CHESTERFIELD WFA

Newsletter and Magazine issue 25

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Welcome to Issue 25 - the December 2017 Newsletter and Magazine of Chesterfield WFA.

The next Chesterfield Branch Meeting will be held on Tuesday 9th January 2018 with a 7.30 start. Note change of date.

This, our first meeting of 2018 will be the Branch AGM. Following that business being concluded, Branch Chairman, Tony Bolton, will present a review of the last year of The Great War 1918.

Councillor Steve Brunt (a WFA member) will also be present to tell members of Chesterfield Borough Council`s plans for Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the final and concluding year of the Great War

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

Grant Cullen – Branch Secretary

Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2018

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

January	9th	**Jan.9th Note Date Change .** Branch AGM followed by a talk by Tony Bolton (Branch Chairman) on the key events of the last year of the war 1918. Councillor Steve Brunt (a member of the WFA) will also be present to tell members about Chesterfield Borough Council`s plans for a WW1 2018 Commemorations Group.
February	6th	**Tim Lynch** ***`The Unknown Soldiers - the BEF of 1918`*** By 1918 the BEF was mostly made up of conscripts as it launched the most successful campaign in its history. How did an army many regarded as "shirkers" fight so effectively? Tim Lynch is a freelance writer and battlefield guide. This talk is based on research into his own family's part in the Great War.
March	6th	**David Humberston,** Chairman of the Leicester Branch, will be making his first visit to WFA Chesterfield to talk about ***`Women Spies in The Great War`***
April	3rd	**Peter Hart** making his annual pilgrimage to Chesterfield. His presentation will be ` ***Not Again`- the German offensive on the Aisne, May 1918.***
May	1st	Making his debut as a speaker to the Chesterfield Branch will be **Jonathon Steer** who will compare and contrast the ***`BEF at Mons in 1914 with the BEF at Mons in 1918`***
June	5th	**Rob Thompson –** always a popular visitor to Chesterfield Branch. ***"Running Out of Road. Supplying the BEF During the 100 Days Offensives. 1918*****".** This is a new talk dealing with the logistical and supply problems the BEF had as the end of the war approached (BEF needed Armistice as much as Germans).
July	3rd	**Dr. Graham Kemp.** ***"American Expeditionary Force"*** **–** the story and experiences of the AEF, 1917-18. Talk covers the training of the new Army from the States to France. Taking in the experience, the hardship and humour. It looks at their first action at Belleville wood, and then turns to the success and tragedy of 'Argonne Wood.' It reveals the way the US Army contributed to the ending of the war and why afterwards US turned its back on Europe.
August	7TH	**Peter Dennis** is an artist who lives in Mansfield but he has made a name for himself as an illustrator for the Osprey series of monographs on The Great War (as well as other conflicts from ancient times to the present) Peter will explain how he carries out his researches for technical accuracy. He will also bring some of his original artworks for members to view.
September	4th	**John Beech**. "***The Great Escape"***. John needs no introduction to Chesterfield members as he rarely misses a meeting. In September 1917 a group of POW German officers escaped from where they were being held (now on the site of the University of Nottingham). Using his meticulous research, John will tell this story.
October	2nd	Making a welcome return to Chesterfield will be our former Chairman / Secretary, **Peter Hodgkinson**, who will explain the ***Battle of Selle in October 1918.***
November	6th	**Bryn Hammond**. Another leading light in the field of historical research, study and publication on the Great War, Bryn will *discuss* ***`The 500 piece jig-saw: Tank – Other arms Cooperation in the First World War.***
December	4th	Rounding the year off in style will be **Dr Phylomena Badsey** on ***"Auxiliary Hospitals and the role of Voluntary Aid Detachment Nurses during the First World War"***

Issue 25 – list of contents

A Personal note from the Chair (18)

On Remembrance Sunday this year I went to our village service which was held at 2pm in St Mary's Church followed by wreath laying at the war memorial. I expect many of you did something similar. I have to admit that for me Remembrance Sunday always brings to mind my late father who served in the last war and in Palestine in 1948, he was not a casualty but his birthday was 9 November and so the two occasions are always linked in my mind. What really surprised me this year was how soon it seemed to arrive after last year. I know as you get older time seem to accelerate but it made me realise that hardly have we started to remember the First World War Centenary than the final centenary year is imminent. This realisation has been nurtured by the fact that it seems every available hour at present has found be re-reading and researching 1918 so that I can deliver a thought provoking talk for our next meeting. This raises an interesting thought though – what will I do for 2019? Of course that is if you want me to continue as Chairman and to open the year's season of talks. I comforted myself with the thought that 1919 in the immediate aftermath of the war could provide some interesting subjects.

I know that the post centenary world is causing some concern at' WFA Head Office' and I guess that it will be a topic of discussion at next year's meeting of Branch Chairmen which is due to be held in London in February. As far as Chesterfield is concerned your Committee will be keen to build on the current support we are receiving from the membership as numbers at meetings in 2017 have been consistently higher than previously. There is no discernible reduction in the interest and enthusiasm of attendees and we will shortly be starting to put together our 2019 programme. If you have suggestions for speakers or topics you would like to see covered please don't be shy in contacting one of us either at the meeting, by email or phone, our contact details are in this newsletter.

Finally might I say that I hope you will attend the AGM on 9 January, a good turnout is a sure sign of a healthy organisation. I know we try to get the official business over smartly but if you have anything you wish to raise please let Grant know in time to include it on the agenda.

Wishing you, your friends and families the warmest wishes for the festive season, I hope Santa brings you everything on your lists! and please remember that the January meeting is on the 9th and NOT the first Tuesday.

Secretary`s Scribbles

It seems ages since we had a Branch Newsletter & Magazine but here we go with what will be the last issue for 2017 – where has all the time gone! Since I retired two years ago I often wonder when indeed I had any time for work – work which for the final six years involved a daily 80 mile round trip to and from the factory.

As a WFA Branch I think we must look back on 2017 with some satisfaction – good meetings again very well attended. On behalf of your committee I would like to thank all of you who supported us so well. It never ceases to amaze me the wealth of talent we have in our branch – you only have to look at the amount of research being done on a wide variety of subjects by our members – some of whom have presented this to all of us. More to come in 2018 – and hopefully into 2019 and beyond.

There are reports in this issue on our September, October & November meetings but have held over that for December simply because I have not had time to write up my notes on Professor Derry`s presentation. What a man indeed, speaking eloquently for 90 minutes without any notes or visual aids.

Good to see our youngest member of your committee, Jon-Paul Harding writing about his successful attempts to find out more about his great-grandfather – and finally tracking down and visiting his grave. The emotions he must have experienced in that cemetery….well, one can imagine.

WFA Calendars are still available – details of how to obtain one (£10 each of which £5 comes to Branch funds) are elsewhere in this Newsletter. Distribution of these is in the capable hands of our Branch Vice Chair Mark Macartney who was appointed a Trustee of the WFA this year – a very well deserved accolade for someone who spends a big proportion of his time on WFA business – reasons which have kept him away from Branch meetings in November and December.

It has been great to see new faces coming to their first branch meeting – and coming back again ! I have e mailed everyone with our programme for 2018 – it is also included with this Newsletter and once again it is a blend of `youth` and `experience` - a blend which seems to work, judging by our attendances at meetings. Most, but not all of the presentations, will focus on events 100 years ago – 1918 – the last year of this terrible conflict – the effects of which are still felt in the present day. Now we start to look at a programme for 2019 !

As we are only a few days away from Christmas may I on behalf of your committee wish one and all Seasons` Greetings and Best Wishes for 2018. We look forward to seeing you in January – REMEMBER – the meeting in January is on JANUARY 9th – for this month only the SECOND Tuesday in the month. This is of course the Branch AGM and as our Chairman, Tony, has said in his notes, we are looking for a good turnout of members. If any member wishes to stand for any of the offices or raise anything at the AGM, please let me know.

Grant Cullen – Branch Secretary – 07824628638 – grantcullen@hotmail.com

We recently received the undernoted from Andy Prada of the Durand Group

" Hi Grant

Just thought I'd send you a bit of photographic graffiti from our recent trip to the Hulluch tunnel, to wet your branch whistle so to speak!

Fact: 46th Division spent more time in the Loos Salient than any other division during the Great War and the graffiti proves this. We have other stuff regarding the trench mortar batteries. "

- One of the most respected organisations working on the Western Front today is the Durand Group. This organisation is arguably the world-authority on subterranean warfare during the First World War and it consists of a cadre of professionals made up of retired and still serving members of the military (encompassing firearms and bomb disposal experts) academics, archaeologists, leading authorities on the First World War, mechanics, engineers, Health and Safety professionals, a film maker, a doctor and three surveyors. Several members of the group have been decorated for their armed service and all are vastly experienced in conducting archaeological research underground. Safety is of primary importance and stringent risk assessments are carried out before any project is given the go-ahead. The group has also formed extensive links across Northern France with landowners, farmers, politicians and archaeologists, and this, along with their professionalism, has enabled access to some of the most unique parts of the old frontlines – the many souterraines, dugouts and complex tunnel systems that lie undisturbed, deep below the surface of the old battlefields.

Finding Great-Grandad

By Jon-Paul Harding.

As an 11year old boy my interest in World War One began when my Nanna gave me my great grandfathers (George John Ransom) medals, death penny and some post cards which he had sent to his wife and some which they in turn had sent to him. Sadly these sat in a drawer for many years until I started researching the family tree. I did not know anything about which regiment in which he served, all I knew was the family story that he volunteered for a mission into no man's land and he was shot while returning and was found the next day face down in the mud.

So the search began. I looked at the medals which gave me his name, regiment and service number but on his medals they have spelt his name wrongly it reads Rawsom instead of Ransom which was the first stumbling block as which name to research. The regiment he was in was the Leinster Regiment 2nd Battalion C company 10th platoon and his service number was 15280 . I started to look everywhere I could think of but found nothing apart from the information on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website which led me to where he was buried which was the Longuenesse Souvenir Cemetery in St Omer. It also gave me another service number so now had two to try and figure out. But that is all I found out as after searching Army records, they had more than likely been destroyed in the bombing in WW2. After many more hours in front of the computer I managed by luck to find out that he had been shot in the buttocks and been taken to the General hospital in St Omer but unfortunately died on the 10th of August 1917 of which I can only think of been through infection.

I also contacted the Leinster Regiment Association which helped me to understand the Regiment he was in and why an Irish Regiment as I could not understand a man born in London and lived in Sheffield being in an Irish Regiment. They said he would of been in a training reserve battalion which was in Etaples in I.B. D 35 in France (which I found from a post card that was returned to the family) and one day a list would be put up and your name would be on it to which battalion you where needed in as they might have needed replacements after losses so off he went to the Leinster's.

I managed to find the regimental war diaries and read them but again no mention of the mission or George John Ransom ,but it was good to find out some of the place's they had been and what the Battalion had been up to in the time George John Ransom was with the Leinster's.

So in all this researching it was my ambition to visit his grave in France. I started to look at trips to the battlefields of the western front to see if any went near , so I booked in the hope of visiting but on the trips I went on I was unable to visit as St Omer was too far away. But this year, (2017) I found a trip which went to St Omer so I booked it straight away in the hope I would be able to eventually go and pay my respects. The company that I have travelled with try to do personal visits so I talked to the guide and he spoke to the drivers and between them the managed to take me to the cemetery whilst we were in St Omer. So finally on the 27th of September 2017 I got to go and pay my respects and visit Private George John Ransom 15280 Leinster Regiment it was an emotional and thought provoking time for me and it felt like a weight had been lifted. I had taken a Poppy cross and some other bits to leave on his grave.

I have also visited my other great grandfather and a great uncle my great grandfather Lance Corporal Gervase Litton 36584 11th Battalion Manchester regiment he is on the Thiepval Memorial and died on the 11th January 1917 but again I have not been able to find out any more information as his records were also destroyed. My great uncle Serjeant Wilfred Litton 38105 20th Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers he is on the memorial wall at Tyne Cot he died on the 24th October 1917 I have also not been able to find much more about him as well as The other two his records were destroyed as well .The sad thing is that I have never seen any pictures of them until earlier this year when I was given a picture of my great uncle which was fantastic to see as was able to put a face to a name.

My search will still continue to try and find all I can of my family member's During the WW1 as I can imagine that there is much more to discover.

LEST WE FORGET

As previously advised, thanks to a kind donation from a WFA member, we acquired a large number of Bulletin and Stand To! magazines. If anyone wants any of these to fill in gaps in their collections, please get in touch – a modest donation to Branch funds is all we ask. I can bring any copies members would want to any Branch meeting or I can post them out – postage extra. All magazines are in good condition although some of the older ones the staples are a bit discoloured.

A number have already found new homes but at time of writing availability is as follows:-

Bulletin issues 9 – 27 inclusive; 35-39 inc; 44-50 inc; 52-54 inc; 93 & 94; 96-107 inclusive.

Stand To! issues – 11, 13, 15-16-17, 20, 24-25, 29, 31-37 , 40-56 , 90-108 inclusive.

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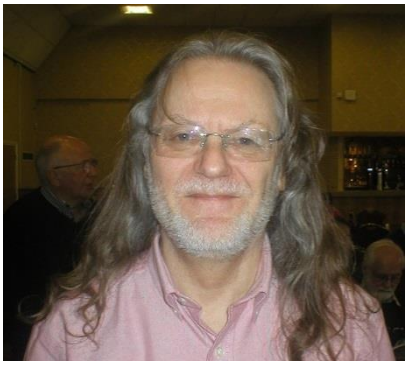
September Meeting

After the normal opening formalities, Branch Chairman, Tony Bolton welcomed our speaker for the evening, Alan Atkinson, now looking fit again – and indeed very dapper – having been unable to present at our August meeting due to illness.



The title of Alan`s presentation was ***Propaganda – the British Way !***

Alan, who retired from Shell Oil in 2011, and completed the MA First World War Studies at Birmingham University in 2013. Drawing on his researches for his MA, Alan went on to explain how the British exploited Propaganda to their advantage.

By way of introduction Alan said that he would define propaganda, look at propaganda in the past, immediate pre war, during the war, what it was meant to deliver and because of the nature of the topic the presentation would be very visual. We would have a look at the aims of wartime propaganda and its organisation.

The first thing is to decide `what is propaganda` - the word comes from the latin to describe the congregation of cardinals for the propagation of the faith. In todays terms – and here Alan quoted from the Oxford English Dictionary –

`Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature used to promote a political cause or point of view`

Of course propaganda is not an invention of the 20th century – one can go back to the Bayeaux Tapaestry – 1066 and all that – which gives a very biased account of the Norman invasion and conquest of England by William the Conqueror. Fast forward to Richard III – was he a cruel murderous tyrant – or a victim of Tudor propaganda ?

The Napoleonic Wars were, from the British perspective, the last significant continental war involving Britain in Europe, sure there was other wars in between, Crimea, South Africa, but in

terms of a global scale this was a major conflict, the likes of which was not seen again until 1914.

James Gillray, considered to be the father of the political cartoon – he painted the undernoted cartoon when it was possible that a deal might be struck between Britain and France "The Plumb-pudding in danger, _ or _ State Epicures taking un Petit Souper" (1805), shows Pitt and Napoleon, both in full uniform, seated either side of the globe, a large plum pudding, Pitt using a knife to carve a large slice through the Atlantic, to include the West Indies, while Napoleon uses a large sword to carve Europe away, leaving only the British Isles, Scandinavia and Russia. The cartoon rather mocks Napoleon – a trait in propaganda in the The Great War, something we will come to later

What happened next ? During the 19th century there was various wars but nothing on the scale of the Napoleonics…or The Great War yet to come.

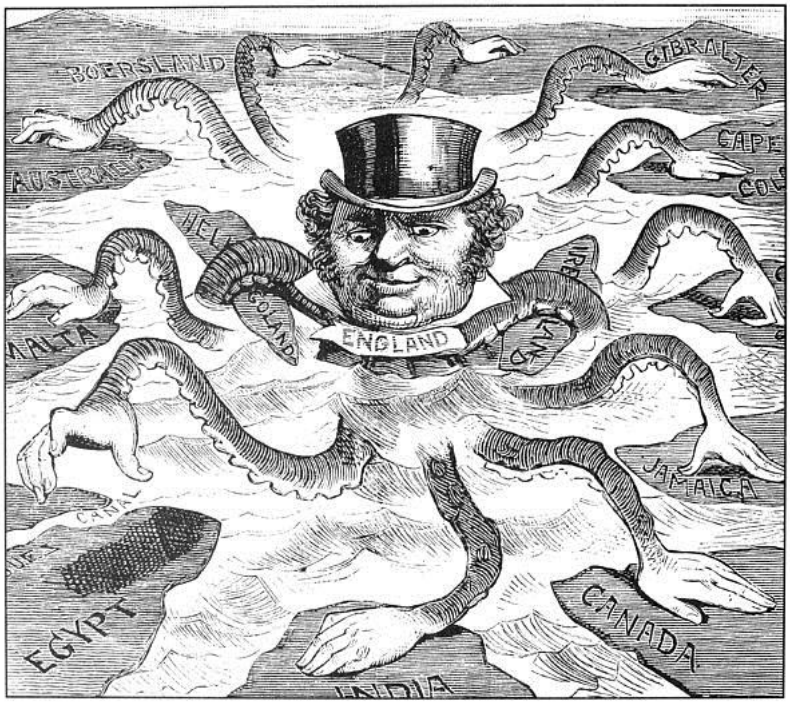
The main threat to European stability and indeed the British Empire in India was Russia so it was no surprise to find in the pages of Punch satirical cartoons `sending up` the Russian Czar. Later Punch cartoons featured the American civil war – and the bogey man the Russian Czar and here we have a cartoon of Lincoln meeting Czar Alexander – giving the impression of a meeting of two bloody oppressors.

A recurring theme of propaganda in The Great War – and indeed before it in terms of artwork, featured the `Four Ms`

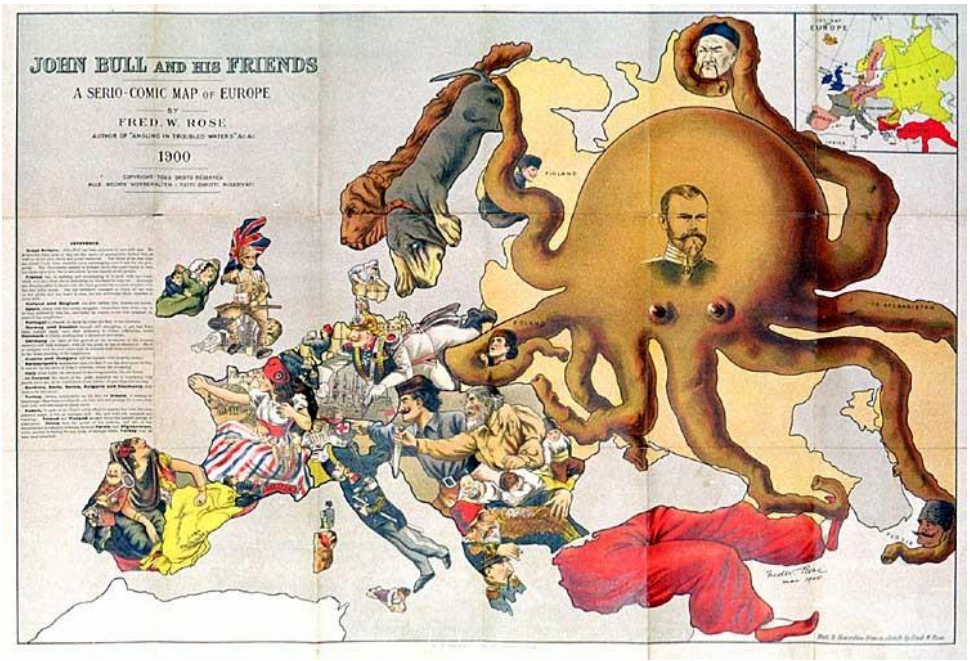
- Maps
    - Mockery
        - Molluscs
            - Monsters

All of which would be encountered as we go along.

The next picture showed an American cartoon having a go at Britain in the 1880s for being expansionist and imperialist.

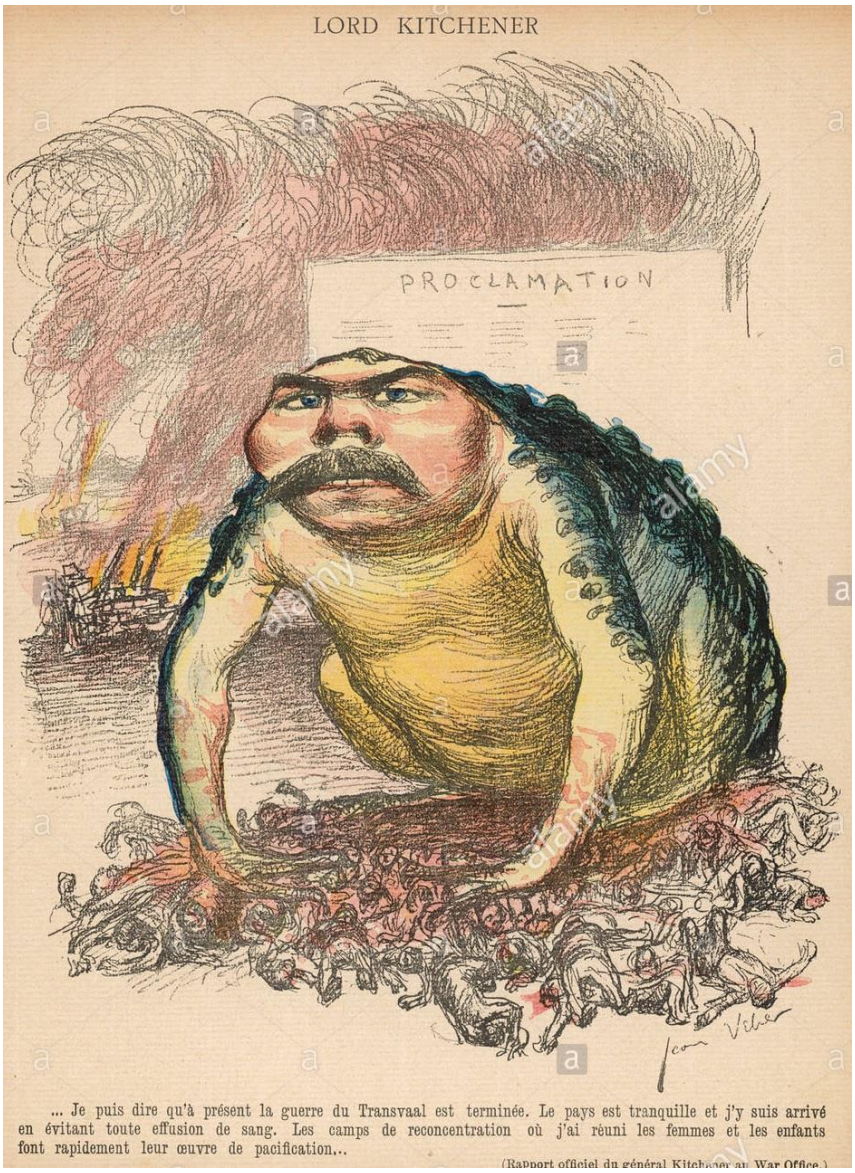


In 1900 a very famous artist Frederick Rose, who specialised in what was known as `serio-comic maps` was still portraying Russia as the expansionist threat



Although the British Empire expanded to a position where it was said that the `sun never set` there were however some fears and indeed failures. Following the unification of Germany and the Franco-Prussin War of 1870 it became obvious that the `new` Germany was intent in finding its place too, in the sun, in the form of an overseas colonial empire and in Britain their was aniety for what was perceived as imperial `competition`.

The Second Boer War threw up one or two heroes including Robert Baden-Powell but it was the poor performance of the British Army and its treatment of Boer civilians in concentration camps that caught the attention of the public and even Kitchener was the subject of cartoon mockery, including one cartoon which depicted him as a toad.



Britain had no propaganda agencies at the war's outbreak, but an organization was soon established at Wellington House under Charles Masterman in response] to propaganda activities in Germany. During most of the war, responsibility for propaganda was divided between various agencies, resulting in a lack of coordination. It was not until 1918 that activities were centralized under the Ministry of Information.

When the war finished, almost all of the propaganda machinery was dismantled. There were various interwar debates regarding British use of propaganda, particularly atrocity propaganda. Commentators such as Arthur Posonby exposed many of the alleged atrocities as either lies or exaggeration, leading to a suspicion surrounding atrocity stories which meant a reluctance to believe the realities of Nazi persecution in the Second World War.

In Germany, military officials such as Ludendorff suggested that British propaganda had been instrumental in their defeat.

Organisation

Britain had no propaganda agencies in place at the war's outbreak. This led to what Sanders and Taylor have termed "an impressive exercise in improvisation". Various organisations were established during the war, and several attempts at centralisation and greater coordination between these agencies occurred. By 1918, these attempts at centralisation were mostly fulfilled by the Ministry of Information

The poster "What did you do in the Great War, daddy?` " played on the guilt of those who did not volunteer.

The initial establishment of a propaganda agency was a response to the extensive propaganda activities of Germany. Charles Mastermann was chosen to head the new organisation, which was to be based at Wellington House, the London headquarters of the National Insurance Commission. After two conferences in September, the war propaganda agency began its work, which was largely conducted in secret, unknown by parliament.[1]Until 1916, Wellington House was the main British propaganda organisation, with work focused on propaganda to the United States, although divisions also existed for other countries. Wellington House had expanded significantly by the time of its second report in February 1916, with new departments and an increase in staff.

The Bureau began its propaganda campaign on 2 September 1914 when Masterman invited 25 leading British authors to Wellington House to discuss ways of best promoting Britain's interests during the war. Several of the writers agreed to write pamphlets and books that would promote the government's point of view.

Foreign Office centralisation (1916)

A lack of coordination between these various organisations led to propaganda activities being centralised under the Foreign Office following a conference in 1916. The Neutral Press Committee was absorbed into the News Department, and Wellington House was placed under the control of the Foreign Office.

Only Masterman was resistant to this reorganisation, fearing the loss of independence that it implied. However, later criticism of the Foreign Office's control of propaganda emerged during the year, particularly from the War Office. After DavidLloyd George, who had been instrumental in the establishment of Wellington House, became prime minister, the propaganda machinery was once more reorganised.

Propaganda under Lloyd George (1917)

In January 1917, Lloyd George asked Robert Donald, editor of the Daily Chronicle, to produce a report on current propaganda arrangements. Donald's report was critical regarding the continued lack of coordination, asserting that "the condition into which publicity and propaganda work has drifted at the present time is due to the casual way in which it originated and to the promiscuous way it has expanded." However, Wellington House's activities in America were praised.

Immediately after the production of this report, the cabinet decided to implement its plan to establish a separate Department of State to be responsible for propaganda. Although not Donald's first choice, John Buchan was appointed head of this new organisation in February 1917. The department was housed at the Foreign Office, with the title of the Department of Information. However, this organisation was also criticised, and Robert Donald argued for further reorganisation, an idea supported by other members of the advisory committee, such as Lords Northcliffe and Burnham. Buchan was temporarily placed under the command of Sir Edward Carson, until another report was produced by Robert Donald later that year.

This second report again highlighted a persistent lack of unity and coordination, although this time even Wellington House was rebuked for its inefficiency and haphazard nature of distribution. Both Masterman and Buchan answered the criticisms in this report by suggesting the investigation behind it was limited in scope. Nevertheless, criticisms against the current propaganda system increased and, following the resignation of Carson from the War Cabinet in 1918, it was decided that a new ministry should be created.

The Ministry of Information (1918)

In February 1918, Lloyd George entrusted Lord Beaverbrook with the responsibility of establishing the new Ministry of Information. From March 4, 1918, this ministry took over control of all propaganda activities, being split into three departments to oversee domestic, foreign and military propaganda. The foreign propaganda division was under the headship of John Buchan and consisted of four branches; propaganda in military zones was the responsibility of the War Office department MI7; domestic propaganda was controlled by the National War Aims Committee. A further organisation was set up under Lord Nothcliffe to deal with propaganda to enemy countries, and was responsible to the War Cabinet rather than the Minister of Information.

His ministry was a fulfilment of the recommendations regarding centralisation laid out in the second report of Donald, acting as an independent body outside of the remit of the Foreign Office.

Nevertheless, there were still problems and criticisms related to the new ministry. Tensions existed between the new Ministry of Information and older ministries such as the Foreign Office and the War Office, and many in government were concerned about the growing power of the press as symbolised by the journalistic control of the new propaganda ministry.

In October, Lord Beaverbrook became seriously ill and his deputy, Arnold Bennett, assumed his position for the final weeks of the war. After peace was declared, the propaganda machinery was essentially dissolved and control of propaganda returned to the Foreign Office.

Methods

Various methods of propaganda were used by British propagandists during the war, with emphasis on the need for credibility.

Literature

Various written forms of propaganda were distributed by British agencies during the war. These could be books, leaflets, official publications, ministerial speeches or royal messages. They were targeted at influential individuals, such as journalists and politicians, rather than a mass audience.

Leaflets were the main form of propaganda in the first years of the war, and were distributed to various foreign countries. These leaflets were academic in tone and factual in nature, distributed through unofficial channels. By June 1915, 2.5 million copies of propagandistic documents had been circulated by Wellington House in various languages; eight months later, the figure was 7 million.

Leaflet production was greatly reduced under the Ministry of Information, to approximately a tenth of previous production. This was both a result in changing ideas of the most efficient methods of propaganda and a response to paper shortage.

Media Coverage

British propagandists also sought to influence the foreign press, by providing it with information through the Neutral Press Committee and the Foreign Office. Special telegraph agencies were established in various European cities, including Bucharest, Bilbao and Amsterdam, in order to facilitate the spread of information.

Film

British propagandists were slow in exploiting cinema as a form of propaganda. Wellington House had suggested its use soon after the war's outbreak, but the suggestion was overruled by the War Office. It was only in 1915 that Wellington House was permitted to implement its plans for film propaganda. A Cinema Committee was formed, producing and distributing films to allied and neutral countries.

The first notable film was `Britain Prepared` (December 1915), which was distributed worldwide. The film used military footage to promote ideas of British strength and determination in the war effort.

In August 1916, Wellington House produced the film `Battle of the Somme`, which was met favourably.

Recruitment posters

Recruitment was a central theme of domestic propaganda until the introduction of conscription in January 1916. The most common theme for recruitment posters was patriotism, which evolved into appeals for people to do their 'fair share'. Among the most famous of the posters of the war were the "Lord Kitchener Wants You¬ " posters, which depicted Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener above the words "WANTS YOU".

Other concepts used on recruitment posters included the fear of invasion, and atrocity stories. The "Remember Scarborough" campaign, recalling the 1914 attack on Scarborough, is an example of a recruitment poster combining these ideas.

Paintings

James Clarke`s 1914 painting entitled *The Great Sacrifice* was reproduced as the souvenir print issued by The Graphic illustrated newspaper with its Christmas number. The painting depicted a young soldier lying dead on the battlefield beneath a vision of Christ on the Cross. It had an immediate appeal to many, and prints were snapped up by churches, schools, and mission halls. One reviewer stated that the print had "turned railway bookstalls into wayside shrines." Framed copies were hung in churches next to Rolls of Honour, and clergymen gave sermons on the theme of the painting. The original oil painting was acquired by Quen Mary, wife of George V but several other copies were made. Clark also painted *The Bombardment of the Hartlepools (16 December 1914)* Clark designed a number of war memorials and his painting was the basis for several memorial stained glass windows in churches.

Atrocity propaganda

Atrocity Propaganda, which aimed to mobilise hatred of the German enemy by spreading details of their atrocities, real or alleged, was used extensively by Britain in the First World War. It reached its peak in 1915, with much of the atrocities related to Germany`s invasion of Belgium. Newspaper accounts of "Terrible Vengeance" first used the word "Hun" to describe the Germans in view of atrocities in Belgium. A continuous stream of stories ensued, painting the Germans as destructive barbarians, and many of the atrocities being reported were entirely fictitious. One of the most widely disseminated documents of atrocity propaganda during the war was the Report of the Committee on alleged German Atrocities, or *Bryce Report*, of May 1915. This report, based on 1,200 witness depositions, depicted the systematic murder and violation of Belgians by German soldiers during their invasion of Belgium, including details of rape and the slaughter of children. Published by a committee of lawyers and historians, headed by the respected former ambassador Lord Bryce, the Report had a significant impact both in Britain and in America, making front-page headlines in major newspapers. It was also translated into 30 languages for distribution into allied and neutral countries. Its impact in America was heightened by the fact that it was published soon after the sinking of the Lusitania. In response to the Bryce Report, Germany published its own atrocity counter-propaganda, in the form of the 'White Book' (*Die völkerrechtswidrige Führung des belgischen Volkskriegs*/The illegal leadership of the Belgian People's War) which detailed atrocities committed by Belgian civilians against German soldiers. However, its impact was limited outside of a few German-language publications; indeed, some interpreted it as an admission of guilt.

Other publications referring to the violation of Belgian neutrality were subsequently distributed in neutral countries. For example, Wellington House disseminated a pamphlet entitled *Belgium and Germany: Texts and Documents* in 1915, which was written by the Belgian Foreign Minister Davignon and featured details of alleged atrocities.

Edith Cavell

Edith Cavell was a nurse in Brussels who was involved in a network helping allied prisoners to escape. This was in violation of German military law, and as a result she was court-martialled for treason, and having been found guilty was executed in 1915. The story was reported, however, in a way that presented the event as the murder of an innocent houser of refugees.

Following her death, the story was reproduced by Wellington House for many propaganda campaigns, both domestically and to the United States. Pamphlets and images depicted her execution as an act of German barbarity.

Soon after this incident, the French shot two German nurses who aided German prisoners of war to escape. German propagandists chose not to use this as propaganda.

The Lusitania medal

(left)The Selfridge replica of the German medal by Goetz in its case

British propagandists were able to use the sinking of the Lusitania as atrocity propaganda, as a result of a commemorative medal privately struck by German artist Karl Goetz a year later. The British Foreign Office obtained a copy of the medal and sent photographs of it to America. Later, to build on this anti-German sentiment, a boxed replica was produced by Wellington House, accompanied by a leaflet explaining the barbarism of Germany. Hundreds of thousands of these replicas were produced in total, whereas Goetz's original was made in an edition of fewer than 500.

Alan then drew his interesting and polished presentation to and end by bringing us right up to date – by comparing his first illustration , the painting by James Gilray– that of Pitt and Napoleon carving up the world – with a cartoon which appeared in December 2016 on the cover of the Spectator magazine – showing Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump – in similar uniforms to Pitt and Napoleon – and in similar pose - carving up the world.

In propaganda little has changed in 200 years !

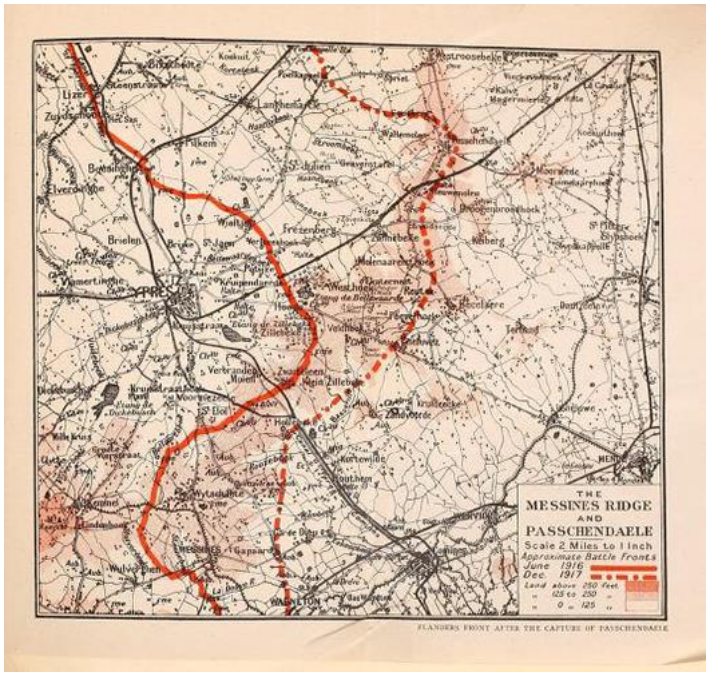
The evening was concluded by a Q & A session before Branch Chairman Tony Bolton proposed a vote of thanks to Alan, our speaker, to which those in attendance responded appropriately.

October Meeting

The presentation by Branch Regular Murray McVey for the October meeting – almost exactly one hundred years to the day - was on The Battle of Broodseinde, 4 October 1917. Now retired, Murray enjoyed a long and successful teaching career and has been a sought-after guide for NST since 1999. He has a lifelong interest in the WWI battlefields, lecturing on the subject in the UK. Murray regularly leads both WWI and WWII focused tours in France and Belgium.

This Battle fought near Ypres in Flanders, at the east end of the Gheluvelt plateau, by the British Second and Fifth armies and the German 4th Army. The battle was the most successful Allied attack of the Battle of Passchendaele and was the last of three successful “bite and hold” battles launched by General Herbert Plumer during the middle phase of the Third Battle of Ypres. That battle had opened with an ambitious attempt to push the Germans back along a long stretch of their line. That effort had failed in the mud. Plumer’s Second Army had then taken over from the Fifth Army. Plumer believed in making limited advances in attacks on shorter stretches of the line, stopping once a pre-determined point had been reached and digging in ready to repulse the inevitable German counterattack.

Murray opened by showing a map of the Ypres Salient in 1917 which showed the rail network, so important in ensuring an effective logistical supply.



The Battle of Broodseinde was the third "bite and hold" battle of the Passchendaele campaign with the intention of capturing the Gheluvelt Plateau. The Gheluvelt Plateau ran along the southern edge of the Ypres Salient, and formed a formidable barrier to further eastward attacks, and so stopped Haig`s plan to breakout of the salient. General Haig believed that the

Germans were on the edge of collapse, and had ordered the exploitation forces (infantry, tanks and cavalary, as well as an amphibious forces on the Belgium coast) readied for the expected collapse. However, considering the continuing German counterattacks (nine were conducted immediately after the Battle of Menin Road, as well as more on 30 September and 1 October), it should have been apparent that German morale was still strong.

Once the Gheluvelt Plateau was captured, General Haig believed that two further attacks, planned for 10 October (moved forward to 9 October) and 13 October, moved forward to 12 October) would result in a breakthrough. Even the subordinate Army commanders (General Plumer commanding the British Second Army and General Gough commanding the British Fifth Army) believed that the breakthrough was imminent.

German defences

German defences consisted mainly of mutually supporting pillboxes, protected by barbed wire entanglements. While they were scattered across the terrain, there were large numbers of them concentrated along the crest of the Gheluvelt Plateau (where they were used by artillery observed and staff headquarters), as well as part of the **Flandern I** line on the forward slope of the Passchendaele Ridge. In addition to the pillboxes, there were numerous artillery positions behind the Gheluvelt Plateau, where (protected from direct observation) they could fire in support of the defensive troops.

British objectives

What were the Allied forces and objectives of the Battle of Broodseinde ?

The British objective was to capture the crest of the Gheluvelt Plateau on the south eastern flank of the Ypres Salient (and hence protect the southern flank of the Ypres Salient, as well as allow further attacks on the Passchendaele Ridge to the East). As a result, 12 divisions were involved in the attack over a 14,000 yards (13,000 m) front.

Preparation

The battle was originally planned to start on 6 October, but was moved forward to 4 October. The original "bite and hold" battle (the Battle of Menin Road allowed three weeks of preparation. Due to the increasing chance of rain affecting the battle (as occurred earlier during the Battle of Langemarck), the interval between attacks were shortened. This had a negative effect on the battles as it allowed less time to prepare (resulting in more German artillery escaping counter-artillery fire and less damage done to defensive barbed wire and pillboxes).

Similarly, the pre-battle artillery barrage was also shortened. For the Battle of Menin Road, a week long artillery barrage was used, and for the Battle of Polygon Wood, a 24 hour long

artillery barrage was used. No pre-battle artillery barrages were used or the Battle of Broodseinde. As an alternative, a series of "practice" barrages were unleashed, beginning on 27 September. The practice barrages increased to two barrages a day from 1 October onwards. Despite the ruse of using "practice barrages", through the use of "a very reliable agent", the Germans were aware that an attack was coming from as early as 1 October.

The battle was almost called off, with rain starting on 2 October (2.7 mm on the first day, 1.2 mm on 3 October and 4.6 mm on 4 October).[14] This had the effect of turning parts of the artillery-damaged ground into a morass.

Attack

The main attack was conducted by the I Anzac (composed of the 1st and 2nd Australian Divisions) and II Anzac Corps (composed of the New Zealand Division and 3rd Australian Division) (part of the Second Army) and XVIII Corps (comprising the 11th and 48th Divisions) (part of the Fifth Army), with flanking attacks supporting the main attack conducted by the X Corp (comprising the 7th, 21st and 5th Divisions) and IX Corps (comprising the 37th Division) (Second Army) and XIV Corps (comprising the 29th and 4th Divisions) (Fifth Army). The original plan was to have the I ANZAC Corps replaced after the Battle of Polygon Wood. As the I ANZAC Corps had emerged from the battle with less than expected casualties, it instead remained in the front line. The II ANZAC Corps replaced the V Corps.

Additionally, small forces of tanks were also used—with four tanks providing aid to the 21st Division and 10 tanks aiding the 11th Division (all tanks were from the Tank Corps D Battalion).

The attack was timed to start at 0600 hours. The northernmost corps (XIV Corps) encountered a bog during its advance—resulting in it losing the protection of the creeping barrage. The XIV Corps encountered machine gun fire from defences along the edge of Houlthulst Forest and suffered 1,700 casulties whilst gaining very little ground. The northern corps of the main attack (XVIII Corps) manage to capture all of its' objectives at a cost of 2,000 casulties. German artillery fire and counter attacks later resulted in the Germans recapturing the northern half of the village of Poelcappelle.

The I ANZAC Corps had one of the most unique experiences of the war. When it was preparing to attack, a sustained German artillery barrage fell on it causing 1 in 7 of the attacking forces to become casualties. When the Australian forces started to attack, the cause of the German artillery barrage became apparent, when they met the German 212th Infantry Regiment (from the 45th Reserve Division) in no-mans land. The German attack was the result of concerns over the amount of ridgeline held near Zonnebeke, and the desire to recapture as much of it as possible.[18] Due to the superior numbers involved, the Australians quickly routed the Germans, and continued the attack. Despite hard fighting to defeat the fortifications of the Flandern I line, the Australians reached the first objective (the "Red Line"—a line 100 to 200 yards short of

the crest of the ridgeline) by 07:20. During the hour long halt at the first objective, parts of the 1st Australian Division had to fight German pillboxes positioned along the crest of the ridgeline (these turned out to be 2 Battalion headquarters).

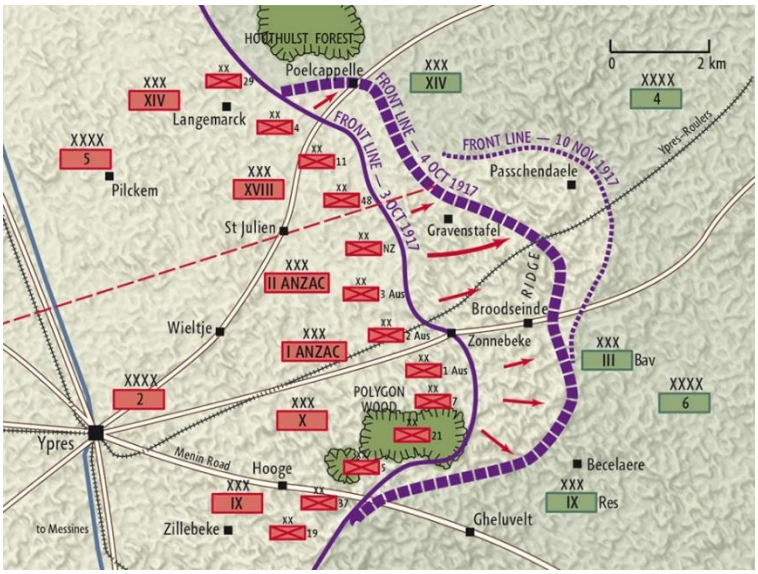
The Australians consolidated just short of the second objective due to defensive fire from German positions along the edge of 'Daisy Wood'. This effort cost the Australian divisions approximately 4,500 casualites.

Initially, the II ANZAC Corps had an easier time than its neighbouring ANZAC units. During the advance to the second onjective (the "Blue Line"—a line 200 to 400 yards beyond the crest of the ridgeline), it had to advance through parts of the Flandern I line. Despite this, the second objective was reached by 09:00, at a cost of 3,500 casualties (including 1,853 New Zealanders).

The attack by the X Corps achieved most of its objectives (advancing 800 yards (730 m)), although unsubdued German artillery fire from behind the Ghevulelt Plateau caused large numbers of casualties (8,000 casualties in the three attacking divisions). The southernmost corps (the IX Corps) experienced the same problems as the X Corps and made little headway against the German defences.

After the attacking units reached their final positions, Allied artillery fired an interdiction barrage for an additional two and a half hours, allowing the attacking troops to establish defences (trenches, outposts, defensive wire entanglements, etc.). As a result, when the Germans counterattacked, most of the counter attacks were dispersed purely through the use of Allied artillery.

Results



Overall, the attack was a stunning success, with an average advance of over 1,000 yards (910 m), and the Australian 3rd Division advancing up to 1,900 yards (1,700 m). However, the success was varied—with limited (or no) success on the southernmost Corps, to moderate gains between Menin Road and Polygon Wood, and to full success at Broodseinde Ridge.

Had the artillery preparation been in place, it would have been possible for the advance to have continued. However, as some of the artillery was already at its extreme range, the plan would have had to have been modified to address this possibility prior to the attack.

As it was, there was discussion between Generals Godley (II Anzac Corps commander), Charteris (Head of Intelligence at BEF HQ), Plumer (Second Army commander) and Birdwood (I Anzac Corp commander) as to the possibility of further attacks on 4 October (with Godley and Charteris wanting to attack further, but Birdwood and Plumer arguing against). However, by mid afternoon it was decided that no further attacks would take place.

Aftermath

The capture of the ridgeline was a stunning success, with General Plumer calling the attack "*the greatest victory since the Marne*", and German Official History referring to the attack as "*the black day of October 4*". However, the success of the battle masked the problems that would play such a huge problem in the next battle (the Battle of Poelcappelle). The wetness of the ground caused units to lose the protection of the creeping barrage, as well as causing the artillery shells to bury themselves in the mud before exploding (and so be less effective). Similarly the muddy terrain also caused large difficulty in moving the artillery from its position on the southern edge of the salient (where it supported the battle) to the eastern edge (where it would be used in the Battle of Poelcappelle).

The success of the battle also caused excessive enthusiasm in the BEF HQ (believing that the Germans were close to collapse), resulting in the time interval between attacks being further reduced (and so less preparatory artillery fire and time to move artillery)—which would have a disastrous effect on the next two battles (the Battles of Poelcappelle and First Passchendaele). Murray concluded by saying that had note been made of the fact that the attacking units of the Second Army was subjected to 10 German counter attacks on the same day as the attack then a more accurate appreciation of German morale might have resulted.

As is the normal at Branch Meetings we concluded with a Q & A session and discussion before Branch Chairman Tony Bolton afforded Murray McVey a warm vote of thanks for his efforts on the evening.

The Western Front Association **Durham Branch** **Saturday 24th October 2017**

1917-2017 First World War Centenary Conference

Durham WFA's third conference to commemorate the centenary of The First World War.
Another outstanding day, with four brilliant lectures by masters in their field.

Branch Vice Chair Mark Macartney attended the above Function in his capacity of WFA Trustee, where he was joined by many from all walks of life, all with the same interest and dedication in the Great War. I was also good to see a regular Branch attendee Alan Atkinson, plus WFA Chairman Mr Colin Wagstaff also in attendance.

A good turnout attended what was a very. Informative, educational, thought-provoking Conference, presented with both humour and respect. Well done! to all speakers.

Really good day extremely interesting speakers with lovely presentations. Good company, good venue, nice refreshments and first class organisation. Also present was the WFA Branded Goods Stand manned by the Branded Goods Trustee Mark Macartney.

Well done to all involved in the organisation of the event, hard work but definitely worth the effort All in all, a 'First Class and memorable event'

After an introduction by Branch Chairman Alan Healey the Conference was opened by the Conference Chairman Professor John Derry, Professor Derry also introduced and controlled the conference throughout, attempting to keep a track on time (a tall order) but he managed it, well done John. Four excellent speakers covered their “specialised subjects” intensely,)

Prof John Derry (Chair)

Dr David Murphy

Prof Eric Grove

Dr Matthias Strohn

Dr Bryn Hammond

Dr David Murphy The Nivelle Offensive

Dr David Murphy is a lecturer at the Centre for Military History & Strategic Studies in the Department of History at Maynooth University, Ireland. David also teaches at the Irish Military College in connection with Maynooth University's Defence Studies programme. He has lectured at various military institutions including the Royal Dutch Military Academy, Breda; the US Military Academy at West Point and the US Command and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth. David has written a number of published works including a book on the Nivelle Offensive, 1917.

Bullet points

Dr Murphy stated that 8.3M men were demobilised after the war, French Army wore easy to be seen red trousers and hats, Joffre and the Command mind-set was covered, December 1916 (Joffre and the Offensive, over 1m dead or missing), Germany exhausted over Verdun, 434000 Military casualties, Military Offensive in 1917, 1917 The French Context, public discontent, the allies-relations between France and England, growing discontent with British efforts. In December 2nd 1916 General Robert Nivelle was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the French armies, Joffre kicked upstairs when Nivelle replaced him ; Louis Hubert Gonzalve Lyautey appointed Minister of War, General Robert Nivelle stated "we have the formula", he was, born 1856, to a French father and English mother, spoke fluent English, Grandfather was Captain Robert Sparrow, Nivelle AC Marne 1914, Hero of Verdun, From artillery Sub-lieutenant in 1878 to Colonel of Artillery in December 1913 to General (October 1914). Methods/Ideas: rehearsal, use of artillery, Infantry firepower, concentration of force, problem-believed own PR. Nivelle (his circle) "the butcher", The Plan-seek decisive battle, attack at Arras-French sector at Somme. Further deficiencies: Feb/Mar-Russia, attack difficulties, 20th March-French Government falls. New Government created, operational security, German awareness, Last minute problems (tough going) weather, terrain, river, and canal. Nivelle after 1917, North African Command, America, Died 1924

Prof. Eric Grove The 1917 U - boat Campaign Reconsidered

Prof. Eric Grove is a world leader in naval history and is director of the Centre for International Security and War Studies. Eric has recently retired as a lecturer of naval history, and war and security studies, at Liverpool Hope University. He is widely published and also lectures to the Royal Navy COs and Warfare courses, and at the Joint Services Command and Staff College. Eric is very familiar to both TV and radio audiences through his contributions to numerous documentary and current affairs programs

Bullet points

U-Boats, A very detailed and informative talk was presented under to explain his full blown explanation, U-boats were the great crisis of the Naval War, in fact the Great Crisis of WW1. 1916 had been a horrendous year weather-wise. More ships entered British Ports in the first few months of 1917 than in all 1916. The Warehouse was Britain's secret weapon of WW1

Dr Matthias Strohn German Defence in Depth at Third Ypres

Dr Matthias Strohn is a senior lecturer in the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. His principal research interests are the Military History of the inter-war period, the German Army during the First World War and the German Army in the Third Reich. Matthias holds a commission in the German Army and, as a reserve officer, was attached to the German Staff College for 4 years as the Military History Staff Officer. Since 2012 he has been in the Military Attaché Reserve and in this position he has served on the defence attaché staffs in both Madrid and London.

Bullet Points

Ypres from a German perspective, 1st battle of Ypres Oct/Nov 1914, Langemarck 1914, a presentation on the First World War in Germany wouldn't have over 80 attending like here in Durham today indeed would be lucky if half a dozen were in attendance. 2nd battle of Ypres April/May 1915, 5th Battle of Ypres (very little heard of-Sepy/Oct 1918.

1st Battle 150,000 Casualties (19 October – 22 November) 1914) Result-Indecisive
2nd Battle 70,000 Casualties (22 April – 25 May 1915) Result-Allied Victory
3rd Battle (Passchendaele) 350,000 Casualties (July to November 1917) Result- controversial
4th Battle 120,000 Casualties (9 -29 April 1918) Result-Allied Victory.
5th Battle 10,000 Casualties (28 September – 2 October 1918) Result-Allied Victory

(5th Battle (Advance of Flanders) -very little talked about)
On War graves Dr Strohn explained British ones gave appearance of (glorious dead) German (dull), What did the Allies learn from the German Forces, and what did Germany learn from it. In conclusion Matthias said Germans always counter attacked.

Dr Bryn Hammond **The Battle of Cambrai**

Dr Bryn Hammond is a senior historian and Head of Collections at the Imperial War Museum in London. He has published a number or articles and books on military history, including a new work on El Alamien and the definitive work on the Battle of Cambrai. Bryn is an extremely popular speaker at Western Front Association branches.

Bullet Points

Cambrai 1917, further thoughts on Cambrai-Cambrai equalled Tanks, Cambrai as catalyst, Cambrai enquiry, Cambrai is a catalyst (revisited), forgotten, neglected or unknown. In conclusion Bryn said Cambrai wasn't just about tanks, Cambrai is not a closed story (it will continue after the Centenary)

Professor John Derry **Conference Chairman**

Prof. John Derry was conference chairman in 2014, 2015 and 2016, and the Branch was delighted he returned this year. John was an Emeritus Professor of Modern British History at the University of Newcastle and is the author of numerous books and biographies. He is a widely admired speaker to The Western Front Association and local history groups.
Professor Derry brought the conference to a close thanked all speakers and organizers and attendees for their effort to make the day another resounding success, wishing everyone a safe journey home.

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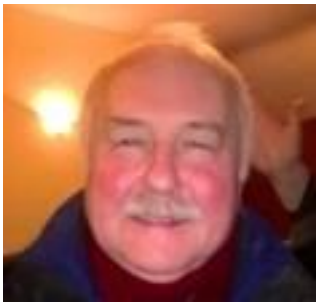
November Meeting



Our speaker for the evening, another debutant, but no stranger to Branch Meetings was Arthur Lacey, a retired GP from Mansfield, who has devoted much of his time since leaving work to researching the Royal Army Medical Corps in the Great War. In his own researching Arthur has actually identified over a thousand more persons (7870) than is recorded on Official histories and the like (6873) as being members of the Corps.

Arthur said it was impossible to cover the RAMC in one short talk so what he had done was cover a few aspects which he hoped would prove interesting to the audience.

Many of us have relatives who were in the Great War who triggered our interest and Arthur said he was no exception in having a grandfather, Private Arthur Lacey 35163 of the 1st Battalion, the Worcestershire Regiment but he had had no experience of the RAMC. Arthur said he was fortunate in being able to get his grandfather`s papers and with these and the war diaries of the Regiment have explored areas of the Western Front where the battalion was stationed. On March 5th 1917 the battalion was in action in an attack from Boucshavennes and Arthur explained that he had explored that area and accidentally came upon the remains of a shrapnel shell which he showed to our members, a jagged piece of metal with some of the shrapnel balls still sticking inside. It did however bring home to Arthur, the sort of casualties members of the RAMC would have to deal with caused by fragments of such a shell and its shrapnel balls. The RAMC was not a fighting force but nevertheless experienced the full horrors of the war, indeed 170 officers and 3000 other ranks were killed in action or died of wounds. The Geneva Convention however, does state that the bearing of arms by members of the RAMC is actually allowed in defence of themselves or their patients. Indeed there is a Captain JC Dunn who

wrote `The War the Infantry Knew` who actually took up command of a unit when other officers were killed or incapacitated.

When conducting his studies on the RAMC, Arthur concluded that there were two very important aspects – Evacuation and Innovation.

In 1914 there was a total of 3168 Medical Officers – by the end of the war in 1918 this number had risen to 13152. It takes 5 years to train a doctor! So this increase did not come from medically trained personnel – they had to come from the general population. Some of these additional people came from America, some were women and many were medical students. The number of Warrant Officers went up by a factor of 12 to the end of 1918.

Arthur then showed a chart of casualties but as he rightly pointed out, medics in the front line tended to put themselves in danger.

Arthur returned to his own researches which basically means visiting cemeteries, wandering round and looking at graves – not just in France Belgium and elsewhere – everywhere the British Army has been, the RAMC has been too – but also in the UK where there is a quite a lot to see as well. In fact there are 1990 RAMC graves in the UK and 67 in the Republic of Ireland. So far Arthur has visited 4000 graves of the 7870 RAMC fatalities in the Great War. He said he meets so many interesting people, often on a similar quest and these trips give him an opportunity to report back to the CWGC if he finds any graves or markers which are damaged. He then drew members` attention to the almost 500 RAMC personnel who were lost, or were buried, at sea.

Medical Services – there has always been someone who looked after the wounded from doctors to camp followers but whoever it was always had two aims, firstly to care for the condition of the casualty and the second aim is to return them to combat condition, the latter being partly the reason why, in fact the RAMC was formed in 1898. Along the way, thinking back to Evacuation and Innovation, there is always been medical innovation and Arthur showed a seventeenth century chart showing some of the things which they came up with to extract a bullet, similarly the American civil War through up similar interesting developments. Of course, all of these were in pre-anaesthetic days.

Arthur then put up a slide showing registers of medical officers in the 1600s which shows that there has always been M.O.`s attached to the British Army as we know it. These men held no military rank and were often just `tolerated` by the commanders. Military expediency always took preference over medical needs, indeed it was this which led to the formation of the RAMC, something driven by the British Medical Association (BMA) the doctors' trade union!

From formation in 1898 what was the RAMC designed to do – what was the plan? It was basically the evacuation of casualties to proper care somewhere down the line to what became known as Casualty Clearing Stations. The first bit was generally first aid there was little understanding of the effects of wounds, certainly no understanding of infection and their experience in the military was generally from the Boer War. Small actions, clean wounds with little by way of operations as operations in those days usually resulted in death anyway. Well that was the plan anyway but as von Moltke said - `no plan survives contact with the enemy`.

So where did these doctors come from? Arthur said he was grateful to a friend whose grandfather, a Manchester GP had been a pre-war reservist and went to war with 18th Field Ambulance unit. He took with him a camera and made some interesting pictures until the military hierarchy decided to ban cameras from the war zones. This chap AWB Louden eventually rose to command his own field ambulance with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. So what happened to his practice in Manchester when he went to war? The plan by the BMA was

those doctors who did not or could not go to war would look after the patients of those who did. The plan failed though as when he returned from the war his practice had dissipated and he had effectively to start again, this time in Cardiff.

Arthur then discussed Arthur Anderson Martin and recommended his book `A Surgeon in Khaki` which is cconsidered by critics to be an accurate portrayal of frontline medical conditions, his account of his experiences in 1914, early in World War I. Already a well-respected and widely traveled surgeon when war broke out, Martin joined the Royal Army Medical Corps. Under Field Marshal Sir John French, he served at Le Havre, Harfleur, and at the battle of the Marne. He marched to Aisne, to the new lines behind La Bassée, and finally to Flanders. During his entire service, he advocated immediate specialist surgery for the direst wounds, even under fire.

What use were these guys in the front line? – they were GPs after all. You have to remember that doctors in the RAMC were not just treating military cases, but civilian as well – all doctors get their qualifications and training the same way – this is what allowed them to innovate.

Overall battle casualties – 23% - overall non battle casualties 68% - the latter being caused by conditions, climate etc. Indeed if you look at the figures for France and Flanders it is not that different. Arthur went on to explain how, on one of his cemetery trips he came across these three in Bedford Cemetery - including Pvte McDougall, from Strachur, Argyll – all 1914 graves – all from Highland Regiments. Why are they in Bedford Cemetery in 1914 before any fighting had started? They died of measles – these men had never come across measles before. Other diseases like scarlet fever, mumps, meningitis and diphtheria became not uncommon – none of these associated with combat.

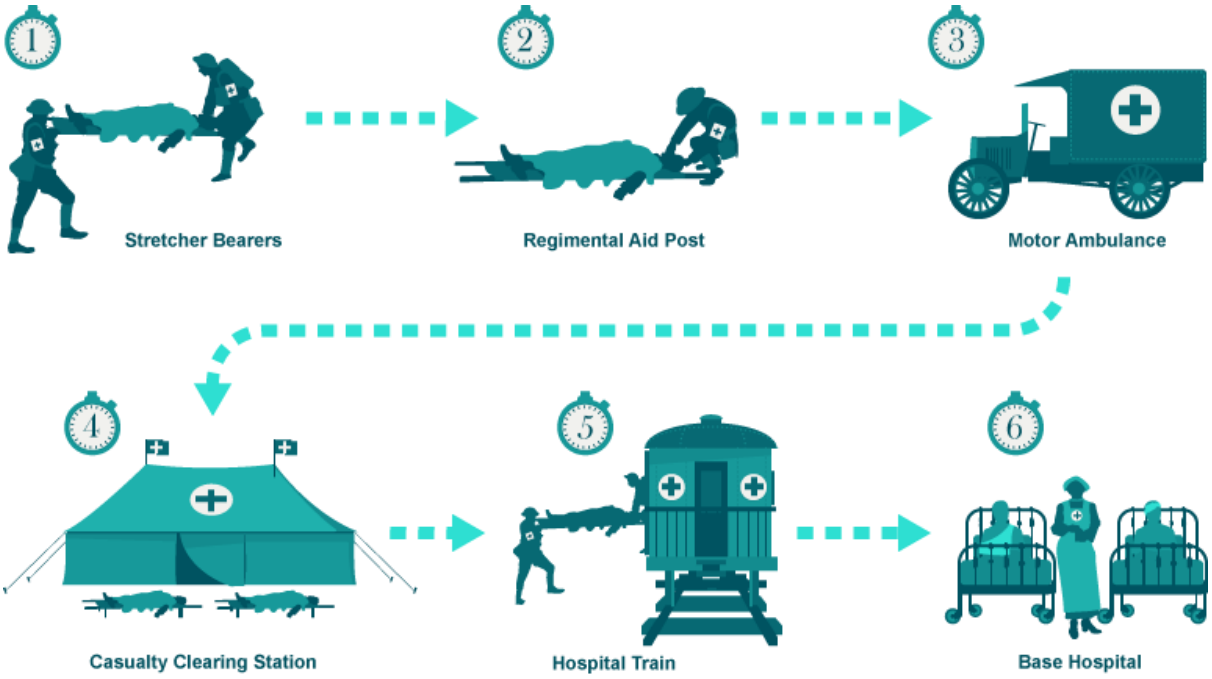
It was noted that those battalions with good M.O.s, were generally good battalions and usually had the smallest sick parades, lowest numbers falling out on route marches and the fewest reporting with cases of trench foot. These guys were very important in keep fighting forces fit and healthy as well as being able to deal with the effects of fighting.

Arthur then said to describe the structure of the RAMC would take too long for this presentation so he would approach this with a question he once asked himself – what is a `Field Ambulance`? A Field Ambulance is actually a front line medical unit – not a vehicle – but a unit, manned by the RAMC. It came under the command of the Division, had the capacity to handle 150 casualties but in fact often had to deal with many more. It had the responsibility of establishing and managing the points along the casualty evacuation chain which was.

It was responsible for the following,

- bearer and relay posts which were about 600 yards behind the Regimental Aid Posts
- Advance Dressing station for Brigade
- Main Dressing Station
- Walking Wounded Collecting stations

The critical thing about all of this is they were flexible



Each Field Ambulance had 10 officers and 224 men, in three sections, all of which had stretcher bearers and these could divide into sub sections, all of which could work independently.

There were others, for example, transport – someone to look after horses and water carts – and, of course the ambulance wagons. Originally horse drawn but after 1914 supplemented by motor vehicles.

Arthur said that, despite often being overlooked, the Sanitary Section was very important – the supply of clean water – cooking, cleaning, de-lousing, indeed all that could be done practically, to keep the troops healthy.

Regimental Aid Posts – part of the Regiment and, by definition, close to the Front Line but a location which was `semi protected` - maybe in a ruined building, cellars etc. Bandaging to contain blood loss was carried out, maybe a bit of splinting to stabilise shattered limbs – basically it is `first aid`

Arthur then showed what equipped a Field Ambulance Unit commenting on how difficult it must have been to carry out emergency operations, like amputations etc., in the conditions pictured. He backed this up by a quotation from `A Surgeon in Khaki`, Arthur Anderson " it is now eleven o`clock on a pitch black night, we are in for a busy night as the stretcher bearers are out in the field collecting the wounded whose arrival was expected at any moment"

….but as Arthur pointed out this might be a mile, or even two from where the casualty had been hit.

"The operating tent was lit by a huge acetylene lamp with the operating table fixed in the centre of the tent with the tables, often consisting of panniers which held dressings, for the

instruments placed on either side. The stretchers, each containing a wounded man were taken down from the wagons and placed on a heap of straw near the door of the operating room. 16 men were laid down and the used stretchers were put in the wagons. One surgeon stood on one side of the operating table, another on the other side, to assist or give anaesthetic *if necessary*. One after another each wounded man was lifted on to the table, his wounds speedily dressed and he was again carried out and laid on the straw. Those with painful wounds were given morphine" We are not talking about surgery here – just first aid. "Those who could take it were given soup, tea, bread, jam and other stimulants appropriate to their condition. Wounds were mostly from shrapnel and only one case required an anaesthetic – he had a bad compound fracture of the thigh and was in terrible pain. We made up some good splints and fixed the limb comfortably in position. One poor devil had a bad abdominal wound for which we could do nothing but administer morphine and leave him until he ceased to breathe. The wounded thus treated were taken off to the railhead in empty supply wagons under the charge of a medical officer, the operating tent was struck, the panniers packed, the Field Ambulance had done its job and moved on."

That was a report from the Marne in 1914.

Arthur then touched on one of the operations – warning anyone of a squeamish disposition to look away – from a Lt King Wilson, RAMC in Gallipoli 1915, a scribbled note,

"OC Casualty Clearing, Sir, I am sending you by bearer one of those few head wounds which have a chance having tied the temporal artery and haemorrhage is controlled by padding and bandages"

Arthur demonstrated where you can feel ones temporal artery. That was the sort of thing the Field Ambulance was doing.

He then mentioned the Falklands – in the book `Red and Green Life Machine` - medic Rick Jolly said that anyone who reached is field ambulance alive left alive and when you start to think of the numbers of deaths we had on the Western Front, the 1st of July 1916 casualty rate who were not evacuated and died subsequently, it is the recovery issue that is the problem. So, evacuation in 1914-1918. As has been shown, there is little more than first aid going on with delays in getting these guys back for proper treatment – blood loss, shock etc. and this was because there was not a lot of understanding of what was going on to the poor old wounded man and as time went on they developed knowledge of that. Showing a picture of VC corner, a lot of men as casualties were `walking wounded`.

Many of these men having received first aid at the Regimental Aid Post walked three miles or more to a dressing station – and had to have their wounds re-dressed on account of the original

bandages being too tight ! Wounds of every type were seen on these men – the exception being fractures of the long (leg) bones which were of course were stretcher cases. Walking wounded were commended for their pluck and endurance but some cases were so slight that the RAMC had no alternative but to turn over these men to the Military Police.

In other theatres there was exceptions like Simpson and his donkey on Gallipoli - After landing at Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915, Jack Simpson began to use donkeys to provide first aid and carry wounded soldiers to the beach, for evacuation. Simpson and the donkeys continued this work for three and a half weeks, often under fire, until he was killed. Arthur then said, to the surprise of most of us that Jack Simpson had been born in South Shields.

Of course all this walking is reasonable if it is over flat ground, but if men were making their way back by trenches, many of these were blocked, totally congested, and he used the well-known picture of Passchendaele in the mud as an extreme example of trying to get wounded back for treatment.

There are two types of stretcher bearers, the Regimental Stretcher Bearers, at the regimental aid posts, and the Field Ambulance Stretcher Bearers, who have to get wounded back to the medical facilities.

How many men does it take to recover one casualty? This obviously depends upon the conditions and, of course, stretcher bearers were not immune from becoming casualties themselves. Arthur has researched this and concludes that 1548 died of wounds and that more than two thousand were listed as Killed in Action, but of course we will never know the exact totals.

The next stage of evacuation was `Ambulances` - horses – wagons and trucks with solid wheels – would anyone like to ride on a vehicle with solid wheels after sustaining a wound ? The amount of instability for anyone wounded – particularly those with fractures was tremendous.

Then vehicles with rubber tyres – possibly solid rubber tyres – and of course the roads were poor as well.

Arthur then showed a picture of something which is still in use today – a wheeled stretcher.

After a casualty has had some treatment and their condition stabilised where do they go next – if possible an ambulance train which was more comfortable, more stable – but little opportunity for much in the way of medical treatment en route. Each train could carry 500 patients, 47 orderlies, three Medical Officers, three nurses and three chefs……not quite the Orient Express! There was little opportunity to do anything other than keep the patients comfortable.

Arthur then went on to tell of a friend of his, with whom he had qualified, who had, as a Territorial gone on to command his own Field Ambulance in the 1980s. He was presented with this sort of facility – on exercise in Germany of course. A train pulled in (from Poland) – in the 1980s any fighting was going to be against the Russians – and this was what he would have had to cope with – the sudden arrival of 500 wounded passengers.

The next picture showed casualty evacuation by sea from the fighting on Gallipoli in 1915. Of course not all the patients were suffering from wounds sustained in action, many, many men were evacuated ill with the various diseases which were rife in that inhospitable peninsula.

Arthur said he had used this picture to stress a point made earlier that evacuation used the same kit that had taken men and kit up to the front. The lighters used were not specifically designed to deal with casualties, but there was some innovations later.

The BEF had one further stage of evacuation of casualties that the Germans did not – we had to get them home across the sea, be it the Channel or the Mediterranean and Arthur then listed those sixteen British hospital ships sunk in WW1 out of a total in operation of 130

H.S. "ANGLIA."- Mined off Dover on 17th November, 1915, in the afternoon; 14 officers and 374 men, sick and wounded on board; 9 officers and 244 men were saved by destroyers, patrol boats. etc.; 5 officers and 128 men were lost, also 1 sister and 9 men of the R.A.M.C. staff.

H.S. "GALEKA."- Mined off Havre on 28th October, 1916, at 6.10 am., in a strong gale and heavy sea; no patients on board; 19 R.A.M.C. orderlies were killed in the initial explosion, all the other staff and ship's crew were saved; the ship was beached, but became a total wreck.

H.S. “BRITANNIC."- Sunk by mine on 21st November, 1916, at 8.12 a.m., in the Aegean Sea; there were no patients on board and the day was warm, with a calm sea. All the staff were saved with the exception of Lieut. J. Cropper, R.A.M.C., and 8 orderlies; the evacuation was carried out with difficulty, on account of the movement of the ship, which continued to travel for some distance before finally sinking.

H.S. “BRAEMAR CASTLE."- Mined in the Aegean Sea, on 23rd November, 1916.

H.S. “GLENART CASTLE."- Mined at 11.30 p.m. 1st March, 1917, on route from Havre to Southampton; 520 sick and wounded on board, including 300 cot cases; all patients and crew saved by destroyers tugs and trawlers; ship cleared of invalids by 12.50 a.m. ; the weather was unusually mild, and the sea practically a dead calm; the ship was towed into Portsmouth. She was mined a second time on 26th February, 1918, and sunk.

H.S. "ASTURIAS.”- Torpedoed on 21st March, 1917, at midnight, off Devonshire coast; no patients on board; Temporary Captain G. L. Atkinson, R.A.M.C., Staff Nurse J. J. Phillips, and 12 R.A.M.C. orderlies were drowned; the ship was beached at Salcombe.

H.S. "GLOUCESTER CASTLE."- Torpedoed at 7 p.m., on 30th March. 1917, on route from Havre to Southampton; 399 patients, including 300 cot cases, on board; all the patients were saved by destroyers and transports, but 3 unfortunately died during transfer; the ship was eventually brought into port.

H.S. "SALTA."- Mined on morning of the 10th April, 1917, just outside Havre; no patients on board; 5 officers (including the officer-in-charge), 9 nursing sisters, and 37 other ranks R.A.M.C., were lost with the ship.

H.S. "LANFRANC."- Torpedoed without warning on 17th April, 1917, at 7.30 p.m., on route from Havre to Southampton; 387 patients on board, including 27 German officers and 140 German other ranks; there were 326 cot cases, many of which were seriously wounded, including a number of fractured femurs and amputations; 22 British, including 2 officers, and 18 German other ranks were lost; the ship sank rapidly.

H.S. "DONEGAL."- Sunk by torpedo on 17th April, 1917.

H.S. "DOVER CASTLE "- Torpedoed without warning on 26th May, 1917, at 11 a.m.; 632 patients on board, including 29 officers; all the patients were saved. Although three boats were destroyed by the first explosion. The ship was sunk by a second torpedo after being cleared.

H.S. "GOORKHA."- Mined on 10th October, 1917, off Malta, at 11.50 a.m.; 362 patients on board, including 20 officers and 17 sisters; the ship was cleared in thirty-five minutes; there were no casualties; the ship Was towed into Malta.

NAVAL HOSPITAL SHIP "REWA."-Torpedoed 4th January. 1918. 4 crew (naval) were lost.

H.S. "GUILDFORD CASTLE,"-Torpedoed, but reached port, 10th March, 1918.

H.S. "LLANDOVERY CASTLE."- Torpedoed 27th June, 1918; no patients on board; 88 R.A.M.C. staff and 146 crew were lost.

H.S. "WAR ILDA."-Torpedoed in the Channel, 3rd August, 1918; there were 471 invalids, including 439 cot cases on board; 2 officers an 113 other ranks were lost, together with 1 Q.M.A.A.C. and 1 R.A.M.C.; the rest were cleared from the ship within an hour; the Ship sank half an hour afterwards.

Arthur highlighted the loss of H.S. Salta which was sunk off Le Havre which just showed how even getting wounded back across the channel was not that easy.

For comparison Arthur showed some pictures from the Falklands War in the 1980s which highlighted the advances in battlefield casualty treatment and equipment available since the 1914-18 war

This picture showed a typical ward in a UK hospital. Arthur said that time precluded any discussion on the massive expansion in the numbers of hospitals during the war to cope with the numbers of casualties, save to say that there had been two Auxiliary Hospitals in Chesterfield alone in addition to the main hospital.

Moving on Arthur touched on illnesses and he quoted correspondence by a Lt. Gilbert Gray which indicated that he was rendered unfit for service due to malaria but had been due promotion to Captain and was pursuing that rank`s pension – and of course all this was going on during the months of the Battle of the Somme. So behind the scenes there was all the facilities dealing with these sort of issues. Malaria , by that time was become quite an important illness, particularly when

you realise that 1.5 million people were infected with a death rate of up to five per cent and there was epidemics of it in the UK from returning troops.

" in essence the First World War was a vast experiment in political, demographic and medical practices which exposed large gaps in the knowledge of tropical medicine, including malaria" The authorities feared that there would be a national epidemic in the general population.

Arthur in discussing training, then quoted from Sir Harold Stiles, who was a member of the Military Services Commission in France and then Director of Military Orthopaedics for Scotland.[2] He was responsible for treating wounded soldiers in the Military Surgical Division at the Bangour hospital. "the surgery of the war is that of young men with keen receptive brains who have been trained in the fundamental medical sciences and who have been able to apply their knowledge, not merely to the improvement of old methods of treatment but also in the devising of new methods to meet the new conditions they had to deal with and the new environment in which they found themselves. It is largely due to the teamwork of younger men that great advances have been made, not only in wound treatment, but in early and late treatment of fractures, particularly fractures of the femur, in wounds involving joints or injuries to joints whether combat related or in general".

The most important advance in medicine in WW1 was infection control but in fact it was down to a chap called John Snow who was an English physician and a leader in the adoption of anaesthesia and medical hygiene.

He is considered one of the fathers of modern epidemiology, in part because of his work in tracing the source of a cholera outbreak in London in 1854 to a water supply. What he did was a first step in addressing public health issues.

Clean water, sanitation... and latterly vacinations etc. Infection covers all these things, it is not just wounds, you still see people today who lose limbs from meningitis and septicaemia – if you do not take away the infected tissue it will come back and you will lose the patient. Clean water at the field ambulance was essential as you have bacteria of all sorts, TB, VD, in addition to those previously mentioned plus cholera and dysentery – spread by rats.

Innovations in this line was by the establishment of laboratories attached to the Field Ambulance to look at the pathology of the specimens and to work out what the organisms were so that they could know exactly what they were treating.

Rats were a major problem on the Western Front and Arthur mentioned Philip Gosse who studied medicine at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London then became a General Practitioner with a practice in Beaulieu in the New Forest. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1914 and served in WW1 on the Western Front and in India. For a time, Philip was the British Army's Official Rat Catcher Officer on the Western Front and he toured the camps lecturing about the importance of hygiene and care of food - especially left-overs and food waste.

Arthur then briefly mentioned VD – the French supplied the facilities, the Americans the condoms…the British…well they suggested the `stiff upper lip`!!

Mud…on the Western Front…led one surgeon to remark that every gunshot wound is more or less infected and you have to realise that this period was pre-antibiotics. All infected wounds have a `foreign` body in them, dirt, fragment of a button, scrap of uniform and initially, to try and treat this they injected antiseptic fluids and in this they were not very successful. What they did learn though was you had to excise *all* infected tissue or you got gas gangrene. You did not stitch up a wound suspected of being, or potentially, gangrenous, it had to be left open. It was often for this reason that amputation was used.

Arthur then produced a `bone` which he said was a right femur and he posed the question as to how many fractures of this bone were reported. Referring to a casualty report from which he

quoted `gunshot wound to left thigh bone fractured` - now if the bone is fractured by a gunshot wound there is also extensive damage to surrounding tissue, blood vessels, nerves etc. – it is a major cause of bleeding – internal as well as eternal and of course shock as well. Now, anyone who knows about first aid knows you have to immobilize and stabilize that limb. At the beginning of the war 80% of all soldiers with a fractured femur died. Splints were crude, strips of wood, or even a rifle, but you cannot splint a fractured femur or hip with a rifle.

In 1875 – it shows how long it takes these things to develop - a chap called Thomas came up with a splint for fractures of the lower limbs. His nephew, Sir Robert Jones, was Orthopaedic Surgeon for the British army and he advocated use of the Thomas splint for fractures of the femur. The collar fits tight up into the groin whilst the leg is immobilized by strapping to the parallel rods, applying traction as required.

This picture shows a casualty with the Thomas splint fitted

This simple fitting reduced the death rate from such fractures at the Battle of Arras from 80% to 15%. It also reduced considerably the number of cases who required amputation although it took time to get these innovations in, not to mention time to train people in the application.

Shock. Nobody really knew what `shock` meant – it is not just due to loss of blood, it is to do with men who are thirsty, tired, cold, have been lying out in the battlefield. These are things that had to be considered when they tried to develop treatments – including under the skin fluids, rectal fluids and latterly, intravenous fluids – and pain relief. But they did not really know enough about this, so they had to `innovate` and the big innovation was of course, blood transfusions. Blood groups had only been identified in 1907 and initially you could only give person – to - person blood transfusion because blood naturally clots easily and it was only in 1914 that the first anti-coagulants were used. The first stored blood did not appear until 1916.

Anaesthetics.

This was standard anaesthetic equipment around at the start of the war. Ether or chloroform was dripped onto the face mask which put them to sleep whilst the surgical procedures were undertaken – the big problem was – if used often enough, particularly in a confined space, everyone else went to sleep! Anaesthetics relied very much on the patient being semi-conscious and doing the operation quickly. It was only later that things were developed similar to what we have now, use of machines, supportive ventilation etc.

As mentioned before, from the Boer War, people were operated on – lived, people were operated on – died. In a bullet wound – or a shrapnel wound with a lot of holes to operate effectively you have to relax them. For such wounds in the chest or abdomen when operating you have to have a good look around to remove any sources of infection and again, these techniques were developed, albeit very slowly.

Moving away from the `squeamish` bits now, Arthur briefly spoke about `The RAMC Heroes` - seven Victoria Crosses – two with Bar – 499 DSOs, 395 DCMs, 1400 odd Military Crosses, 3000 Military Medals. Most of these could not be awarded posthumously and Arthur quoted the Earl of Meath from March 1916 who questioned why more posthumous honours could not be granted for VCs DSO, DCM, MC and MMs. So there may well have been more VC winners had they not died. The point being made is that there were very many brave men amongst the medics who had risked life and limb to rescue and treat the wounded. Just because they were behind the lines does not mean they were out of danger and a recent article in the WFA magazine was about the nurses of Passchendaele, including nelly Spindler who was killed at Brandhoek when a shell hit her casualty clearing station. Of course everyone has heard of the exceptional bravery of Noel Chavasse but how many of you know about Arthur Martin – Leake? Equally brave.

Martin-Leake first served in the Second Boer War as a trooper in the Imperial yeomanry. After his year of service was completed, he stayed on in South Africa as a civil surgeon. He then joined the South African Constabulary until he was forced to return home due to his wounds.

He was 27 years old and a surgeon captain in the attached to the 5th Field Ambulance during and on 8 February 1902, at Vlakfontein, when he was awarded his first VC. His citation read

`During the action at Vlakfontein, on the 8th February, 1902, Surgeon-Captain Martin-Leake went up to a wounded man, and attended to him under a heavy fire from about 40 Boers at 100 yards range. He then went to the assistance of a wounded Officer, and, whilst trying to place him in a comfortable position, was shot three times, but would not give in till he rolled over thoroughly exhausted. All the eight men at this point were wounded, and while they were lying on the Veldt, Surgeon-Captain Martin-Leake refused water till everyone else had been served`

Martin-Leake qualified as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1903 after studying while convalescing from wounds. He then took up an appointment in India as Chief Medical Officer with the Bengal-Nagpur Railway.

On the outbreak of the First World War, Martin-Leake returned to service as a lieutenant with the 5th Field Ambulance, RAMC, on the Western Front

He was awarded his second VC, aged 40, during the period 29 October to 8 November 1914 near Zonnebeke, Belgium. His second citation said

`For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty throughout the campaign, especially during the period 29th October to 8th November, 1914, near Zonnebeke, in rescuing, whilst exposed to constant fire, a large number of the wounded who were lying close to the enemy's trenches.`

He died in 1953 aged 79. A couple of interesting facts – Martin-leake never wore his medals. He was actually working at No. 32 CCs when Noel Chevasse was brought in, but we don`t actually know if he treated Noel Chevasse, but he was certainly there at the time.

Just to bring it closer to home, Captain John Leslie Green VC, Green served in the RAMC, attached to 1/5th Battalion, The Sherwood Foresters (The Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment). He had previously seen action in the Battle of Loos. He was 27 years old, when he performed a deed for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross during the disastrous diversionary attack made by the 46th Division at Gommecourt on 1 July 1916 as part of the opening day of the Battle of the Somme. His citation read

` For most conspicuous devotion to duty. Although himself wounded, he went to the assistance of an officer –and a friend – Chesterfield man Frank Burrell Robinson - who had been wounded and was hung up on the enemy's wire entanglements, and succeeded in dragging him to a shell hole, where he dressed his wounds, notwithstanding that bombs and rifle grenades were thrown at him the whole time. Captain Green then endeavoured to bring the wounded officer into safe cover, and had nearly succeeded in doing so when he himself was killed. `

Moving on to conclusions.

The numbers of casualties in The Great War were huge, but it has to be considered how many more it may have been but for the officers and men of the RAMC – the evacuation and innovation who ensured that many survived who would otherwise have been lost. Many of the innovations in modern medicine were instigated during the war

Evacuation and stabilisation, anesthetics, treatment for shock, aseptic treatments, not antiseptics and this thing about removal of all infected tissue, so important before closing the wound.

This concluded Arthur`s comprehensive presentation. There followed a Q & A session before Branch Chairman wound up proceedings with a warm vote of thanks , to which those in attendance responded generously.

Cenotaph Programme Distribution

Branch Vice Chairman and WFA Trustee Mark Macartney took charge of Programme/ leaflet distribution at the Cenotaph and Whitehall this year, which had in previous years been done by fellow WFA trustee and colleague David Tattersfield, who as some will know is Branch Chairman of the Yorkshire WFA Branch. Unfortunately due to pressure of time and other factors, David decided that he couldn't undertake the organisation the programme distribution this year at the Cenotaph. So Mark stepped in to organise and take charge of a small team of volunteers distributing the programmes, ensuring this important task continued without a hitch.

Mark says in 2016 there were 5000 programmes produced which proved to be too many as there were over 1000 left over, this year with it being a Saturday plus the MOD building staff not participating, the decision was made to just have 2500 produced, this figure proved to be absolutely spot on, as everyone got a programme that wished one (ensuring King Charles Street, where the WFA Parade assembled and paraded from was well catered for) and there was only about 100 or so leaflets left over.

Picture under shows Aerial Photograph of the Western Front Association Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph, Whitehall 11 November 2017

Battlefield Trip to Salonika

We have received the undernoted from David Tattersfield of the Yorkshire Branch

Every year the Yorkshire branch undertakes a visit to the Western Front, which is run by Clive Harris of Battlehonours. For 2018 we are looking at a visit to **Salonika**. Because this is a lot further afield than France or Belgium, and is a bit more "specialist" it may be less easy than normal to fill the spaces on the tour. I am therefore offering the members of Chesterfield branch, the chance to express an interest in this tour.

Details are below....

The timing of the tour would be potentially any time in April, July, August or the first half of September. October is also a possibility. The tour would be include four nights full board (1 night in Thessaloniki and 3 nights Dojran). The guides would be Clive Harris and Alan Wakefield with local guides also assisting. It would also include a boat trip on Lake Dojran. The budget airline Easy Jet flies daily from Manchester and Jet2 flies from Leeds Bradford (but these are either once or twice a week so are slightly less flexible). In terms of pricing of the flights, the Jet2 can do this for under £150 return.
If this tour does get off the ground, Clive can offer a "non-flight" price (where individuals book the flights themselves) or a "flight" option (where Clive sorts the flight out). However, because of price fluctuations which occur (and which cannot be guaranteed) the price for the "flight" option would be £250 more than the non-flight option.

The cost of the tour (non-flight option) would be £950 per person based on two sharing a twin room (single supplement is an extra £130).

As a comparison, the brochure price for the Battle Honours scheduled tour this year with BA flights from Gatwick is £1700 (although in fairness that is for five nights not four).

Once there is sufficient interest shown, and Clive's calendar is clearer, a date will be selected. At the moment, it is more than likely going to be April but that is not guaranteed.

As WFA members in your branch area may well live close to either Manchester or Leeds/Bradford airports, I thought sending these details to you may be of interest to them.

If they do wish to send an "expression of interest" in this tour, I will take their details and email them with further details. Such an expression of interest is of course no commitment on their behalf

If interested please contact David on wfa.yorkshire@gmail.com

Ypres and Messines Visit 2nd until 6th December 2017 (incl)

As some of the Branch know that our Vice Chair Mark with WFA Chairman Colin Wagstaff and other members went on a Battlefields trip recently, led by well-known to the Branch Historian and Regular speaker Rob Thompson to the battlefields of Ypres and Messines What a 'fantastic" time by this mountain of knowledge who has been nicked-named "Blitzkrieg Rob" (after "Blitzkrieg Rob and the Exploding Warheads") a very brief outline of the program undertaken is as under:

Sunday 3rd: Menin Gate including information about "The Dash"/ Berkshire Extension Cemetery Plugstreet and Hill 63/Lumm Farm.

Monday 4th : Goumier Farm artillery bunkers/ BBCFM small arms museum between Kemmel and Loker / then the British front line in front of Bayernwald and then Bayernwald itself.

Tuesday 5th: St Julien Canadian memorial/ Frezenburg Ridge/Polygon Wood/ Zonnebeke Passchendaele Museum.

Wednesday 6th: on the final morning the group visited Tyne Cot. Where Rob went into every detail of the activities in this area,

Group Photo taken at the Memorial in Memory of All People of Scottish Origin who took part in the Great War 1914-1918, Remembering the Kings Own Scottish Borderers, to the memory of over 7050 Soldiers and all ranks of the KOSB who Died in the Great War, who gave their lives for their Country, their Regiment and their friends, also dedicated to the 1st South-African Brigade which was part of the 9th Scottish Division during most of the War.

L-R Jon Palmer, Mark Macartney, Colin Wagstaff, Richard Olsen and Cathy Stevenson

12 words from 100 years ago we love to use today

Terrible though it was, the First World War did leave us something other than the horrors of trench warfare: some of our most beloved sayings and phrases originated from this time. The unique melting pot of men, languages and cultures forged a new kind of slang.

Let`s explore a few words from that era that are still used today. Here is a dozen favourites…

Plonk

Abbreviated from the French "vin blanc" meaning white wine, this typical British soldier's alliteration eventually became the word for any kind of wine, as in, "pass that bottle of plonk".

Binge

Continuing with the theme of alcohol, binge was originally a Lancashire term meaning to over-indulge. Whilst the word can have negative connotations around food and drink, it's also used to describe life-affirming entertainment - from shamelessly listening to podcasts back-to-back, to watching the entire run of your favourite TV series in one sitting. Bliss.

Having a chat/chatting

It's good to talk and even better to chat, but where did the term come from?

Soldiers from the Commonwealth were often billeted with the British "Tommies", and that included several regiments from India. In this instance the Hindi word for parasite ("chat") was the inspiration for this saying. As the prevalence of lice was an everyday problem at the front, men sitting around picking them off their skin led to such groups being described as men "chatting". In later years this has morphed into the term "chatting" or "having a chat" to mean a group of people, or even two people, sitting around casually talking to each other.

Crummy

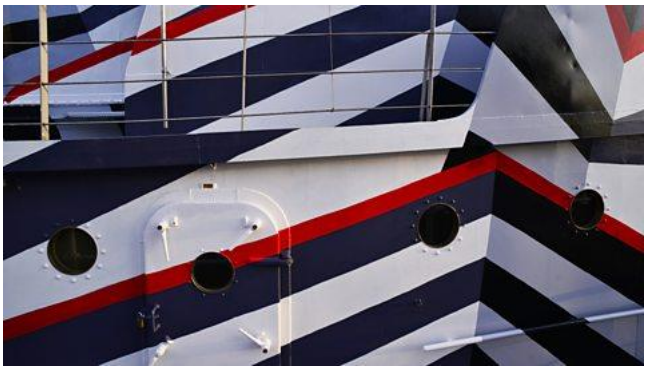
Lice were also directly responsible for this American slang term coined by US infantrymen, meaning lousy or of inferior quality. The eggs of the lice were white and resembled tiny crumbs of bread, hence the word "crummy".

Skive

From the french word "eskiver" meaning to dodge or avoid, this was used during WW1 as slang for shirking duty. In recent times "skiving off" implies a deliberate intent to stay off work, usually coupled with an elaborate excuse such as a dead aunt or an illness of some kind.

Camouflage

Another French word meaning disguise. In 1916 the word began to be used specifically as a term for obfuscating military targets using materials to blend them into their surrounding environment.



Cushy

Another word popularised by British soldiers but of Indian origin, this time springing from the Urdu word for pleasure – "Kusi" – and the Hindi word "Khush", meaning happy, easy or pleasant. "Cushy" is now defined as "undemanding, easy, or secure" and applies to any relatively comfy situation, and back then was used in a similar way to describe any military posting that was

agreeable i.e. a cushy billet, or a cushypost, but also referred to a wound that was non-fatal yet debilitating, granting the victim some precious time away from the front.

Dud

This refers specifically to a shell or a bullet that failed to go off. Now its definition has expanded to include any object that does not work properly, or fails to work at all.

To be in a flap

This was a Naval expression dating from 1916 and refers to the flapping of birds, and means to be worried or excited. Later it became widely used by ground forces in WW1 and led to the term "unflappable" which appeared much later and means "marked by assurance and self-control".

Over The Top

When someone is exaggerating or behaving in a more pronounced way than need be they are being "over the top". Of course in WW1 this literally meant going over the top of the trench to charge the enemy, and most likely being mown down by machine-gun fire in the process.

Scarper

Another bastardisation of language, this time from the Italian word "escarpare" which means to run away. During the war the German fleet was scuppered at Scapa Flow and this re-established the word among English soldiers – to "scarper" being to "leg it" as fast as possible!

Bumf

Nowadays this refers to large amounts of paperwork, or useless and unwanted printed material such as junk mail. Soldiers in WW1 often used it to ridicule the ludicrous amount of orders and unnecessary paperwork that came from their superiors, likening it to toilet paper, i.e. "bum-fodder".

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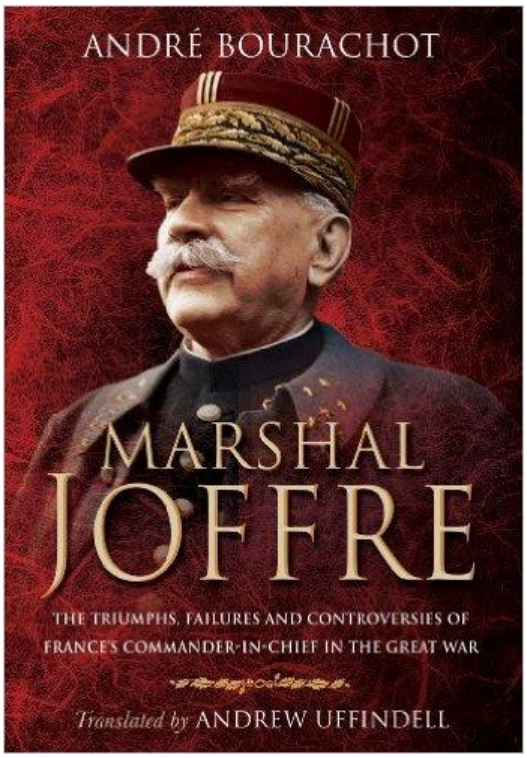
Book Review

Marshal Joffre: The Triumphs, Failures and Controversies of France's Commander-in-Chief in the Great War Hardcover – 2 Jun 2014 . £18.94 post free on Amazon



By Andre Bourachot General Andre Bourachot is a leading expert on the history of the French army. He entered the military school at Saint-Cyr in 1958 and decided to specialize in engineering. During his long career he served in various roles - as a staff officer, instructor and commander. He left the French army in 1998 as Engineer in Chief. He is a former student of the Centre for Advanced Military Studies and of the Institute for Advanced National Defence Studies in Paris, and he has an engineering degree from the Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussees. He is married and is the father of two children. In addition to this book on Joffre, he has written a two-volume history of the French army, De Sedan a Sedan, 1870-1918 and De Sedan a Sedan, 1918-1940.

A century ago General Joffre, as Chief of the French General Staff, led the armies that blocked the German invasion at the First Battle of the Marne. He saved Paris from occupation and France from probable defeat. His calm demeanour when faced with a disaster, his ruthless dismissal of incompetent subordinates, and his skilled redeployment of his forces contributed to a historic victory. At the time many saw him as the saviour of the nation, but what should we make of him now? His conduct of the war after the Marne - futile offensives that cost thousands of lives and gained no ground, followed by near defeat at Verdun - undermined his position and led to his dismissal. Although he remained immensely popular in France, his reputation has been under a cloud ever since, and he has been overshadowed by the French generals - Petain who commanded the French army and Foch the allied Forces - at the time of the final victory over Germany. Andre Bourachot, in this lucid and highly readable study of Joffre's career, focuses on his performance during the opening phase of the Great War. He offers a fresh and carefully considered view of the man and the soldier. An interesting insight, not only into the man himself but to the machinations between the military and the politicians. We are all aware of the rivalries – and backstabbing – amongst the generals of the BEF, an example being the lead up to Haig replacing French. Bourachot`s book opens the lid on similar goings on within the French military hierarchy - and the post war cover ups.

The book was originally published in France in 2010 but was translated into English – excellent translation, incidentally, I never found any flaws – by Andrew Uffindell and was first published in English by Pen & Sword books in 2014

WFA BRANDED GOODS

Polo Shirt **£17**

Gents (code 569M) Russell Classic Cotton Pique Polo Shirt (100% ringspun cotton) (all sizes)

Ladies (code 569F) Russell Ladies Cotton Pique Polo Shirt (100% ringspun cotton pique.) (sizes 8 - 18)

Sweatshirt **£18**

Gents (code 762M) Russell Jerzees Raglan Sweatshirt (50% polyester/50% combed ringspun cotton)

Ladies (code SS180) Fruit Of The Loom Lady Fit Lightweight Raglan Sweatshirt (80% cotton Belcoro® yarn/20% polyester) (sizes 8 - 18)

T-Shirt **£15**

Gents (code 215M) Russell Classic Heavyweight Combed Cotton T-Shirt (100% combed ringspun cotton) (all sizes)

Ladies (code 155F) Russell Ladies Lightweight Slim T-Shirt (100% ringspun cotton)(sizes 10 - 16)

Fleece **£25**

Gents (code RGI22) Regatta Thor III Fleece Jacket (100% polyester anti pill fleece) (all sizes)

Ladies (code RGI23) Regatta Ladies Thor III Fleece Jacket (100% polyester anti pill fleece) (sizes 10 - 20)

Rugby Shirt **£26**

Gents (code FR100) Front Row Classic Rugby Shirt (100% cotton) (All Sizes Available

Ladies (code FR101) Front Row Ladies Classic Rugby Shirt (100% cotton) (all sizes)

Breathable Jacket **£42**

Gents (code 510M) Russell Hydro 2000 Jacket (Nylon taslon with PU Coating) (all sizes)

Ladies (code 510F) Russell Hydro 2000 Jacket (Nylon taslon with PU Coating) (all sizes)

Kustom Kit Short Sleeve Corporate Oxford Shirt **£25**

Gents (code K109) Easy iron fabric. Button down collar. Left chest pocket. Back yoke with centre pleat and hanging loop. Curved hem. Available in long sleeve K105.

Collars 14-14.5-15-15.5-16-16.5-17-17.5-18-18.5-19-19.5-20-21-22-23

Ladies (code K701) Easy iron fabric. Tailored fit. Button down collar. Back yoke. Curved hem. Available in long sleeve K702 and 3/4 sleeve K710. 85% cotton/15% polyester. Weight: 125 gsm

Gents sizes:	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL	3XL	4XL
Chest (to fit):	34/36	36/38	38/40	40/42	42/44	44/46	46/48	48/50

Ladies sizes:	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28
Chest (to fit):	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50

Order all the above clothing (Polo/Sweaters/T-Shirts/Oxford Shirts/Fleeces/Rugby Shirts & Breathable Jackets) direct from the supplier stating that you are member of the Western Front Association to:

Unit 95a, Tulketh Street, Southport PR8 1AW

Telephone 0800 169 2228 or 01704 873301 Email: sales@westcoast-embroidery.co.uk

Payment is by Credit Card, Bank Transfer or cheque only.
Note: an order form and cheque payable to West Coast Embroidery must accompany orders by post

Mug **£10**

Lapel Badge **£2.50**

The Official WFA Tie **£9**

Official WFA Baseball Cap **£8**

Messenger Bag **£27**

Shoulder Bag **£25**

Bookmark **£1.60**

To order the above (non clothing items) go to the E-shop on the Website or:

Contact: Sarah Gunn, Office Administrator, BM Box 1914, London, WC1N 3XX

Tel: 020 7118 1914 Email: office@westernfrontassociation.com www.westernfrontassociation.com