CHESTERFIELD WFA

Newsletter and Magazine issue 26

Patron –Sir Hew Strachan FRSE FRHistS

President - Professor Peter Simkins MBE FRHistS

Vice-Presidents

Andre Colliot

Professor John Bourne BA PhD FRHistS

The Burgomaster of Ypres

The Mayor of Albert

Lt-Col Graham Parker OBE

Professor Gary Sheffield BA MA PhD FRHistS

Christopher Pugsley FRHistS

Lord Richard Dannat GCB CBE MC DL

Roger Lee PhD jssc

www.westernfrontassociation.com

Branch contacts

Tony Bolton
(Chairman)
anthony.bolton3@btinternet.com
Mark Macartney
(Deputy Chairman)
Markmacartney48@gmail.com

Jane Lovatt (Treasurer)

Grant Cullen
(Secretary)
grantcullen@hotmail.com

Welcome to Issue 26 - the January 2018 Newsletter and Magazine of Chesterfield WFA.

The next Chesterfield Branch Meeting will be held on Tuesday 6th February 2018 with a 7.30 start.

The speaker for the evening is Tim Lynch who will Discuss,

`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” f so effectively?
His talk is based on research into his own family’s part in the Great War,
Tim, a regular at our Branch meetings is a freelance writer and battlefield guide.

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

Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2018

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

January	9th	**Jan.9th** 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"***

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2018 Spring Conference and AGM

APRIL 21

London offices of Norton Rose Fulbright, 3 More London, Riverside, London, SE1 2AQ

Programme for the day

9.30am	Doors open. Teas/coffees
10.15am	Welcome by the President
10.20am	**George V in the Great War:** Alex Churchill
11.20am	**Veteran contributions to the shaping the Imperial War Museum:** Catherine Long
12.20pm	buffet lunch
1.20pm	**The Zeebrugge Raid 1918:** Clive Harris
2.20pm	Teas/coffees
2.45pm	AGM
4.30pm	Finish of proceedings

THIS IS A FREE EVENT / BUFFET LUNCH £15

Confirm attendance via: **Steve Oram secretary@westernfrontassociation.com**

7th WFA President's Conference

JUNE 2

Birmingham

Saturday 2nd June 2018
Doors 09.00
Start 09.45 until 16.30

Tally Ho! Sports and Social Club, Birmingham B5 7RN

GERMAN SPRING OFFENSIVES

- **Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria and the German Spring Offensive 1918:** Jonathan Boff
- **British Intelligence and the German Spring Offensives:** Dr. Jim Beach
- **Manpower Issues in early 1918:** Alison Hine
- **The Battle for Flanders: German Defeat on the Lys 1918:** Chris Baker
- Panel discussion including Gary Sheffield and John Bourne

WFA York Conference

JULY 7

York

Saturday 7th July 2018
Doors 09.00,
Start 09.45 until 16.15

Manor Academy, Millfield Lane, Nether Poppleton, York YO26 6AP

TOWARDS VICTORY

- **Tommies in 1918:** Taff Gillingham
- **The Battle of the Selle 17/18th October 1918:** Dr Peter Hodgkinson
- **From the Battle of Montdidier to the Battle of Guise - The French Army in the 100 Days Campaign 1918:** Dr. Tim Gale
- **Politics and Strategy in the Making of the November 1918 Armistice:** Prof. David Stevenson

Booking details for Birmingham and York events only:

£30 for each conference which includes buffet lunch plus tea/coffee.

£50 combined fee for both conferences. Book via website or by contacting WFA Office.

www.westernfrontassociation.com **Telephone: 020 7118 1914**

A Personal note from the Chair (19)

For those of you who read my notes in the last issue of this newsletter you may remember I talked about the apparent speed with which we seem to have flown through the centenary years, well here we are in the final centenary year of the war. If my phone and diary is anything to go by 2018 will be a busy year. Those that attended the January meeting will know that the Chesterfield Branch of the Western Front Association has been invited to join Chesterfield Borough Council's group co-ordinating the town's remembrance of the end of the Great War. I therefore accepted the invitation on your behalf and attended my first meeting on 16 January. I was impressed by the range of organisations represented and the obvious enthusiasm to do something significant for the Armistice Centenary. I will keep you informed as plans develop but it already appears that we will be requested to provide speakers and volunteers for a number of events in the borough in the month leading up to 11th November.

External groups have also approached me to request speakers, Unison's retired group in Sheffield have once again requested a talk while Kiveton Park History Society have requested a speaker, unfortunately theses talks are all understandably clustered around mid- November so please don't be surprised if I ask for some help from our established branch speakers.

On a slightly different subject I can tell you that I will be attending the national Branch Chairman's Meeting which is held every two years *(is this biennially? I am never sure if that is every two years or twice a year)* this year in London over the weekend of February 17/18. This is the opportunity for local branches to influence the way our association is going in the next few years. There have been a number of fairly radical suggestions for the way the association develops in the future. I would very much appreciate your views on this. You can either write or email me, the details are on the cover sheet or website, or at next month's meeting I will try to get some idea of your thoughts to take to the meeting. Please have a think about what you want from the WFA in the future.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the February meeting.

Tony Bolton

Secretary`s Scribbles

Welcome to the first issue in 2018 of the WFA Chesterfield Branch Newsletter. The January meeting was a busy one, firstly with Councillor Steve Brunt making members aware of Chesterfield Borough Council`s plans to commemorate the events of 100 years ago – 1918 – the year of victory. We appreciate being asked to participate and our Branch Chairman, Tony Bolton, has already attended a meeting of the group which the council has set up for this purpose. Tony`s comments regarding his first meeting of this group is under his `Notes from the Chair` feature.

Then there was the Branch AGM – see report elsewhere - and it was amazing to hear from treasurer Jane Lovatt, not only the healthy state of Branch finances but that the average attendance has risen from 15 in 2015 to 29 in the year just ended. May I, on behalf of your Committee, thank those who come along and help bring that vibrancy to Branch meetings – but not forgetting of course those who find it hard to attend because of distance etc, but still maintain a keen interest in the Branch.

We were saddened to hear that two of our branch stalwarts, Malcolm Ackroyd and Charles Beresford had been poorly, both requiring a spell in hospital. Hopefully, by the time you read this both will be well on their way to recovery and that it will not be too long before they are back amongst us.

Now that we are almost a month into the New Year and (hopefully he says) the worst of the winter is behind us no doubt many members will getting out and about visiting museums, libraries, cemeteries – maybe even planning to visit some battlefields themselves in pursuit of our interests and enhancing our knowledge. Me ? Next October I am off to spend several days at Verdun where German Chief of the German Staff Erich von Falkenhayn vowed to `bleed the French army to death` in early 1916, only to have the losses of his own troops almost become as many as the French who tenaciously held on to that tiny salient.

Before that there will be various conferences – I will definitely be attending the WFA President`s and the York Conference as well as that of the Great War Forum – more about these elsewhere in this Newsletter / Magazine and, of course in the Stand To ! and Bulletin journals

Last call - 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 last year.

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

Any opinions expressed in this Newsletter /Magazine are not necessarily those of the Western Front Association, Chesterfield Branch, in particular, or the Western Front Association in general.

WFA Chesterfield Branch – 2018 AGM 9th January 2018

Branch Chairman Tony Bolton opened the meeting by asking if all had received the minutes of the 2017 AGM and copies of the annual financial statement. He asked Branch Secretary, Grant Cullen, if he received any Notices of Motion or any notices of intention of any member to seek office – in addition to those sitting office bearers, all of whom had indicated willingness to stand for re-election. GC said there was no correspondence of this nature. TB then reminded members that only those who were fully paid up could take part in any voting. TB then asked if there was any omissions or corrections to the 2017 AGM minutes. There being none, members unanimously adopted these as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

All offices were declared vacant.

Grant Cullen proposed, seconded George Houldsworth that Tony Bolton be re-elected Branch Chairman and this was unanimously agreed. George Houldsworth then proposed that the remaining offices be filled *en bloc* there being no additional candidates. Members agreed unanimously by a show of hands.

It was proposed that the following be elected. Mark Macartney – Vice Chair; Grant Cullen – Branch Secretary; Jane Lovatt – Branch Treasurer; Jon-Paul Harding – Committee.

There being no one otherwise minding these members were duly elected to serve in their respective posts for 2018.

Tony Bolton then called upon Jane Lovatt for the Treasurers report.

Jane stated that 2017 had been another good year for the Branch with an average attendance of 29 at meetings, an increase of 4 from 2016 and significantly above the average of 15 for 2015. Financially we generated a surplus of just over £800 with reserves now standing just over £3000. In part this was enabled by several members being willing to share their time and knowledge with the rest of us at no cost to the Branch, or for a minimal fee. Speakers from outside the Branch have supported the WFA ethos by only charging reasonable expenses which the branch has been able to cover without any monthly meeting dipping into the red. Members were thanked who have donated books as raffle prizes – thanks also to those who support us at each meeting by buying raffle tickets.

During the year the Labour Club raised the cost of hiring the room but the venue still represents very good value for money and gives members access to private parking and of course, the licensed bar. It was stressed that in order to comply with local licensing laws everyone who attends a meeting must become a member of the Labour Club on an annual basis. This cost is met by the Branch. `

Jane asked that all members must ensure that they sign in on entry to the meeting and to ensure that their membership is up to date and that they are in possession of a current membership card. The suggested attendance donation has again been kept at £3 and has remained unchanged since the Branch was inaugurated in 2010.

Last year members voted to spend funds replacing the laptop but it `miraculously` rallied and is still functioning, it will however, need replacing at some time in the future. We have, however invested in a lectern and speaker`s lights. Jane cautioned that we are a `not for profit` organisation and asked that members give some thought as to how some of these funds be spent.

Jane concluded her report by thanking her fellow committee members for their hard work and time, and thanked all members and friends for the continued support of the Branch.

The financial statements and the Treasurer`s report were unanimously adopted as a true representation of the Branch`s affairs, by a members show of hands, there being no one otherwise minded.

Branch Chairman, Tony Bolton, then asked if there was any further business, there being none, and he therefore declared the Branch AGM closed.

The Branch Committee for 2018 is –

Chairman – Tony Bolton (0002243) anthony.bolton3@btinternet.com

Vice Chairman – Mark Macartney (00018748) markmacartney48@gmail.com

Treasurer – Jane Lovatt (00017515) fjl1966@live.co.uk

Secretary – Grant Cullen (00012972) grantcullen@hotmail.com

Committee – Jon-Paul Harding (00020818) jonpaul.harding@gmail.com

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.

January 2018 Meeting

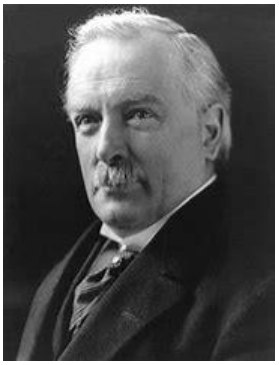
Branch Chairman welcomed everyone and Jon-Paul Harding read Binyon`s Exhortation to open the meeting.

Tony then introduced Councillor Steve Brunt of Chesterfield Borough Council who had requested an opportunity to address the local WFA membership to advise them of the Council`s plans for Commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the last and final year of The Great War.

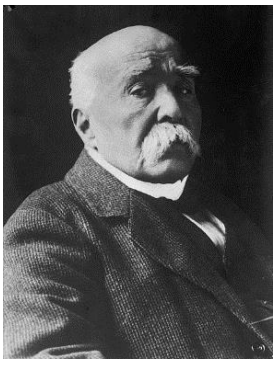
Councillor Brunt, a former Mayor of Chesterfield (seen here laying a wreath at the Menin Gate) opened by saying he had a long time interest in The Great War and had been a member of the WFA for more than 20 years. He said he was very keen that Chesterfield commemorates appropriately the conclusion of The Great War and gives it the respect it deserves. Steve said

that back in October he had approached the Council leader saying that the council needs to get a group together which he was willing to chair to commemorate the 100th Anniversary in 2018. That group is about looking at – not coordinating - not dictating – not directing – everything across the Borough that is being done to commemorate in 2018, October to November 1918. It has been decided to call the group and the period the `Eleventh to the Eleventh`, starting the main activities around 11th of October going through to the 11th of November but it does not exclude anything happening outside that period. The group meets once a month in the Town Hall – in fact the next meeting is next Tuesday (16th) at 2pm and the group would welcome one or two from Chesterfield WFA. What they are looking at doing is making sure that the group knows what is happening, for example the Council has commissioned a play at the Pomegranate Theatre which will run in the week prior to the 11th November. It is called the Eleventh Hour. Other organisations involved will be the Royal Hospital, Chesterfield College, the University of Derby and the local schools who did so much during the 2016 Battle of the Somme Commemorations and the group will want to know who is doing what, where and when. Next Tuesday`s meeting has John Holmes (Christchurch), Mike Evans from Staveley Town Council, Natalie Pearson from the Coalfields Education project, so you can see already it has spread. Steve said he was seeking representation from Chesterfield WFA on this committee where the Branch could keep other members appraised of the local WFA`s plans, meetings etc. Steve said he had put together a schools presentation based on his battlefield visits over the years, including school party visits to the Western Front. Steve finished by saying that he wanted everyone in Chesterfield, Derbyshire and beyond to know what this town is doing. It is also planned to have a `poppy fall` at the Town Hall later in the year. Tony Bolton said that he appreciated the invitation and that the Branch would participate.

As has become a Branch convention, the presentation at the January meeting after conclusion of the AGM business, Branch Chairman Tony Bolton delivers a talk , giving an overview of the year, one hundred years ago – in this case his talk was`**1918 – Defeat & Victory`.**



1918 commenced positively for David Lloyd George (left), who had been Prime Minister for just over a year. He had achieved some kudos within the ranks of the Allied leaders and he got that primarily on the backs of the efforts of the BEF in 1917 which had taken the strain in the offensives from the French army which was showing signs of moral and physical collapse having carried the weight of the war since 1914. Lloyd George used this position particularly with the new French President,



Georges Clemenceau (left) to advocate a change of policy and got agreement that in 1918 the Allies would stand on the defensive in the West whilst returning to his favoured policy of `knocking the props out` from under Germany. Of course in 1918 it was Germany which was doing all the `propping`, with the other Central Powers , excepting Germany, hanging on by the skin of their teeth. It was generally realised that the collapse of Russia would mean that in 1918 the Germans would be able to move considerable numbers of divisions to the Western Front and that too supported the feeling that in 1918 the allies would stand on the defensive. The American build up, following their entry into the war in 1917, had so far proved disappointing, only 150000 troops had so far arrived in France in the four months from November 1917 to February 1918 and the plans were to defend in 1918 and go for victory in 1919.

Shortage of manpower was probably the overriding factor which governed British policy in 1918, manpower had passed its peak availability and was in steep decline. The cabinet decided that the priorities for 1918 should be:-

- Shipbuilding – to replace the losses in the U boat offensive and to replace those ships which had been under construction in the US but upon American entry into the war had been requisitioned so there was a deficit that Britain had to fulfil.
- Aircraft construction – new strategic bombers
- Tanks – Mark IV and Mark V and a new Mark VIII, an Anglo American design
- Guns and other munitions was still apriority
- Agriculture and forestry – to reduce the dependency on imports. In fact the Forestry Commission dates from February 1918.

1919 was going to be the year when American `boys` and Entente `toys` were going to win the war.

After succeeding in persuading the Allied leaders, Lloyd George turned his attention onto the military. In 1917 he had attempted to control the military by his support for the Nivelle offensive but when that failed it gave Haig and Robertson the opportunity to outmanoeuvre him and although he was not an enthusiastic supporter of Third Ypres he did reluctantly agree that it could be fought . The problem for the army at Third Ypres was the massive losses and the battle ran on, as was generally acknowledged for far too long and there was little better news for the army from the Battle of Cambrai where initial success led to ultimate failure. David Lloyd George`s views had been strengthened by Allenby`s taking of Jerusalem in December 1917. The method he used to control the army was by the Supreme War Council which had been agreed in November 1917 at the Rapallo Conference which had been held immediately after the Caporetto disasters.

Using this Supreme War Council he effectively sacked Robertson (left), Chief of the Imperial General Staff and replaced him with Henry Wilson (right) a more compliant man altogether. He also wanted to get rid of Douglas Haig but he feared the reaction he would get from his political colleagues and the British public, but he had no intention of allowing Haig to mount another offensive in 1918. At the conferences in the early part of 1918, Lloyd George agreed with the French that Britain would take over more of the Front and in January 1918 25 miles of front line was passed from the French to the British, this effectively used up all of Haig`s reserve divisions. Lloyd George also prevented any further attacks by withholding further reserves in Britain. This led to a severe manpower shortage in France and the disbandment of 141 infantry battalions, brigades became three battalions strong rather than four.

To jump forward slightly, in the wake of the Germans spring offensives, Lloyd George was challenged as to the reserves which had not been made available to strengthen the line and a certain *cause celebre* broke out with Lloyd George telling Parliament that there was more troops in France in January 1918 than there had been one year previously.

Major General Sir Frederick Barton Morris (left) the former Director of Operations at the War Office was incensed by Lloyd George being fast and loose with statistics. On May 7th 1918 he wrote a letter to The Times in which he accused the Prime Minister of lying to Parliament. There was a natural reaction and on the 9th of May and emergency debate took place in the House of Commons.

The Opposition was led by the man whom Lloyd George had replaced as Prime Minister – Herbert Asquith. By a mixture of Asquith`s tedious style, and Lloyd George`s brilliant oratory and again playing fast and loose with statistics he was able to see off the challenge but the main reason was the Commons did not want, at that stage of the war to have to find another Prime Minister. The main outcome of the Maurice debate was a nail in the coffin of the Liberal party. In truth though, in 1918 the ration strength of the BEF in France and Belgium was larger than it had been in 1917 but this largely due to the number of Labour Battalions and the number of troops supporting things like the air force and tanks. The `bayonet strength` of the army – the infantry – was something like 70000 to 100,000 lower than it had been in 1917. This reflected a growth in the `tail` of the army which increased all the way

through 1918 and indeed all the way through the Second World War. By the end of the war in 1918 only 1 in 3 in the army were infantrymen.

Lloyd George had further manpower issues, on the 9th of March a new conscription bill came in raising the age to 50, this being at a time when nationally male life expectancy was probably about 65. Even men up to the age of 56 could be called up if they had a particular trade which was required. Lloyd George felt that if he was going to ask the country for a greater commitment it was quite wrong for Ireland to be left outside the conscription scheme, so Ireland was included in the Bill. Predictably fury erupted in Ireland, the United States and in the Dominions, so much so that the policy was never actually implemented, instead 50000 volunteers were called for but only 10000 actually came forward. The garrison in Ireland, as a result of this uncertainty and political unrest had to be increased from 25000 to 100000 men so the net result was a drain on manpower of around 75000 men. Of course it wasn`t only Britain that had problems, the one glimmer of hope was Germany, which had endured a winter of food shortages, strikes and other unrest, and had seen Russia under the Bolsheviks pull out of the war, the imposition of punitive terms on the Russians meant that considerable German forces – 52 divisions had to remain in the East as the armistice remained unsigned. Meanwhile, the Bolsheviks, expecting to be rewarded by a grateful population, held elections to the Duma. However they received only 25% of the vote and were by no means the largest party when the assembly met on the 5th of January. Anarchists and the bayonets of the Bolsheviks brought the assembly to a quick conclusion. Russians had to wait under 73 years before their next democratic elections under Boris Yeltsin.

Left to right – Stalin, Lenin, Trotsky

On the 3rd of March 1918 at Brest-Litovsk the Bolsheviks finally signed the Armistice, Russia lost 34% of its population, 32% of its agricultural land, 54% of her industry and 89% of her coal mines. The reality of what this German victory had meant was brought home to the Allies.

On November 1917, exactly one year before the end of the war, Erich Ludendorff (left) decided to gamble again. He had a poor record of gambling at the `tables, in 1917 he had gambled that unrestricted submarine warfare would bring Britain to her knees. In fact it hadn`t and had brought America in on the side of the Allies. His plan now was annihilate the British army before sufficient American forces could arrive in France. The German operational plan was for a single front war and if he hadn`t tied up nearly 1 million troops in the East chasing grandiose dreams of Empire he would have had even more troops available for his Kaiserschlacht.

Now Gerhard Grosse, a German military officer has just written an excellent – though `heavy` book called `Myths and Reality of German Warfare` argues that Ludendorff did have viable alternatives but was out of his depth even at the planning stage. He couldn`t solve the basic dilemma between the necessary tactics to achieve a breakthrough tactical breakthrough and the strategic necessities to produce a victory, there was no strategic targets of any value. The vaguely expressed strategy was to roll up the British army from the south and bundle it off the continent. In fact when he did strike the German army made huge advances. In nine days they recovered all the land they had given up in the withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line and all the territory lost during the Somme battles of 1916 but none of this could be described as a strategic success, in fact his left hand army of the three that attacked which was supposed to be his flank guard actually achieved greater penetration than his other two.

The Kaiserschlacht Offensives

- Michael
- Georgette
- Gneisenau
- Blucher-Yorck
- Marneschutz-Reims/Friedensturm

On April 9th he attacked again in Flanders striking the unfortunate Portuguese divisions and achieved initial tactical success but he soon became bogged down, Defences in Flanders, which were far more important to the British than those in the Somme, because they covered the al important Channel ports, was more determined and the shocks of the German attacks were beginning to wear off. Success in Flanders was nowhere as near as great as they had achieved in the Somme. Then, completely changing his view as to what his tactical and strategic objectives were, he struck the French at the Chemin de Dames. It is hard to imagine what Ludendorff`s thoughts were, clearly he did not have any hope of annihilating the British Army and whilst his tactical break ins were impressive but he could not turn these into operational successes and the reason he couldn`t was because he could only advance as fast as a man could march, or a horse could pull, his logistics, and that gave the Allies, no matter how hard they were being hit, the opportunity to reform a defensive line.

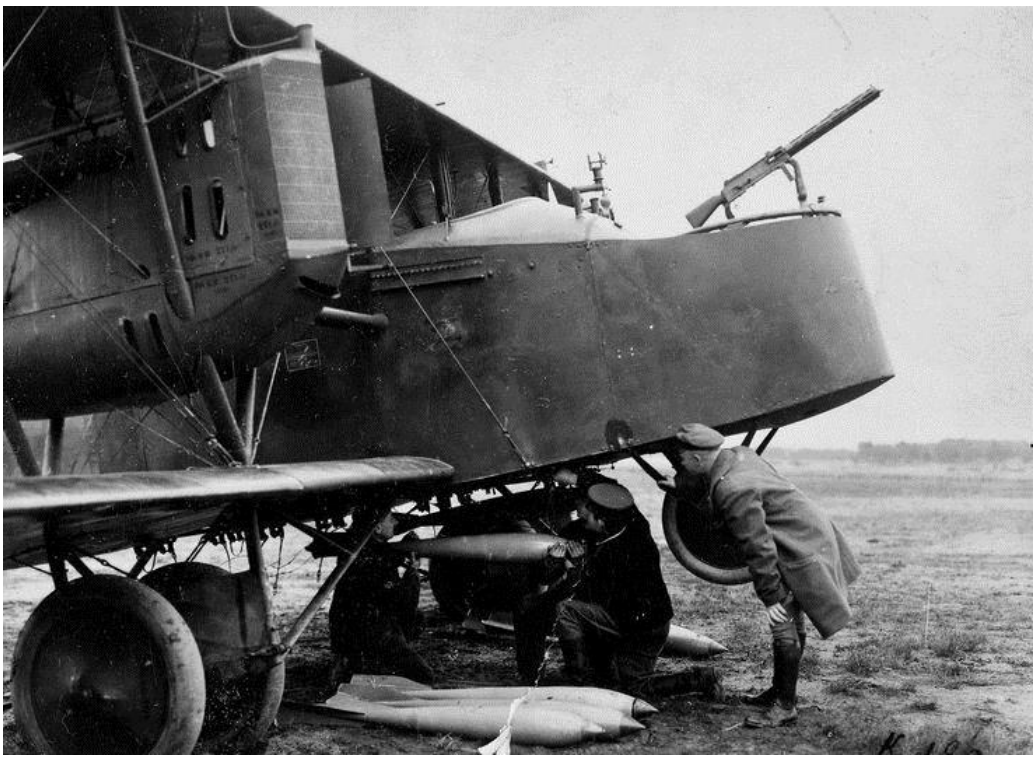
Of course, the Allies on the receiving end of these unprecedented tactical successes did not see them for what they were, Britain, forb the only time in the war feared actually losing. There was frantic appeals to the US for more troops and America increased the flow of troops to France fourfold, 150000 were arriving in Europe after March.

It was the remarkable strength of British industry – what the Germans called *materielschlacht* that all the guns lost by the British army during the German spring offensives were available for immediate replacement from depots back at home and within weeks the British army was completely re-supplied.

It also galvanised the Allies into appointing a *Generalissimo* in Ferdinand Foch. (left)

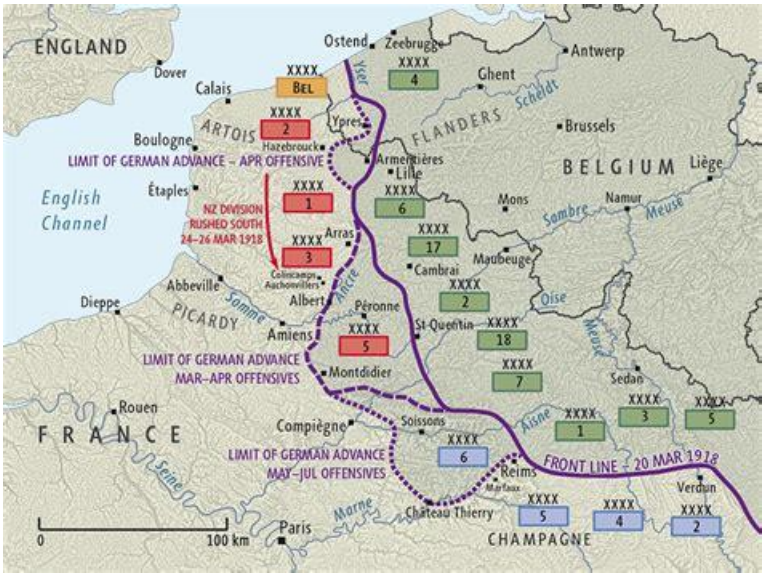
As a backdrop to the armed life or death struggle, the Royal Navy provided a chink of light when on St. George`s Day, April 23rd, Admiral sir Roger Keyes attacked the German submarine base at Zeebrugge, blockships were sunk in the channel. Marines and sailors were landed from the old destroyer Vindictive and two Mersey ferries, the Daffodil and Iris. Troops were landed on the mole to suppress the defences. In truth there was no long term effect, the Germans were able quite quickly to find ways around the blockage but at the time it was a good news story that was well needed by a population that was in shock as a result of the German offensives.

A further development came on April 1st 1918 when the Royal Air Force came into being, following on from the appointment of Lord Rothermere, the press baron on January 2nd and largely in response to the effects of German bombing on London, German fixed wing aircraft, like Gothas(below) having replaced the Zeppelins



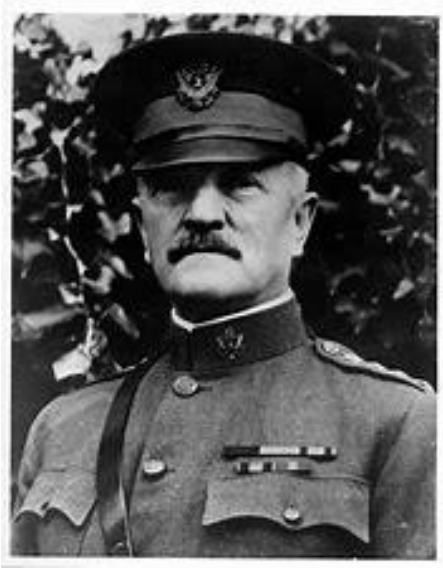
Losses were tiny compared with those inflicted in world War Two, there being 856 lives lost the impact upon morale and production was very real, indeed Lloyd George himself was not immune from these fears.

In the harvest moon phase at the end of 1917 over 300000 people were sleeping in London tube stations. 100 Gothas and 15 Zeppelin-Staaken *Riesenflugzeug* `Giants` drew off 200 aircraft and 14000 men from the Western Front as air defence for London. The cabinet too, overreacted, the authorised the creation of the Independent Air Force and authorised day and night bombing of the Rhineland. British bombing was no more effective than German, in fact there was even fewer casualties in Germany in raids on Cologne, Frankfurt and Darmstadt. By the end of the war the RAF actually had Handley-Page V500 bombers which could actually reach Berlin and the argument over strategic bombing began during World War One, continued in the inter war years and like the tank, strategic bombing had to wait until the net war to come of age.



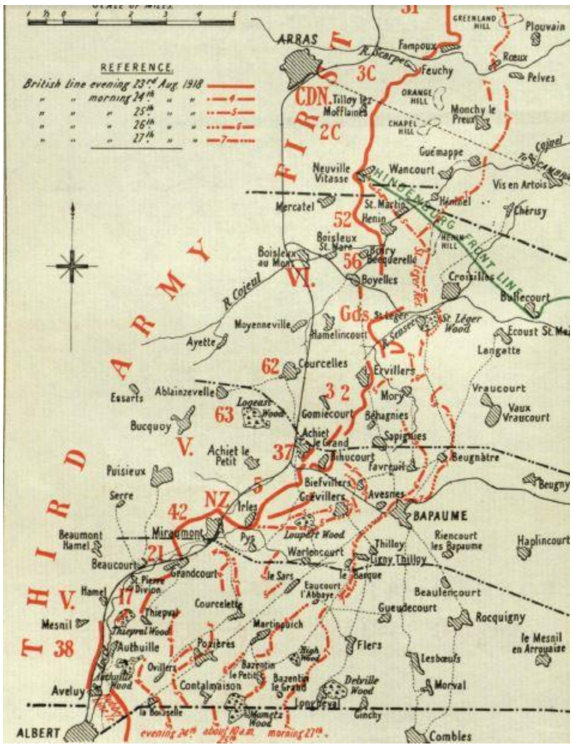
Even at the height of the German spring offensives there had been Allied counter attacks and an exhausted and increasingly demoralised German army was fought to a standstill. It became obvious that the result of these offensives was to produce a series of large salient and a corresponding increase in the length of the German front line. It should be recalled that in the spring of 1917 the Germans had withdrawn to a straight, shorter defensive line thereby reducing the number of troops required to man the front, now they had gone back and were in a worse position than they had been originally. The line was thinly held and was weaker in the extended positions than it had been previously. It is interesting to note that one of the criticisms levelled at the British High Command for the offensives of 1916 and 1917 was that only a matter of yards was taken – Ludendorff had actually captured land – tens of miles of it – but for all of this he had achieved absolutely nothing.

The Allied attacks, when they came, fell upon a shaken and largely worn out army. The stated German intention had ben to destroy the British army before the arrival of sufficient numbers of Americans. The March offensives galvanised the Americans into supplying more troops albeit hastily organised and in many cases barely trained.



Some of these troops were allocated to serve alongside British and French troops but General `Black Jack` Pershing (left), Commander of the American Expeditionary Force jealously `ring fenced` the majority of the American army. He considered that an American army, under American officers would be in a strong position to dictate the peace at the end of the war, just as Kitchener had realised earlier. His refusal to allocate American units to British and French armies had several unforeseen circumstances, the three year experience, gained at much pain and loss by the other Allies was denied to the majority of the American army. When the Americans finally came into action in September 1918 it was reminiscent of the British Army on the Somme in July 1916. There was huge logistical difficulties and needless casualties because of the American `know it best` attitude. Some, however, of Pershing`s troops served alongside the Australians and on July 4th (American Independence Day) they took part in an attack on a small village called Hamel. It was noted for its textbook success – a classic example of an `all arms` battle – guns, tanks, aircraft and infantry – and was a dress rehearsal for the British advance during the Hundred Days. Foch attacked at Chateau Thierry on the 8th of July but it is Amiens on the 8th of August that really marks the start of the Hundred Days.

Fourth Army, comprising 3rd Corps, the Australian Corps and the Canadian Corps achieved completed success. Supported by the French in the South, over 500 tanks, some of which were being used as forward supply tanks and with close air support to attack the anti-tank guns the Germans were using, Rawlinson achieved the largest single day advance on the Western Front – in miles – ever. Armoured cars and cavalry ranged in the rear areas. German Headquarters and even trains bringing reinforcements were captured. Over 12000 prisoners and 450 guns were taken. It is debatable where Ludendorff actually had a nervous breakdown, but he certainly called August 8th 1918 the Black Day for the German Army and he subsequently told the Kaiser that the war could not be won by military means alone. What really surprised both the British and the Germans was the readiness of German soldiers, who had fought so stubbornly for three years, to surrender to even small groups of infantry or cavalry. Haig broke off the action at Amiens after three days, German reinforcements and tiredness in his own troops were resulting in diminished return. Foch, in his position as *Generalissimo,* ordered Haig to continue the attack. Haig, using his prerogative of referral to the British government, refused and managed to persuade Foch that it would be better to renew the offensive elsewhere. On the 20th of August, Foch attacked at Soissons.



The following day Julian Byng`s Third Army attacked between Arras and Albert.

Fourth Army joined in the on the 22nd, whilst on the 26th, First Army attacked on the Scarpe and by the night of the 26 and 27th August, the Germans were beginning to withdraw back to the Hindenburg Line.

On first of September the Australians entered Peronne and the Canadians broke the Droucort-Queant line

On September 6th the Germans began to withdraw from the Lys.

The British army reached the Hindenburg Line on the 26th September

The first fifty days of the hundred days had resulted in an advance of 50 miles on a front of 40 miles – but at a cost of 180,000 casualties. Pushed by Haig to be more adventurous and audacious Foch eventually agreed to launch the Grand Offensive. On the 26th September the French and the Americans attacked at the Meuse-Argonne which, according to Gary Sheffield was ` a bludgeoning affair reminiscent of the Somme`. On the 27th September, the Canadians, after a textbook artillery preparation forced a crossing of the Canal du Nord. On the 29th King Albert and the Belgian Army and elements of Plumer`s Second Army broke out of Ypres with Passchendaele and Messines ridges being retaken but the hardest test fell to Rawlinson and Fourth Army – he was to break the Hindenburg line near St Quentin. The Hindenburg line was actually six lines of defences with multiple trenches and strongpoints. The St Quentin canal, nearly 35 feet wide 5 miles long and 50 foot deep was a formidable obstruction in its own right, Just to the north was a three and a half mile tunnel and it was here that Rawlinson decided that he would make his attempt but the Germans realised that this was the only location for an attack and the defences were extremely strong. The Australians, assisted by two US Divisions attacked supported by tanks. The 46th North Midlands division was to attack further south, directly across the canal on a front of 2000 yards supported by 316 heavy guns which, incidentally, was more heavy guns than were available on the Somme on July 1st 1916. Using anything that would float, including lifebelts and lifejackets from cross channel ferries the 137th Sapper Brigade flooded across the canal. I heavy mist they managed to capture intact the Riqeval Bridge and this effectively outflanked the German positions that the Australians and Americans were attacking.

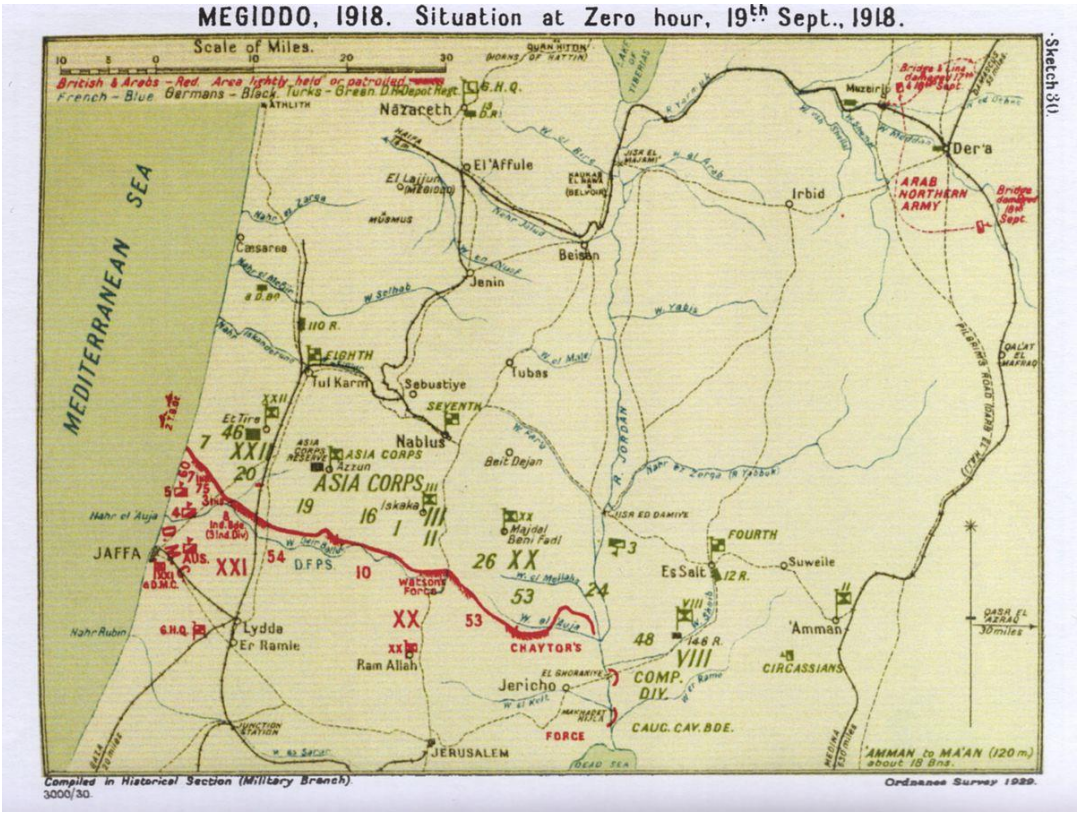
By the 4th of October there was no more established lines to defend before Germany. Ludendorff told Hindenburg that an armistice was essential.

What now about Lloyd George`s eastern policy?

In December 1917 Allenby had taken Jerusalem but the German spring offensive had caused a hiatus in Palestine, 60 British Battalions were withdrawn and sent to France and these were

replaced by the much travelled 2nd and 7th Indian Divisions who had formed part of the Indian Corps which had been formed in France in 1914 and had subsequently been rushed out to Mesopotamia in an attempt to relieve Townshend and now found themselves in Palestine. The ranks of the Territorial divisions which had been withdrawn had been filled by newly raised Indian Army units. The order of battle for the Egyptian Expeditionary Force read like a roll of honour for the Empire, not only were there Indians, there were two battalions of the British West Indian Regiment, two battalions of Jewish volunteers, part of the Royal Fusiliers, there was Australian Light Horse, New Zealand Rifles and there was even a mountain battery from Hong Kong. The French, always with a suspicious eye on the British Imperial ambitions sent the *Detachmente Francais Palestine* which included the Armenian League and of course on Allenby`s right flank, there was Lawrence and his arabs.

By September, Basil Liddell-Hart says, `Allenby fought one of the most precisely decisive battles in all history ` - Megiddo – which takes its name from the village which is the biblical site of `Armageddon`. In an entirely successful deception Allenby managed to switch virtually his whole force from the right flank to the left on the coastal strip which was lightly held by the Turks.



On the 19th of September 400 guns fired a 15 minute barrage and the infantry was through the Turkish front lines before the Turkish counter barrage was fired. Pivoting on their right they rolled up the Turkish Eighth Army and forced against the Judean hills where it was virtually annihilated. The difference between Megiddo and Ludendorff`s spring offensives was that Allenby had the means to turn tactical break-in to strategic rout. By midday on the 19th September, the cavalry divisions were 18 miles behind the old front line heading for the passes across the Judean hills. It was late in the afternoon before General Liman Von Sanders, the German commanding the Turkish forces, realised the extent of the damage that had been caused and he set off for Damascus from his headquarters in Nazareth. Within an hour Australian mounted troops had entered Nazareth just missing the opportunity of capturing the army commander. The cavalry then moved east and south and cut off the Turkish 7th Army

which was in the Jordan valley. Attacked by the 10th Division and their route of escape across the bridges of the River Jordan by the Australian horsemen, the Turks bolted. At Wadi Farr in scenes reminiscent of the Falais Gap or the Baghdad Road in 1991, RAF bombers caught the fleeing Turks. 86000 machine gun rounds were fired by the planes and caused total devastation. The RAF crews were so disgusted by the slaughter that some asked to be relieved from further operations against the fleeing Turks, 75000 POWs, including 3500 Germans were taken. The Turkish 6th army which was operating west of the Jordan was also caught as it struggled back towards Damascus. On the 1st of October, Australian mounted troops and arabs, entered Damascus, the day after Indian troops occupied Beirut on the coast and by the 25th mounted troops had reached Aleppo. The Turks had had enough and on 30th October, on board the battleship HMS Agamemnon, which was lying just off the island of Mudros, an armistice was signed. The Ottoman Empire, which had existed since the fourteenth century came to an end.

Mesopotamia. After the fall of Baghdad in 1917, the army had pushed up the Euphrates as far as Tikrit which was supposed to be the birthplace of Saladin – and of course Saddam Hussein. Further advances took place up river to Kirkuk but the War Office considered that Palestine was a better option in defeating the Turks than Mesopotamia and troops were withdrawn to be replaced by newly raised Indian army units. One of the arguments for continuing the operations in Mesopotamia was the support it offered to the Russians who were in the Caucasus and northern Armenia and were stopping Turkey infiltrating into Northern Persia where the Turks hoped to destabilise the government and gain access into Afghanistan and India.

The Bolshevik Revolution in the Caucasus through the whole thing into turmoil. It was quickly realised that it was politically and logistically impossible for the army in Mesopotamia to replace the Russians in this region. The Southern Caucasian Republic which was an unlikely amalgam of Georgians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians and Dhagistanis had emerged from the wreckage of the Bolshevik Revolution and it was hoped that if we sent a mission to Baku they could be formed into some sort of force to prevent Turkish incursions into Northern Persia and also protect the Caspian oilfields.

Major General L.C. Dunsterville

Major General Lionel Dunsterville was sent, with 200 officers and NCOs, 650 miles from Baghdad, across Persia to the Caspian Sea. When he reached Enzeli on the Caspian he found that the Bolsheviks had complete naval control over the Caspian and it was impossible for him to get across into Baku. He therefore sent for Royal Navy guns which were taken from Tigris gunboats and transported all the way across Persia, mounted on to local shipping to dispute with the Bolsheviks the crossing of the Caspian and by August 1918, Dunsterville was in Baku. By this time Baku was run by the Central Caspian Dictatorship and they had no intention whatsoever of being organised into a fighting force to defend the oilfields.

On the third of June Royal marines were landed at Murmansk in northern Russia to protect the supplies there. On the same day 2000 Germans landed in Georgia having crossed the Black Sea from the Ukraine. The Transcaucasian Republic disintegrated along religious lines. The Caspian oilfields were the target for German, Turkish and British attention. The Turks, realising that they had lost their Arab empire want to replace it with a pan-Turkish Empire that would take in the

Muslim states of Azerbaijan and Dhagistan, a plan much favoured by Mustafa Kemal later to be known as `Ataturk`. Dunsterville`s attempts to get the locals to form any sort of defence force failed. They had no interest whatsoever to fight for control of the oilfields. On the 25th august there took place one of the more unusual agreements of the First World War when the Bolsheviks and the Kaiser`s Germany agreed that Germany would cease advancing into southern Russia if the Bolsheviks would attack the Allies at Murmansk and Baku. Germany would receive one third of the oil produced by the Caspian oilfields. Faced with threats on all sides and an intransigent local population Dunsterville pulled out on the 14th of September and the Turks occupied Baku.

The loss of experienced troops to Palestine and transport to Dunsterville limited to what Lieutenant General William Marshall (left) who in November 1917 had succeeded Sir Frederick Stanley Maude (upon the latter's death from cholera) as Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Mesopotamia, could do and there were only minor operations until October when the War Office instructed him to occupy Mosul. Moving up the Tigris, he fought two clever battles at Fatah Gorge and at Shatack. In both actions the infantry kept the Turks pinned in their positions whilst cavalry swept round the flanks. He was still several miles short of Mosul when the armistice came into effect on the 13th of October but Marshall chose to ignore it and occupied Mosul on the 1st November, much to the displeasure of the Turkish commander and he occupied the oilfields two days later. Under the Sykes-Picot agreement, all of Iraq was to be a French sphere of influence and the French had sent a mission to Basra. But by simply expediency Marshall refused to give them transport to move up country and they were forced to sit and watch ad British boots on the ground effectively dictated policy and won for Britain an important strategic advantage.

Latterly Mesopotamia and Palestine were important operations for the cavalry, rapid exploitation and rapid turning of the flanks but it was the petrol engine that finally did for cavalry, particularly the tank. The Middle East campaigns of 1918 were a brilliant swansong for the British cavalry.

Britain, France and the United states all sent troops to Russia as civil war tore that country apart. Fearing that the Czar and his family would become a rallying point for dissidents, on the 16th of July 1918 the Bolsheviks ordered then into the basement of their house of captivity in Ekaterinberg and shot them all, including their doctor and their maid. On 30th August Lenin was the victim of an assassination attempt when Fanny Kaplan a disenchanted anarchist shot him twice, once in the lung and once in the neck but he recovered. Lenin, ultimately was to unleash a Red Terror on Russia against anyone who opposed him and his party.

Now in Salonika Franchet D`esperay who had been commanding a mixed group of British, French, Serbian, Italian and Greek troops had been held up as the Bulgarians had held all of the commanding heights, indeed these forces had been sitting there for most of the war. On the 15th September, after the withdrawal of the German `stiffening` divisions, and with Bulgaria facing famine at home, French and Serbian troops broke out and this was followed on the 20th September when British troops entered Bulgaria with Bulgaria subsequently seeking an armistice. It was the first of the Central Powers to fall. Austria attacked Italy at Asiago and on the Piave in the summer of 1918 but made no headway whatsoever. On October 24th, supported by French and British troops, the Italians went on to the offensive at Vittorio Veneto and inflicted a major defeat on the Austrians. Two weeks later, on the 4th of November, the Austrians signed an armistice. Germany now stood alone.

In South East Africa the war had begun in November 1914 with a botched landing at Tanga, Dar es Salaam. German South East Africa, later Tanganyika, now Tanzania was one of the most successful German colonies. The commander of the *schutztruppen* Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck (left) escaped into the outback with 15000 askaris and for the rest of the war led ten times that number of Empire troops a frustrating and uncomfortable chase all over southern Africa. By 1918 British columns were closing in on him but he again eluded capture by slipping away into Portuguese East Africa, now Mozambique. The British were refused entry to pursue him. In December 1917 Portugal had suffered a coup, the Sidonio Pais coup and the new government were anxious to prove that they could carry out the war successfully. Eventually British troops were allowed to enter the Portuguese territory but by this time von Lettow-Vorbeck was long gone. In July 1918 he inflicted a heavy defeat on the Portuguese at Namakura. Toe weeks after the end of the war in Europe he managed to capture a British despatch rider and it was only then that he realised that Germany had signed an armistice. The war in Africa had lasted two weeks longer than that in Europe. When he emerged from the jungle he could not believe the state that Germany had sunk to.

By the end of September most people in Germany realised that the end was near and, trying to salvage something from the wreckage the Germans contacted Woodrow Wilson (left), the American President, proposing a cessation of hostilities based upon his Fourteen Points that he had presented to Congress on the 8th of January.

On the 12th of September the Kaiser had amended the German constitution to that of a constitutional monarchy with the Reichstag having total control as it was hoped that this move would make him a more acceptable negotiating partner to the Americans. Prince Ma of Baden had made this a precondition before accepting the position as Chancellor. Wilson, however refused the German overtures. Ludendorff then wildly swung and advocated continuing the war into 1919, Prince Max realised this was completely impossible and after consulting the Kaiser had Ludendorff sacked on the 24th October. On 28th October, Admiral Reinhard Scheer, aiming for a `death or glory` mission, hoping to improve the German`s negotiating position, ordered the High Seas Fleet to sail. The fleet mutinied. On the day that he sacked Ludendorff, the Kaiser, trying to quell some unrest and disruption gave a political amnesty and amongst those released was Karl Liebknecht, the Spartacist leader. The Spartacists were the German Bolsheviks. On November 1st the Kaiser refused to abdicate and on the 5th of November the Bavarian Royal Family fled as revolutionaries occupied the palace, declaring Bavaria to be a socialist republic. Three days later the German armistice delegation arrived at the forest of Compiegne. On the 10th of November, realising that his personal safety could no longer be guaranteed by his army, the Kaiser abdicated and fled to Holland. On the home front anarchy reigned but the German army continued to fight on, in semi open warfare, including several sharp actions. The British managed to advance a further 20 miles taking 120000 prisoners. On the 4th of November, in the last significant action by British troops, they forced a crossing of the Sambre. It has been believed that the last 100 days of the The Great War was the greatest military victory in British history. The British Army took a higher number of prisoners than the combined totals of France, US and Belgium and captured almost 3000 guns.

By the 11th of November logistics was becoming a major problem and Haig was quite prepared to accept an armistice.

It is hard to imagine those people in a railway carriage in the forest of Compiegne negotiating the armistice did not have half an eye on posterity when the set the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month as the date and time when the armistice would take effect, a day that survived the second world war, a rather `double end` to the first world war which today is still recognised as a day of remembrance.

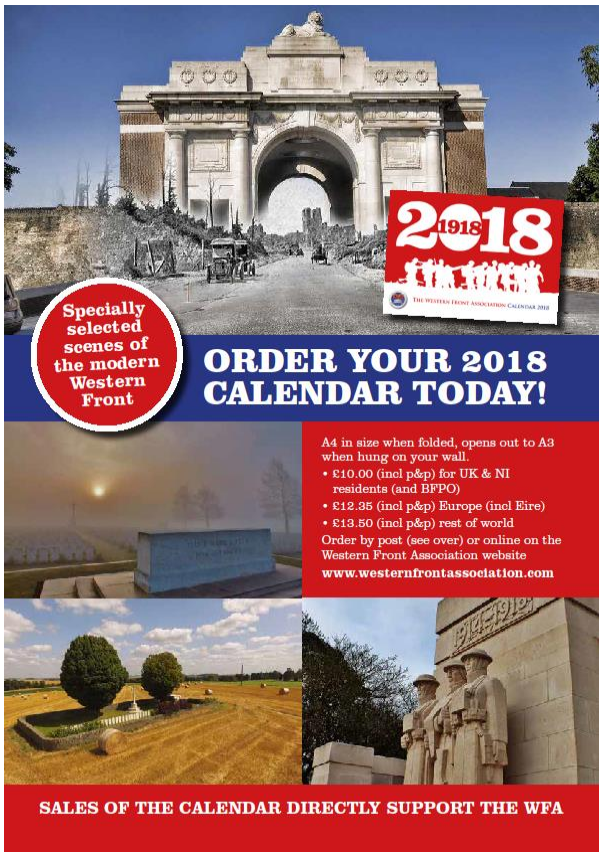
On the sixth of November Lloyd George asked the King to dissolve parliament, a General Election being held on the 14th of December. It was the first General Election since the Representation of the Peoples Act which extended the franchise to all men over the age of 21 and for women over 30. It was known as the `coupon election`. The `coupon` was a letter, signed by David Lloyd George and Bonar Law given to loyal liberals who were prepared to support the coalition and not face opposition from Unionist candidates. The coalition was returned with a big majority. The big losers were Asquith and the rump of the Liberal party, indeed Asquith lost his own seat of East Fife were, in 1914, he had been returned unopposed.

The other big winner was Eamonn de Valera (left) and Seinn Fein who thrashed the old Irish National Party and became the largest Irish Party.

At the dawn of 1918, few would have forecast that by December 31st the German army would be back in its own territory, out from all occupied territory and with Allied troops occupying the Rhineland, British second Army having occupied Cologne on the 11th of December.

Those remaining loyal units of the German Army were too occupied putting down Spartacist and other revolutionaries, to take any notice. The need for the German army to restore and maintain order, meant that politicians turned a blind eye to myth that the German army had not been beaten on the battlefield with the `stab in the back` myth which sowed the `dragons' teeth` for another global conflict just over twenty years later.

That concluded the presentation with Tony fielding questions and a brief discussion before Branch Secretary Grant Cullen proposed a vote of thanks which concluded a very satisfactory meeting.

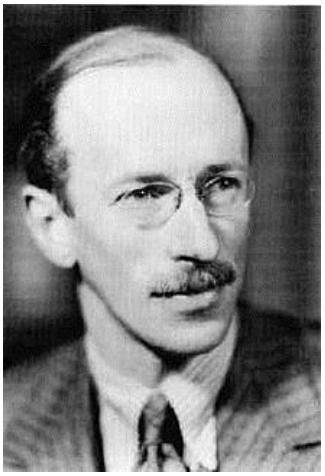


December 2017 Meeting

After the normal opening formalities, Branch Chairman, Tony Bolton welcomed our speaker for the evening, Professor John Derry, in front of what was almost a `full house` attendance. Professor Derry, Emeritus Professor of Modern British History at the University of Newcastle and author of numerous books and biographies. John studied history at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Following national service in the RAF he returned to Emmanuel College as a resident fellow. In 1961 he was appointed lecturer at the London School of Economics before returning to Cambridge to a lectureship at Downing College. 1970 saw the beginning of his distinguished career at Newcastle University where he ultimately became professor of history. His many publications include twelve books, including biographies of Pitt, Fox, Castlereagh and Grey.John is a widely admired speaker to The Western Front Association and local history groups but this was his first, and eagerly anticipated visit to Chesterfield Branch. Professor Derry`s talk was entitled `Haig Reconsidered` a topic which would give much food for thought.

John opened by saying that his subject for the talk was, for him, a personal voyage of discovery and revisionism. Many years ago he said he had read Winston Churchill`s book `The World Crisis`, a book about which Sir Arthur Balfour said `Winston has written a large book about himself – and called it the World Crisis!` When in his twenties John said he had been swept

away by the Churchillian eloquence and rhetoric and had been something of an `easterner` and had regarded the war of attrition on the Western Front, almost as Churchill did, as a denial of the military art, but over the years he had changed his view of Douglas Haig, as have a good many historians. There is of course a time lag between historical revisionism and revisionism communicating itself to the general public and Haig`s reputation has gone in more than one cycle of reappraisal. At the end of the war he was strongly considered to be the architect of victory and in the 1920s he was still highly regarded, not only for his work in creating the British Legion and making sure it was a nonpolitical movement – remember in many of the continental countries veterans associations were highly political sometimes of the extreme left, sometimes of the extreme right. Haig was determined that this would not happen in this country. When he died in January 1928, it has been said subsequently that more people turned out for his funeral than turned out for the funeral of Princess Diana which is the most recent example of widespread public grief in the country. It was only in the 1930s when you got the publication of novels ,a re-discovery of the war poets and the rise of a sort of neo-pacifistic temperament in this country that his reputation started to plummet, not least by the publication in the mid-1930s of Lloyd-George`s `War Memoirs`. John said he felt that he was being polite by saying that in his memoirs Lloyd-George was `economical with the truth` because, by the time he wrote his memoirs in the 1930s he wanted to pass the blame for the casualty rate in the First World War onto somebody else, even though we must never forget that all of Haig`s campaigns had to be fought with the approval of the British War Cabinet. Ultimately it is a political decision, in this country at least to give the go ahead for any military or naval action and Lloyd George was determined to pass the buck. Later – and remember he did not die until 1945 – he responded to the criticism that he had been unfair to Haig and many of the other generals by saying that by the time he had written his memoirs, particularly when covering the events of 1917 and 1918 he had not kept good records himself and was over dependent on the views of a well-known military commentator of the time, almost certainly a reference to Basil Liddle-Hart (pictured)



Liddell –Hart who, in the war, had been very pro-Haig and of course after the war turned violently against him. This means that, insofar as people were aware of Haig, he was regarded as a bungler or worse still, a butcher. One however, one American general in the past had been regarded as a butcher, Ulysses S. Grant, the greatest of the Federal commanders in the American Civil War who most people now consider it was he who understood what was needed to defeat the confederacy but putting the relentless pressure of his superior resources on the shrinking confederate army. In the 1960s with the publication of Alan Clark`s `The Donkeys`, Haig`s reputation took another pummeling and of course things like Blackadder and `Oh What a Lovely War` damaged his reputation still further, until in 1998 even the Daily Express which can hardly be called a left-wing newspaper, urged the removal of Haig`s famous statue in London as it was an insult to the war dead. Things have changed since then because, in more recent years, there has been a regular flow of publications, either about Haig in general or scholarly biographies like Gary Sheffield`s `The Chief` which is probably the best of recent studies of Haig. Again, there have been more specialist studies which have put the war into perspective.

Nobody can deny the horrors of the First World War but as the late Lord Hailsham once said `remember the Battle of Hastings was pretty horrible without antiseptics or modern medical treatment`. All war is horrific or as Jacky Fisher once said about a conference before 1914 which had suggested that they should try to `humanise` war. `It is impossible to humanise war – it is hell`. Remember it is always politicians who get us into war then expect soldiers, sailors and airmen to fight it. John said he mentioned this because John Terraine has been justified over the last fifty years in taking the view that Haig was in fact a thoroughly professional soldier and that sets him apart from a good many other soldiers from the late Victorian army who didn`t regard soldiering as a serious career and as a Lowland Scot he was a serious minded man who did take it seriously and it is important to remember that Haig was a Scot by birth, born in Edinburgh on 19th June 1861 and that his father was, of course, the famous whisky distiller. Haig was fortunate in that the family was well off because of the products manufactured by the company. His father died when he was very young and he was the youngest of a large family and there is no doubt that the most important influence on him was his mother who was a very devout member of the Church of Scotland as indeed Haig himself was to be during and after the First World War. He was educated at Clifton, and English public school modelled on Dr. Arnold`s Rugby School, and then he went up to Oxford. He left Oxford without taking a degree because, although he had passed the examinations he missed a term because of illness and Oxford, like Cambridge, is still a university that still insists that you `keep term`, you have to be in residence for nine terms in order to graduate and rather than go up for another term Haig preferred to go to Sandhurst because he had decided to make the army his career. At Sandhurst he was somewhat older than most of the other cadets but he wanted to go into the cavalry and he was eventually commissioned into the 7th Hussars and like many young late Victorian officers he gained his early experience of soldiering in India where, very quickly he became Regimental Adjutant. He was serious minded and when others were enjoying themselves he preferred to read books about the military art and the history of war. A little of a foretaste of Bernard Montgomery in that respect. But Haig was also a very good polo player despite the fact that as a boy he had suffered from asthma and his first attempt to get into the staff college at Camberley failed, two reasons, firstly, he got less than 50% in the mathematics paper and the asthma condition. As a boy he quickly realised that if he was to overcome this health obstacle he had to be self-disciplined and he became a very self-disciplined man. In India he is successful as adjutant, he gets into the staff college at Camberley on the second attempt in 1896 and he impressed the tutors there, one of whom Colonel Henderson was an expert in the history of the American Civil War. Now it has been said that many British and continental soldiers ignored the experiences of the American Civil War which was, in some respects, a foretaste of the First World War, much more so than the frequently studied campaigns of Napoleon. The all had a `Napoleonic` complex in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Henderson was an expert on Lee and Grant and possibly some of that rubbed off on Douglas Haig. He served with distinction in the Boer War, he had been present in the first re-conquest of the Sudan, the famous Omdurman campaign in which the young Winston Churchill was involved as well as the young David Beatty. Haig caught the eye of people as a `thinking soldier` then he distinguished himself in the Boer War which we should remember was a war in which cavalry and mounted infantry was very important. He served under Sir John French, took part in the relief of Kimberley and then in the grueling guerilla war that followed before the peace agreement of Vereeniging of 1902. By this time Haig was regarded as one of

the `coming men` in the army and he became Director of Operations and helped Richard Haldane, Secretary of State for War from the Liberal victory in 1906, in the reform of the army in the light of the Boer War experience. It is interesting to note that Haldane who was very much an intellectual, a barrister by training and profession, also had a long standing interest in German philosophy, particularly the rather depressing philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer. Haldane set up the Territorial Army Reserve and Haig was very important in those reforms and in setting up that body to train people in an age when conscription was unthinkable. Then of course Haig takes command at Aldershot and so, when 1914 comes, he is a Corps Commander in the BEF. That experience is important, particularly his involvement in the first Battle of Ypres in October/November 1914. That undoubtedly shaped Haig`s attitude to modern war. It is also interesting that, in the years before 1914, he was convinced that ultimately the country would have to go to war with Germany even though he had visited Germany, attended German army manoeuvres, had met the Kaiser and held the old Imperial German Army in high regard, which was, arguably, the most professional army that had ever existed in modern European history. It is said that in 1939, after the German `blitzkreig` victory over Poland, Adolf Hitler asked the German generals to comment on the performance of his new army and he was outraged when the generals said the army did quite well in Poland but it is not quite up to the standard of the old Imperial Army of 1914. That outraged Hitler who thought that any army motivated by Nazi ideology would be the best in the world and of course he loathed the old imperial regimes in Berlin and Vienna and he thought, probably correctly, that too many of his generals still had their hearts with the Kaiser, rather than the Third Reich. There is no doubt that, in 1914 in terms of staff work, the German army was easily the best in the world;

Haig therefore was a pessimist that ultimately war would come and he felt that it would be a long war, indeed in 1914 he said that this war will last at least three years so he set his face against the `over by Christmas` school of thinking, which , in John`s opinion, has been exaggerated in many of the accounts. Furthermore, early in the war he said `we can only win this war if we defeat the German army in Ypres` so right from the start of the war the decisive sphere of operations would be the Western Front and it would be how the French and the British coped with the German army which would decide the outcome and he never wavered from that conviction throughout the war despite the fact that personages like Winston Churchill and David Lloyd George who detested the attritional wastage on the Western Front always considered that there might be an easier option, possibly Italy, possibly Gallipoli or elsewhere in the Middle east against Turkey, and so on. John said he thought that most historians today would defend Haig`s belief, which was a perfectly orthodox one, that the Western front was the decisive sphere of operations and that the German army was the most dangerous enemy, indeed the BEF, except when it had to aid the Italians, had little to do with the army of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

As a Corps Commander, Haig first became prominent in the First Battle of Ypres and here, it has to be remembered that, left to themselves, the British generals would have abandoned Ypres because the Germans occupied the low ridges overlooking the town. However the politicians said that since Ypres was the only German town or city in Belgium of any size not occupied by the Germans, it had to be defended at all costs and this is why you have the long, suffering of the BEF in the Ypres salient. It is quite remarkable that the Germans never captured Ypres. Haig never forgot the experience of that first Battle of Ypres because in late October he felt that the Germans were on the verge of success so much so that in the closing stages of the battle, he got on his horse and went to the front line to rally his troops. As John pointed out – don`t believe the myths of the `chateau generals` as over seventy British generals were killed in action in the first world war, most of them on the Western Front. Haig felt that the Germans called off their attack when they were on the brink of success and this experience goes some way to explaining

his determination – some would say stubbornness – in later battles. As the war went on he became more and more critical of Sir John French with whom he had been very close to in the war in South Africa.

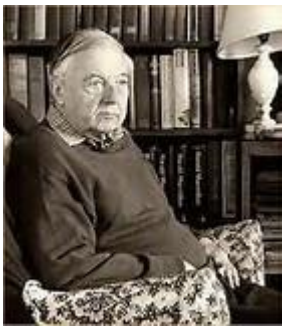
Notoriously, of course, Haig had lent French a considerable sum of money to prevent the latter having to leave the army on account of his gambling debt. That of course was kept very quiet and private as the army had strong views about an officer borrowing money from a fellow officer. John said he mentioned this, for although they had been close in the Boer War and its immediate aftermath, Haig became a critic of French`s handling of the BEF in 1914 and 1915, a criticism which is preponderantly shared by the majority of historians. French had done well in South Africa but had been promoted beyond his capacity when given the role as CIC for the BEF. In addition Haig was highly critical of French for holding back reserves at the Battle of Loos, Haig believed that had these reserves been more readily available that battle may have ended in victory instead of the usual messy, attritional `draw` which characterised so many battles on the Western Front.

So Haig becomes CIC of the BEF in December 1915 but we have to remember that Haig was in a coalition war. Most of Britain`s wars have been coalition wars, the notable exception – and it was a war Britain lost – was the American War of Independence when we did not have a single friend in the world. The Americans were helped by the French, and later the Spanish and the Dutch – a contradiction of the `normal` British war experience.

In the 1930s Liddell-Hart published an influential book which was later reprinted by Penguin Books - `The British Way in Warfare`. In terms of history it was soundly based, he argued that, if you look at Britain`s wars from the time of King William III in the 1690s right through to the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, he asked `what was the British technique in warfare`? – it was to concentrate on the war at sea and to have small expeditionary force for commitment in any particular theatre as the need arose otherwise we depended upon allies who we supported with subsidies, Britain, of course, forging ahead commercially in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which subsidised her continental allies to keep them in the field particularly in the Napoleonic wars – don`t forget the importance of the Prussians at the Battle of Waterloo without whom it would have been a very different battle, indeed , as John said, would Wellington have fought at Waterloo without the promise of assistance from Blucher? So what Liddell-Hart was saying was that we should never have attempted to raise a continental army on such a scale for commitment in Europe that, in his opinion was a big mistake in 1914-18. Professor Derry said that conclusion was completely theoretical answer to the problem. If Britain had refused, for the only time in British history, to raise a continental army for commitment in Western Europe, the war would undoubtedly have been lost, no subsequent British army, for example in the Second World War, was on the scale of the BEF from 1916 to 1918. Almost 2 million men were in the BEF in the latter part of the war. It has been pointed out that, in 1914, the BEF was a high quality, tiny, little army, only two Corps with appropriate cavalry and artillery support, hence the Kaiser`s famous phrase about the `contemptible little British army ‘which led to the nickname of the `Old Contemptibles` for those in the war right from the beginning. Certainly no British army in the Second World war was on that scale and by 1944 at the Normandy landings we were subordinate to the Americans in the grand alliance against Hitler`s Germany, to say nothing of the Eastern Front and the Soviet Union. John said he mentioned all of this, as it is important to remember that the only time (ever) we have raised an army on a continental scale for commitment in Europe is – The First World War.

Haig is seen as an important factor in the creation of the New Army and he seems to have been as competent an administrator as he was as a general in directing military operations. Think of the problem of supply, the railway systems – they had to call in Eric Geddes to create a railway system for the BEF. Think of the problems of equipping, feeding, men on an unprecedented scale, think of the medical services, think too of the backup services which the British army (rightly) believed were necessary and it is no coincidence that a private in the British army was much better off than his equivalent in the French army, at least until after the mutinies of 1917, in terms of rotation from the front line, of leave provision, recreational provision, and so on, it is a remarkable achievement. Somebody once said that the BEF started off as the military equivalent of a little corner shop but by the end of the war was like a multi-store, superstore company. That, in John`s consideration was one of Haig`s achievements which has only in recent times been recognised and appreciated. Of course, the great controversies turn upon the battles, particularly the Battle of the Somme and the Third Battle of Ypres – Passchendaele and remember hear that both French and Haig were told by the British government that they must support and cooperate with the French which effectively meant, especially in the early days of the war that they had to yield to the French High Command with effect to the strategy with which the war was being fought but that they were responsible for the BEF and answerable to the British government. It is a typical politicians` way – offer with one hand, take away with the other. It meant that there was always a sensitivity here, British people did not like the thought that the French would make all the decisions even although the war was being fought in a tiny strip of unoccupied Belgium and a huge sector of Northern France. We should not forget the tremendous burden the French army bore in the First World War, particularly in the first eighteen months of the war. Despite the surge of a million men to join up in Britain it need time to train and equip those men. The brunt of the war in 1914 and 1915 was borne by the French army that` glorious and sorely tried army`, to use a Churchillian phrase.

Peter Hart has estimated that by the end of 1915 the French army had suffered more than two million casualties of whom 730,000 were dead and if you look at the overall casualty rates for the leading combatants in the First World War, Britain and its Empire one in ten service personnel died, unprecedented in numbers compared with any previous conflict. One in eight German service personnel died, French, one in six died and if you look only at the French infantry, one in four died which is an appalling attrition rate. It is comparable to the loss rates in the American Civil War where the Northern and Southern armies lost a quarter of their men dead. Many of course died off the battlefields from disease or post-operative shock. We must never forget the importance of disease in war, particularly before the advent of anti-biotics. If you take Gallipoli as an example, what made Gallipoli such an awful experience was not only the ferocity of the fighting and the appalling nature of the terrain but disease. Clem Attlee, he was a major at Gallipoli and he never forgo the experience though he continued to defend the concept of Gallipoli til his dying day but he never forgot the sufferings of the men from disease as much as from Turkish action. John mentioned this to draw attention to the fact that the British army had never been in a war of such scale of hostilities or one which had produced casualties – killed, wounded, captured or missing - on such a scale. The continentals were much more attuned – at least in percentage terms to what happened in the First World War.



John Terraine (pictured) liked to point out that, if you looked at many of Napoleon`s battles the proportion of casualties to the men involved was comparable to many first world war battles – the difference in Napoleonic times was that the battle was over in one to three days and usually there was a decisive outcome. What sets the battles on the Western Front apart from earlier experiences was that so many of them seemed to be inconclusive with neither side succeeding in making the decisive breakthrough.

If you had to ask anybody as to why Haig`s reputation is so controversial, it can be summed up in two words - `Somme` and `Passchendaele`. Passchendaele is often used as a synonym for the most complex of actions which we call the Third Battle of Ypres – it is not a single battle it is really an extended campaign. Why did the British Army fight in the Battle of the Somme? Here we have to remember the importance of Joffre the French CIC, and particularly as the Germans occupied a great swathe of Northern France and the impact of casualties on the French army it was inevitable that French generals and French public opinion should say that the British should be doing more on the Western Front. Why was the Somme selected as the place of the major offensive in 1916? It was meant to be part of a series of coordinated Allied offensives in Italy and on the Eastern Front as well as the Western Front. Of course the Germans wrong-footed the French by attacking at Verdun in February 1916 in a battle that went on until December 1916. Inevitably the French were keen that the British would carry a heavier burden on the Western Front. As a consequence of denying the Germans victory in the First Battle of Ypres, the Kaiser, no less, is on record as saying, `the best infantry in the world is 1st Corps of the BEF under the command of Sir Douglas Haig. ` The trouble with the Kaiser was that he could say one thing one day – and something different the next! There was, of course a second Battle of Ypres in 1915 and the Germans were denied for a second time. The British would have preferred an offensive in Flanders in 1916, for a number of reasons – they wanted to break out of the Salient advance some 12 miles and capture the important railway junction of Roulers that would disrupt the German supply routes for their troops in Flanders and North Western France. It was the French that said the key sector for the offensive must be the Somme and the reason was simple that was where the French and British spheres of influence joined up. Most British generals did not like the idea of fighting at the Somme they could not see what the strategic purpose of what such an offensive was. The French were just eager for the British, famous for their stubbornness in defence to go on the offensive. Of course, because of Verdun, the British ended up carrying a much greater share of the responsibility for the Somme. Nevertheless Bill Philpott in his huge book `Bloody Victory` which is probably the most scholarly modern assessment of the Somme, is insistent that we should not forget the French contribution which although scaled down, was still important. Remember, on the notorious July 1st 1916, the French forces actually did well in the southern sector of the attack. The British were compelled to take on a much larger share of that offensive and before the attack went in – and remember Haig would have preferred to wait until August to perfect their preparation and improve their training, but it was French pressure that forced them to bring the date of the battle forward, eventually to the 1st of July. The battle was preceded by the most intense bombardment in the history of the British Army up to that date. Of course we now know we did not have enough guns to cover a 19 to 20 mile front and that possibly as many of one third of the shells were duds! In any case the British seem to have exaggerated the success of the bombardment in destroying German barbed wire. Once the German army decided to go on to a strategic defence, Verdun excepted, on the western Front, the German army excelled in the construction of sophisticated trench systems, deep concrete bunkers and marvelous range of back up emplacements. The French were reluctant to invest time, money and effort in the construction of trench systems because they wanted the Germans

out of France. The French were therefore bound to be committed to the offensive even although most of the offensives in 1915 had proved disastrous, huge casualties sustained for no significant gains. French pressure explains the Somme but what explains the problems First of July?

A disagreement between Rawlinson and Haig! Haig can be criticised for not exercising enough direct control over some of his subordinates of whom Rawlinson was the chief example. Rawlinson (pictured), in many ways a highly intelligent general but very much an exponent of the `bite and hold` approach to war on the Western Front and intuitively sceptical of grandiose offensives and as to whether the British infantry could be sophisticated enough to do more than advance in those long lines always associated with the first of July. Of course many British units did not advance like that but units in Fourth Army did, and that is where most of the tragic casualties were incurred. But you can`t just call a battle off. What interests John about the media, he said, is that when the Somme is mentioned, they always go on about the first of July when in fact the battle went on for months and it is very interesting that, on the 14th of July Rawlinson`s Fourth Army put in a very successful attack to capture the Bazentin ridge. They were obviously learning from their mistakes although the casualty rates for the rest of the battle were appalling, they were nothing like as disastrous as those on the first day. The British were under considerable pressure to keep on attacking to prevent the Germans mounting an even greater attack at Verdun. Indeed of all the battles of the First World War you can make out a convincing case for Verdun being the worst of all, going on until December 1916. Nor should we forget the pressure put on the German army by the Somme offensive, in fact a captain in the Prussian Guard is on record as describing the Battle of the Somme as `the bloody grave of the old German army`. The professional army with which Germany had gone to war in 1914 and Gary Sheffield has gone so far to say that `after the Somme both sides were like citizen militias as the professionals on both sides had been killed, wounded or captured`. Ludendorff in his memoirs – and remember the Somme leads to the sacking of Falkenhayn and the appointment of Hindenburg and Ludendorff to take command of the German army on the Western Front, in effect becoming commanders of the German war machine – Ludendorff said that when they got to the west they realised the full scale of the problems which their predecessors had encountered.

By the end of 1916 France is even more exhausted and this means that in 1917 an even greater burden would fall upon the British indeed, in many respects 1917 is the bleakest and grimmest year of the war for the Allies. In that year you have two revolutions in Russia, the first in April (western Calendar) which sees the overthrow of the Czar and the establishment of the liberal and socialist regime headed by people like Kerensky which hoped to establish a parliamentary republic in Russia and to keep Russia in the war but in November (western calendar)/October (Russian calendar) that regime in turn is overthrown by the Bolshevik Revolution. It was only in 1920 did the Communist regime go on to adopt the modern calendar system. All these events means we have to look at the war comprehensively. Although Russia does mount an offensive in 1917 it is a failure and then it is only a matter of time before they are effectively knocked out of the war. Thus, given French exhaustion, a greater part of the burden now falls on the British. That burden was actually increase as a result of one other consequence of the battle of Verdun.

The first consequence was that it brought Philipe Petain to prominence for it was at Verdun that Petain established his reputation as one of the best, most thoughtful and responsible French generals. It was quite ironic in that when he was appointed he was on a 36 hour leave and was finally traced to a hotel in Paris where he was in bed with his mistress! Petain, unlike

his predecessors understood the effect of `wear and tear` of men in modern warfare. He stabilised the Verdun front but that did not stop Joffre, who was probably jealous, moving him to another army command. Petain was replaced at Verdun by General Robert Nivelle.

The emergence of Nivelle is the consequence number two of the battle of Verdun. Nivelle was an exceptional Frenchman, Protestant with an English mother and compared with other French generals he was articulate and fluent in English, indeed one of the problems in the alliance was that neither side was very good at speaking the others language, although Haig was an exception to that on the British side. John said the reason he mentioned Nivelle`s good command of english was that he charmed Lloyd George who had become British Prime Minister who liked eloquent and articulate men, being an eloquent and articulate man himself! Nivelle persuaded the French politicians and Lloyd George that he could repeat, on a bigger scale, his success at Verdun and he planned a great offensive in April which he said would win the war, an offensive which he said he would not allow to become bogged down in attrition. The British would be involved in diversionary attacks to take German attention away from the main thrust of the French offensives. Unfortunately for Nivelle, French security was lax, the Germans seemed to know long before it happened what the French were planning and furthermore, the Germans wrong-footed the French by retiring some 20 to 30 miles to their newly built Hindenburg Line, as it was known to the British, which was a superb line of emplacements. To the Germans it was known as the Siegfried Stellung. The tragedy is, in April 1917, although the British have great success and the Canadians capturing Vimy Ridge on 9th April, the French offensive proved to be a disaster and as a result of that disaster, not only was Nivelle sacked and packed off to North Africa, but the French army mutinied. Within a few weeks over 50% of the divisions in the French army were affected by mutiny - a term which could involve divisions imitating the Bolsheviks in Russia and who were genuinely interested in revolution and those who said they would `work to rule` - if the Germans attack we will resist them – but we won`t go over to the offensive after the recent experiences in the Nivelle offensives.

Général Pétain

This means that at the time when Haig is planning the Third Battle of Ypres he is under additional pressure to take pressure off the French. It is not the only reason why the third Battle of Ypres lasted for so long but it is a contributory reason and it is astonishing that the Germans never realised the full scale of the mutinies in the French Army. The French themselves have kept details of these mutinies under wraps for a century and whether historians will now have access to the full records will remain to be seen but at the time the French did not want even their allies to know the full scale although the BEF High Command did have some knowledge and were aware that after the failure of the Nivelle offensives the French army could not put in an offensive, they were under more pressure to attack to prevent the Germans exploiting French weakness. But that was not the only reason for the Third Ypres offensive. The Admiralty were very concerned about the use of Ostend and Zeebrugge, two Belgian ports occupied by Germany as U-boat bases, remember, in February 1917 the Germans made the fateful decision to resume unrestricted U-boat warfare. It was bound to be risky, they had already tried it in the war but after the sinking of the Lusitania, and subsequent American protests, they backed off. At that point John said he was sympathetic to U-boat captains for, before 1914, there had been a series of international

agreements as to how submarine warfare should be conducted and you only have to read these to realise that no sensible submarine captain in any navy could apply these rules. You were expected to surface, challenge the merchant ship, board it, and inspect it for contraband goods and personnel – a bit reminiscent as to what the British did in the Napoleonic war. Of course, by surfacing, a submarine was giving away its chief advantage – that it was underwater. Then, if the boarding party from the submarine was convinced that there was contraband goods or personnel on board, you were allowed to sink the ship, but before doing so you had to allow the ship`s crew time to take to their boats. Of course you can understand why U boat crews preferred to shoot first and leave questions unasked! It was a big risk as America was sensitive about U boats just as the Americans had been sensitive in 1812 about the British right of search of neutral shipping during the blockade of Napoleon`s ports. The outcome of course is that America entered the war in April 1917. This had an immediate effect on the war at sea as the US navy developed by President Theodore Roosevelt was an excellent force and Admiral Sims was happy to cooperate with his Royal Navy equivalents. The Admiralty having lately adopted the convoy system could now, of course, assemble convoys for crossing the Atlantic in American ports. At this point the tide turns in favour of the Allies at sea, indeed the naval historian Eric Grove has argued that the U boat campaign had no chance of success but he also said what else could the German navy do after it failed to break the command of the sea at the Battle of Jutland which saw its capital ships bottled up in port for the rest of the war.

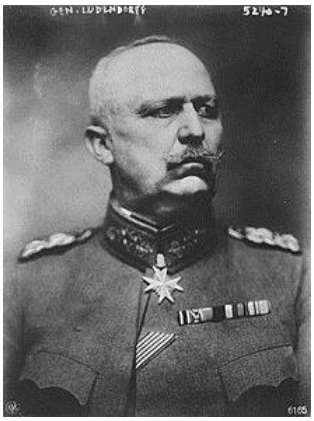
The entry of America into the war created a large poll of fresh manpower plus all the wealth of American industry and manufacturing which was already making a handsome profit selling munitions to the Allies. Of course it would take time for the American army to make a significant contribution to the land war as at that point it was tiny – little more than a border force. It would take time to recruit men, equip, train and ship to Europe indeed it was the spring of 1918 before American troops began to arrive in France in significant numbers. Meanwhile, the British hoped that an offensive in Flanders would lead to the capture of Roulers and consequently Ostend and Zeebrugge and end the long agony of the British army in the Ypres salient. When did the campaign start? To use a phrase of the great Talleyrand…. `it is a question of dates`. Did the campaign start on the 7th of June 1917? When Plumer`s second army exploded nineteen mines under the German positions on the Messines ridge.

Plumer, a great advocate of `bite and hold` and who, at the end of the war was considered by Haig as probably `the best of my army commanders`. Plumer was painstaking infantry officer. The politician Sir Anthony Eden was a junior officer when the nineteen mines went up and later spoke about `those nineteen, carnation coloured, mushroom clouds` which erupted along the line of the German positions. It was an astonishing experience and it was said that you could hear the sound of the explosion in southern England. The Irish claimed to have heard the explosion in Dublin but, as John said, that was an example of Irish exaggeration. The problem is how do you exploit this initial success? and John went on to make two criticisms of Douglas Haig and his conduct in the Third Battle of Ypres. There were good reasons strategically, it was meticulously prepared for but for the exploitation of the initial success he turned to Hubert Gough and Fifth Army, the second mistake was that he only *advised* Gough to make, as his top priority, the capture of the Gheluvelt ridge. Haig was right in that Gheluvelt ridge should have been the top priority in the next stage of the offensive but he felt that *tactical* decisions were best left to the commanders on the spot.

That is a sound military principle but he really should have been much tougher in controlling Gough, just as he should have been much tougher a year before with Rawlinson. The other problem for the British was that the weather broke. Passchendaele, which is often used as a synonym for the whole campaign, although it really only applies to the last weeks of the campaign, you think of mud and there was two periods in this long campaign, which goes right through until mid-November, of torrential rain , which compounded the effect of the shelling on the water table levels in Flanders which was always a place notorious for flooding so Gough in many ways was unlucky in that he was lumbered when trying to exploit the net stage when the battlefield was a sea of mud. However, at the end of August, Haig, dissatisfied with stalemate, turned back to Plumer who said `give me three weeks` and in fact in late September and early October – interestingly enough in another spell of dry weather – and that is crucial in explaining Plumer`s success – he fought three model battles in what we can term `siege warfare style` - Battle of Menin Road, the Battle of Polygon Wood and the Battle of Broodseinde Ridge. We know now, from the *German* side how much pressure the Germans were under. It`s interesting that the Germans made no secret of the fact that they were hanging on by the `skin of their teeth`. If the weather had remained dry then the whole story may have been very different.

Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria (left), one of the best German Generals on the Western Front is on record as saying `…our best ally came to our rescue – rain..`

Rain also caused problems for the Germans as a lot of the water drained off the ridges into the German positions so we must not imagine that it was only the British who had a horrific time. It was an absolutely appalling battle, particularly in its final stages. Ludendorff in his memoirs spoke about the pressure on the German army and he even said that the German troops `no longer showed their firmness for which I had hoped`. In fact Ludendorff dreaded a resumption of the British offensive in Flanders.

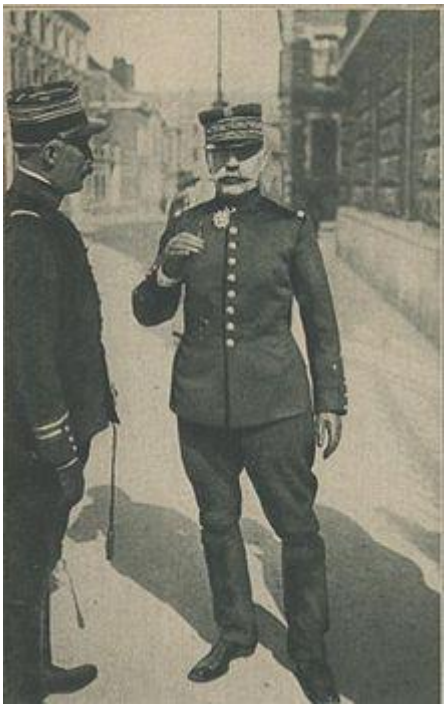


Of course Haig called the battle of in November although some historians like Peter Hart have said he should have called it off a month earlier after the failure of Fifth Army at Poelcappelle but as Major General Harrington the CSO in Plumer`s Second Army said - you cannot just call off a battle you have to attain a defensible position for the winter and only when Passchendaele fell could that to be said to be true. It meant though, that there was a number of consequences. Ludendorff (left), heightened and hardened by the collapse of Russia, felt that before the arrival of the Americans in large numbers, he might have a window of opportunity in the spring of 1918. He dreaded the resumption of a British offensive in Flanders and considered he must act first to prevent that.

Of course, another consequence of the attritional `draw` at Third Ypres is that Lloyd George denied the BEF essential reinforcements in the winter of 1917-1918.

Haig himself was asked, if you were Commander in Chief of the German Army would you go on to the offensive in the spring of 1918? He answered that he would not, it would be a `gambler`s throw`. Now, but by that answer, it didn`t mean he did not expect an offensive but from the German point of view it was a risky business. When the Germans knocked the Russians out they could bring men from the east to the west – but 10% of those men deserted in transit primarily because of the effect of Bolshevik propaganda. John said he would argue that Ludendorff`s offensive, though tactically brilliant, was a strategic gamble and he never worked out what his strategic objective was. Of course, when he attacked on the 21st March 1918 he had sensational early gains where they imagined the French and British lines joined, what they did not realise was that the exhausted Fifth Army had been moved to that sector of the front *allegedly* to rest and recuperate. We now know that Gough`s Fifth army did a remarkably good job in resisting the German attack even although the Germans advanced some thirty miles which was a bigger advance on the Western Front than anybody had seen since the early months of the war.

However, Haig proved his quality in defence and there is no doubt that he and Petain worked reasonably well together – it was not perfect as Petain knew that the French would always have to protect Paris if events reached a critical point but John said he would argue that Haig in fact fought a skillful battle in France in the spring of 1918 although a lot of the credit must of course to commanders like Plumer and Horne. Nor must we forget that, on the 28th March the Germans put in a massive attack near Arras, attacking Byng`s Third Army. That attack was a disastrous failure, in fact, as John said quoting from German sources, the `nearest equivalent to the 1st of July for the BEF`. They failed to capture Arras, this being only two days after a major conference at Doullen where several of the politicians, Clemenceau, Poincare, etc. where, according to some sources (some of which are now debated) Douglas Haig suggested that Ferdinand Foch (seen below on the right) be given overall responsibility for the direction of allied strategy



Previously, the British had resisted the appointment of a French general as Generalissimo because they did not want to dance simply to the French tune. However, the situation had reached crisis point and Foch was an interesting choice. Before the war he had been one of the leading advocates of the strategy of the `offensive at all costs`. But he had learned the hard way in the first two years of the war. Foch wrote a very interesting study paper for the French High Command in December 1916 in which he said that in future the decisive outcome would be decided by all-arms cooperation – artillery, tanks, aircraft, with infantry in a support role. Quite independently, the British were moving to a similar idea. Another thing that John said he wanted to emphasise regarding Douglas Haig, the story that he was blinkered cavalryman is nonsense in fact, his diaries and correspondence show that he had a keen interest in new technology in war. He was a keen advocate of air power and he collaborated very well with Trenchard the CIC of the RFC to develop techniques of air / ground cooperation. He pushed the development of the `creeping barrage` - an important advance in artillery technique. Haig was very keen on the tank, in fact he is now frequently criticised for using them prematurely in September 1916 at Flers in the Somme. Don`t imagine that the tanks of 1917 and 1918 were greatly different from the tanks of 1916 - they were slow and cumbersome and what life was like in the tank with the fumes from the engine, was horrific and skilful artillery could pick

them off – they were still an infantry support weapon in the First World War. Haig was quick to see their potential and earlier in the war far from distrusting the machine gun he had argued for a higher number of machine guns per battalion. So he was interested in the application of technology, in fact – and you can be slightly credulous when you hear that he had read that a scientist had developed a `death ray`.

Haig was instrumental in the defensive Battle of the Lys even although this battle in the north ran the risk of the Germans capturing the important railway junction at Hazebrouck. It was a defensive `victory` for the British. Later still Ludendorff kept changing his offensive and he moved against the French as he proved incapable of breaking through the British lines although he did push back Fifth army, the rest of the record is failure. He had some initial success against the French but each offensive is less dramatic than its predecessor because the Germans were woefully short of horses, troop carrying vehicles, had hardly any tanks, indeed they could not develop on a breakthrough, they were still dependent on exhausted foot soldiers. We must not forget that the Germans suffered appalling casualties in these attacks from the spring of 1918, indeed it has been estimated that in the period from March to November 1918, the Germans lost 950000 men killed, wounded, missing or captured. All this means is that the Germans have `shot their bolt`. The final offensive against the French in the Reims sector sees little gain then in mid-July General Mangin orders a counter-attack south west of Soissons – aircraft, artillery, tanks with the infantry in support and that is the real turning point. Then on the 8th of August the British, with some French help put in the famous attack at Amiens which of course Ludendorff famously described as the `Black Day of the German Army`. By October, morale in the German army was finally crumbling – German soldiers had been told that the U boat offensive would bring Britain to its knees by starving it into submission and yet when the Germans overran the BEF`s positions in the spring offensives they found that the BEF had supplies aplenty and there was undisciplined looting of these stores by German soldiers. So the tide turns and Haig was described *by the Germans* in the closing months of the war as the `Master of the Field`. Haig and Foch worked amicably together although they did disagree from time to time and then Haig had to remind Foch that he was responsible to the British government for the BEF. A series of coordinated, limited offensives kept the Germans running and the British had considerable successes – not just at Amiens but like the crossing of the Canal du Nord and the breakthrough on the Hindenburg Line. By the end of September Ludendorff himself is telling the Kaiser that he will have to seek an armistice. There is no doubt that, in the closing stages of the war, the most effective army on the Western Front was the British Expeditionary Force, many of them young, nineteen, twenty year old conscripts. The British Army, in the last 100 days captured 188000 Germans – an army surrendering in such numbers is a defeated army – plus the French captured over 100000, the Americans 40000. Because the Germans were still on French and Belgian soil when the Armistice came allowed the myth to develop that the German army had not been defeated. That it had been defeated is not in doubt, when the Kaiser sacked Ludendorff it is said that in German theatres and cinemas people applauded the news. Ludendorff fled to Denmark, then Sweden, from where he wrote his memoirs.

What was Haig`s attitude to an Armistice – he was an advocate of a *moderate* armistice. He said that we were not fighting to impose a political settlement in Germany and there he was thinking of President Woodrow Wilson who spoke of democratising Germany. Haig said they were fighting to expel the Germans from France and Belgium – and Alsace-Lorraine. If we achieve that then it is worth having an armistice. The danger of over-strict terms means we will have to invade Germany and the Germans will probably fight all the more ferociously in defence of their homeland. In 1945 it was remarkable how vigorously the Germans resisted even when it was so

evident that the Second World War was lost. In John`s opinion Haig was right although several historians have expressed the regret that we did not hammer the Germans harder thus preventing a sad and a bad legend. Haig also did not want to create chaos in Germany as this might lead to a Bolshevik style takeover and in this we should not forget that in Germany in November 1918 there was sporadic Bolshevik risings in Munich, Berlin and Hamburg. Remember, too that the German sailors mutinied when Hipper wanted to sally forth for a final `go` at the Royal Navy. John said he would defend Haig for wanting a moderate armistice to end the war. The BEF is the best army in the field – but it is a tired army so why expend lives if you can end the war with an armistice.

After the war Haig favoured a demobilising scheme based on `first in – first out` but the Government didn`t listen to him and there was more trouble in the army about demobilisation than there had been at any time during the war. It is interesting that Haig was convinced that the war could be ended in 1918 despite the fact that there was many who thought it would be 1919 or even 1920 before the war could be won, and of course events proved Haig right. After the war, after a short spell as CIC Home Army, Haig went into retirement. Lloyd George who had never liked Haig did not want to give Haig a `plum` appointment after the war and Haig did not make himself more popular with the Prime Minister when he refused to accept any honours until he was satisfied that the government was doing enough for disabled ex-servicemen. Only when he was satisfied about that did he accept an Earldom and a handsome gratuity. The old Haig family home at Bemersyde near Melrose was purchased by public subscription and presented to Haig on behalf of a grateful nation. A significant contributor to that fund was Winston Churchill. Churchill had criticised Haig but in addition to what he said in the `World Crisis`, Churchill wrote a very interesting essay in the 1930s about Douglas Haig, when he said `Whatever one may say about strategy and tactics, only Haig could have carried the burden of command on the Western Front. He was a man in a classic mould`. After the war Haig devoted himself to ex-servicemen's` Associations, particularly the British Legion. Originally there had been a number of such organisation – some right wing, some left wing but Haig thought it should be non-political and there should be no distinction of rank. He spent his remaining years hard at work on behalf of ex-Servicemen and a greater sense of unity in the British Empire. Haig was also a man of religious belief. There is a very interesting book by the reverend George Duncan – `Douglas Haig – As I knew him` Duncan was not a crude `bible thumper` he was actually a highly intelligent and sophisticated theologian. He had been ordained in the Church of Scotland and eventually became a professor at St. Andrews University and he and Haig became close friends. Duncan wrote the book in the 1950s as he felt there was aspects of Haig`s personality which should not be forgotten.

Some people say of Haig `what an unimaginative man` - he kept banging his head against the brick wall which was the Western Front`. But was Haig so imaginative? Some years ago, John said, he was invited to accompany the Durham WFA to Bemersyde. We were welcomed at the gate by the 2nd Earl, Haig`s son (now deceased). Haig`s son had been serving in the Guards when the Germans captured Tobruk in 1941 and he was subsequently incarcerated in Colditz Castle where he took up paining, becoming a talented artist. Bemersyde is quite a simple house, the ground floor being full of Haig memorabilia, but on the wall is an interesting plan of an ornamental garden – designed by Douglas Haig. Having seen that plan his son took the Durham party on a trip round that ornamental garden – who would have thought that a dour soldier like Douglas Haig would have designed and implemented an ornamental garden. I think that because in public Haig was austere and reserved, being notoriously inarticulate in conversation, in writing, he was lucidity itself.

Yes, as a man Haig can be criticised, indeed when Churchill was writing `World Crisis, he wrote to Haig asking him to review and comment on certain parts, to which Haig replied that he was happy to help – we must get at the truth. No one knows more than I that things were not always done ideally or as one would have liked it to be done`. In John`s mind, Haig did not want to enter into controversy. He did not write his memoirs – he was content to wait until historians got it right.

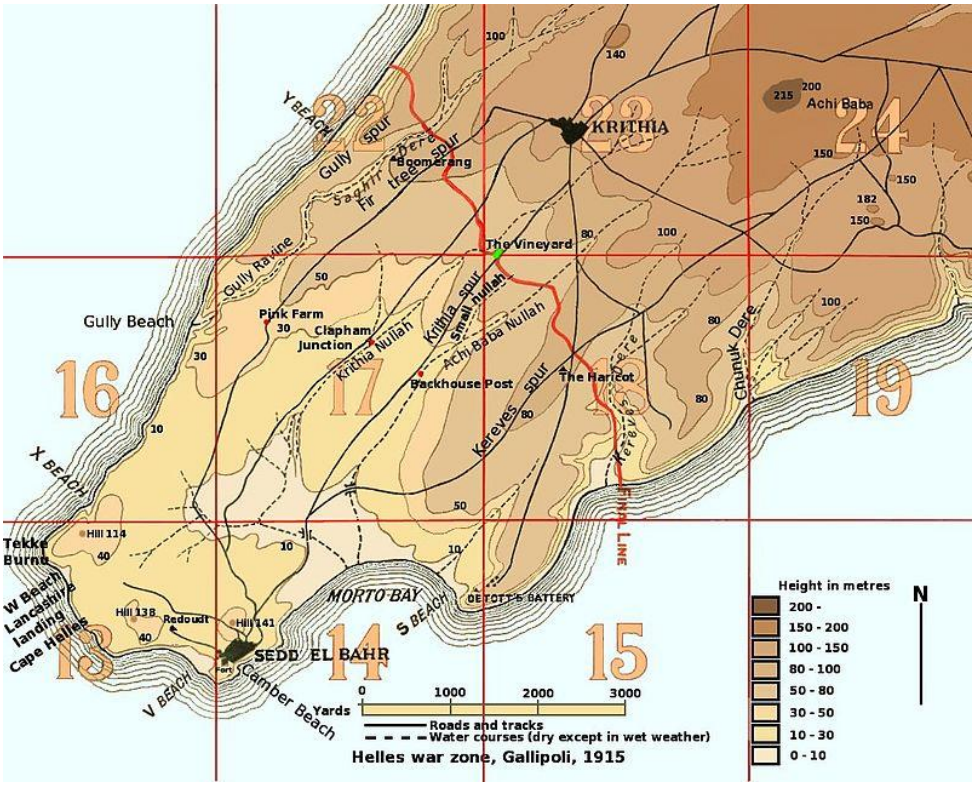
John concluded by saying the thinks that in respect of Douglas Haig they are beginning to get it right and present a balanced, not uncritical picture.

Thus ended a remarkable lecture, Prof John Derry spoke in flowing lucid terms without any notes or visual aids for almost 100 minutes and after a Q & A session sat down to warm applause from all in attendance after Branch Chairman Tony Bolton proposed the Vote of Thanks.

A Gallipoli Journey

Ever since I read Peter Hart`s *magnum opus* on the Gallipoli campaign it has been on my `wish list` of Great War places to visit and in September of last year that wish was fulfilled. My wife and I joined another 24 folks on a week`s tour exploring the peninsula where the British Empire and its ally France sought to take the Ottoman Empire out of the war but were forced into a humiliating withdrawal after all sides suffered terrible losses from death, wounds and sickness.

We travelled with Rotherham based battlefield tours specialist, Leger Travel, flying to Istanbul where we were met by Leger Tour Guide, Gary Ashley and local Turkish guide Cem. After a pleasant overnight stay in a city centre hotel we set off by coach for the four hour leisurely drive, west then south into the Gallipoli Peninsula. Up until the 1990s the Gallipoli Peninsula was a closed off military area and special permission had to be sought before entry but it is now a National Park. On the journey Gary and Cem spoke about the campaign and illustrated it with videos. The largest town on the lower peninsula is Eceabat which was known as Maydos on 1915 and is a ferry terminal for the short ferry crossing of the Dardanelles to Cannakale on the Anatolian or Asian side of Turkey. Outside of Eceabat, to the south there is only one hotel, Hotel Kum, in the National Park which is on the western coast of Gallipoli, facing out to the Aegean Sea and the islands of Samothrace and Imbros. This hotel, with good facilities, was to be our base for the next five days. The only other reasonable site of population in the area is the village of Alcitepe, known as Krithia in 1915 and where four battles were fought in 1915 but the village was never taken by the allies.



After depositing our bags at the hotel and a short pause to refresh we were off on our first visit of the tour, to Achi Baba, the highest point on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Achi Baba was the main command position of the Ottoman defences in 1915. Mediterranean Expeditionary Force Commander-in-Chief Sir Ian Hamilton had set the capture of Achi Baba as a stated priority for operations during the Allied landing at Cape Helles on 25 April 1915. Four separate attempts were made by the Allies to seize Achi Baba and the village of Krithia between April and July, but

the heights remained in Turkish hands for the duration of the campaign. To make the viewpoint more accessible to visitors the National Park authorities have created a walkway up to an observation platform from the car park and from here one can appreciate the strategic importance of the location. Look east and you see the Dardanelles straits, west the Aegean Sea and the landing beaches of Anzac and Suvla Bay. South west the cliffs which dominated the Helles beaches.

This picture taken from the observation platform shows the walkway up from the car park, looking south west towards the Aegean Sea and Helles.

After this stop where Garry and Cem pointed out the key features and gave us all an opportunity to get our bearings, it was back to our hotel for dinner and a few well-earned drinks. Some of our party made the short walk from the hotel down to its beach to watch the sunset over Imbros and the Aegean.

Each day was an early start and we set off at 8 am next morning heading on the short drive south to Helles. With the first stop being the Helles Memorial.

The **Helles Memorial** is a Commonwealth War Graves Commission war memorial near Sedd el Bahr, the southern tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The memorial serves the dual function of being a Commonwealth battle memorial for the whole Gallipoli campaign and place of commemoration for 20,885 Commonwealth servicemen who died there and have no known grave. The memorial takes the form of an obelisk and is over 30 metres high.

The United Kingdom and Indian forces named on the memorial died in operations throughout the peninsula, the Australians at Helles. There are also panels for those who died or were buried at sea in Gallipoli waters.

From the Helles Memorial it was a short walk across the headland to what had been a Turkish gun emplacement overlooking the entrance to the Dardanelles.

This position is just above `V` Beach where the converted freighter, SS River Clyde was run ashore as a sort of landing craft and at the Turkish positions overlooking this beach and Sedd El Bahr fortress.

There is an excellent model which shows the situation on `V` beach on the morning of 25th April 1915.

Just beside this model there are some restored Turkish trenches which overlooked V beach and brought home to all of us the difficult situation those troops who came ashore at that point faced with the Turkish machine guns sweeping the area from the high ground above the beach.

Restored Turkish trenches above `V` beach

View from the restored Turkish trenches above `V` beach showing the dominant position and excellent field of fire for the defenders.

Some of us who felt we were agile enough scrambled down the rough track from the headland to the beach – one can only imagine what it must have been like for the heavily laden troops endeavouring to make their way up under fire to try and drive the Turks off the high ground above the beach.

When we reached the bottom we were right on V Beach Cemetery where many of those who perished on the morning of April 25th were buried along with some those who were killed in the months that followed. Our guide Gary Ashley pointed out some notable graves, including that of the Rev. William Finn, Roman Catholic Padre of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who landed with the men of that Regiment. Fr Finn received mortal wounds on that fire swept beach but despite his own sufferings crawled amongst the wounded and the dying giving absolution until he finally succumbed.

There are 196 named graves in V Beach Cemetery and 480 of those for whom identification was not possible.

After leaving V Beach Cemetery we walked along the beach to a little café where we met those of our party who had opted not to scramble down the cliff, preferring a softer descent by our coach. The café overlooked the position where the SS River Clyde was beached and where the seawater had run red with the blood of the dead and wounded cut down as they struggled ashore. The position of the ship is marked by a partially submerged line of rocks which were made up as a temporary breakwater.

Amazingly the old collier was re-floated after the war, repaired and plied her trade as a tramp steamer in the Mediterranean until finally scrapped in the 1960s.

Suitably refreshed after lunch we split again into foot sloggers and bus passengers to make the ascent of Hill 141 close by the remains of the fortress Sedd el Bahr. The landing on V Beach on April 25th had ended in chaos but early next morning, Lt. Col. Charles Doughty-Wylie of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, armed only with a walking stick led a charge uphill through the village and after vicious house to house fighting the summit was reached and cleared of the enemy by

the cheering, charging soldiers. At the moment of his triumph Doughty-Wylie was killed by a Turkish sniper. He was buried by his men on the spot where he fell. Doughty-Wylie was a real character and had been British Consul at Mersina in Adana Province when the Young Turk Revolution broke out. Massacres of Armenians took place but due to Doughty-Wylie`s efforts this was stopped and order restored. For this he was honoured by the Ottoman government who presented him with the Order of the Medjidie. He was subsequently awarded a posthumous VC for his gallantry on April 26th 1915. So respected was he by the Turks that his is the only lone marked grave on Gallipoli.

Back on the coach we followed the west coastal road until we came to a pull in spot, where a path led down to a most famous beach - `W` beach or `Lancashire Landing` beach where on April 25th the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers landed. Subsequently this landing ground and action entered the history books as the place where six VCs were won `before breakfast`. W Beach differed from the others assaulted that day, in that it was almost a cove, with an arc of high ground and a long, open beach. German military advisors attached to the Turkish forces had helped set up the defence of this position, and redoubts had been placed on the heights with interlocking fields of fire, wire in the shallow water and mines. It was considered almost impregnable for any sort of ship borne landing.

The Lancashire Fusiliers came ashore in companies, about 50 yards from the beach the boats were unhitched from tows and rowed in the final few yards. As the boats neared the shore a tremendous fire was laid down by the Turks, causing heavy casualties. Men jumped into the water, some drowning under the weight of their gear, others getting caught on the wire. Despite this some men beat their way through the wire and assaulted the trenches in the area of the beach itself.

After a time exploring the beach – still quite a lot of debris remains, of lighters which brought supplies ashore etc. can still be seen – we made our way back to the road, crossed it and made our way uphill across a field – not many crops are grown on Gallipoli, the soils are thin and water is scarce – generally sunflowers for their seeds, until we reached Lancashire Landing Cemetery. This cemetery was created between the April 25th landings and the final evacuation

of the peninsula in January 1916. It contains the graves of over 80 men of the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers who died in the first two days following the landings. There are now 1237 Commonwealth servicemen buried or commemorated in this cemetery of which 135 are unidentified.

A short way on we stopped at Redoubt Cemetery. In March 1922 a Lancashire businessman stepped ashore from a visiting cruise ship. He was accompanied by a host of other pilgrims visiting this hallowed land, but what made James Duckworth stand out was the fact that he was carrying a bucket of water containing the sapling of an English oak tree. More than 95 years later this lone oak tree continues to grow in this cemetery, The Lancashire oak tree commemorates Second Lieutenant Eric Duckworth whose loss inspired a family to plant it, and the amateur soldiers from East Lancashire the memory of whose sacrifice it now helps to keep alive. Soldiers who were to make history as members of the first ever Territorial army formation

to volunteer for overseas service. Redoubt Cemetery contains 396 identified graves plus 1292 who remain `known only unto God `

Our group pause to reflect under the Lancashire Oak Tree in Redoubt Cemetery. This visit concluded our first full day on Gallipoli.

Off bright and early the next morning we made the short trip up the coast to Anzac Cove. The landing at Anzac Cove took place on Sunday 25th April 1915 and is known to the Turks as the Ariburno battle. The assault troops, mostly from the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed at night. For reasons which have never been totally clarified they were put ashore roughly one mile north of their intended landing beach. In the darkness the assault formations became mixed up, but the troops gradually fought their way inland despite desperate defending from the Turkish forces which had been rushed to the scene of the landings. ANZAC plans were quickly discarded and battalions and companies were thrown into the battle piecemeal, some advanced to their designated objectives whilst others were diverted to other areas then ordered to dig in on the ridge lines.

After visiting Anzac we made our way back to the road and in single file walked about a mile south until we came to Anzac Beach or Ariburno Cemetery on what was known as Hell Spit. This cemetery was used almost from the first day of the landings up until the point of evacuation. There are 391 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in the cemetery. Special memorials commemorate 11 casualties believed to be buried among them. 22 of the burials are unidentified.

Just beside the road, close to the entrance to the Cemetery is one of the monoliths – thankfully being restored – which bears the immortal words attributed to Mustafa Kemal – Ataturk.

"Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives ... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours ... You, the mothers who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well."

Our next stop was a relatively new museum `Cannakale Destani` which is a really fascinating place to visit – a `must see`. Whilst it has the usual museum exhibits uniforms, weapons, documents, photographs etc., the highlight is the eleven `theatres` which you walk through one by one each with noisy cgi – even the floor moves in one room to simulate being on a ship. Very much showing the war from the Turkish perspective – perfectly understandable - The propaganda film at the end, including modern Turkish navy firing weapons, is in my opinion in bad taste, and was a waste of our time, but represents the direction Turkey is moving under Mr Erdogan`s islamist government.

Although they failed to achieve their objectives, by nightfall on April 25th 1915 the ANZACs had formed a bridgehead, albeit much smaller than intended, indeed in places they were clinging onto cliff faces with no organised defence system. The exact number of the day`s casualties is not known. The ANZACs had landed two divisions but over two thousand of their men had been killed or wounded. Since 1916 the anniversary of the landings on 25th April is commemorated as ANZAC Day, becoming one of the most important national celebrations in Australia and New Zealand. The anniversary is also commemorated in Turkey, the UK and Ireland. Many Australians and New Zealanders used to come to Gallipoli each year for ANZAC Day but numbers have fallen off significantly in recent years because of a perceived security risk. Personally, I would feel safer walking the streets of cities or towns in Turkey than, for example, London.

Moving one, we went up to Lone Pine Memorial and Cemetery – like many on Gallipoli this is a true battlefield cemetery being built on the site of trenches fought over at terrible cost from 6th to 10th August 1915. The `Lone Pine` the focal point of this memorial is not of course the original that having been blown to bits during the battle.

Although the campaign was fought during 1915, there was little battlefield clearance or visits by the Graves Registration Unit until 1919 and by that time many of the remains which had been lying in the open, through the cold of winters and the heat of summers were totally unidentifiable.

The Memorial Wall at Lone Pine commemorates 4934 Australian and New Zealand troops killed in the sector but who have no known grave. In addition special memorials commemorate 182 Australians and one British soldier thought to be buried in this cemetery but whose graves have not been identified.

The memorial panels on this wall and on the central pylon are made from Hopton Wood limestone quarried in Derbyshire – remember Charles Beresford`s lecture when he mentioned Hopton Wood as a source of Great War memorial stone. This cemetery and memorial forms the focal point of the official ANZAC Commemorations on 25th April each year.

After lunch we were taken up to The **57th Infantry Regiment Memorial** a Turkish War Memorial commemorating the men of the Turkish 57th Infantry Regiment who died during the Gallipoli fighting.

Monument to 57th Ottoman Infantry Regiment

The Turkish 57th Infantry Regiment was the first defending unit to go into action following the landing at ANZAC Cove on 25 April 1915. On the first day, the 19 Division commander, Staff Lieutenant Colonel Mustafa Kemal famously ordered the regiment many of whom had run out of ammunition and were in retreat,

"I am not ordering you to attack. I am ordering you to die. During the time before we die other forces and commanders will take our place."

There is a largely symbolic cemetery containing the names of many servicemen randomly selected to be inscribed on headstones or plaques on the walls. The complex contains a three-storey tower, the cemetery, a memorial panel, an outdoor mosque and a large statue of a Turkish soldier. According to a sign at the site, the names of 1,817 soldiers who lost their lives there, including 25 officers, have been identified.

The memorial was constructed in 1992 on top of a position called the Chessboard

. In 1994 a statue of the last Turkish Gallipoli survivor, Hüseyin Kaçmaz, and his granddaughter, were added following his death.

Leaving our bus parked there we walked away from this memorial along one of the ridges above Monash Gully to visit the Nek Cemetery. The Nek Cemetery is a short distance north of Quinn's Post. The Nek is the track leading along the narrow spur from Russell's Top to Baby 700, and the cemetery stands on a ridge with Pope's Hill on the south-west and Malone's Gully on the north-west. This was reached and passed by the 12th Australian Battalion early on 25 April, but not held. It was attacked by the New Zealand and Australian Division on 2 May, and by the 8th and 10th Australian Light Horse Brigade on the morning of 7 August, but was never retaken.

The cemetery was made after the Armistice in what had been No Man's Land. There are now 326 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 316 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to five Australian soldiers believed to be buried among them.

This area was made famous in the film `Gallipoli` where the Australians make a forlorn assault on the Turkish lines. The Turkish front line was in the trees just behind the Cross of Sacrifice, the Australian trench was just behind from where the above photograph was taken. The Australians charge across this open ground 6=and were cut down by the Turkish machine guns and rifle fire. When the Graves Registration Unit arrived in 1919 they found the remains of more than 300 of these men lying together in a strip the size of three of three tennis courts.

Identification was impossible and these men were buried in 1919 where they had fallen – facing the enemy lines.On the way back from The Nek we passed one of the many Gullies that run down from the heights, one can just imagine the troops slogging up these under fire from the Turkish defenders – such a poor choice of landing grounds.

This picture shows Anzac Cove with the prominent feature `The Sphinx` above it.

We paused briefly at Walker`s Ridge Cemetery. The ridge was called after Brigadier-General Harold Walker who commanded the New Zealand infantry at the landing and established his headquarters hereabouts. A Turkish attempt to take the ridge on 30 June was repulsed by the 8th and 9th Australian Light Horse. The cemetery was made during the occupation and consists of two plots separated by 18 metres of ground, through which a trench ran. There are now 92 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World

War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 16 of the burials are unidentified and special memorials commemorate 26 soldiers known or believed to be buried in the cemetery.

Net morning we set off with the visit to the imposing **Çanakkale Martyrs' Memorial** first on the day`s agenda. This is a war memorial commemorating the service of about 253,000 Turkish soldiers who participated at the Battles of Gallipoli. It is located on Hisarlik Hill above Morto Bay(S Beach) at the southern end of the peninsula in. The 41.70 m (137 ft) high monument is in the form of four square columns 7.5 m (25 ft) wide with 10 m (33 ft) space between each other, topped by a concrete slab of 25 by 25 m (82 by 82 ft). The huge structure is well visible during passage through the Dardanelles. When we parked the coach you approach the memorial through a Turkish Symbolic Cemetery – there are few cemeteries containing Turkish dead – these `Symbolic` cemeteries have markers showing the names of those who fell.

After passing through the cemetery you approach the memorial, a massive structure.

Financial problems caused interruption of the construction works several times. The main structure was completed on 15 March 1958. In the meantime, the Turkish daily *Milliyet* started a countrywide financial support campaign, and the memorial was officially opened on 21 August 1960. It breaks the skyline from most of the peninsula, especially at night when floodlit. It includes a memorial wall with names of the missing, also a series of panels depicting the main stages of the campaign and statues, including one of Kemal Ataturk.

From the surrounding gardens there are great views of the entrance to the Dardanelles

Today most people overlook the big part that the French played in the Gallipoli Campaign, indeed I knew very little (nothing?) about their involvement until Peter Hart made a presentation to Chesterfield Branch on this subject several years ago.

When we left the Turkish Memorial we made a short drive to Morto Bay or `S` Beach from where we walked up to the French Cemetery. The sacrifice of French troops in the Gallipoli battles is often unappreciated and forgotten. There were about 22,000 killed, nearly three times the number of Anzac dead (at less than 10,000, of the British Empire total of about 115,000 killed). The French made a successful feint landing at Kum Kale on the Turkish Asian coast on 25th April, 1915, but they started landing on V Beach in the evening of the 26th and took over the right of the Allied line. This Cemetery contains 2,240 identified burials. The impressive (15 metre high) lantern tower Memorial is itself an ossuary, with four more sarcophagus-shaped mass graves around it, containing altogether the remains of about 15,000 French dead (many of them Colonial troops). The memorial wall contains plaques from original cemeteries, regimental and naval plaques.

The grave markers are metal crosses – made from the vast quantities of barbed wire picket posts left behind after the evacuation.

One of the Ossuaries or mass graves in the French Cemetery containing the remains of 3000 French soldiers who died on Gallipoli and who have never been identified. Very few people visit this cemetery, even from France, it, sadly, seems like these brave men have been forgotten by their country. Is it because many of the soldiers were colonial troops?

I think most in our party were glad to come here and pay our respects.

Our next stop was at Skew Bridge Cemetery which was named from a wooden "skew" bridge carrying the Krithia road across the Dere, just behind the centre of the line occupied by the Allied forces on 27 April 1915. It was begun during the fighting of 6-8 May and used throughout the occupation. At the Armistice it contained only 53 graves but was greatly enlarged when further burials were brought in from the battlefields and from smaller cemeteries: - Orchard Gully, R.N.D., Backhouse Post and Romanos Well. There are now 607 First World War servicemen buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 351 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate a number of casualties known or believed to be buried among them.

In the afternoon we drove across to Suvla Bay. It was here on August 6th 1915 that further landings were made to try and break the deadlock further south where the landings of April 25th had stalled into a trench warfare stalemate. The plan was to advance across the peninsula and take the Dardanelles forts and guns in the rear. Despite facing only light opposition, the landing at Suvla was mismanaged from the outset and quickly reached the same stalemate conditions that prevailed on the Anzac and Helles fronts. On 15 August, after a week of indecision and inactivity, the British commander at Suvla, Lt. General Sir Frederick Stopford was dismissed. His performance in command is considered by many to be one of the most incompetent feats of generalship of the Great War.

Suvla Bay is a lonely spot, with no human habitation and only accessible by a rough track road. For one lady in our party – an 80 year old from Inverness – visiting Suvla Bay was the fulfillment of a long cherished wish as it was here that her father landed on August 6th 1915 and remained until the evacuation.

Unlike the Helles beaches, there is really no evidence here as to indicate where the landings took place.

Taking a rough road, virtually a farm track, we made our way to lonely Azmak Cemetery, which takes its name from Azmak Dere, a watercourse (dry in summer) which flows into the Salt Lake. The cemetery contains the graves of 1074 servicemen, of whom 684 are unknowns. The unidentified graves include men who belonged to the 1/5 Battalion, The Norfolk Regiment, included the Sandringham Company who were killed on August 12th 1915. The attack by the Norfolk Battalion passed into legend as the `Vanished Battalion` but many of the bodies, although unidentifiable, were found after the war. This story of course was made into a film `All the King`s Men` starring David Jason as Captain Frank Beck. Before entering the Cemetery, our guide, Gary Ashley took a group of us across the fields to the location where it was subsequently determined that the Sandringham Company was surrounded and virtually annihilated. The following picture shows Gary pointing out the terrain where this happened

Azmak Cemetery

After a refreshment stop as the tiny village of Anafarta, one of few in the Gallipoli National Park, we made our way back to main road for our next stop, Green Hill Cemetery

Green Hill and Chocolate Hill (which form together Yilghin Burnu), rise from the eastern shore of the salt lake. They were captured on 7 August 1915 by the 6th Lincolns and the 6th Border Regiment but once taken, no further advance was then made. On the two following days, unsuccessful efforts were made to push on along the ridge of 'W' Hill (Ismail Oglu Tepe), leading to Anafarta Sagir and on 21 August, the attack of the 11th and 29th Divisions and the 2nd South Midland Mounted Brigade to take Scimitar Hill, although pressed with great resolution, left the front line where it had been.

Green Hill Cemetery was made after the Armistice when isolated graves were brought in from the battlefields of August 1915 and from small burial grounds in the surrounding area. There are now 2,971 servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 2,472 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate a number of casualties known or believed to be buried among them. There is one `Shot at Dawn` grave, Private Harry Salter, executed for desertion December 11th 1915.

One notable grave was that of Lt. W.E.G. Niven of the Berkshire Yeomanry – killed in action on 21st August 1915. He was father of the actor David Niven

There was one further visit that afternoon before we headed back to the hotel – Shell Green Cemetery – quite a hike of about half a mile up a narrow rough track from the main road where the bus parked.

Shell Green which pre-war had been a cotton field was captured, and passed, by the 8th Australian Infantry Battalion on the morning of 25 April, but it remained close to the Turkish line throughout the campaign and was subject to frequent shelling.
The cemetery was used from May to December 1915, largely by the Australian Light Horse and the 9th and 11th Infantry Battalions. It was originally two cemeteries a short distance apart, but after the Armistice the two were combined and enlarged when graves were brought in from the battlefields and from 4 smaller cemeteries. The cemetery now contains 409 First World War burials, 11 of them unidentified

A cricket match was played on the green (and photographed – see below) on 17 December 1915, whilst shells passed over it, as part of the Allied attempts to conceal preparations for the evacuation of the Anzac and Suvla Bay sectors.

Next morning we set off to Eceabat to catch the ferry for the 15 minute crossing of the Dardanelles to Cannakale. This picture shows Eceabat from the ferry.

Upon arrival at Cannakale we walked along the waterfront to visit the Cannakale Naval Museum located beside the Cimenlik Casemates where some artillery pieces were located during the Dardanelles Campaign. Before entering the museum you can see a little warship, this is a working replica of the minelayer `Nusret` whose mines caused such havoc amongst the Allied battle fleet on March 15th 1915. The original Nusret is in a memorial park at Mersin in S.E. Turkey.

We were given a guided tour of the little ship, its cramped crew`s quarters (complete with hammocks) and collection of photographs in the wardroom. Outside at the stern are replicas of the sea mines. The sinking of the French battleship Bouvet with all hands and serious damage to HMS Inflexible, HMS Irresistible and HMS Ocean by these mines caused the naval attempts to force the passage of the Dardanelles to be abandoned and precipitated the subsequent landings at Helles and Anzac Cove five weeks later – five weeks which gave the Ottoman forces and their German advisors time to build up their defences.

The museum itself is a fascinating place to visit with a great display of ordnance, not just from the Great War period, but before and subsequent. For me though the highlight is the remains of the German submarine UB 46. In early December 1916, during the submarine's fifth patrol, *UB-46* struck a mine in the Black Sea a short distance from the north entrance to the Bosphorus and sank with all hands. In her six-month career, *UB-46* sank four ships of 8,099 tons total, including one British ship the Huntsfall.

A 52 ft. portion of the wreck comprising the forward section of the torpedo room and battery compartment was located in 1993 during coal extraction operations and was salvaged by the Turkish navy. The wreckage was transferred to the Dardanelles Naval Museum in 2008.

A fascinating relic close by the entrance to the museum is a gun barrel which split open when the shell being fired exploded prematurely.

Cannakale is a pleasant town with plenty of shops and restaurants, the best of the latter being along the waterfront beside the ferry terminal.

You are never far from reminders of its place in the Great War, including this Krupp gun on the main central street.

This gun a 240 mm L/35 gun and a barrel of 150 mm L/45 naval gun seen alongside were both in action at Rumeli Mesudiye Battery (Fort No. 7) during the Dardanelles campaign.

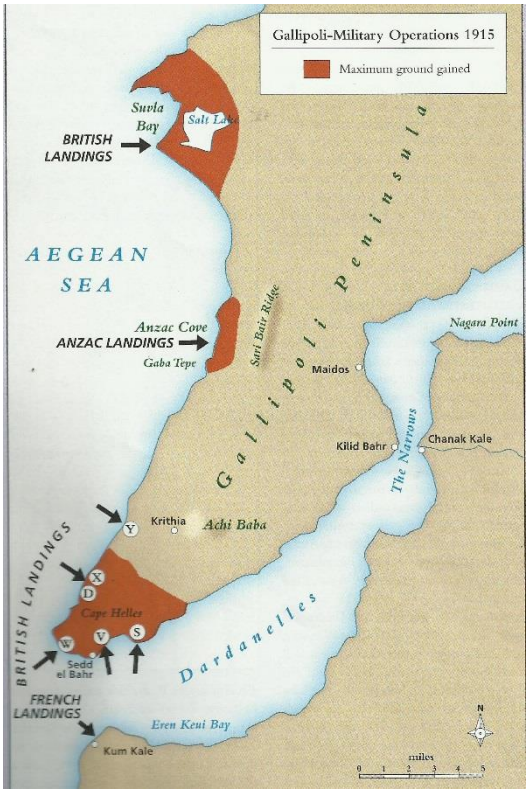
Cannakale is only a half hour drive from the ancient city of Troy and that was where we spent the rest of the afternoon before catching the ferry back to Eceabat.

Close by the ferry terminal at Eceabat there is a fascinating life size diorama depicting trench warfare with Ottoman and Anzac soldiers. There is also detailed relief maps of the Gallipoli Peninsula and the Dardanelles waterway.

A very interesting and fulfilling trip. The battlefields are very much as they were 102 years ago, just more trees but very few developments and you don`t have to look far to see evidence of trenches – although we were advised not to enter these as they are the favoured habitat of local snakes!

I certainly learned a lot to compliment what I had read about. As those who have visited the Western front will know, holding the `high` ground there was always a distinct advantage but `high` ground in Flanders was often just 50 metres above sea level – here on Gallipoli you had massive cliffs overlooking narrow strips of beaches. The Ottoman defenders held all the advantages.

The Ottoman Empire joined the war on the side of the Central Powers in October 1914 and in early November a Royal Navy flotilla bombarded some of the Dardanelles forts, killing 80 soldiers thereby sending a clear message to the Turks and their German advisors that forcing the Dardanelles was going to be a future strategic target of the Allies. This gave the Ottomans time to reinforce the forts, bring in additional guns – particularly mobile howitzer batteries – and stock up on ammunition. The subsequently failure of the naval taskforce in February and March 1915 and the rush to `prepare` - and I use that word loosely – for the landings of troops on wholly unsuitable locations – meant that the land campaign was doomed. The undernoted map clearly shows that despite the sacrifice the British and Empire troops established little more than beachheads, as the accompanying map shows.

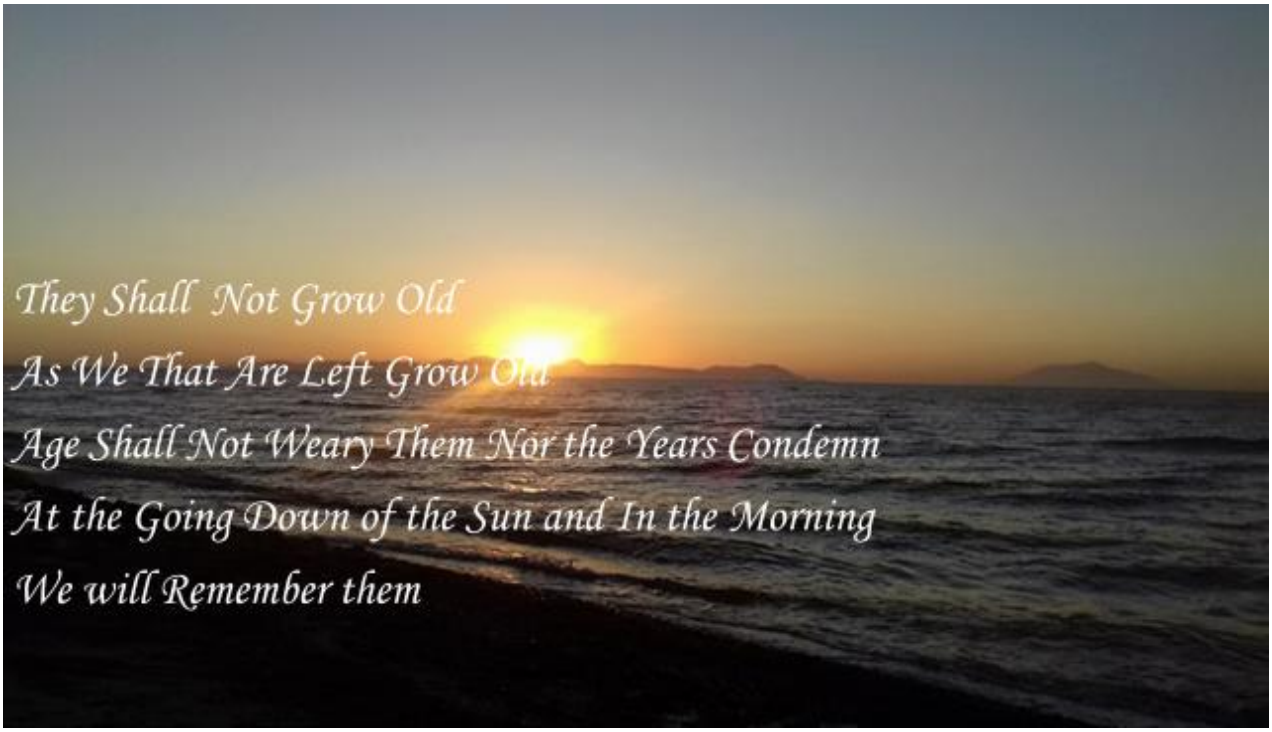


We were pleased to pay our respects at the CWGC cemeteries we were able to visit as well as that of our allies the French. Not forgetting the Turkish soldiers who were defending their homeland. That their government had chosen to throw their lot in with the Central Powers was something they probably had little or no knowledge of. This too, gets little or no mention in Turkish museums or literature.

The weather was pleasant during our visit, sunny and warm with temperatures in the mid to upper twenties celsius. We had plenty of cold water available on the bus to refresh us after each stop or visit. Compare that with the heat of high summer – temperatures in the mid-thirties – when the troops` water ration was ***two pints per man per day!*** Out of that each man had to drink, cook and keep himself clean, is it any wonder that disease was rife, and not just the usual intestinal complaints but things like malaria, diptheria

and meningitis. Then of course come November & December 1915 there was flooding and even snow and ice which took the lives of many more soldiers on both sides of No Man`s Land.

That the concept of this campaign was to force Turkey out of the war, give an option to replace the attrition on the Western Front and bring much needed supplies to Russia via the Black Sea was probably a laudable strategy but the old adage `Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail` was never truer than at The Dardanelles and Gallipoli.



Grant Cullen

Subsequent to our return home and to continue to enhance my knowledge of the campaign, I joined the Gallipoli Association. This was founded in 1969 and produces a quarterly journal `*The Gallipolian*` an A5 magazine of about 60 odd pages. Annual subscription by cheque, Direct Debit or standing Order is £20, £21 if using PayPal

GALLIPOLI ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE, BIRMINGHAM 2017

Stephen Chambers, who organised the conference with the assistance of James Watson Smith, welcomed those attending and thanked the four speakers who had given up their time to address the conference. Stephen noted that Major Herbert James who had been awarded the Victoria Cross *for the most conspicuous bravery during operations at Gully Ravine on 28 June and 3 July 1915* had been born not far away from the conference venue and had taught at several schools in the Birmingham area before joining the army from which he retired in 1930. Sadly, his death in west London in 1958 went unnoticed and it was not until 2008 that he was commemorated in Kensal Green Cemetery; the project being supported by the Gallipoli Association.

The first speaker was **Professor Peter Doyle** whose talk *Terrain, Maps & Failure at the Dardanelles* focussed on the part terrain and maps played in the Gallipoli campaign and whether sufficient information was available to General Hamilton and those responsible for planning the landings. Using maps and photographs of the terrain to illustrate his talk, Peter accepted that the navy's failure to force the Dardanelles left Hamilton with limited options but rejected the claims Hamilton advanced later that he had not been provided with sufficient information by the War Office about the geography of the peninsula and that the maps available were inadequate.

Peter pointed out that Hamilton had access to intelligence reports and maps of landing places and defences, together with Ottoman Army Handbooks and other material; and whilst no large scale maps were available to either side at the time of the landings, the British 1908 Map could not be said to have failed. This was based on a French 1:50,000 map produced in 1854, converted to at a scale of 1:63,360 and although the conversion 'smoothed out' some of the detail, this was not material in terms of the Helles landings. In Peter's view, the crucial fact was that the beach areas were organised for defence by the Ottoman forces who made good use of the terrain and became killing grounds.

At ANZAC the terrain and geology was unlike that at Helles and posed other problems but the landings were broadly in the right place and map accuracy was perhaps of less importance with landings in darkness. However, once inland and with the advent of trench warfare at ANZAC and Helles the need for new and accurate maps became a priority, many being based on captured maps and on aerial photography. In conclusion, Peter contended that Hamilton had the best available information and that the maps were not responsible for the failure at Gallipoli. It was the terrain and above all the stubborn defence by the Ottoman forces that had lost the campaign for the allies in the first few days.

After a short break for refreshments, **Stephen Snelling** gave an illustrated talk entitled '*Heroes, Scapegoats and Squandering Sacrifice: The truth behind the River Clyde's epic odyssey*'. Stephen noted that for many years the *River Clyde* had featured on the cover of *The Gallipolian* which was fitting given the important part the vessel played in the landing at 'V' Beach where 9 VCs were won in 48 hours.

The *River Clyde* was a late addition to the invasion plan; originally the landings were to have been made in open boats but not enough were available. The architect of the plan to use the *River Clyde* was Captain Edwin Unwin who was known for getting things done and took the lead in converting the vessel for its new role. He also believed in leading from the front and when the lighters that were to form a bridge to the shore broke adrift from the steam hopper towing them, Unwin and Seaman Williams jumped into the water under heavy fire and attempted to get the lighters into position and rescued men who had been wounded. When they became exhausted Midshipmen Drewry and Malleson together with Seaman Samson took over the dangerous task and struggled to secure lines to the lighters. All were awarded the Victoria Cross in August. The bravery of Sub Lieut. Tisdall who carried on after Unwin was not initially recognised and he was to die in May but his case was pressed by his mother and was awarded a posthumous VC in 1916.

The second day saw VCs awarded to Col. Doughty Wylie and Captain Walford; the former leading the attack on Hill 141 and the latter on Sedd el Bahr; both perished. Cpl. Cosgrove of the Royal Munster Fusiliers also played an important part in the latter action although his award was not gazetted until August and the bravery of many others like Father Finn, Chaplain of the Munster's, went unrecognised.

General Hunter-Weston was seen by as the principal scapegoat; he was criticised for insisting on daylight landings at Helles and for the delay in switching troops to W Beach. Stephen's research also revealed that privately Hunter-Weston did not believe that the landings would go ahead after the navy had failed and did not consider they were feasible. Others criticised were Captain Davidson who commanded HMS *Cornwallis* and was blamed for staying too long at S Beach rather than supporting the landings at V Beach, and Lt. Col Tizard of the 1st Munster's who was seen by Unwin and others as ineffective. Stephen contended that the principal reason for the sacrifice at V Beach was the failure to recognise that the landings would need to overcome strong defensive positions and the lack of firepower to subdue the Turkish defences. For this he felt that the blame must rest on Generals Hamilton and Hunter-Weston.

The first speaker after lunch was **John Spencer** whose talk, *'Side-lining the Slideshows: the British High Command's allergic Reaction to Gallipoli'* focussed on matters of 'grand strategy'. John explained that the attempts to force the Dardanelles and the land campaign which followed led to a breakdown in the interaction between military leaders and politicians; the failure at Gallipoli permeating British strategy for many years thereafter. Strongly promoted by Winston Churchill, the attempt to force the Dardanelles and the land campaign were seen as means of assisting the Russians and as an alternative to the stalemate on the Western Front. It was opposed by British High Command (notably Haig, French, Robertson) who believed the focus should continue to be on the Western Front; this was essentially a

conflict of strategy between the 'Easterners' and the 'Westerners' both of whom had their supporters and detractors in the War Council and elsewhere.
John highlighted the important role played Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary to the War Council and later Cabinet Secretary. Hankey was among those who reminded Asquith, the then Prime Minister, of an earlier study in 1907 which had drawn attention to the difficulties in attempting to force the Dardanelles by naval action alone and in mounting a combined amphibious attack. However, despite this and the strong reservations of the High Command the expedition went ahead. The French were reluctant participants and were later to blame Gallipoli for the failure of the 1915 Artois/Loos offensive. By the later summer the British High Command were convinced that the campaign had failed and became increasingly concerned at Hamilton's demands for more troops. There was also criticism of the planning and conduct of the campaign in the Report of the Dardanelles Commission. The Salonika campaign - seen as another sideshow by the 'Westerners' – went ahead under the dark cloud of Gallipoli largely due to French pressure.

The failure of the Gallipoli campaign strengthened the position of the 'Westerners'. The appointment of Sir William Robertson as CIGS in December 1915 was also significant; he was a strong believer in the primacy of the Western Front and an opponent of 'side-shows', and supported Haig against pressure from the new Prime Minister, Lloyd George, who wished to divert resources away from the Western Front. The creation of the Supreme (Allied) War Council in November 1917 and the appointment of Sir Henry Wilson as its British representative undermined Robertson's influence over strategic decision-making and he was replaced by Wilson in February 1918 who became the predominant influence on the conduct of the war. However, Wilson had no wish to see a diversion of resources away from the Western Front. Thus, John contended, the contagion of Gallipoli on strategic thinking remained.

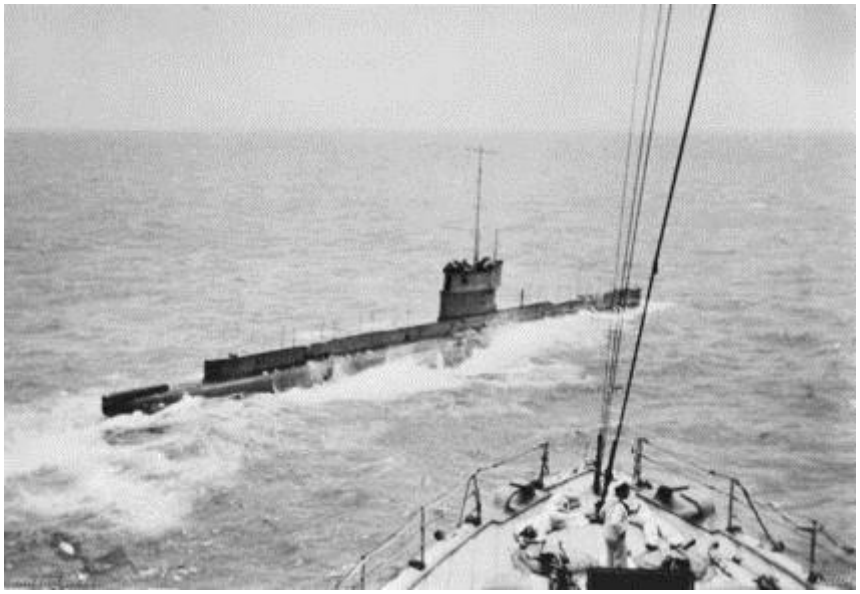
The final talk - *The Vest Pocket Kodak Camera in Gallipoli'* - was given by Jon Cooksey who began by outlining the history of cameras and photograph in previous conflicts. War photography came into its own during the American Civil War and the Mexican war although at this time equipment was cumbersome and cameras recorded images on glass plates. However technical development led to the development of smaller cameras such as the British made 'Ensignette' - the first roll film - camera in 1907. This had a great influence on the development of what became known as the Vest Pocket Camera (VPC) by Kodak in 1912. The VPC produced images of consistent quality although its cost was such that initially only the affluent could afford to purchase it. Nevertheless, the numbers sold increased dramatically in the years before 1914 and when war came many were taken to the front, mainly by officers but not exclusively so. To illustrate this, Jon showed examples of photographs published in *The War Illustrated* in September 1914.The use of cameras was initially not restricted by military authorities but when the implications in terms of photographs falling into enemy hands was realised their use was banned in March 1915. Despite this, cameras were still being advertised and British newspapers still sought and published war photographs.

In the second part of the talk Jon showed a selection of photographs taken during the Gallipoli campaign; these included '*Anzac soldiers on the Pyramids at Giza*', a photograph taken from the *River Clyde* and '*climbing practice at Anzac'* - a re-creation of the taking of Table Top. More controversial was one taken on 25 April showed '*Straggling at Anzac'*; this featured wounded but also many seemingly unwounded troops resting on the beach – a photograph which didn't find its way into the Official History! Another showed Turkish prisoners under guard although the former appeared to have uniforms in much better shape than their ragged guards! Jon had researched many the photographers and some of their subjects, which added further interest to this fascinating talk.

And finally…….

From the BBC website

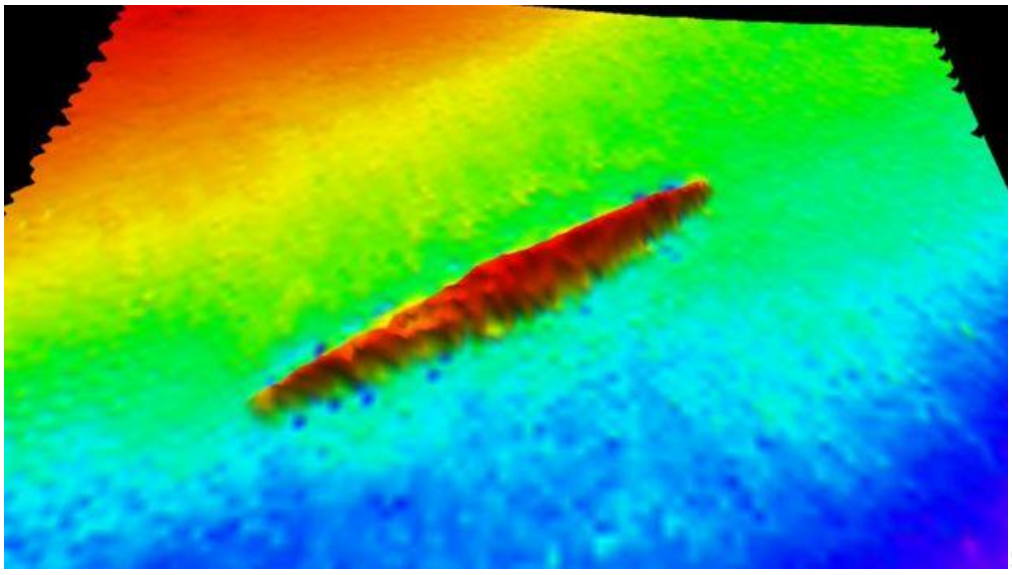
The wreck of Australia's first naval submarine has been found after a 103-year search.



The HMAS AE-1 was the first Allied submarine lost in World War One, vanishing off Rabaul, Papua New Guinea with 35 Australian and British crewmates on board on 14 September 1914.

The 13th search mission for the vessel found it in waters off the Duke of York islands in Papua New Guinea.

The discovery solves Australia's oldest naval mystery, the government said.



Searchers used an underwater drone to find the wreck

"This is one of the most significant discoveries in Australia's naval maritime history," Defence Minister Marise Payne said on Thursday.

"It was the first loss for the Royal Australian Navy and the first Allied submarine loss in World War One; a significant tragedy felt by our nation and our allies."

The search team used an underwater drone floating 40m (131ft) above the sea bed to scour the area. The wreck was found in more than 300m of water.

She said the search team had conducted a brief commemorative service for those who had lost their lives on board.

The government will try to contact the descendants of the crew, and also work with PNG authorities on commemorations for the site.

"I truly believe this will bring peace of mind to the family and descendants of the crew who lost their lives on board and perhaps, in time, we may discover what caused the submarine to sink," Ms Payne said.

The exact location has not been revealed in order to protect the submarine, but it appears to have survived in one piece.

There are no plans to return AE1 to Australia, but work will now begin on trying to establish why it sank.

Twelve search missions over the last century had failed to find its resting place.