Two diaries for the price of one! It is schizophrenic, yet it is very much an excellent idea with the entries in one diary complementing the other. At home little Poppy is writing of her father somewhere in France, while Dad is writing of his feelings in France and the news from home." Stacie has been awarded £100 and a book (H.P. Willmott's "WORLD WAR 1") for her entry and St Cecilia's will hold the Armistice Prize trophy for a third year.

To give a flavour of Stacie's work here are the last diary entries of her father Jim in France and Poppy at home:

JIM: 27th April 1915

Dear Diary,

I have to write this quickly as I have just been told that me and 5 other soldiers in my trench have to crawl out into No Man's Land, find a crater made by a bomb, and wait all day, watching for movement in the enemies trench. As soon as we see anything, a light or movement ... we shoot. With no hesitation. I am not a man who can kill easily. I have never killed a man in my life, and I hope I don't have to. I don't belong in this place. I belong with my wife and daughter, at home with each

other. And I will get there, no matter what it takes. I love them.

I will write when I get back.

POPPY: 28th April 1915

Dear Diary,

Something scary has happened to mummy. A telegram came this morning, and the second she opened it she collapsed onto her knees, sobbing so loud it sounded like she was in pain. I asked her if she was ok, but she just replied with more floods of tears. I retreated to my room, and when I came out after an hour, she was curled up on the sofa, a photo of daddy pressed to her heart. It was wet with tears, and so were her cheeks. She was sleeping gently. I've come back to my room again but I am very frightened, so I'm going to sneak out and look at the telegram.

Love Poppy xx

This is my daddy, Jim Walters. He died on 2nd April 1915 fighting in the British Army. He was a hero and very brave. I love him to the moon and back, and always will.



R.I.P. daddy

To build further on the increased entries this year Andy Gregson of St Cecilia's has met with three history teachers from other schools and all 3 said they would enter in 2012. Also he has contacted other schools and currently expects a minimum of 5 schools to enter next year. Furthermore it is my intention to seek sponsorship of the competition in order to generate interest in what Andy Gregson regards as "a very worthy competition".

MEETING REPORTS

The French at Gallipoli: May 2011. (27 attended)

In his own inimitable style, one that our members have been fortunate to observe on many occasions, **Peter Hart** delivered a talk on an aspect of the Gallipoli campaign that is almost always ignored by many British and Anzac historians, namely the considerable French involvement.

He made the point at the outset of his talk that the French were not keen to be involved in the expedition but really had no choice because they wanted to keep an eye on what their allies were up to in that part of the world! The division they assembled (1st Division of the Corps Expeditionnaire d'Orient) was a mixture of various French, Senegalese, Foreign Legion and Zouave battalions. They were well trained troops and were well supported by excellent artillery in the form of their 75mm guns. The action had not started off well for the French when their battleship *Bouvet* had been sunk in the Narrows with the loss of over 600 men.

General Albert d'Amade was the commander and the convoy set off from both Marseilles and North Africa, meeting up with the British at Malta. When they landed at Mudros it was noticed that the French trained more than their British counterparts. It was decided the French would make a landing at Kum Kale on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles and subdue the Turkish batteries as they were able to fire directly onto the beaches at Helles. The landing was successful as the beach at Kum Kale was undefended but the French faced a more serious threat at Yeni Shehr where the Turks had good defensive positions in

front of their batteries. As the French advanced reconnaissance showed Turkish reinforcements arriving and the French decided to dig in at Kum Kale. Peter then described the very confused situation as some Turks tried to surrender and others occupied houses in Kum Kale and continued the fight. The situation was resolved when General Hamilton ordered the French to move over to Gallipoli to support the British. d'Amade agreed, as his remit to prevent the Turks shelling the landings had been successful.

In the various battles for Kirithia the French were positioned on the right flank and were subjected to shelling from the Asiatic side. The British attack pivoted on the French but the initial attack failed as did the next on the 6-8th May. The French were faced with the formidable gully of Kereves Dere and their only way to progress was to move up the gully. They were fired at from behind and there was nowhere they were safe. General d'Amade was recalled to France on May 15th and replaced by General Henri Gouaud, who was just as eager to continue the attack, however the 3rd Battle of Kirithia on the 4th June was a disaster as the Turks slaughtered the French. Further attacks using the new tactic of 'Bite and hold' made some small gains (Harriot Redoubt).

Peter finished his talk by describing the end of the French involvement in this campaign. Their depot at 'V' beach was being constantly shelled and another attack on Kirithia (12-13th July) resulted in the loss of 800 men. This was the last straw and from then on they adopted a policy of 'Live and let live'. Matters in Salonica became more important to the French and they started to move men to this theatre of the war. Their part in the Gallipoli campaign cost them 27,000

Killed, wounded and missing; with some 20,000 evacuated sick. (Andrew Brooks)

Leadership, Morale and Esprit de Corps: The Winning Factor? : June 2011 (28 attended)

Terry Dean's talk gave us a fascinating insight into a little researched but vital element of the Great War, Officer Leadership Training. It concentrated on the work and principles promulgated by Brigadier Kentish, with much of the narrative spoken by his great nephew.

Given control of the 3rd Army School at Flixicout he developed a month long course focussing on leadership, moral and esprit de corps. The leadership skills would come from an understanding of human nature and care, example setting, a manifest knowledge of the job and by being optimistic and enthusiastic at all times. Morale, he believed, would be improved by being kind and considerate and by giving good orders at all times. Esprit de corps should be developed by the officer never thinking of himself but of his unit, imploring it to strive for company and battalion.

Asked by Haig, he set up a senior officers' school at Aldershot aiming, with a 3 month course, to teach leadership rather than tactics, enabling officers to become true leaders of men. He believed over-training was counter productive and that every regiment should have its own sports grounds.

Measurement of the success of his methods cannot be quantified but it formed the basis for modern Army leadership methods. Haig believed it played a significant part when thanking him by saying 'nobody but you or I will know the impact of your school but we know it was the winning factor'.

We certainly had a winning talk by Terry, superbly illustrated and narrated, giving us an insight into both a personality and topic we knew nothing of. (Peter Bamford)

AFTER HARD SUFFERING COMETH
REST MOTHER FATHER SISTERS
BROTHERS - Pte F Hargreaves KORLR

GOMMECOURT: July 2011 (15 att'ded)

With **Niall Cherry's** talk coinciding with many members visiting France only a sparse audience enjoyed Niall's analysis of the diversionary attack on Gommecourt and of the participating British Commanders.

The German positions at Gommecourt Salient were amongst the strongest on the Western Front. Responsibility for the attack fell to Lieut. Gen. Snow's VII Corps in Gen. Allenby's Third Army. Haig rejected proposals for the diversionary attack to take place at a weaker point such as Vimy. Beyond allotting 46 (North Midland) Division under Maj. Gen. Montagu-Stuart-Wortley to attack the north of the salient with 56 (London) Division under Maj. Gen. Hull attacking the south of the salient Snow exercised little control. Wortley was on Haig's "black" list after expressing concern at Haig's orders to attack the Hohenzollern Redoubt at Loos, an attack that proved disastrous.

Concerned at the width of No-Mans Land 56 Division dug new trenches to narrow the gap and when they attacked through smoke at 7.30 am on 1st July elements of the Division took their objectives. 46 Division had to contend with unfavourable wind which made smoke ineffective, difficult ground and extensive German barb wire which resulted in their attack being

unsuccessful. Wortley was ordered to attack again but only mounted a weak mid-afternoon attack. The Germans were therefore able to concentrate counter-attacks on the Londoners who by 9 pm were forced to withdraw.

6769 casualties were suffered and Haig endorsed Snow's recommendation that Wortley should be sacked. (TD)

Accumulated Weariness: living with the effects of war: August 2011 (26 att'ded)

After the War 15,000 men applied for pensions as a result of shell shock, but the true number of those who suffered from this was much higher.

Tricia Platts gave an excellent presentation, which included the personal experiences of several soldiers, detailing the causes and symptoms of shell shock and how it was treated. The Naval and Military Press has recently published a War Office Report on shell shock.

In the rush to enlist, few men were rejected, which meant that there were some "veritable weeds" in the army. The appalling conditions in the trenches caused unbearable strain, even on the fittest.

Shell shock was seen as contagious and officers were treated differently to other ranks, being sent to hospitals and rest areas rather than lunatic asylums.

Treatment included experimental and "talking" therapies, massages, workshops and convalescence, but institutions were needed for the more severe casualties where psychotherapy had not worked.

Medical Boards were established to determine whether disablement was caused by war and in 1919 these were taken over by the Ministry of Pensions. Over 1,000,000 applications for pensions for all conditions were made 1919-1920. Discharged servicemen's organisations,

such as NUXS the National Union of Ex-Servicemen, grew up and helped to provide men with support. (Gaynor Greenwood)

CHARLIE'S WAR - PART 1: September, 2011 (24 attended)

'Eee bah gum, a talk given by a southern softie on a fine Yorkshire Regiment in t'Great War, whatever next?'

To that question, the answer must be 'Charlie's War - Part 2', and, for my part, September 2012 cannot come around soon enough to enjoy the second helping of **Chris Payne's** account of his grandfather who we left enjoying the delights of an attachment to the 63rd Sanitary Section.

Through a treasure trove of letters that were written home to Charlie's wife Ida we get a picture of a man who, understandably, would have preferred not to have been were he was, who recognised that the 'beastly Hun' needed to be given what for, and yet recognised where his duty lay, while rightfully being concerned about his 'little woman' back home in a London that occasionally enjoyed the attention of the Zeps and the Gothas, not to say the odd munitions factory explosion. Like countless millions, Charlie Payne was a small cog in the machinery of industrial scale destruction that was the Western Front, yet the letters are from a man who had not lost his humanity and his links home.

Chris Payne's talk took us through his life from Charlie's earliest days from his birth in Westminster, briefly sharing with us the family background and then his entry into the khaki-clad ranks of the military, even though his uniform was somewhat backwards in coming forward! Categorized as B1 on entry, some eight and a half months of robust training in

such exotic locations as Clacton, West Hartlepool and Neasham ensued, all of it designed to make him fit for the front and at the end of July, 1917 he would be sent to France. Having started out by enlisting with the East Surreys, he left England as a Green Howard, only to become a member of the 2/5 Bn, Duke of Wellington's Regiment in France. Such were the exigencies of the military.

Having now trained as a Lewis Gunner, Charlie's first taste of action comes at the Battle of Cambrai, where his Battalion, as part of the 62nd Division's 186th Brigade, would be engaged at Havrincourt and the Bois de Bourlon between the 20th and 28th November, and later in defensive positions established to forestall the German counter-attacks in early December. This is followed by lengthy marches to rest areas, a mouth watering Christmas dinner of stewed beef followed by raisin duff (what no custard?), and employment with the 63rd Section fashioning ablution furniture.

Chris Payne skilfully blends the broader military picture with Charlie's life as seen through his letters, importantly reminding us that each man who served was a human being and not solely a khaki-clad cog. All that I can now do is to award Chris my Standard and Poors rating of 'Triple E', by saying that the talk was Excellent, Enjoyable and Educational, and all the better for being in Estuary English - by 'eck! (BH Bertram)

A German soldier's journey from the Baltic to the Black Sea: October 2011 (29 attended)

When commencing his talk **Andrew Brooks** shared with us one of his objectives post retirement which was to increase his knowledge of the Eastern Front. He started buying material in 1995

but it seemed the purchase of some 350 postcards written by Hans Degendorf, who served in the Motor Transport Column of the Bavarian Cavalry Division, has been the catalyst to Andrew increasing his knowledge of places, geography and all things military east of the river Oder in WW1.

After giving an overview of the campaigns in the east culminating in the abdication of the Czar in March 1917 Andrew told how Hans Degendorf's war probably started in the St Mihiel Salient in March 1915 before moving east of Konigsberg. He then expertly described by reference to the many cards written by Hans and little seen maps how Hans moved south from Lithuania via the Pripet Marshes, Bucharest and other places to cross the Black Sea to the Crimea from where he was evicted in September 1918.

Andrew concluded his talk with a slide show of postcard photos which he had not been able to use in his main presentation. It was an evening which revealed to me (and possibly others) a major aspect of WW1 where my knowledge could usefully be increased.
TD

PROGRAMME OF FUTURE MEETINGS

After last November's errors in this year's programme I hope there are no problems this time! However in producing Despatch I wonder whether we should change our meetings to the second Monday of each month.

This would mean **all** meetings are on the 2nd Monday except possibly at Easter, we would be more festive at our meeting in December and it could benefit meetings attendances and Members.

A suitable issue to talk about at next month's AGM?

2012 PROGRAMME

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

Dec 5th: "*A.G.M. and Christmas Social*" - An invitation to members to speak for ten minutes on any WW1 topic.

Jan 9th (2nd MONDAY IN MONTH):
"*German South West Africa, 1914-15*" - John Restorick (Bradford Mech. Inst. WW1 Group)

Feb 6th: *To be advised* - Peter Hart (Oral Historian (IWM) & author)

Mar 5th: "*Army Chaplaincy, a Historical View*" - Rev. John Bolton OBE MA (ex Army Chaplain)

April 2nd: "*A Line in the Sand*" - James Barr (Author)

May 8th TUESDAY: "*Macdonell's Multi Continental & 3 Dimensional War*" - Terry Dean (N Lancs W.F.A.)

June 11th (2nd MONDAY IN MONTH)
"*German Commerce War Part 3 - Under the Sea*" - Graham Kemp (N Lancs W.F.A.)

July 2nd: "*A Nurse's Life in France and Flanders*" - Sue Light (Sussex W.F.A.)

Aug 6th: "*Fritz Harber - German Scientist at War*" - Dave Wright (Scientific Historian)

Sept 3rd: "*Charlie's War Part 2 - 2/5 Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment, Jan 1918 to Feb 1919*" - Dr Chris Payne

Oct 1st: "*POWs in Russia*" - Andrew Brooks (N Lancs W.F.A.)

Nov 5th: "*Chairman's Night*" - Stan Wilkinson

Dec 3rd: "*A.G.M. and Christmas Social*" - An invitation to members to speak for ten minutes on any WW1 topic

BALLONS DES VOSGES: Terry Dean (+S)

The edges of the pillbox aperture frames a stunning westward looking view of one element of the German's panorama from their positions in the le Linge complex of trenches in the Vosges Mountains.

I had been attracted there following Andrew's account in last November's Despatch of his brief visit to WW1 sites in the central Vosges.

During WW1 the trees would be obliterated by shellfire and the footpath to aid 21st century sightseers in front of the pillbox would not exist thus affording the German's dominating short and long views over the French positions. No wonder the French had appalling losses in their 1915 attacks. You can read and see more about what I found in my all too brief venture into the Ballons des Vosges by visiting our website.



LANCASHIRE'S BEST KEPT WAR MEMORIAL 2011

Croston has won the award for the best kept War Memorial for 2011 with Chipping and Heapey being commended for their entries.

Museum of Lancashire

I understand the renovated museum will reopen on **Saturday 26th November**. A World War I gallery will be a significant feature with many items in the display not having been on public exhibition before.

Branch Members will hopefully visit and I look forward to a report for next Despatch.



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