STAND TO!

THE JOURNAL OF THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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www.westernfrontassociation.com

WFA Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph and in the Guards Chapel on Friday 11th November 2016

Attendance at the Cenotaph and in the Guards Chapel is open to all Western Front Association members. Those attending the ceremony must assemble in King Charles Street behind the archway and NOT at the junction with Whitehall. This will assist the marshals and will allow an orderly column of members to proceed to the Cenotaph. Attendees must assemble no later than 10.20am as the Columns will form up at 10.30am for briefing and March Out at 10.40am. Please note that the column will be moving out to the Cenotaph 10 minutes earlier than previously.

Wreath layers please note! Please order your own wreath from the Royal British Legion early. (Tel: 01622 717172). On the day please report to Barbara Taylor. Instructions regarding the order and method of wreath laying will be conducted by Barbara between 10.10am and 10.20am. It is most important wreath layers attend this. Medals should be worn. **A very limited amount of disabled parking** will be available in King Charles Street, provided that the driver remains with the vehicle at all times. Vehicle details must be communicated to the Parade Marshal John Chester <jhonchst@btinternet.com> by the 2nd November to obtain access to King Charles Street.

New lunch venue for 11/11/2016

The Mandeville Hotel
Mandeville Place,
Wigmore Street,
London, W1U 2BE

Lunch bookings going fast!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
WFA 2017 CONFERENCES

On 6th MAY
WFA SPRING CONFERENCE and AGM
will take place at the
University of Northumberland

3rd June - WFA President's Conference, Birmingham
8th July - WFA Conference, York

Full details of timings will follow but please get the date in your diary and we hope to see many of you there.

Annual Western Front Association Lunch - 11 November 2016

Lunch on the day at 13.30 hrs with other members at the Mandeville Hotel , Mandeville Place, Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BE

Starter
Tian of Crab, with dressed salad and toasted brioche
Chicken liver parfait with Melba toast
Vegetable terrine (V)

Main Courses
Roast Beef with horseradish cream
Pan fried Rump of Lamb with mint and thyme dressing
(both served with dauphinoise potatoes and seasonal vegetables)
Baked Aubergine with goats cheese crumble (V)

Desserts
Chocolate Mousse with ginger crumb
Baked Apple and Cinnamon crumble with crème anglaise

Coffee included. Pay Bar.
Please indicate choices when booking.
Vegetarian options available indicated in red.
Please indicate any special dietary requirements when booking.

Cost - £30 fully inclusive -
pay via WFA Office - 0207 118 1914

STAND TO!

The Journal of the Western Front Association

No. 107 October 2016

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The Editor is always prepared to consider original articles for publication; they should be sent to him at the above address.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

When David and Judith Cohen first told me that this edition of War Art was to be their last I sensed it was the end of an era. To have researched, organised and written a feature item every three months for twenty–two years is a marvellous feat of longevity in itself. Not many would have – indeed could have – found the time or had the perseverance to have done so, even if they had wanted to. That they did find the time and had the determination, in order that readers might get a different perspective on the war in each issue, is to their eternal credit and our great enjoyment.

From a very early stage in my current sojourn as editor of *Stand To!*, War Art became one of the items I 'did' first. This was partly due to the fact the David and Judith were always so prompt in the delivery of their material and – yes, I admit it, also partly due to the fact that the amount of 'raw text' was never daunting and it was always so well presented in any case that I could knock it off pretty quickly – but most of all I always wanted to see what treasures they had set out for we readers in the forthcoming issue. I loved looking at the images one by one as I worked my way through the piece and reading of the artists who had created them. Often an image would strike a personal chord; either I had visited or been near a featured location, I was touched by the artist's technique which evoked a particular mood or emotion, or I could link an artist with another personality whom I had heard of or studied. When we moved to 'colour' it was War Art which benefited perhaps most of all: the images often lifting from the page.

I shall certainly miss the feature then and will remember it fondly as I am sure many members and readers will. I shall also miss the regular contact with David and Judith. In this electronic age, when contact with contributors is more often than not via email and large files can be sent and received in seconds, David and/or Judith always – but always – rang to ask when I needed the material and when they would send it and then rang again to ask if I had received it. On those occasions we would chat a little and pass the time of day – sometimes with one or other of them listening and joining in the conversation on 'speakerphone' – and sort out a few of the world's issues. There is no doubt that I shall miss that human contact every couple of months.

So thank you David – and thank you Judith – not just for War Art, which was always eagerly anticipated and of course has been a wonderful part of our journal for so long but for everything else you have done for and given to the WFA over so many years. Your contributions will not be forgotten. I am sure everyone else will join me in wishing you both a very long, a very fruitful and a very happy retirement.

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR WANTED

Key responsibilities of the role

- Have an overview of all WFA reviews in publications and on the website. Being responsible to Jon Cooksey (*Stand To!* editor) for editorial policy.
- Dealing with publishers, reviewers and the WFA's publications and web editors by email, letter or telephone.
- Compiling and maintaining an up to date list of named marketing contacts at publishers, contacting them for review copies if necessary and receiving books for review.
- Compiling and maintaining an up to date list of a team of reviewers and their contact details.
- Selecting which titles to review, matching titles to specific reviewers and mailing titles to them in timely fashion.
- Collating and grouping all reviews received, selecting, editing and standardising the overall raw text for consistency and house style and sending electronic files to editors when required.
- Sending copies of reviews to publishers/authors.

Expressions of interest in the role to Steve Oram
secretary@westernfrontassociation.com

Front Cover: *A mother photographed with her convalescent wounded son by Lieutenant Ernest Brooks in the Duchess of Westminster's No. 1 British Red Cross Society (BRCS) Hospital, Le Touquet on 18 June 1917. This150-bed Base Hospital opened during the first winter of the war in what had been the Casino in Le Touquet and after a short period it became a hospital for officers only. In October 1915 the BRCS purchased the nearby Hotel des Anglais set amid the forests, one wing of which - with the exception of two rooms reserved for a doctor and his wife who worked in the Etaples hospitals - was specifically reserved for the relatives of dangerously wounded and sick officers. Relatives could remain in Le Touquet until their sons were out of danger and it was reported that one mother stayed for over five months before it was deemed safe enough to move her son's terribly mutilated body across the channel for further treatment in Britain. Courtesy IWM Q2409*

Communication Lines

Disorientated

Just a quick correction regarding the item on p.109 of *ST* 106, 'Men of the Clapton Orient FC of the 17th (Footballers) Battalion, 48th Middlesex Regiment'. The text states that the memorial was funded by 'Leighton' Orient FC Supporters (amongst others). Shouldn't this be Leyton Orient FC? I know for a fact, that Leighton Orient FC, were a Sunday Morning League pub team from Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire, who played in the Milton Keynes Sunday Football League in the late 1960s early 1970s.

Ian Chambers Chairman, Dublin Branch

WFA members visiting the Verdun area will be familiar with the major forts and the ossuary which lie at the core of the battlefield. They may not however have heard of two outlying sites of great interest, both of which repay a visit and deserve the support of battlefield enthusiasts.

These sites are the Moreau–Lager–West (Camp Moreau) in the Argonne, and the Ouvrage de la Falouse, near Verdun. Camp Moreau is a German reserve camp some 3km north of Vienne–le–Chateau on the D63 – about 35km west of Verdun, and about 2km behind the German front line of February 1916.

After the war the camp disappeared into the undergrowth, and was virtually forgotten until 1996. The Comité Franco–Allemande then embarked on a long programme of renovation, and has cleared and restored many of the features of the camp. These include *inter alia* a delousing station, springs, a well, a canteen, a wash–house, cabins, latrines, trench lines, and a tunnel system set into the hillside.

Visits to the site can be made every Saturday morning from 9.30am to midday, for a modest entry fee; contact La Maison du Pays de l'Argonne at Vienne–le–Chateau, tel no. 0033 (0)3 26 60 49 40, email mpa@argonne.fr , or 0033 (0)3 26 60 85 83, or by letter to Camp Moreau, 51800 Vienne–le–Chateau, France, or to M. Roger Berdold, Chemin du Culot, 55120 Le Neufour, France.

The Ouvrage de la Falouse is situated about 3km south of Verdun, just to the east of the D34, and signed to the left from just before the A4 autoroute. It is a minor fort, one of the last built to protect Verdun, between 1906 and 1908, guarding the Meuse valley. It too was completely lost and overgrown before a lone enthusiast Frédéric Radet gathered a small group of like–minded friends to clear and restore it. Since it did not suffer any bombardment it is in fine condition, and comprises barracks, machine–gun turrets, two 75 mm cannon turrets, kitchen, latrines, and a tunnel. Some thirty mannequins of officers and poilus add a realistic picture of the soldiers' life behind the front in 1916. To visit contact Frédéric Radet –email lafalouse@orange.fr, or tel no 0033 (0)6 83 27 13 34. Again a modest entry fee is requested.

It cannot be too strongly stressed that both these sites have been rediscovered and revived through the hard work of a few highly dedicated volunteers; over the years they have received virtually no grants whatsoever, and have previously relied on donations. Although a small entry fee is now charged, they both operate on a shoe–string, and donations are always gratefully acknowledged.

Tim Tawney, via email

Seaforth Snapshots

Thank you for producing yet another excellent 'special' (*ST!*106), it was full of interesting and informative articles and a worthy tribute to the memory of those who fought on the Somme.

I was particularly interested to see the photographs in Richard van Emden's article 'Shots from the Front' as some are ones with which I am very familiar. In correspondence with Richard it transpires that he does not know who the original photographer was, but has a number of pictures of 1/6 Seaforth Highlanders in his possession, some, but not all, the same as I have used in my book on the battalion, *The Spirit of the Troops is Excellent*. We have deduced that a member of the battalion, most probably an officer, took a series of photographs in the summer and autumn of 1915 following the 51st (Highland) Division's move to the Somme to take over from the French. The photographer then had copies made and distributed them to his comrades; I was kindly allowed to copy those held by Captain William Petrie's daughter.

Knowing that many members like to put names to the faces in photographs I can help with the one at the top of p.10. Although it was not published in *The Northern Scot* until early March 1916, their caption then read:

'Our readers will be interested in the above picture, which shows us a group of the 1/6th Seaforth Highlanders in the trenches. This, we believe, is one of the first photographs which has been published showing the Morayshires in the actual fighting line. The boys seem to be putting in the time with some degree of nonchalance. On the extreme left Lance Corporal Charles M'Donald, Elgin, is busily engaged writing in a notebook, probably to someone at home who will be very glad to receive his letter. Next to him we have Private Adam Wood, Elgin, who is of a literary turn of mind, judging from the newspaper in his hand. Over the corner of the paper Private J Patience, Avoch, is peeping as if he didn't want the cameraman to know that he was with the Morayshires! Private Fraser, Moycroft, is meditating profoundly, while Private J M'Guiness, Elgin, is keeping a watchful eye on the enemy through the periscope.'

I have tried to do some research into the fate of these men and so far I have not found evidence of any of them being killed, although it must be said without specific details such as a service number it is not easy as there are plenty of Frasers and McDonalds in this part of the world! The reference to Private Patience 'peeping as if he didn't want the cameraman to know that he was with the Morayshires', was likely because he came from Avoch, on the Black Isle, and had originally served with his local Territorials, the 1/4 (Ross–shire) Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders.

To conclude, James Jack, whose grave is pictured on p.11, was a 32 year–old married man whose wife, Jessie, lived in Dunbar Street, Burghead. On August 27, 1915, the Morayshire Seaforths were in the line at La Boisselle when a shell landed close to a group of men repairing the trench parapet. Three were wounded and James Jack was killed. He was subsequently buried a short distance away at Bécourt which, as the other photograph shows, was very much a new cemetery at that time with only about twenty graves; the first burials had been of Privates Daniel Campbell and Donald Ross of 1/7 Black Watch who both died on August 6, 1915.

Derek Bird via email

Irish Voices

On receiving *ST!*106 which I look forward to reading, I was especially pleased to note that at least one other member, J B L Rose of Luxembourg, agrees with me about the nature of David Filsell's poorly–informed review of Myles Dungan's book *Irish Voices from the Great War* in ST!105. However, I do not agree entirely with Rose's view of Myles Dungan's 1995 edition of this book as 'a significant milestone in the rehabilitation of Irish First World War veterans', or with his assessment of Dungan as some form of prophet. Myles Dungan was part of a process which many have claimed to have started, but the man who did most, and at the greatest personal risk, was the late Lieutenant Colonel Brian Clark MC GM, late Royal Irish Fusiliers, Chairman of the RBL in the Republic, whose advocacy of ex–servicemen in the 1970s and 1980s meant that he was permitted by *An Garda Siochana* to hold a personal firearm.

David Filsell's comments make it clear that there is little understanding of Irish views among some readers at least and perhaps an overview of Remembrance in what is now the Republic of Ireland since 1922 would be in order at some stage?

Richard Doherty, via email

The editor writes: *I would be delighted if anyone felt that they were able to contribute a piece on the lines Mr Doherty sets out above.*

Morland facts

I feel I must respond to an aspect of the review of my book – *Morland Great War Corps Commander* – (*ST!*105). The reviewer, Mr Filsell, is very experienced and one must respect his opinions, however, there are several factual errors and two omissions in the first section which I would draw readers' attention to in the cause of historical accuracy:

- Morland commanded the 47th Division in August 1914 in England (*not* France)
- He went to France in October 1914 to command 5th Division (*not* August 1914 and *not* the 47th Division)
- He took command of X Corps on July 1915 (*not* July 1914)
- He took temporary command of XIV Corps in August 1916 (*not* XIII Corps)
- He took command of XIII Corps in April 1918 (omitted)

- In 1919 he did take command of X Corps, but in Germany (omitted)

I am disappointed that the above details (laid out in Appendix 1 of the book) were not referred to correctly and I hope this letter sets the record straight.

Bill Thompson, via email

Cornwell Corrective

In Andrew Lambert's article 'Jutland – How the War Was Won' on p.130 of *ST* 106 there is a photograph captioned as being of Boy (1st Class) Jack Travers Cornwell VC. Although this is the usual attribution, there were, in fact, no existing recent photographs of Jack Cornwell (in uniform or otherwise) and, possibly, none of him at all when the newspaper media took up the campaign to get him the Victoria Cross. Because of the perceived need for such a photograph, one of the newspapers took a photo of Jack's older brother Alfred wearing Jack's second uniform and that has ever since been known as a real photograph of Jack Cornwell.

Niall Ferguson via email

Cornwell Corrective – Part Two

I don't suppose I'll be the first or the last to write in that the image attributed to be Boy (1st Class) Jack Travers Cornwell on p.130 of *ST* 106 in the article 'Jutland: How the War was Won' is a fake! The article was first class and the author, Professor Andrew Lambert, is to be congratulated for it, but alas he was sucked in as so many other researchers and writers have been over the last decade when looking for a contemporary photograph of Cornwell in uniform.

Although already buried, by July 1916 there was a determined public demand for a public funeral with Naval Honours, thus Jack's body was exhumed and taken on Sunday 30 July 1916 to East Ham Mortuary for a final resting place in a plot at Manor Park Cemetery; even Admiral Beatty sent a wreath. After the citation of Jack Cornwell's Victoria Cross appeared in the *London Gazette* on 15 September 1916, it was six days later on 21 July that 'Jack Cornwell Day' was named and enthusiasm for the heroic deed went even more viral. The next month Jack Cornwell's father died of heart failure whilst serving with the Royal Defence Corps and in November Jack's mother, Lily, accepted the Victoria Cross on behalf of her son from the King at Buckingham Palace. The press were all over the Jack Cornwell story, but no photograph of the boy could be procured, but that didn't deter the media one bit.

With no images available of Jack Cornwell on his death, Ernest Cornwell, Jack's younger brother, was persuaded by journalists visiting the house to pose by putting on one of Jack's uniforms, plus cap with the ship name tally of HMS *Lancaster*, not HMS *Chester* on which he died, since which time it's become universally recognised as the Jutland hero himself.

Graham L Cauldwell, Melbourne, Australia

Editor's note: *My thanks to Messrs Ferguson and Cauldwell for setting the record straight. I can confirm, however, that Andrew Lambert had nothing whatever to do with sourcing or placement of images and therefore no blame should be attached to him for the error. Andrew did not supply any images to illustrate his piece so I had to source them all plus the accompanying map. The error was mine entirely – for which I apologise – and made during research to source the great many extra images needed to illustrate the articles in the special.*

Chateâu Regnière–Ecluse query

I wonder if your knowledgeable readers are able to help. I have been asked by the owner of the chateâu at Regnière–Ecluse on the Somme to find out any information about who was stationed there during the Great War. We know that it was occupied by the HQ of the British Expeditionary Force Canteens (EFC) as the Imperial War Museum holds a photograph taken outside the front door and information in the book *West and East with the EFC b*y Captain E Vredenburg confirms this. However, the chapter in the book about life at Regnière–Ecluse does not mention anyone by name it simply notes that the chateâu was the headquarters of the EFC between 1917 and 1919.

I am not a member of The Western Front Association but it was suggested that I might contact the Editor of *Stand To!* in the hope that members might be able to shed light on the soldiers depicted in the photograph. It would be of particular interest if anyone had letters from relatives who were stationed at Regnière–Ecluse.

Ronwen Emerson, via email ronwen@me.com

A formal portrait of the Headquarters Staff, Expeditionary Force Canteens photographed by Ernest Brooks at the Chateâu Regnière–Ecluse. Courtesy IWM Q3584

The First Tank Action in History

by David Fletcher

The Duke of Wellington is once supposed to have said that trying to describe a battle is like trying to describe a ball since everything is happening at once. He may have been right – he usually was – yet people have written about them – battles I mean, not balls – although I normally steer clear of them. This year, however, I will make an exception. One hundred years ago – on 15 September 1916 – tanks went into action for the very first time, but since that requires more space than I have to play with I have decided to follow three participants, with one thing in common; due to circumstances beyond their control each crew went into action alone on different parts of the front, and all survived, although their tanks may not have been so fortunate.

Gender

The tanks in question were all of what later became known as the Mark I type. They came in two distinct versions, both of which will be covered here, there was the 'Male', armed with two 57mm guns, normally known as six–pounders firing high explosive or solid shot which had a muzzle velocity of 1,818 feet per second and a maximum range of 7,500 yards, and three Hotchkiss air–cooled machine–guns. And the 'Female', armed with four Vickers water–cooled heavy machine guns (effective range about 2,000 yards, rate of fire up to 500 rounds per minute) and one Hotchkiss gun. The maximum armour thickness was about 10mm, just enough to resist small arms fire and fragments from shell bursts but easily penetrated by armour piercing rounds and no defence at all if hit by an artillery round.

The tank was powered by a six–cylinder Daimler engine, a petrol engine of course in those days and made by British Daimler in Coventry, no connection with the German company. These early tanks had two 25 gallon petrol containers high up in the front, and if these were hit the tank went up in flames, hardly anyone got out alive, least of all from a female tank which was difficult enough to get out of at the best of times. Top speed was about 3mph, virtually walking pace so progress was slow and rather noisy, at least for those inside the tank.

First of the first

If we can say with certainty that this was the first ever tank action in history can we actually say which tank went into action first? Well we can as a matter of fact. It was a male tank, No. 765 named *Daredevil 1* and on the day carrying crew number D1. It was commanded by Captain Harold Mortimore whose second–in–command was Sergeant H Davies and whose driver was Private A Wateredge of the Army Service Corps. There were five other men in the tank and we know all their names, but those three ought to suffice for now. The original plan was to send two tanks out together, but that had been changed, the other one was to pass through a wood and approach the target from a different direction but there was no knowing if it would get there at all and even if it did, whether it would it get there in time to do anything.

So, in effect, Mortimore was alone. He started out at 5.15am and had quite a long way to go, over featureless, shell–torn ground. His target was a German strong point, known officially as the 'Brewery Salient', and was a German strongpoint backing onto Delville Wood, which needed to be taken out before the British advanced.

Faith

Daredevil 1 was running well, albeit slowly. Mortimore and his crew had a lot of faith in their machine and Mortimore had a lot of faith in his crew, young as they were. Remember for most of them it was their first intimate view of the battlefield, their first long journey in a fully closed down tank, and their first experience of being fired at. It was probably just as well that there was a lot going on inside the tank to occupy their minds and so much noise that they had virtually no idea of what was going on outside.

As they neared their first objective they were joined by their supporting infantry, men of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (KOYLI) who, for safety, formed up behind the tank. Now, as they were getting close, *Daredevil 1* was to go in alone, all guns firing. The area was divided into trenches which the British called 'Hop Alley', 'Ale Alley', 'Beer Trench' and so on, which is why the official British name for it all was Brewery Salient, although to the

D Company Heavy Section Machine–Gun Corps officers photographed at Elveden. These include Mortimore, second row, fourth from right, and Hastie, back row, fifth from right. Courtesy Tank Museum Bovington

troops on the ground it was known as 'Mystery Corner'. A ridge just in front of it obscured the view although it was known that there were machine guns there and its location was a threat to a British attack, which is why it had to be eliminated.

Mortimore was making for Hop Alley, a member of the KOYLI, following behind the tank, said that heads kept popping up and down in the German trenches as they tried to fathom out what this strange thing was, then, with the tank only a few yards away, they took to their heels and fled. Mortimore said that at one point he halted his tank astride a trench and fired his machine guns into it. More Germans emerged from a dug out and looked aghast at this strange machine, the like of which they had never seen before.

Some accounts say that the trenches were already empty before the tank got there, but Mortimore, watching from the tank, saw British infantry, with fixed bayonets, chasing the Germans into Delville Wood. Having cleared Hop Alley the tank moved on to give the same treatment to Ale Alley and Beer Trench. There was still no sign of tank D5, commanded by Arthur Blowers, so Mortimore decided to move on to his next objective. He had only gone about 300 yards when his tank was disabled, a fragment, probably from a British shell that came down short, broke his starboard drive sprocket so the tank would now go nowhere. The damage was too great for the crew to repair so all Mortimore could do was to get his crew out and shepherd them back to the British lines. Later in the day the tank was recovered and taken away to be repaired.

C Company

The Heavy Section, Machine–Gun Corps was broken down into six companies, A – F, but only C and D Companies took part in the action on 15 September 1916. We have already dealt with a representative of D Company, Harold Mortimore, now it is the turn of C Company and in particular of Basil Henriques.

Lieutenant Henriques commanded the female tank C22, one of three tanks which, to begin with, were directed against a German strongpoint which the British knew as 'The Quadrilateral'. It was a formidable position although its exact location and layout was not known to the British and to that extent it had a lot in common with 'Mystery Corner', although it did not back on to a wood.

Four C Company tanks seen being prepared for action near the end of Chimpanzee Valley. We are not able to say which tanks these are or exactly when the photo was taken but a number of tanks left from here on the day. There is a female tank on the right, nearest the camera. Courtesy Tank Museum Bovington

It was decided to send three tanks against The Quadrilateral: they were the male tank C19 *Clan Leslie* commanded by Captain Archie Holford–Walker (brother of C Company Commander Major Allen Holford–Walker) and female tanks C20 and C22, the former commanded by Henriques' good friend Lieutenant George Macpherson. Rose Henriques, Basil Henriques' wife, said that her husband was never cut out to be an army officer and the same is probably true of George Macpherson. He had only just left school and was destined for the Ministry. Neither tanks C20 nor C22 had been 'christened' with names that we know of.

C19 Clan Leslie*, Archie Holford–Walker's tank (a male) in Chimpanzee Valley. But when was it photographed? Courtesy Tank Museum Bovington*

Breakdown

The three tanks moved off from behind the British lines at 5.00pm on 13 September 1916, part of a long line of tanks setting off for action. The journey took virtually all night, jammed onto the road amidst a mass of other traffic, until they turned off down a side road and entered 'Chimpanzee Valley'. Here they spent the day cleaning their machines, repairing any damage done so far, topping up their petrol and greasing all the rollers. They set off for the front at about 7.00pm having received new orders to attack The Quadrilateral first, before moving on to their other tasks. They moved off in the order C19, C20, C22 and before they had gone 100 yards C20, George Macpherson's tank, broke down. The crew put it right but it broke down again so they had to leave it where it was. And then there were two!

These two advanced, following a guide on foot who used lights to direct them around obstacles, but it was slow going. Then, while descending a steep slope, C19 stopped with tail trouble. Most tank commanders at the time believed that the steering link to the tail was part of the tank's mechanism so if it was damaged the tank could not go on. In fact the tank didn't need its tail. It could steer just as well, only slower, on its gears, but Archie was sure his tank had to be repaired and of course this would take time, so Basil Henriques pulled out to pass him and went on alone.

A few yards further on Basil discovered that C22 had already used a lot of petrol so they had to top up the petrol tank from C19 then, after halting for a while to cool the engine and releasing the guide, Henriques went on. He was trying to follow some white tape laid out on the ground but he kept losing it. Henriques also says that the track they followed, although poor, was paved with dead Germans. He stopped again at around 5.00am because they were running a bit early but when he reached a front line trench about 45 minutes later, the infantry did not want him to stop there in case the presence of his tank attracted artillery fire, so he backed up about 20 yards and waited there for five minutes.

Drama

Now we come to the first dramatic part of Henriques' story. It is claimed that when starting out on his journey across no–man's land one of Henriques' machine gunners opened fire on men of the 9th Battalion, the Norfolk Regiment, thinking they were Germans. The late Trevor Pidgeon in his *The Tanks at Flers* devotes a lot of space to this incident and doubted that it ever took place, yet the Official History says it did.

Lieutenant Basil Henriques, still sporting an East Kents cap badge. Courtesy Tank Museum Bovington

Soon afterwards, however, Henriques reached the outer trench of The Quadrilatral and went in. There was not the panic on the part of the Germans as had been evident at 'Mystery Corner' and although C22 had everything its own way to begin with Henriques found that the front of the tank was soon taking heavy punishment. Splinters from his hinged visor cut into Henriques face so that blood began to flow. It was the same for his driver. Then something striking the front broke the glass of his vision block and fragments flew into his eyes. Something similar happened to his driver and soon all their vision devices were broken and the only way to see out now was by opening the hinged visors slightly – a risky procedure. Looking round Henriques noted that two of his gunners were lying on the floor; he thought they were dead but they were wounded. Bullets were clearly coming through the sides of the tank and Henriques thought that the sponsons weren't bullet proof, although the Germans had in fact been issued with armour piercing bullets, which they were now firing at the tank. Since he felt that he could no longer help the infantry and he did not want his tank to be captured, Basil Henriques pulled out and made his way back to Chimpanzee Valley, leaving the infantry to their fate, which was a grim choice. But one tank could not hope to do what three were supposed to.

Macpherson mystery

We left George Macpherson and his tank with a broken down engine. Later on he got it running again and went to 16 Infantry Brigade HQ for orders. He was told to attack The Quadrilateral in company with another tank to finish the work Basil Henriques had started. This second attack was subsequently called off, but not before the two tanks had gone forward and had come under fire. Making their way back, Macpherson dismounted and, making his way back to report was apparently hit by a shell fragment and later died at No. 34 Casualty Clearing Station. He is buried in Grovetown Cemetery. However, there are those who say that he committed suicide because he had failed that day. If your tank breaks down, or is recalled after starting out for battle there can be no accusation of 'failure' and it is not worth shooting yourself for, although Trevor Pidgeon, who supports the suicide theory said of Macpherson that he was 'the embodiment of so much that was good, honest and noble in Britain'. (1)

The newly gazetted Second Lieutenant George Macpherson photographed in 1915. Courtesy Tank Museum Bovington

Basil Henriques tried desperately to get back to his tank and his men but he was caught up in a system and transferred further and further away, ending up at an ophthalmic hospital in London where they obviously worked to save his sight. Even so he was never given command of a tank again and after lecturing on tank warfare at Bovington was appointed as a reconnaissance officer with a Tank Corps battalion in France, an appointment he retained until the end of the war.

Dinnaken

Finally we will return to D Company for another famous one–tank action which is so well known that it seems to epitomise the actions of tanks on the Somme. It is the story of Lieutenant Stuart Hastie commanding D17, the male tank *Dinnaken.* Hastie's second–in–command was a Corporal Sheldon and his driver was Private Wescomb of the Army Service Corps. D17 was one of three tanks told off to skirt the village of Flers and then make for Gueudecourt. But in the revised orders, after a number of tanks had become ditched, Hastie was now ordered to drive right through Flers.

They started out alright, in a convoy with other tanks. In Hastie's group George Court was leading in the unnamed (as far as we know) female tank D14 followed by Victor Huffam in another female – D9 *Dolly* – with Hastie in the male tank D17 *Dinnaken* bringing up the rear. They hadn't gone far before Court's tank got ditched in what is described as a disused support trench. The edges just crumbled as he tried to cross and the tank became stuck. Victor Huffam therefore crossed the trench in an attempt to tow Court out, the front of D14 was sticking up in the air, but while manoeuvring Huffam's tank D9 got itself jammed alongside Court's tank so both were stuck and it became clear that they were not going anywhere. Wescomb, Hastie's driver, eased *Dinnaken* round them and gingerly crossed the trench but now *Dinnaken* was also on its own.

Ahead of him, about a mile away, Hastie could just make out Flers, but first he had to get there. On the way Hastie's starboard gunner Boult fired at a German observation balloon and claims to have brought it down. By now D17 was surrounded by British infantry, all going in the same direction. Here they encountered belts of barbed wire, some of which Hastie was able to crush down to let the infantry through while nearby Arthur Arnold in D16 and Leonard Bond in D18 were doing the same thing, although they were bound for a different destination. Hastie meanwhile encountered 'Flers Trench' at the entrance to the village which he straddled and fired into, observed from above by Cecil Lewis who noted it in *Sagittarius Rising*.

'Walking down the high street'

Now Hastie was in the village itself, some buildings of which were still standing. By now D17 had damaged its tail but inside they knew enough to continue, steering on the brakes. Their route through the village took them around a bend by the church and there, ahead of them, lay the roadway leading down to the square. It was about here that another aircraft reported '*Tank has been seen walking down the High Street of Flers followed by large numbers of our troops, cheering wildly'*. The press got hold of this and converted it into '*A tank is walking up the High Street of Flers with the British Army cheering behind it'.*

German infantry threw stick grenades at them as they went by but these did no harm, and Percy Boult, the starboard gunner, managed to pick off a German machine gun in the rafters of a half–destroyed house. But just before they reached the square a runner came up and told them they were in the British barrage, so Hastie was obliged to turn back. He wasn't sorry because his engine had started to knock badly and he didn't know how long it was going to

last. He was unable to engage a German artillery battery a little way ahead so they returned slowly up the high street, re–negotiated the bend and re–crossed Flers Trench. The village was now behind them but the tank was in a bad way. In fact after a short distance Hastie turned off the road to the left and sought partial shelter beneath a ridge, at this point the engine gave out and refused to start again.

Harold Head's tank D3, another male, was lying under better cover about 100 yards away. This tank was also disabled, with shell splinters in the track, but it offered better cover from the German barrage and the crew of D17 took their chance and ran over to it, Hastie himself having gone on ahead of them. There they remained until nightfall when the German barrage calmed down and they were able to make their way back to safety.

Metal HQ

D3 was later recovered by an Army Service Corps repair team. But D17 remained where it was and was used as an advanced headquarters by a series of infantry brigadier generals over the ensuing days. Incidentally, and for what it's worth, Colonel J F C Fuller, writing at the time of the Battle of Cambrai and with particular reference to events in Fontaine Notre Dame, said that he never imagined for one minute that tanks would enter a built–up area such as a village on account of the risk. But roads went through villages, not around them, so where else might he expect a tank to go. Of course where a village had been entirely obliterated, as was the case with the village of St Julien in the Ypres Salient, it didn't matter but where buildings were still standing they did pose a threat because they offered cover to enemy infantry. Yet, as Hastie's action in D17 had shown it was possible to enter a village and survive, and there were other examples to follow from the Cambrai fighting, at Havrincourt for instance.

The famous artist's impression of D17 Dinnaken *'walking down' the high street at Flers on 15 September 1916. Allowing for some artistic licence it is quite a good picture. Courtesy Tank Museum Bovington*

References

(1) See Colin Hardy, 'Rewriting History – An Alternative Account of the Death of Lieutenant George Macpherson of the Heavy Section Machine Gun Corps', *Stand To!* 89, pp.30–32.

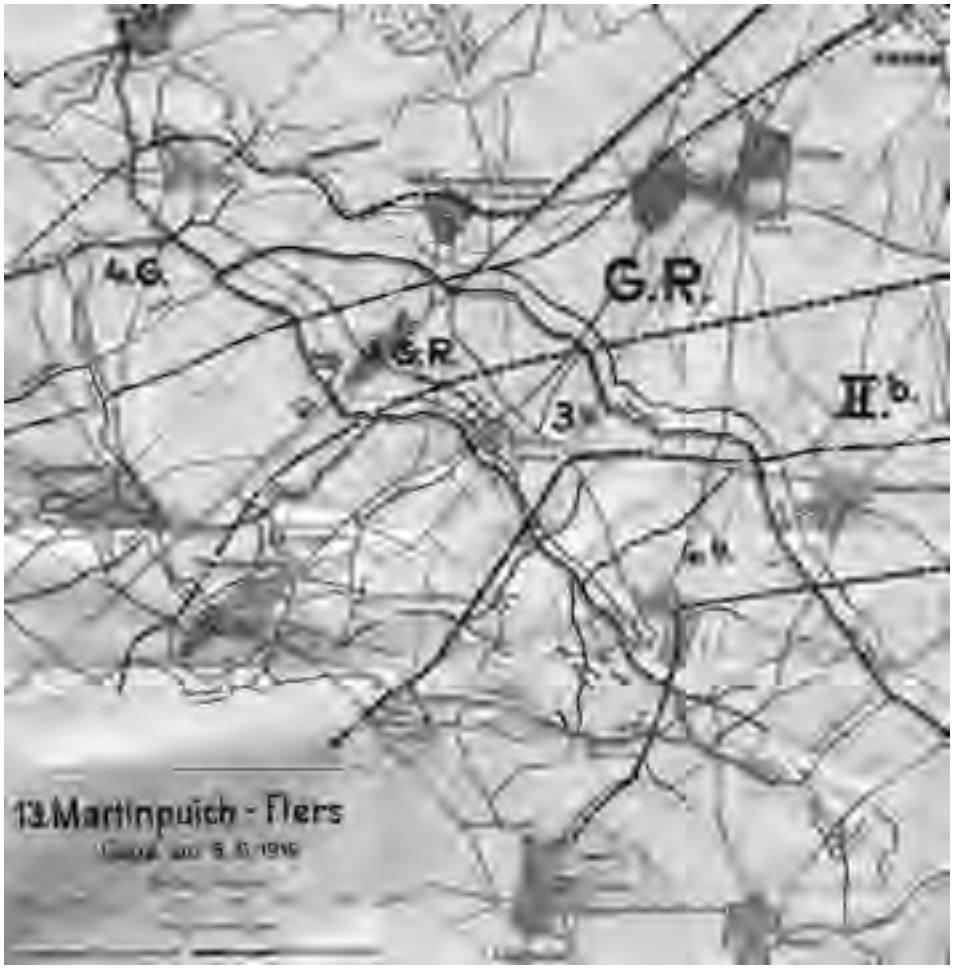
Tank D17 Dinnaken *again, seen where it finally came to rest east of the Longueval – Flers road and probably serving as an infantry brigade headquarters with a goodly crowd gathered around it. The spot is easily visible today. Courtesy Tank Museum Bovington*

Facing the Tanks
The German Army at Flers – 15 September 1916
by Jack Sheldon

For two and–a–half months from the beginning of July 1916, the Allied armies hammered away, largely separately, at the German defenders on the Somme then finally, as part of the alliance–wide policy, a major coordinated attack took place in mid–September. The British contribution was to attack on a broad front, supported by Mk I tanks at Flers. It represented the climax of weeks of costly 'line straightening' and aimed at the destruction and breakthrough of the German defence in this sector. It was to be the heaviest attack delivered since 1 July, but the results were less than had been hoped for, even if it proved once more that if sufficient heavy gun fire was brought to bear, the German forward positions could be overrun relatively easily and terrain could be captured. Acknowledged expert on the German Army, Jack Sheldon, here examines the fight for Flers in the early autumn of 1916 from the German side of the wire.

On 15 September 1916 the Martinpuich – Ginchy front was the sector of the Bavarian II Corps, (*Generalleutnant* von Stetten). From west to east it was defended by the 3rd, 4th and 5th Bavarian Infantry Divisions, commanded by *Generalleutnants* Ritter von Weninger, Ritter von Schrott and Endres respectively. Standing in the way of an advance north to Flers were Bavarian Infantry Regiments 5 and 9, Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment 5 of the 4th Bavarian Infantry Division and Bavarian Infantry Regiment 14 of the 5th Bavarian Infantry Division.[1]

Generalleutnant *Ritter von Schrott commanding the German 4th Infantry Division*



German positions in the Flers–Martinpuich sector on 5 September 1916

Soldiers in all units were badly worn down by the preliminary bombardment and their morale was shaky, as was evidenced by men drifting away to the rear from their front line trenches and a reluctance to get involved in fire fights for fear of betraying their locations amongst the shell holes. Their relief, in some cases, by formations of III Bavarian Corps had already begun.

Destructive fire

Before this could be concluded, however, the battle began and they were heavily engaged, suffering very serious casualties. In order to survive to fight another day, all these formations were forced to yield ground swiftly when the blow fell. During the bombardment on 13 September, Infantry Regiment 14 suffered casualties of seventeen killed, fifty–seven wounded, thirty missing (almost all buried alive by shelling) and a further fifteen, buried but dug out and medically evacuated.[2] The following day the bombardment increased dramatically in intensity to drum fire. This caused many more casualties and continued through the night 14/15 September. To make matters worse, between 1.00am and 6.00am, the entire area was drenched with gas. The assault trenches were filled with massed British infantry and then, on the stroke of 7.00am, they began to storm forward. *Leutnant* Oeller, commanding 1st Company Infantry Regiment 14, describing the attack of the British 41st Division, remembered,

> 'About 6.45am the British moved to occupy trenches pushed forward from the edge of Delville Wood astride the Longeuval–Flers road. Our machine gun and rifle fire forced them one by one to jump back into the trenches. About 7.00am the British launched forward out of Delville Wood and along the low ground to the left of the Flers–Longueval road in four or five columns, each eighty men strong and with five to ten paces between columns. The thrust was accompanied by three armoured vehicles, of which one ditched as it attempted to cross the road.[3] When the advance had closed to within two hundred metres, destructive British fire came down and completely smashed the company sector.
>
> 'We observed the attack from the moment it left the wood and from then until the break in to our positions we fired a constant stream of flares calling for defensive fire, but nothing came down in response. Because there were only forty five men to defend the 400 metre wide company sector, I withdrew all parts of the company I could contact in good time and took up

The initial positions held and ground subsequently ceded by the Bavarian II Corps during the battle for Flers on 15 September 1916

position on heights to the right of the Flers–Longueval road where I could bring down enfilade fire on the enemy. I also sent word to the Second Position for support. I stayed in position with elements of 12th Company, suffering heavy casualties, until I was deeply outflanked on either side and feared that I might be cut off. At that moment I was wounded in the shoulder and I gave orders to pull back to Flers.' [4]

Survivor stories

By the evening of 15 September the commander of Infantry Regiment 9, *Oberstleutnant Freiherr* von Freyberg, was located on the far side of Flers in charge of no more than the shattered remnants of his regiment and two battalions of Infantry Regiment 10 (rushed forward by the 6th Infantry Division). It had not proved possible to carry out a counter–attack towards Flers, so instead the Bavarians went into hasty defence north and northwest of the village. Later, when the 9th Infantry Regiment was moved back into reserve it was quite impossible to produce a normal after action report because so many of the key personnel had been killed or captured. Instead the regiment interviewed as many survivors as possible, then despatched the personal accounts to Headquarters 4th Infantry Division. Though of little value at the time, this procedure means that the modern reader has access to a very unusual and detailed selection of low level descriptions of the action south of Flers and to the east of the Flers–Longueval road.

Most of the reports were from men of 1st Battalion and its Machine–Gun Company, which had been in reserve. However, a handful of them were provided by men who had been manning either the First Position in the so–called *Zerschossene Stellung* (literally the 'Shot–up Position'), the eastern extension of *Postierungsgraben*, which bisected High Wood from east to west) or the Intermediate Position, the *Alter Foureaux Riegel* (Switch Trench). These provide a glimpse of what confronted the Bavarians that morning and also show how quickly the defence collapsed. *Gefreiter* Michel Lutz of the 11th Company was located in the front line adjacent to a prominent left–hand bend in the Longueval–Flers road, 500m northeast of the northern tip of Delville Wood.

'At 6.00am on 15 September very heavy artillery fire started coming down. There were large numbers of gas shells amongst it, so once again we had to mask up. About 7.30am, five armoured vehicles came driving up. Of these, the second one definitely mounted a gun. The first wagon was brought to a halt by hand grenades thrown from the sap,[5] but the others drove on slowly. Assault troops rushed forward from behind the vehicles and attacked the company. The forward trench was then evacuated and its garrison pulled back to the Second Line, to 1st Battalion.' [6]

Infanterist Gregor Löber, also of 11th Company, observed the tanks as well.

'… When the gas had dispersed, about an hour later six armoured vehicles advanced from the British position. They drove in three rows of two, each with 150 metres between them. The second vehicle on the extreme right arrived in front of the centre of 11th Company. It stopped ten metres short of the trench then, when all six vehicles reached the same relative position, assault troops rushed round from behind them. Simultaneously machine guns opened fire from the armoured vehicles and the infantry advanced in line.'

Löber was slightly wounded and pulled back for treatment at about 10.00am. He reported that by that time no British soldier had entered the 11th Company position. However, less than an hour later, he saw British infantry with fixed bayonets moving along the sunken road to the south of Flers. For his part, *Infanterist* Ries of the 9th Company, back in Switch Trench, stated,

'I was with Three Platoon by the battalion command post. Suddenly somebody bawled down into the dugout, "Get out, the British are coming over the hill!" With a few others, I dashed back about three hundred metres and we occupied a trench together with men from the 5th and 18th Regiments [the 18th was part of the 3rd Infantry Division] … All of a sudden, I saw masses of British soldiers rushing down the hill at us … with fixed bayonets. Everyone to the left of us pulled back. *Leutnant*

The deployment of the regiments of the 4th Bavarian Infantry Division before Flers on 15 September 1916

The Battle of Flers–Courcelette. German dead in their front line trench – 15 September 1916. Courtesy IWM Q189

> Wolpert held men back, but he was shot at from the rear and fell dead at once. When I looked around I saw two armoured vehicles to our left rear driving along the *Flersriegel* [Flers Trench] and firing at us with machine guns. We blocked off to the left and fell back to the right, being constantly pressed and with the vehicles heading towards the 5th Regiment command post … We then pulled back to the *Gallwitzriegel*.'

Probing attacks

Prior to the main battle, the main German positions were hit by a series of probing attacks, some of which were delivered in strength. Infantry Regiment 5 had been tasked with the development of the so–called *Finger Abschnitt* (Finger Sector). This ran south southeast from just outside the eastern tip of High Wood in the direction of Longueval and this was where forward elements of the regiment were attacked early on 15 September. Notwithstanding the fact that this was a newly–dug trench, it was seen immediately by British airmen and pounded heavily during the bombardment. During the night 13/14 September, for example, when Reserve Infantry Regiment 5 in High Wood was fending off a grenade attack, one shell landed directly on a dump by the forward command post, destroying 600 hand grenades and 1,000 signalling cartridges which were of course missed when the attack began.[7]

During the night 14/15 September the relief of the regiment by Infantry Regiment 18 of the 3rd Infantry Division began. As a result, the British assault butted up against a mix of sub units from the two regiments. The 3rd Battalion Infantry Regiment 18 was in the front line, but had had not time to orientate itself, whilst the *Foureaux Riegel* was being manned by companies from both regiments. The first wave of attackers totally overran the 3rd Battalion, none of whom returned. Moving through, follow up waves complete with tank support, attacked the *Foureaux Riegel.* Bitter close–quarter fighting with machine guns and grenades took place here, but it did not last long. Infantry Regiment 5 later made clear the shock effect of the tanks here. 'The effect of their appearance was shattering, because the infantrymen were powerless against them They drove along the trench and brought the garrison under machine gun fire. Infantry assault groups then rolled the trench up.' With the defence under attack frontally and from a flank, it did not take long for the British to press on to Flers.

Infantry Regiment 5 commented later. 'The arrival of the tanks and our own impotence against them made a visible impression on the men.' [8] In considerable disorder and near to panic, despite the steadfast leadership of the surviving junior officers, what was left of the two regiments soon fell back all the way to the *Gallwitz Riegel*.

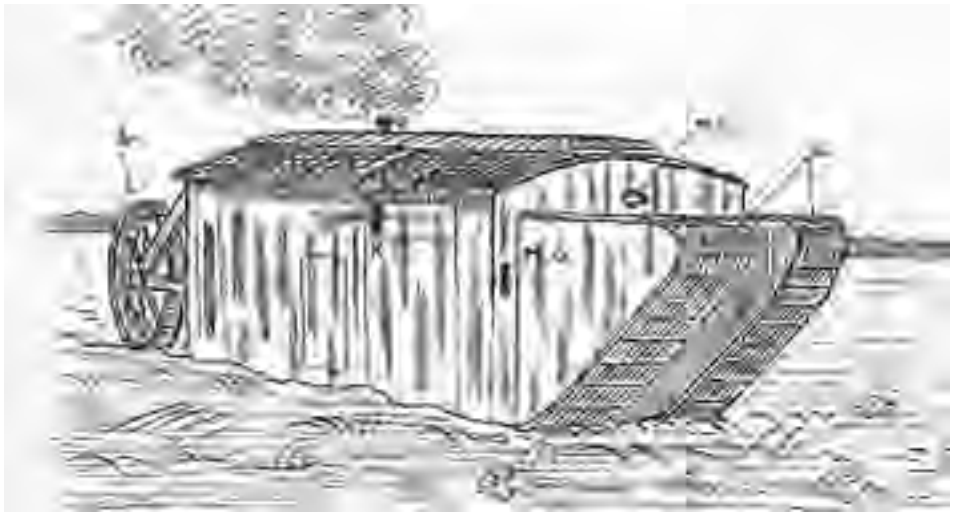
Taking on the tanks

The situation for Reserve Infantry Regiment 5 – located in and around High Wood – was more or less the same. Its forward elements were driven out of the wood swiftly, fell back and, like most of what was left of the 4th Division, ended the day north of Flers. Of course the tanks had come as a complete surprise to the Bavarians and they definitely had an effect on the outcome of the battle, but a case could be made that one of the most positive aspects of their employment was the effect they had on the morale of the attacking troops, who exploited to the full the physical shelter and fire support they provided at critical moments. Not all the defenders buckled immediately as they appeared, however. A number of gun crews of the Machine–Gun Company of Infantry Regiment 9 engaged them, but not very successfully. *Gefreiter* Ludwig Engelbrecht later reported, 'I immediately fired at the first vehicle, but the bullets had no effect on its armour, so I directed my fire instead to good effect at the advancing infantry'. *Schütze* Ferdinand Lehnemann, operating in the *Flers Riegel*, just to the southwest of the village at about 8.30am, stated, 'From the left came a shout, "An armoured vehicle is coming over the hill!". The machine gun was moved about fifty metres to the right to improve its field of fire. It had a stoppage, so a new set of working parts was inserted. I fired at the armoured vehicle and saw a ring fly off it. The soldiers accompanying it all lay dead on the ground.' [9]

Because they had none of the armour piercing SmK ammunition, soon to become standard issue for machine gunners, they were unable to do much more. However, the German artillery was altogether more successful, despite the novelty of the situation. Some guns deployed south of Flers were abandoned as their crews fled before the advancing British infantry, but others located in around the *Gallwitz Riegel* held their positions, even though they had suffered losses of men and equipment. These batteries thwarted all attempts by the British to press on past Flers then, as soon as the tanks attempted to get further forward, they were easily knocked out by gunners firing over open sights. *Leutnant* Klengel of 1st Battery Field Artillery Regiment (FAR) 77 described one such engagement.[10]

> 'Towards 9.00 am the battery telephone squad returned from the Sunken Road Section, with orders to engage the advancing enemy infantry. The canister rounds were prepared… All non–essential personnel were ordered by the Section Commander to collect grenades and weapons from a cache one hundred metres away and to deploy along the *Gallwitz Riegel*, left and right of the battery position, in order to thicken up the meagre infantry presence there. This could only be carried out fully when the crew of the knocked out, left–hand gun of the Sunken Road Section arrived … The enemy attack continued … Just before 9.30am, an enemy armoured vehicle drove in front of the battery position and, with its first shots, set on fire an ammunition wagon, which was parked close behind a forward howitzer position. With its third round, the right–hand gun, directed by the Section Commander, hit the armoured vehicle at a range of 925 metres and set it alight.[11] Altogether there were about eight hits, some of them from the left hand gun…The left hand gun continued to fire against the constantly renewed waves of attackers, who drew ever closer.
>
> 'In the meantime, another armoured vehicle approached the position of 3rd Battery FAR 77, which was located a short distance to our right rear. Because it was not engaged for a few moments and was threatening the 'Trench Section', the section commander decided, despite the infantry that was drawing ever closer, to pull his one remaining functioning gun out, with the help of some hastily–summoned Bavarian infantrymen, and to deal with the vehicle. Just as the gunner took aim at it, it was destroyed by a first round direct hit from the 3rd Battery.' [12]

An artist's impression of the heroic death of Leutnant *Kohl, commanding the Sunken Road Section 1st Battery FAR 77. Having served his gun until he knocked a tank out south of Gueudecourt, he refused to surrender and fired his revolver until he fell. A highly complimentary account about the action was sent to Germany after the war by a British captain from Huddersfield, who described it as the bravest act he ever witnessed*



An artist's impression of a British Mk I tank, drawn from a rough sketch made by Vizefeldwebel *Emil Seller 6th Company Bavarian IR 21 after the battle*

German concerns

As night began to fall on 15 September, the British XV Corps had only secured its Second Objective, with the Third Objective to the north of Flers out of reach and the Fourth, which enclosed Gueudecourt, nothing more than an unachievable aspiration. Although the Allied assault on 15 September only produced limited gains, the loss of ground, in particular that around Flers, worried the normally imperturbable General von Below, commander

of First Army, considerably. His chief of staff, *Oberst* Fritz von Loßberg, recalled what then happened. 'General von Below, who temporarily considered withdrawing the left and right wings of the army into positions to the rear, which were partly complete and partly still under construction, decided, under my influence, to continue resistance along the current line of battle.'[13]

In other words, despite this setback, there was to be no essential change to the policy of making the Allies fight for every foot of ground. Nevertheless, for the German Army the battle had highlighted a number of disturbing matters. Reflecting on it later *Generalleutnant* von Stetten, commander II Bavarian Corps, passed on his concerns to his divisional commanders.

> 'The divisional reports on the way the events of 15 and 16 September unfurled paint an impressive picture of outstanding performances and gallant deeds, but also reveal several weaknesses which, in their totality, caused the British attack to be successful … From all the reports there is no doubt that, in the truest sense of the word, the enemy artillery completely neutralised our infantry. Almost all their efforts were then devoted to protecting themselves from the effect of the enemy artillery … every new trench dug during the night was immediately subject to drum fire. As a result, the infantry sought sanctuary in craters in order, as far as possible, to remain unobserved. So developed what is known as a 'Somme Position', namely shell craters, with some protection improvised and connected by shallow, wide trenches. I believe we must find a way of coming to terms with this situation. No order, no matter how severe, can make a man do something which, from his experience, he knows will put his life at increased risk. It is clear that this type of 'position' has very serious disadvantages, both for the cohesiveness of the troops as well as the self–reliance of the individual man.
>
> 'It is pointless to close our eyes to the fact that during the Battle of the Somme the internal structure of particular units has been seriously weakened; otherwise, despite all losses, it would have been impossible for forward companies on the day of battle to have been down to forty to sixty riflemen … Because under battle conditions as difficult as those on the Somme there will always be weak links who know, with greater or lesser skill, exactly how to remove themselves, in future consideration will have to be given to the organisation of a stricter system of policing immediately behind the front; one which will concentrate in particular on the cellars of adjacent built up areas and dugouts close to batteries, [engineer] parks and medical posts. In actual fact, during the battle the dugouts by the engineer parks and medical facilities seem to have acted like powerful magnets …

Generalleutnant *von Stetten, the commander of II Bavarian Corps*

> 'The striving to avoid being detected did not merely prevent the preparation of normal defences; rather it had the consequence that almost all the troops withdrew from any form of fighting. For a long time, excessive reliance on hand grenades has pushed the use of the rifle dangerously into the background. On the Somme, to this has been added such a concern that to shoot is to risk positions being betrayed that fire has not been opened, even when valuable targets have appeared. During the night 14/15 dense masses were observed moving from the rear to fill up the forward trenches. They were not fired at. Large assemblies of troops were seen being fed in the open. They, too, were not fired at … The following statement by an officer is significant, "It was fortunate that there were no hand grenades available, so the men had to shoot." [14]
>
> 'Next to inadequate shooting and frequent failures of machine guns, another very unpleasant matter emerged; one which cannot be passed over in silence. Alongside brilliant examples of endurance, all too often there was a regrettable lack of courage to do battle, a lack of willpower such that if a man had to die at least he would sell his life as dearly as possible. This was the spirit that was engendered in his heroic little band by *Oberleutnant* Sturm and described in his own words, "The shout, 'Here they come!' caused all to forget [the danger]. In the place of a depressed mood came the joy of battle, which harked back to the day of Mörchingen [Morhange]."[15] This spirit is lacking in many fighting units and, unfortunately, it must be said, amongst their commanders. With little or no resistance, they simply surrendered and accepted the fate of being captured.
>
> 'The understanding of what being taken prisoner means to a soldier has undergone grievous change during the course of positional warfare. Of course instances can occur in the current style of warfare that makes this sad fate unavoidable. Nevertheless, every soldier – and even more every officer – must have it drilled into him that to fall unwounded into the hands of the enemy is somewhat shameful and all too easily leaves an enduring stain on his character.'[16]

Had General Sir Douglas Haig been on the document distribution list, von Stetten's observations of his command's performance on 15 September 1916 would undoubtedly have made his day.

Dr Jack Sheldon's latest book, Fighting the Somme: German Challenges, Dilemmas and Solutions *is scheduled for publication shortly by Pen and Sword Books.*

References

(1) All the formations involved around Martinpuich and Flers on 15 September were Bavarian, so that prefix will be dropped during the remainder of this description of the fighting that day.

(2) History of Bavarian Infantry Regiment 14, p.178.

(3) This may have been Tank D7, commanded by Lieutenant A J Enoch. See Trevor Pidgeon, Battleground Europe guide to *Flers and Guedecourt* p.74.

(4) History of Bavarian Infantry Regiment 14, pp.179–180.

(5) This sounds to be improbable because the practice of bundling several grenades together as a close range anti–tank measure had not yet been developed. Possibly the vehicle simply broke down.

(6) All these personal accounts are contained within *Kriegsarchiv Munich* 9. Inf. Regt. (WK) 7 *Abschrift der Aussagen von Augenzeugen über die Vorgänge am 15.9.16* dated 21.9.1916.

(7) Weniger, History of Bavarian Infantry Regiment 5, p.71.

(8) *Ibid.*p.73.

(9) Both these personal accounts are contained within *Kriegsarchiv Munich* 9. Inf. Regt. (WK) 7 *Abschrift der Aussagen von Augenzeugen über die Vorgänge am 15.9.16* dated 21.9.1916.

(10) Bolze, History of Field Artillery Regiment 77, p.150.

(11) This may have been Tank D5, commanded by Second Lieutenant Arthur Blowers. See Pidgeon *op. cit.* pp.89, 90 & 101.

(12) This may have been Tank D6, commanded by Lieutenant Reginald Legge. See Pidgeon *op. cit.* pp.89–92.

(13) Loßberg, *Meine Tatigkeit im Weltkriege, 1914—1918 (Berlin:1939)*, p.254.

(14) Original emphasis.

(15) This is a reference to the very bloody Battle of Morhange, which occurred on 19 and 20 August 1914in the Moselle region near to Luxembourg, during the Battle of the Frontiers.

(16) *Kriegsarchiv Munich Infanterie–Divisionen* (WK) 2355 *No. 292/21479 Generalkommando II A.K. An die Herren Kommandeure der 3. Und 4.I.D. Betreff: Schlacht an der Somme* dated 16.11.16.

The Camera Returns (89)

by Bob Grundy and Steve Wall

Twenty years ago, in *Stand To!* 46, we featured a visit by King George V to the town of Fouquereuil on 11 August 1916, midway through his visit to the Western Front which took place between 8 and 15 August 1916. At 1.00pm the following day, the King and his entourage visited General Sir Douglas Haig, the Commander–in–Chief of the BEF, at his headquarters in the Château Val Vion near Beauquesne.

The King's visit to France was covered in detail by Lieutenant Geoffrey Malins, the British official film photographer, together with the British official photographer Ernest Brooks. The film taken by Malins was subsequently incorporated in a War Office film entitled 'The King Visits his Armies in the Great Advance' which was released in October 1916.

The two black and white wartime photographs – IWM Q991 (above) and Q950 (following page) – were both taken by Brooks during the afternoon of 12 August. Q991 was taken on the balustrade terrace of the château and shows from left to right, General Joseph Joffre, French President, Raymond Poincare, King George V, General Ferdinand Foch and Haig. Q950 shows the party being filmed by Malins as it leaves the château. During the visit the King decorated Haig with The Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order.

Château Val Vion was originally built in 1784 but destroyed by fire ten years later. It was rebuilt and that replacement became the HQ of General Sir Charles Monro commanding the Third Army

The Château Val Vion in September 1918, in use as divisional HQ by the staff of the US 27th Division. The officer pictured is Captain H F Jaeckel, aide to Major General Ryan.

in July 1915. In June 1916 Haig and his staff moved in to use it as an advanced HQ during the Somme offensive. It was conveniently situated 10 miles from the château at Querrieu, which Lieutenant General Sir Henry Rawlinson was using as his Fourth Army HQ and 4 miles from Toutencourt, the HQ of Lieutenant General Sir Hubert Gough's Reserve – later the Fifth – Army. In July 1918 the château became incorporated into the British defences with trenches dug in its grounds and the surrounding woodland then to the south of the buildings. One of these trenches was actually called 'Val Vion Trench' and is shown clearly on the accompanying extract from a British trench map corrected to 23 July 1918.

In early September 1918 the US 27th (New York) Infantry Division arrived in this area on its transfer to the British Third Army, to be held in GHQ Reserve. The 27th opened its divisional HQ at the château at 4.00pm on 4 September and two days later the divisional history tells us that it was treated to a visit by Sir Harry Lauder who had lunch with the divisional commander Major General John Francis O'Ryan of New York, and his staff. The same day 'accompanied by a small, portable piano, Mr Lauder sang his inimitable Scotch songs' to a hastily assembled audience. At the conclusion of his impromptu programme we are told that he 'delivered a very forceful address, in which he told of the death of his son, an officer in the British army and of his hatred for the enemy and the enemy methods of conducting war'.

Beauquesne is 5 miles south of Doullens and the château – marked on the modern IGN 1:25,000 map as 'Val Vion Fme' – can be found one mile east of the town south of the D31 as you head towards Raincheval. The château was destroyed once again during fighting in 1940 and so this second rebuild dates from the early 1950s when some of the brick and stonework – including steps and terraces – was salvaged and re–used.

Whilst we were by no means the first enthusiasts to visit this historic location we were still made very welcome by the current owners, who kindly allowed us to take the comparison photographs.

Cricketers to the Front

The Men of Gloucestershire County Cricket Club

by Martin and Teresa Davies

In the summer of 1914 Bristol–based Gloucestershire County Cricket Club (GCCC) had more pressing matters to contend with than political events in the far off corners of Europe. At its Annual General Meeting on 29 January 1914 the club's precarious financial position – over £670 owed to the bank – had been highlighted. The Gloucestershire Chronicle's *Shilling Fund – initiated in response to this crisis – closed four months later at the end of May having raised nearly £1,000. This had alleviated the situation at first but a disastrous 1914 County Championship – only one win the whole season – had had a detrimental effect on gate receipts – the main source of income. Each year in August since 1872 the club had staged the Cheltenham Cricket Festival at the Cheltenham College ground. This was regarded as a guaranteed annual fundraiser and in 1914 it was scheduled to run from 10 to 18 August. Despite the war the club took the decision to proceed with the Festival, driven by its dire financial situation. However several star players, including the big–hitter and 'crowd–puller' Gilbert Jessop (batsman and fast bowler), decided that they would play no more cricket until the current situation was resolved. These actions together with Lord Kitchener's initial 'call to arms', resulted in poor attendance, for despite excellent weather the local men preferred to head for the recruiting stations, an act which exacerbated the club's already precarious financial position. As a result the club scheduled a meeting for 21 October at the Grand Hotel in Bristol to discuss the option of winding it up. Perversely, however, the coming of the Great War would save the club from extinction: expensive matches were curtailed, life–long supporters continued to purchase tickets for non–existent seasons and the payroll for the professional players was significantly diminished as they too rushed to the recruiting stations. Martin and Teresa Davies allow us a glimpse into the war of some of these men.*

Sporting celebrities

In local communities it was often well–known sportsmen who encouraged enlistment through their own acts and contributed to the sense of the great adventure. Across Bristol and Gloucestershire the men of the GCCC were no exception with Alfred Dipper (batsman and medium pace bowler) and Thomas Gange (batsman and fast bowler) being amongst the first to enlist. Local newspaper, the *Western Daily Press*, hoped that '…their example would be followed by cricketers and footballers across the country'.[1]

The boost to recruitment as sporting 'celebrities' enlisted was also seen in Gloucester as the Gloucester Rugby Football Club players flocked to the recruiting stations. As the

The 1914 Gloucestershire County Cricket Club squad: Standing left to right: Harry Smith (British Army); T Langdon; Thomas Gange (Royal Artillery); George Dennett (East Yorkshire Regiment); Alfred Dipper (Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry): Francis Ellis (Royal Engineers); Seated left to right. William St C Grant (KIA, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders); Michael Green (Gloucestershire Regiment); Cyril Sewell (Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry); Thomas Miller (Gloucestershire Regiment): Charles Parker (Royal Flying Corps). Courtesy Roger Gibbons

overwhelming majority of the these players were volunteers they had a choice of regiment and as a consequence were able to serve together, taking with them a team spirit and camaraderie born on the pitch at Kingsholm. [2] In 1914 only 8 per cent of the rugby players were officers, a figure which would rise to 18 per cent by 1918, and due to this they served in only eleven infantry regiments with the majority of the players (78 per cent) in the Gloucestershire Regiment and of those the majority served in the 5/Gloucesters. In contrast 34 per cent of the eligible county cricketers were officers in 1914 and this would rise to over 75 per cent in 1918 which manifested itself in the cricketers serving in twenty–five infantry regiments as well as in the Royal Artillery, the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) and the Royal Engineers which negated any sense of comradeship built up at the crease of the County Ground in Bristol. Further, whereas 95 per cent of the rugby players were born locally only 54 per cent of cricketers were local with 17 per cent being born abroad. Hence there was a common upbringing with shared values and experiences enjoyed by the rugby players which was absent amongst the cricketers. This must have added to a sense of isolation from their home environment. This did however have an 'advantage' during times of heavy casualties. In units which suffered badly the effect on the survival of the cricketers was not disproportionate, in contrast to the effects on the rugby players when their units were badly hit. For example six of them were killed in action on 23 July 1916 alone.

In general the rugby players and the cricketers did not serve together although several cricketers served with 5/Gloucesters and spent some of their time behind the lines playing in organised cricket matches which featured a large number of rugby players as team mates. This was particularly true for Captain James Winterbotham (slow orthodox bowler) serving with 5/Gloucesters and whose matches would be reported in the first trench magazine, the *Fifth Gloucester Gazette*. The Royal Engineers helped to prepare wickets using 'matting which somewhat unsettled some of the cracks' to create some sort of semblance of an even surface.

Season cancelled

On the Home Front in autumn 1914 the playing of organised sport was initially deemed as unpatriotic and the rugby fixtures for the 1914–1915 season were cancelled in September 1914. Professional Association Football would follow by cancelling matches eight months later. Although the Marylebone Cricket Club banned games at its grounds this did not significantly affect the cricketers as the start of the Great War had coincided with the end of the 1914 season and by the start of the 1915 season most eligible players were in military uniform. Throughout the war on the Home Front rugby and cricket matches involving military sides, particularly soldiers recovering from wounds and their RAMC orderlies, were frequently organised and reported on in the local press. However, cricket matches were also organised with professional players who were usually over the eligible age limit for enlistment with the gaps in the teams filled by former players – now in uniform – home on leave. To avoid any misunderstandings the score cards always included the military rank of these players. Of particular note in this context was Gilbert Jessop, who had gained a commission as a captain in the 14th (Reserve) Battalion, Manchester Regiment. His national celebrity was used by the army to aid the recruitment process. [3]

Captain Gilbert Jessop, 14th (Reserve) Battalion, Manchester Regiment, addresses a recruitment rally in 1915. Courtesy Roger Gibbons

Raising money for the British Red Cross, Captain Jessop staged 'recruitment' cricket matches with local sides, the success of which was such that in the Midlands he leased the Fazeley Cricket Club ground from June until September 1915 and organised a series of matches. However Jessop would not see active service. On 15 June 1916 he was admitted to the 2nd Southern General Hospital suffering from ruptured muscles following a bout of trench digging. The doctor was confident that he would be 'out' for only 'one month' and he was sent to Bath for radiant heat treatment which involved total immersion in steam for up to thirty minutes. [4] However, during one session, and in the absence of the attendant, excessive heat was generated and an equipment malfunction occurred which prevented his escape from the contraption resulting in serious damage to his heart. As a consequence he was classified as 'permanently unfit' and never played cricket again.

First blood

Although cricketers and rugby players did not generally serve in the same units, the first cricketer to die was Lieutenant William Yalland (batsman) who was killed in action on 23 October 1914 with 1/Gloucesters (1st Division, 3 Brigade) near Ypres; his death came just six days before that of Walter Hancock, the first Gloucester rugby player to die serving in the same area with the same unit.

On 19 October 1914 the Germans launched an attack against the line near Langemarck which was defended by 1/Gloucesters, 2nd Battalion the Welsh Regiment (2/Welsh) and the 1st Battalion the Coldstream Guards (1/CG). On 23 October as the right of the 1/CG fell back, Lieutenant Yalland was ordered to re–take the abandoned trench using No. 15 Platoon, A Company, 1/Gloucesters. Captain Burns in command of D Company, was subsequently ordered to move forward to support Yalland's men but pinned down by heavy fire D Company was forced to take cover in derelict buildings. Under the cover of darkness the men moved up to find that Yalland's Platoon had taken the trench but at a heavy cost: 'outside the trench lay eight dead men, and also poor Lieut Yalland' who had been shot through the head but whose actions had 'saved the situation'. [5] Both William Yalland and Walter Hancock are commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial.

Lieutenant William Yalland, A Company, 1st Battalion the Gloucestershire Regiment, killed in action at Langemarck on 23 October 1914. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres. Courtesy the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum

Time and tide

For a long time it was widely believed that Yalland's death had been followed swiftly by that of the Reverend Archibald Fargus (batsman and fast bowler) who had served as a chaplain in the Royal Navy since 1907. In August 1914 he was posted to HMS *Monmouth*, a ship which, along with HMS *Good Hope* in January of the same year, had been assigned to the Third Fleet (Reserve Fleet) and mothballed at Chatham (Pembroke Reserve). With a desperate need for ships both the *Monmouth* and *Good Hope* were re–activated and crewed with inexperienced and partially–trained men of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and assigned to Rear Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock's 4th Cruiser Squadron in the Pacific Ocean. On 1 November, off the Chilean coast, German forces commanded by Vice Admiral Graf Maximilian von Spee engaged the British squadron. Both the *Monmouth* and *Good Hope* were sunk with the loss of 1,570 men and Fargus' obituary duly appeared in the 1914 edition of *Wisden*. Local newspaper articles continued to make references to his death into late 1916 but Archibald Fargus was in fact still alive having missed his train connection to Portsmouth. Since time and tide wait for no man, HMS *Monmouth* had sailed without him!

No doubt after a suitable reprimand, he was re–assigned to the cruiser HMS *Europa*. Archibald Fargus survived the war and died in 1963 although he did not merit a second obituary in the contemporary edition of *Wisden*.

Elcho in Egypt

As a large number of the cricketers were professional soldiers almost half of those who became casualties were killed in 1914 and 1915: a contrast to the Gloucester rugby players who were generally enlisted men and of whom almost half of the casualties died in 1916 alone. However, casualties from both clubs occurred in every year of the war. Captain Hugo Charteris, Lord Elcho, (batsman) was serving with A Squadron, Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry (RGHY) in Egypt at Katia (Qatia) when the British Army suffered another reverse against Turkish forces. In order to create a defensive shield to protect the strategically important Suez Canal the British 5th Mounted Brigade (OC, Brigadier General Edgar Askin Wiggin) fanned out across 20 miles of desert to the east of the canal. The environment was harsh but gradually the British engineers constructed a railway and water pipeline which expanded the army's operational base into Sinai and Palestine following a line of available oases. This route into Palestine, however, also facilitated the movement of Turkish forces in a westerly direction. In April 1916 A Squadron, RGHY and a machine–gun section were dug in at Katia with orders to hold its position in the event of a Turkish attack. On 23 April amidst thick fog the RGHY was subjected to a series of co–ordinated attacks and although Captain Michael Lloyd–Baker had deployed his troops to create the illusion of a bigger force this had resulted in defensive weaknesses. Subjected to shrapnel rounds, encirclement and involved hand–to–hand fighting the men of the RGHY held on, in accordance with their orders. Hugo Charteris was wounded twice and each time he insisted on returning to the firing line. At the end of the battle, which resulted in a 92 per cent casualty rate amongst the RGHY with only nine men escaping, Hugo Charteris was reported as missing. [6] It was subsequently confirmed by the Ottoman Red Crescent and the British Red Cross in June 1916 that he was a prisoner of war in Damascus. At the beginning of July, as the fog of war cleared, it was announced that he had in fact been killed at the Battle of Katia and he is commemorated on the Jerusalem Memorial to the Missing of Egypt and Palestine. The price paid by the RGHY became the subject of great controversy after the war as Brigadier General Wiggin maintained that he had ordered the retirement of the RGHY, an order that the Yeomanry insisted had never arrived.

Gallantry

The cricketers won a number of gallantry awards during the war but perhaps the most remarkable was that awarded to Captain Hugh Jones (batsman), 13th (Service) Battalion (Forest of Dean) (Pioneers), Gloucestershire Regiment at Thiepval on the night of 3/4 September 1916. With a number of his men wandering disorientated in no man's land – hindered by the gas helmets they were forced to wear owing to a German gas barrage – Captain Jones mounted the parapet with his torch in his hand. His men headed towards the moving light and the comparative safety of the trenches. Although the mounting of static lamps to guide men towards their own trenches was standard practice, the presence of a moving light could only mean one thing and attracted the attention of the German artillery, machine gunners and snipers; all missed. As his men appeared out of the gloom Captain Jones dragged them into the trenches until only two wounded men remained stranded in no man's land. Not content with his attempts so far, Jones ran over the open ground in the midst of a German bombardment to grab two stretchers and then lead a party out to bring in the wounded soldiers. For his actions that night Captain Jones was awarded the Military Cross. In June 1918 he suffered the last of his three woundings when he was hit in both legs by machine–gun bullets. Following hospital treatment he was transferred to 3rd Battalion (Depot), Gloucestershire Regiment at Sittingbourne and whilst recuperating he contracted influenza which rapidly developed into pneumonia. Despite being transferred to the Fort Pitt Military Hospital, Chatham for treatment, he died on 10 November 1918 and is buried at St Mary's Churchyard, Lydney, in a grave which bears a representation of the badge of the Gloucestershire Regiment.

Captain Hugh Jones, 13th (Service) Battalion (Forest of Dean) (Pioneers) the Gloucestershire Regiment who won the Military Cross on the night of 3/4 September 1916. He died of pneumonia on 10 November 1918 whilst recovering from gunshot wounds to both legs and is buried in St Mary's Churchyard, Lydney, Gloucestershire. Courtesy of Wycliffe College, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire

In total eighty–five Gloucestershire County cricketers fought in the Great War and eighteen (21 per cent) died. Twelve awards for gallantry in the field were awarded but, as befitted their officer status, the cricketers were also honoured after the war with decorations not only from the British government but also the governments of France, Belgium, Serbia and Russia. In contrast only one of the Gloucester rugby players, Captain Percy Stout DSO, OBE, Motor Machine Gun Corps, was honoured by a foreign government; he was awarded the Order of the Nile by the Sultan of Egypt for his services as an intelligence officer in Cairo.

Of the thirty–three players who had represented the Gloucestershire County Cricket Club in the 1914 season eight (24 per cent) had died but thirteen would return to resume their cricketing careers together with another six players who had not been available for the 1914 season due to their military commitments.

The research for this article was conducted as part of a volunteer project at the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, Gloucester and was published as a book, For Club, King and Country. The Story of Gloucestershire County Cricketers and the Gloucester Rugby Club Players as Soldiers of Gloucestershire in the Great War, 1914–1918 *by Martin and Teresa Davies in September 2014. It is available from the museum shop (www.soldiersofglos.com), with all proceeds going to support and maintain the museum (Registered Charity 1095077).*

References

(1) *Western Daily Press,* 29 August, 1914.

(2) Martin and Teresa Davies, 'They Played for Gloucester and Fought for Their Country', *Stand To!* 99, January 2014, pp.10–13.

(3) Gilbert Jessop was well–known nationally not only because of his nineteen matches for England but also for the fact that he was a renowned big hitter of the cricket ball whose reputation with the bat has, arguably, only been challenged by Ian Botham.

(4) Service Record of Captain Gilbert Jessop, 14/Manchesters, TNA WO/339/25674–C577072.

(5) The quotes referring to Lieutenant Yalland's actions and death are taken from letters home which were subsequently published in the *Western Daily Press,* 3 November, 1914 and *Gloucester Journal,* 26 December, 1914.

(6) The casualty statistics are taken from the exhibition on the Battle of Katia at the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, Gloucester (www.soldiersofglos.com).

Learning on the Ancre

2nd Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry 13 November 1916

by Stephen Barker

On 13 November 1916 at 5.45am, 2nd Battalion Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (2/OBLI) made an assault on the Redan Ridge, north of Beaumont Hamel, during the first day of the Battle of the Ancre. The battalion was attacking as part of 5 Brigade within the 2nd Division, a formation of V Corps in Hubert Gough's Fifth Army. On 28 November following, Brigadier General Kellett, temporarily in command of 2nd Division, compiled a thirteen point list of 'Lessons Learnt During Operations 13th/17th November 1916'.[1]

In this piece Stephen Barker sets out the context in which the Ancre battle was fought, briefly describing the assault by 2/OBLI, before examining the attack in the light of Kellett's 'lessons' and what current scholarship and research have to say about what the BEF was learning during the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

Motivations

For the duration of the 15 September 1916 offensive, Sir Hubert Gough's Reserve Army had intended to sweep north to cover the Fourth Army flank as it advanced on the line Arras–Cambrai. In spite of the operations becoming bogged down during October, the concept of an advance by Gough had not entirely been abandoned (Reserve Army was renamed Fifth Army on 1 November). [2] The rainfall during the first three weeks of October, however, forced several postponements of any offensive movement by Fifth Army.

Why did Sir Douglas Haig wish to continue the Somme battle into October and November, with increasingly adverse weather conditions and many units in need of rest? According to Brigadier General John Charteris, Haig's Chief of Intelligence, German morale was low, which encouraged Haig's own fundamental belief that the general who held on longest in a battle would ultimately win. Haig was also determined not to give the enemy a moment's peace, looking to ensure that they were unable to build further defensive lines on the Somme.[3] In addition, the Commander–in–Chief (C–in–C) believed that what had now become 'attritional warfare' was working in the allies' favour in Picardy, grinding down the German forces, while conversely the quality and performance of his own troops was improving.[4] There were other reasons for prolonging the battle: Haig was under pressure from critics in England, as he was from the French High Command turning the tide in their favour at Verdun.[5] The Field Marshal was also aware that on 15 November 1916 an inter–Allied military conference was scheduled at Chantilly and that a British success would be well received by their allies, not only the French, but also the hard pressed Russians and Rumanians. [6] Not all these motivations to continue the fight were well founded, but were fundamental in the decision to continue the Somme battle.

In early November however, there was further cause to call a halt to any further offensives. The weather was so poor that a proposed attack on Le Transloy by Fourth Army inspired a 'mutiny' on 5 November headed by Lord Cavan (XIV Corps) and supported by General Rawlinson (Fourth Army). Cavan wrote:

> '*No one who has not visited the front trenches can really know the state of exhaustion to which the men are reduced. The conditions are far worse than in the first battle of Ypres, all my general officers and staff officers agree that they are the worse they have seen, owing to the enormous distance of the carry of all munitions – such as food, water and ammunition.'* [7]

By 8 November, Haig had instructed Rawlinson to postpone any large–scale offensives by Fourth Army indefinitely, believing that the state of the ground and the demands of training requirements made them unfeasible. Yet Haig allowed Gough's Fifth Army to continue planning an assault astride the Ancre. There were several reasons for this: Firstly, Gough himself was keen and confident, persuading Haig with the prospect of relative success. Secondly, a positive outcome immediately prior to the Chantilly Conference would help

The Somme campaign 1916. 2/OBLI attacked on the Redan Ridge between Serre and Beaumont Hamel – towards the top left of the map – on 13 November 1916. Courtesy of Fulwood Barracks

Conditions in the vicinity of the River Ancre in November 1916. Author's Collection

2/OBLI 'somewhere in France'. Courtesy of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

bolster the C–in–C's flagging reputation. As Haig wrote on 12 November:

> *'The British position will doubtless be much stronger (as memories are short) if I could appear there (Chantilly) on top of the capture of Beaumont Hamel for instance and the capture of 3,000 prisoners.'*[8]

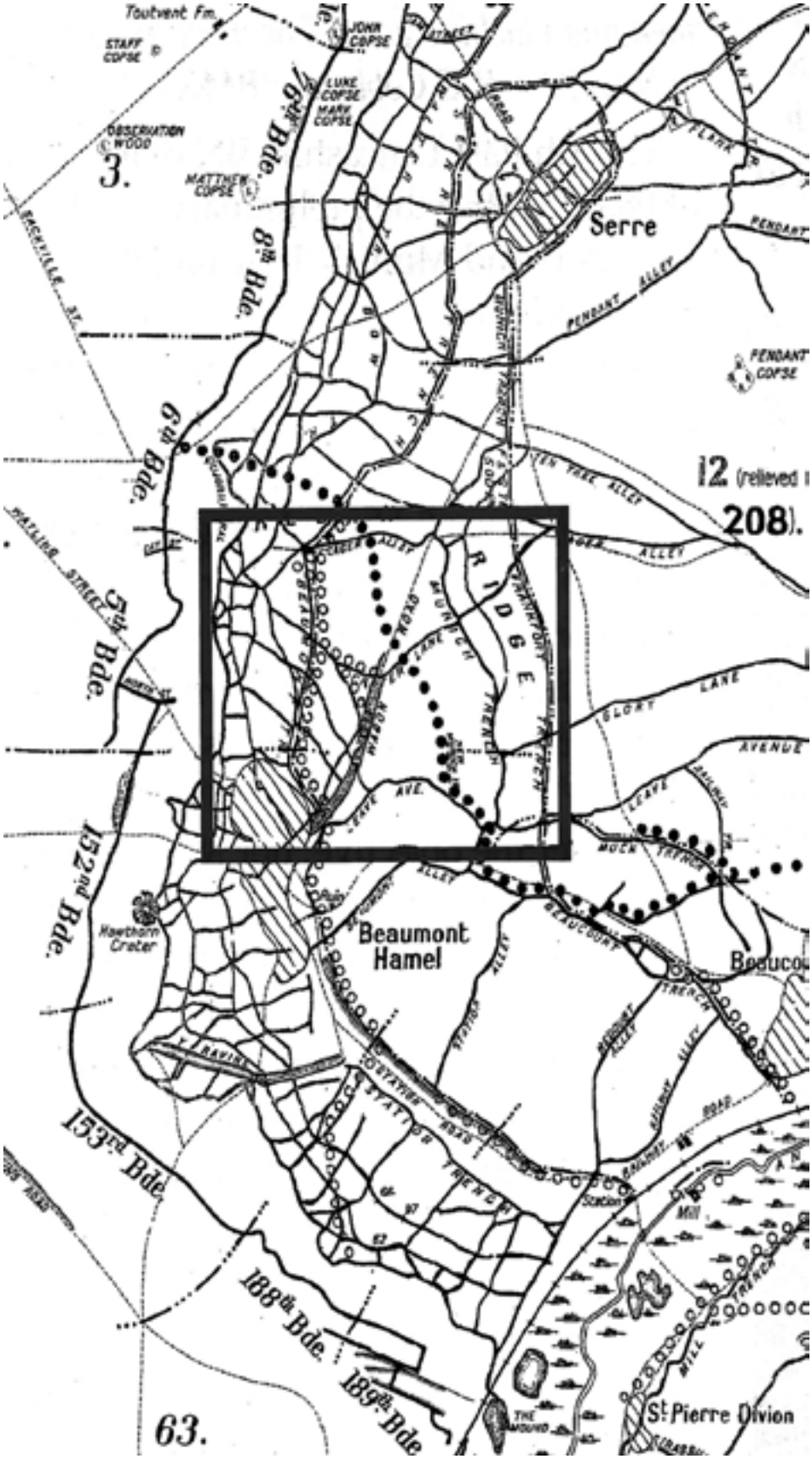
Finally, it was perceived that there was a favourable tactical opening in the Ancre sector which might still be exploited even this late in the campaigning season. Taken together, the motivations for continuing the Somme offensive on 13 November can be regarded as both political and personal, not least of which was Gough's desire for a success which had so long escaped him.[9] It says something of the nervousness at GHQ however, that during the morning of 12 November Haig's Chief of Staff, General Kiggell, visited Gough. Kiggell made it clear to the latter that although the decision to attack was Gough's own, it should only be carried out if there was a good chance of success. Later that afternoon, Haig felt the need to visit Gough in person, with the same message: that the capture of Beaumont Hamel would be useful to him, while adding that *'nothing is so costly as failure'*.[10]

The position of the Redan Ridge north of Beaumont Hamel. Courtesy of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

The ground

From 140m above the surrounding terrain, excellent views are to be had from the Redan Ridge to the north of Beaumont Hamel. The highest part of the plateau runs about 500 yards wide along its east–west axis and then turns abruptly south. Both 'Munich' and 'Frankfurt Trenches' followed the turn of the ridge on this north–south line from their junction with 'Lager Alley' down to the Beaumont–Beaucourt Road over a distance of approximately 1,400 yards. Both of these trench systems, running roughly parallel, some 250 yards apart, had been heavily fortified by the Germans – they were the key to holding the high ground and were the main objectives for the 2nd Division including 2/OBLI on 13 November.

The 2nd Division Operation Orders for the assault on 13 November were issued in their original form on 22 October with the final objectives for V Corps being given as the Serre position, 'Puiseux Trench' and the 'Beauregard Dovecote'. However, in the light of the poor weather, the state of the ground and the pervading strategic and political positions, the final order issued to 2nd Division was for the capture of the rather more limited Yellow Line – ie 'Frankfurt Trench'.[11] The jumping off position for 5 Brigade was approximately 250 yards away from the German front line. 'Beaumont Trench', designated the Green Line, lay a little further back in the defences, with approximately 1,400 yards of ground to cover to reach Frankfurt Trench. This terrain covers



The area of the Redan Ridge attacked by 2/OBLI in 13 November 1916. Courtesy of Fulwood Barracks

a relatively flat area of ground today, although in November 1916 the poor conditions cannot be exaggerated. Some veterans felt them to be worse than those at Passchendaele the following year. Haig himself knew that the ground was knee–deep in mud. On 31 October he wrote:

> *'In the afternoon I rode to HQ, Fifth Army at Toutencourt. I wanted definite information as to the state of the front–line trenches and whether the winter leather waistcoats had yet been issued, also whether an extra blanket per man had been sent up. Malcolm* [Gough's Chief of Staff] *assured me that everything possible was being done for the men, but the mud in front is quite terrible'.*(12)

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Crosse who commanded 2/OBLI on 13 November 1916. Courtesy of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

The assault

The details of 2/OBLI's attack are not disputed and have been well recorded in several sources, the most comprehensive being Simon Harris' excellent 2012 publication.(13) 5 Brigade was to attack on the right of the 2nd Division's front adjacent to the boundary with the 51st Division at Beaumont Hamel. On 5 Brigade's left flank was 6 Brigade, which was to assault the notorious 'Quadrilateral'.

The 2nd Highland Light Infantry (2/HLI) led the attack on the right, with 24th Royal Fusiliers (24/RF) on the left. The 17th Royal Fusiliers (17/RF) and 2/OBLI held the same positions respectively in the second line. As the British trenches were deep in mud, the two leading battalions, which were to take the first objective – 'Beaumont Trench' (the Green Line), formed up in the open.(14) 2/OBLI and 17/RF were to follow in support and ultimately to pass through them to the final objective Frankfurt Trench (Yellow Line).(15)

At zero hour, 5.45am, following a creeping barrage, 2/HLI and 24/RF, reached Beaumont Trench at the allotted time, though having suffered considerable loss from snipers and machine–gun fire. On the left of the attack, 24/RF with the support of 2/OBLI were obliged to block the trenches running north, repelling intermittent German bombing raids from that direction owing to the difficulties of 6 Brigade in front of the Quadrilateral.(16) Once the Beaumont Trench position had been consolidated by elements of all 5 Brigade units, about 120 of the 2/OBLI and 17/RF pushed on towards Frankfurt Trench. In doing so, the leading waves lost direction in the darkness and mist, wheeling northward into a communication trench, Lager Alley, facing at a right angle to their correct line of advance!(17) Once the error was discovered, the advance to Frankfurt Trench continued in the face of stiff resistance by the Germans of I Battalion, 23 Regiment. The mixed companies of 2/OBLI reached the objective and found themselves isolated and in touch with no other British units on the flank, though in fact elements of

17/RF had also entered Frankfurt Trench further south. The battalion withdrew into Beaumont Trench via 'Wagon Road', driven back by two companies of the German II Battalion, 23rd Regiment. Sometimes the 2/OBLI men were surrounded, but with some difficulty – and great courage – managed to extricate themselves. By mid–morning, the battalion had consolidated the junction of Beaumont Trench and Lager Alley. In the days that followed it supported other assaults and casualty evacuation in the sector. Its casualties on 13 November were 13 officers and 235 other ranks killed, wounded or missing.

Kellett's 'lessons'

The origins of the widely used term 'learning curve' to describe the changes in the British Army from its small professional origins in 1914 to the war winning force of 1918 may have originated with Professor Peter Simkins, then of the Imperial War Museum, in the mid 1980s.[18] Although many historians now accept the concept in general, many have criticised the term for implying that the British Army's development was smooth and always progressive. In his most recent book, Simkins has apparently acknowledged this criticism referring to the army's education as a 'learning process' and 're–skilling'[19]

Amongst the critics of the Learning Curve, Professor Bill Philpott best sums up the complexities of analysing the BEF during 1914–18:

> '*The more that the British Army's performance on the Western Front is studied, the more obvious it becomes that 'learning' is only one facet of the process of transformation, while 'curve' implies far too steady a parabola for what was in reality a more up–and–down, dynamic process of adjustment to new technologies, more sophisticated and flexible tactics, novel operational doctrines, complex logistics and fundamental change in the systems of command, control, communications and intelligence. Moreover, this dynamic encompassed competition with the enemy and symbiosis with an ally. Even after three decades of study, our understanding of the nature and process of the transformation of warfare between 1914 and 1918, and the British Army's place therein, remains incomplete.'*[20]

In addition, civilian leadership at home and the relationships between, and personalities of, those in command – as Prior and Wilson have pointed out recently – might be added to the list of factors affecting this 'process of transformation'.[21]

What follows is a brief examination of the 2/OBLI attack on 13 November 1916 in the light of Brigadier General Kellett*'s Lessons,* part of a wide ranging evaluation after the battle, instigated by V Corps. Each of Kellett's points is taken in turn – quoted directly in italics – and links made where *directly* relevant to the performance of the battalion. Connections are also made where events *indirectly* affected the battalion – for example, where a neighbouring unit on the flank was held up. The *Lessons* have been quoted verbatim and mostly in their entirety, though not all Kellett's points relate to 2/OBLI's actions that day and are therefore left unremarked.

'2nd Division Lessons Learnt During the Fighting – November 13–17 1916 [22]

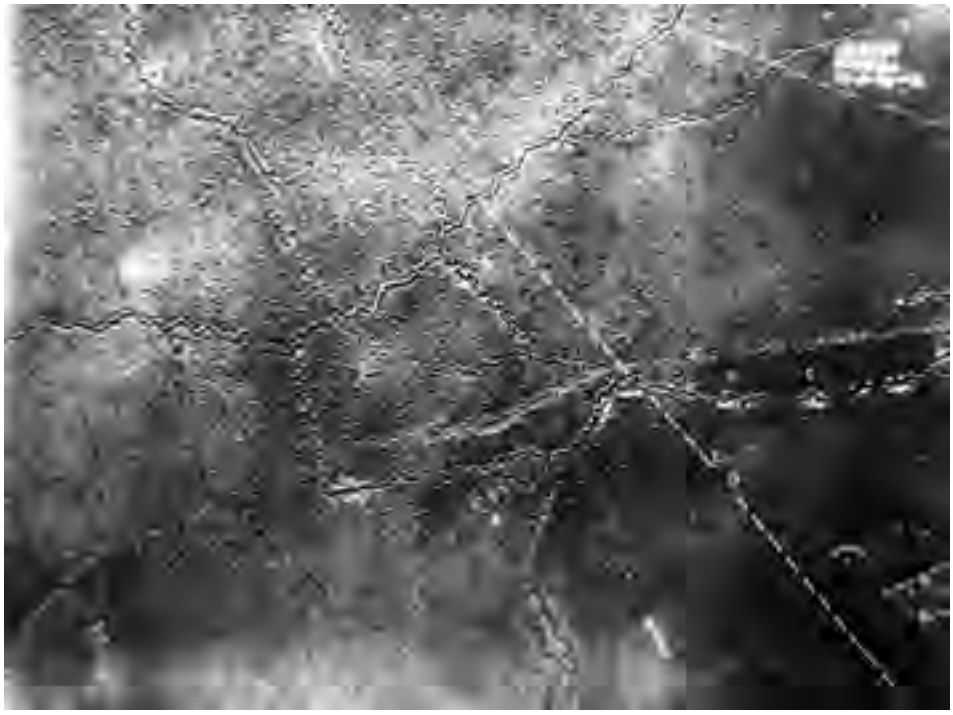
I think that the lessons we learnt in the earlier fighting on the Somme have been borne out in the recent operations.

1. *<u>The difficulty of keeping direction especially in darkness or foggy weather.</u> All officers and NCOs carried compasses, but in the heat of an engagement and in a maze of trenches this was not sufficient. It was suggested that if men keep closer together (ie almost shoulder to shoulder) it would be easier to keep direction. This has the disadvantage of increasing casualties if the hostile barrage comes down at once, but in the case of those operations where, owing to the state of the trenches, men had to be formed up in the open, the danger would not be greatly increased. This difficulty did not arise in the assault against the first German line, but against the succeeding lines or systems. I think that our attacks should be so timed as to allow the succeeding objectives to be reached in broad daylight in order that the landmarks which have been previously explained can be recognised. Taping a line parallel to the objective is imperative as is also reconnaissance of the ground.'*

The 2/OBLI war diary made clear that the thick mist (and darkness) ensured that keeping direction was very difficult throughout the morning.[23] Poor visibility had been anticipated however, and all officers given orders that if the objectives were invisible during the assault, then compasses were to be relied upon. Though as one of the 2nd Division brigadiers pointed out later*: '...marching by compass bearing as a peace manoeuvre is a very different thing to doing so under fire.'* [24] In spite of the fact that no taping of a line parallel to the objective had been carried out by 5 Brigade, the initial advance by compass bearing to Beaumont Trench was carried out in exemplary fashion.

The real problems for 2/OBLI began when subsequently jumping off from Beaumont Trench in the direction of Frankfurt Trench at 7.30am. By this time visibility was down to 30 yards, there were few landmarks by which to orientate and in the heat of battle in a maze of trenches, compasses were of little value.[25] Kellett's point of '*allowing subsequent attacks to take place in broad daylight'* is particularly relevant here – those landmarks previously explained to units might then be recognised in the heat of battle. Lieutenant General Jacob (II Corps) recommended attacking in the afternoon for this reason and that in addition there was a surprise element given to the assaults. Six afternoon attacks in his Corps had succeeded, whereas two that had begun at dawn had failed during the Ancre battle.[26] 2/OBLI's subsequent assault at right angles to the correct line of advance was not surprising therefore given the circumstances. It took exemplary discipline, leadership and courage to push on to the objective thereafter. As Griffiths points out however, *'...there was no substitute for careful preparation'* and as such the attack on Frankfurt Trench had some of the features in microcosm, of many such assaults on the Somme.[27] Having lost time in consolidating Beaumont Trench, becoming disorientated in the fog and with the creeping barrage out of reach, 2/OBLI would have made a more effective assault on Frankfurt

Oxford students approaching Redan Ridge Cemetery No.2 recently. This image illustrates how exposed the landscape is. Courtesy of Hanna Smyth



Aerial photograph of the Munich–Frankfurt Trench system on 17 November 1916. Courtesy of the Tank Museum, Bovington (TM 5086D5)

Trench the following day, when other 2nd Division reinforcements were required to begin to restart the process, again with inadequate preparation. Giving some time for adequate groundwork prior to an assault was to be an effective lesson to learn.

2. *'The necessity of the infantry keeping close up to the artillery barrage. This had been very carefully practised and the men thoroughly realised its importance. The result was that until the men became exhausted and the barrage got away from them casualties were very small.'*

Following the almost complete failure of the infantry assault north of Fricourt on 1 July 1916, the importance of neutralising enemy defences rather than destroying them was emphasised by GHQ. The requirement for a 'creeping barrage'– a wall of exploding shells behind which the infantry advanced and which neutralised enemy machine gunners and snipers – was perhaps *the* most significant lesson to be learned at the Somme.[28] The assault by 5 Brigade on 13 November behind a creeping barrage was carried out very effectively at first – 24/RF and 2/HLI in the front line, followed by 2/OBLI in the second, pursuing the barrage within 20 yards and walking firstly into the German front line and then Beaumont Trench with a number of casualties. Two Hundred and seven prisoners were captured and a quantity of equipment.[29] This success was aided by 2/HLI destroying uncut wire the night before the assault using Bangalore Torpedoes.[30] Prior and Wilson also ascribe the assault's initial success to: *'...the firmer going* [than on 6 Brigade's front] *and the lighter mist so that the men could actually see the barrage and follow close behind it'*.[31]

Variations in atmospheric conditions, the wearing out of artillery pieces' rifling, poor visibility, an overzealous pursuit and the poor quality of some shells meant that 'friendly fire' was inevitable when following the barrage. Some 2/OBLI casualties were so caused – Captain Ralph Kite was mortally wounded on 13 November for example.[32] The main reason for 'friendly fire' in this instance was poor communication. At the opening of the attack, the main barrage came down on the German front line and then crept forward at a rate of 100 yards every five minutes. However, it had been decided that a quarter of the 18–pounders would fire fifty yards short into no man's land to protect the infantry advance. According to an intelligence report written by a member of the Royal Field Artillery (RFA) on 14 November this had grave consequences:

> *'Barrage: – Most of the infantry officers were pleased with our barrage. Some said that its irregularity has caused us no casualties and all stated that they were waiting in front of the enemy front line at ZERO TIME and were in consequence caught by the 25% of our 18 pounders which were firing short of the enemy line. The barrage advanced too rapidly for the infantry who were held up by the mud which was, in places, quite impassable. The majority of our casualties were caused by our own RA. The infantry had not been told that 25% of our guns would barrage 50 yards short of enemy front line.'*[33]

This confirms also that the main assault on Frankfurt Trench by 2/OBLI was not supported by a creeping barrage, nor was the battalion able to communicate with the artillery to make any adjustment to it. Poor communication between the guns and the troops actually making the attack was the main limiting factor with regard to a creeping barrage at this stage of the war.[34] The attack on the main objective was delivered by tiring troops therefore, and went in unprotected. More generally, German machine guns were being sited back beyond the initial creeping barrage into deeper positions – a precursor to defence in depth tactics practised later in the war, most notably at Passchendaele.[35]

3. *'The necessity for reorganisation. The difficulty of doing this was increased by the heavy state of the ground, the mist and the maze of trenches. It was found that a battalion was not collected together for further action on the*

day it had delivered its first assault. This required determined action by all commanders down to section commanders and I am giving this matter very careful attention during the period of training.'

Although in support of the first wave and ordered to take Frankfurt Trench at 7.30am, 2/OBLI inevitably reinforced the consolidation of the initial objective – Beaumont Trench – with the rest of the 5 Brigade battalions. It was a testament to the battalion's leadership that this was carried out, the false move into Lager Alley then corrected, the advance to Frankfurt Trench initiated and the fighting withdrawal carried out. As Griffith makes clear: '*The process of consolidating one line before sending the next wave from it was perhaps the most difficult trick of all in maintaining the momentum of an offensive.'*[36]

As early as May 1916, Fourth Army's *Tactical Notes* laid particular emphasis on practising the tricky operation of passing one battalion through another.[37] Such an assault demanded initiative be shown particularly by junior officers and NCOs – the same *Tactical Notes* complaining that *'...troops had become too accustomed to deliberate action based on precise and detailed orders'*.[38] 2/OBLI's performance amply demonstrated great initiative, flexibility and enterprise on 13 November. Such qualities were at the heart of manual SS 143 – *Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action 1917* – which synthesised the lessons from the Somme fighting during the winter of 1916–17.

'Initiative: – The matter of control by even Company leaders on the battlefield is now so difficult that the smaller formations, ie, platoon and section commanders must be trained to take necessary action on their own initiative, without waiting for orders'.[39]

In order to aid consolidation of captured trenches, it was widespread practice to divide attacking waves into different functions, one of which was the 'mopping up' platoon, whose role was to secure the ground won. The impact of not doing so affected 2/OBLI when a party of *'...40 Germans remained 'unmopped up' for nearly 48 hours in the German Front Line '...* [causing] *considerable inconvenience and some casualties.'* [40] These Germans were at the junction of the 5 and 6 Brigade boundary and were one reason why the battalion was forced to support the holding of the intersection of Beaumont Trench, Serre Trench and Lager Alley to prevent attacks on the brigade flank from the north.

4. *Rifles became clogged with dirt and mud and the men's hands became so muddy that the breech mechanisms failed and extractors became broken. Most units had covers ... but I am seriously considering whether it will not be better in muddy weather to make the men carry their rifle covers on, and only take them off when they arrive at the first objective allotted to them. Up to this moment the bayonet usually suffices.*

It is worth emphasising how wretched the prevailing conditions on 13 November 1916 were. The British trenches were so deep in mud that the leading formations of 5 Brigade formed up in the open in no man's land just short of the German wire.[41] On 6 Brigade's front, where the mud was deeper, men sank up to their thighs. Following a creeping barrage in these conditions became almost impossible. Where rifles were inoperable, grenades rather than bayonets tended to be resorted to and attacks tended to grind down into stationary grenade fights which only benefited the defenders.[42]

5. *'The importance of buried cable lines.*

6. *The necessity of having special parties left back well in the rear to deal with the collection and evacuation of wounded in the forward areas.*

7. *The necessity for allowing plenty of time for getting orders to the lower formations if a fresh operation is ordered.'*

It is worth underlining here that, as already noted, a number of 2/OBLI casualties were caused by 'friendly fire' from 18–pounders firing into no man's land. This oversight may have resulted from the complexity of the artillery revisions of the original orders for the assault which, as late as 11 November 1916, make no mention of the protective firing into no man's land. At any rate, the infantry were unaware of this change.

8. *'The difficulty in controlling the 'non–starters' when an attack takes place in the darkness or mist. With men whose period of training is necessarily short, and habits of discipline not sufficiently inculcated, there is no doubt a great temptation for them under heavy fire to drop into shell holes or trenches instead of going forward and thereby escape observation. As mentioned in para. 1, the closer the men are together the less chance will there be of shirking.'*

German trenches at Beaumont Hamel, November 1916. Author's Collection

Officers and sergeants of 'D' Company 2/OBLI in early 1917. Courtesy of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

There is no evidence or suggestion of 2/OBLI soldiers going to ground prematurely on 13 November. However, as the battalion's war diary makes clear there was use of the bomb (grenade) in the attack:

> *'There was considerable bombing of German dugouts West of the GREEN LINE (Beaumont Trench), and altogether, one soldier being seen by an officer to throw 21 bombs in succession down the steps of a German 'Regimental Command Post' in MUNICH TRENCH, East of the GREEN LINE.'*[43]

As early as July 1916, it was made clear to all ranks that the rifle and bayonet were the main weapons for the offensive. This reaction against the ascendancy of the grenade in training during 1915 came about from the perception that bombers were more interested in seeking cover than capturing the enemy's trench – grenade fights resulting only in '*...stationary conflict, no serious effort being made to take any ground'* [44] This was echoed by Watson in 1920: '*When attacking troops are reduced to bombing down a trench, the attack is as good as over.* '[45] Charles Carrington agreed, stating that as soon as the enemy started to return grenades an attack bogged down.[46] Grenades were suited for consolidating captured trenches, less effective for capturing them in the first place.

9. *'The necessity of parties of men who have reached an objective remaining there even if they are isolated, but it is difficult to arrange for the artillery barrage when isolated parties are in advanced positions. In this connection an intelligence party found by my Divisional artillery proved of great value.'*

Kellett seemed to be in two minds, believing that to secure a foothold in an objective gave an opportunity to reinforce, rather than surrender gains to the enemy and begin the process again. Conversely, while it is clear that the divisional artillery 'intelligence party' did good work in gathering the exact positions of friendly troops, they were not able to do so in extremis and certainly not in distant Frankfurt Trench in the face of an enemy counter attack. Isolated units tended to be surrounded and eliminated; indeed 2/OBLI men only just escaped the net and fought with great skill and courage to extricate themselves, with no further possibility of reinforcement.[47] The most effective 'bite and hold' assaults in 1917 required troops to take limited objectives which might be supported continually by artillery and reinforcements. Troops were specifically ordered not to attempt a breakthrough beyond the objective – even if the opportunity arose – too often this led to isolated parties in advanced positions being surrounded and suffering excessive casualties for no gain.

10. *'The importance of flank protection.'*

5 Brigade flanks were 'in the air' for most of the battle. The troops of 2/OBLI were delayed in their move to Frankfurt Trench by the need to block trenches running north as 6 Brigade was in difficulty on the left.[48] As we have seen, a party of Germans remained in their front line at the junction of 5 and 6 Brigades. On the other flank, 51st Division could not take Beaumont Hamel until the afternoon. The 'head' of 5 Brigade attracted fire and the possibility of a counter attack from either flank as a result. The 2nd Division troops were trained in flank protection and executed their preparations effectively, yet such action naturally delayed the advance on the objective. No matter the quality of training, leadership and morale of the attackers, if an attack went in on a narrow frontage, with enemy troops on either flank remaining unsuppressed by artillery, little of use could be achieved.

11. *'The moral effects of the tanks.*

12. *The use of our flares by the Germans.*

13. *Some system by which infantry can communicate with artillery by means of coloured lights is most important in cases where it is required to ask for the range to be lengthened to let the infantry advance or to ask for the artillery barrage to be put down or increased in intensity.'*

Evaluatory

Kellett's *Lessons* are a good example of the evaluatory papers being produced by the BEF in the winter of 1916–17 and which can usually be found amongst the *Intelligence Summaries* associated with divisional or higher level war diaries at the National Archives. These documents provide some of the raw materials by which the BEF transformed itself into a war–winning force in the summer of 1918. Yet this process was uneven, with important lessons often negated by strategic and political imperatives and sometimes the wrong lessons being learned – Kellett's own view that men bunch together to aid orientation or isolated units hold onto inaccessible, advanced positions were rightly ignored in the long term. Changes in German practice also cancelled out the BEF's own developments on occasions – an example being the withdrawal of machine gun teams to deeper positions to avoid the creeping barrage – in anticipation of Von Lossberg's 'elastic defence in depth' created during the winter of 1916–17.[49]

2/OBLI performed admirably on 13 November 1916, carrying out five distinct manoeuvres: consolidating Beaumont Trench; securing the brigade flank; advancing in error

A few of the thousands of German prisoners captured, mainly by 51st and 63rd Divisions, around Beaumont Hamel. Courtesy of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

to Lager Alley; assaulting Frankfurt Trench and conducting a fighting retreat. Such actions suggest leadership, morale and training of a high standard and deserving of attention equal to their more celebrated action against exhausted and demoralised Prussian Guards at Nonne Bosschen in November 1914. Yet, in spite of the gains made by the 51st and 63rd Divisions around Beaumont Hamel, 2nd Division had failed to secure its objectives on the Redan Ridge. The thick mud, poor visibility, an effective defensive system and other factors undoubtedly played a part. At the heart of this failure was the fact that if defending enemy forces were not neutralised, then little could be achieved, irrespective of the preparation, training and morale of the attacking infantry. In addition, 2/OBLI's involvement in consolidating Beaumont Trench and reinforcing the brigade flank meant that it lost the creeping barrage, attacking unsupported, when its primary objective had been the seizure of Frankfurt Trench.

Artillery was the key player in suppressing enemy machine guns, snipers and batteries, having three roles to play in the initial bombardment to ensure that infantry could get forward: wire cutting; destroying the German trench system and counter battery fire, in addition to laying 'creeping barrages' during the offensive itself.[50] Effective suppression of the enemy was regularly achieved in 1918, depending upon a sufficiency of guns allotted to the front to be attacked, the overwhelming weight of the bombardment, an appropriate distribution of fire to the different roles required and efficient registration of targets. The preliminary bombardment beginning on 11 November 1916 for the Ancre assault however, was truncated, hampered by poor weather, of insufficient weight and fired from increasingly worn barrels with defective ammunition into soft ground which absorbed any impact. 5 Brigade made good progress initially behind the 'creeping barrage', but encountered determined resistance from sometimes exhausted German defenders who had nevertheless not been neutralised. These were indeed bitter lessons to learn.

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‘Smokes for the Blokes’
Insights into the Tobacco Trade’s Perspective on the Early Years of the Great War

by Henry Daniels

Smoking was almost universal amongst the men of all combatant nations during the Great War and of all the methods used it was the cigarette – the ‘fag’ – which was ubiquitous; captured on film held firmly between the fingers or drooping from the mouths of lowly privates and high ranking staff officers alike. In this article Henry Daniels shows how the British tobacco industry seized upon the mood and the events of the early years of the Great War, not only to raise its profile and boost its sales, but also to make a vitally important contribution to the national war effort. Using, as principal sources, contemporary issues of the two trade journals Tobacco Trade Review (TTR) *and* Tobacco (TB)*, he looks at the associative link the industry sought to forge between patriotism and smoking; the pressing need for tobacco among servicemen, as represented in the journals; how smoking was related to vitality, health and recovery from wounds; supply and shipment and contemporary branding and packaging. His focus is on the period between August 1914 and December 1915 – the seventeen months of Sir John French’s command – during which the Old Army and its traditions were practically annihilated and after which, under Sir Douglas Haig’s command and with the build–up of New Army volunteers and conscripts, the war on the Western Front entered a new phase, as did the supply of tobacco – a commodity which – for the men at the front – was deemed almost as vital as ample supplies of ‘bully beef’, bombs and bullets.*

The Imperial Tobacco Company of Great Britain and Ireland (ITC) was founded in response to James ‘Buck’ Duke’s attempt to take over the British tobacco industry in 1901. It comprised the thirteen biggest among the 500–odd British manufacturers of the day, dominated by the giant W D & H O Wills of Bristol. [1] Among the effects of the ensuing ‘Tobacco War’ between ITC and the American Tobacco Company (ATC) were a huge increase in advertising, greater attention to branding and package design and the inclusion as stiffeners in paper packets of colourful, collectable cards. After an agreement was reached in September 1902, the Liverpool manufacturer Ogden’s, which ATC had bought as a first step towards a general takeover, was sold to ITC, the Americans and the British promised to stay out of each other’s domestic market, while the rest of the world was to be covered by the newly created company British American Tobacco (BAT).

There was widespread Victorian and Edwardian concern about the question of racial degeneration, brought to the fore by the poor physical condition of so many working class would–be recruits who were rejected as unfit for service during the second South African War of 1899–1902. This worrying revelation, which, ironically, came to a head at the same time as the Haldane–Esher army reforms of 1906–8, was directly and unhesitatingly linked to smoking by such influential authors as Baden–Powell:

> A SCOUT does not smoke. […] He knows that when a lad smokes before he is fully grown up it is almost sure to make his heart feeble. […] Any scout knows that smoking spoils his eyesight, and also his sense of smell, which is of greatest importance to him for scouting on active service. [2]

Nonetheless, the cheap cigarette, retailing at 1d for a paper packet of five, had become, by the eve of the Great War, a staple in the lives of the majority of working class and middle class men, young and old, and of an increasing number of women. Its popularity had gradually overtaken that of chewing tobacco and snuff, as well as the contemplative pleasures of the expensive cigar, the clay pipe and the briar. Advertising and branding saw to it that, in the mind of the consumers in the new mass market, smoking was constantly and closely associated with notions of vigour, sport, sexual attractiveness and the military and naval glories of the Empire. The cheap, endlessly replaceable, throw–away cigarette required no paraphernalia beyond a box of matches, was in plentiful supply, could be shared with companions and, perhaps most importantly, was well suited to the fast new pace of modern, urban life, a concomitant, as well as an antidote to, stress and fatigue. [3]

‘Smoke more, rather than less

The 1 September 1914 issue of TB (p.40) carries an article entitled ‘How Smoking Helps.’ The following extracts are revealing:

> Smoking used to be a luxury merely, now it is a duty, for every 1s. paid for tobacco at 4d. per oz. considerably over half, or about 8d., represents tax. No one wants to avoid paying tax at a moment of national crisis. Therefore smokers should smoke more rather than less.

Readers are reminded that it has been the privilege of smokers to provide a steady current of revenue, the urgency of which

> ‘… should be fully realised by tobacconists and smokers, but those who are making, or who contemplate making, presents to the mobilised home army should bear the fact in mind that tobacco will not only be a comfort to the men, but its provision will be a patriotic action, because it helps strengthen the finances of the country.’

Addressed to the trade, the twofold message is clear: retailers should instil into their customers the idea that tobacco is the best comfort for the fighting men, while increasing their own consumption is the duty of all patriots–and who would not wish to appear patriotic in these times of need?

On the same page is printed a letter from Messrs. J Millhoff and Co., Ltd., manufacturers of *De Reszke* cigarettes, reproducing one received from Buckingham Palace expressing the Prince of Wales’ appreciation of their generous donation of £105 towards the National Relief Fund. It goes on to stress the Russian origin (mistaken by some for German) of their founder and the all–British ownership of shares in the company. This well–known middle and upper class brand is thus associated with Royalty, the National Relief Fund and the alliance with Russia: all good advertising for the company.

The 1 October 1914 issue of TB (p.43), features a photograph of the shop–window display of tobacconist C H Jorden, Ltd. of Clapham Junction, crammed with

> ‘… goods of all–British manufacture, with the exception of Russian and French cigarettes, which are to be seen either side of General Sir John French’. [The] flag is kept fluttering by means of [an] electric fan… Note circular tickets bearing the words ‘British manufacture.’ ‘Army Mixture’ and ‘Navy Mixture’ are displayed with soldiers and sailors on same. ‘General’ briars (French manufacture), ‘Britannia’ cigarettes, and ‘All–British’ tobacco are included.’

There is no editorial comment on this most patriotic of window–displays, though one might interpret its publication as a sign of approval and an encouragement to other retailers to ensure that their customers come to make a strong association between smoking and the war effort. The same issue (p.45) mentions the generosity of manufacturers Messrs B Muratti, Sons and Co. who

> ‘…have arranged to send a gratuitous supply of cigarettes to the front for the use of the British soldiers who are so valiantly fighting for their country’s cause. They are forwarding 100,000 cigarettes, comprising two of their well–known brands, for the soldiers, and 20,000 of their choicest brand for the officers.’ [4]

It is interesting to see that this apparently democratic gesture earns praise for the company within the trade, captures the goodwill of the

men at the front, whose varying tastes can all be catered for, now and in the future, taking care to uphold the same traditional class distinctions as the army was anxious to maintain between soldiers and officers.

In the following month's 1 November 1914 issue of TB (p.v), we are again reminded of class differences by the report of a Glasgow tobacconist's unsuccessful attempt to encourage customers to buy two packets of cigarettes at a time, one for themselves and one to put into a sort of pillar–box on the counter, destined for the boys at the front. It was pointed out to him that since his shop was in a poor neighbourhood, this kind of generosity was too much for his customers and that he would do better to punch six little holes in the top of the box. From that day onwards

> '…every customer who bought cigarettes popped one through a hole for the fun of the thing, so that the box, which used to stand empty, has to be cleared twice a day now.'

Apart from the obvious, if unintended, sexual imagery, popping a cigarette in a hole is not unlike the (by this time outdated) action of slotting a round into the breech of a rifle, which may have appealed to customers who unconsciously felt it to be a warlike gesture. Sadly for the retailer, his trick, though providing cigarettes for the troops, did not directly increase his sales. Nonetheless, it allowed him to share a patriotic moment with his customers: all good for trade, no doubt.

After almost one year of war, the message to smokers is still the same: issue N° 572 of TTR, of 1 August 1915 carries a front–page article entitled 'A Plea for the Pipe in Wartime', quoting a circular of the parliamentary War Savings Committee: 'Save, especially in all things which have to be got from abroad, that is to say food and drink of all kinds, tobacco, &c.', which it follows with a reminder that since tobacco duties, amounting, for example, to 3s. 8d (= 67 per cent) for every pound of tobacco retailing at 6s per lb to 'the artisan class', currently yield c. £19,000,000 annually to the national revenue. The comment is: '…we fail to see the wisdom of preaching economy in regard to tobacco', concluding that '… any impartial person would acknowledge that there is much to be said in favour of the advice "Smoke as usual".'

'Send us cigarettes and more cigarettes'

Tobacco was the commodity reputedly most often requested in their letters home by men serving overseas. In response to this and conceived to coincide with what some still hoped would be the end of the European war, Princess Mary's appeal for donations in aid of a Christmas gift for the men at the front is reported in the 1 November 1914 issue of TB (pp.42–3) as progressing well. This very successful scheme would result in the famous embossed, gilded, airtight, brass box, designed by the architects Adshead & Ramsey, containing a greetings card, a photograph of the princess, smoker's requisites or sweets and/or writing paper and envelopes for non–smokers. The article reports promises of subscriptions from, among others, HM the King (£100); Harrods, Ltd (£262 10s) and, most generous of all, the popular press magnates Lord and Lady Rothermere (£1,000). The total stood at £17,240 on 22 October, the latest subscription of £500 having come from ITC: not a particularly large sum, in view of the fact that the company would stand to reap a handsome profit from the operation.[5] It is interesting to note that at this moment in the history of the feminist movement, a gift of tobacco was considered unsuitable for nurses serving on the continent. Instead, they would receive the box, a packet of chocolate and the same greetings card as the men. The 44,840 lbs of tobacco and 13,050,000 cigarettes were supplied by the W D & H O Wills and John Player (leading members of ITC), while Asprey & Co. supplied the tinder lighters (more reliable in damp conditions than safety matches). Harrods and others supplied the briar pipes, while the greetings cards were supplied by De La Rue.

Princess Mary's embossed, gilded gift box containing tobacco, cigarettes, a card and a photograph of the Princess. Courtesy IWM EPH 1992

The 1 August 1915 issue of TTR (p.259) carried a short article about the Post Office's disinclination to reduce postal charges relating to parcels sent to men serving abroad. Though the journalist comes to no precise conclusion over the question, he does use it to underline the overwhelming popularity of smoking among the men at the front:

> 'It is known that by far the greater proportion of these packages contain tobacco, the soldiers' demand for which seems to be never–ending. "Send us cigarettes and more cigarettes" is the plea to be found in most of the letters from the Front; and the plea is underlined by Red Cross officials, some of whom express the view that tobacco seems as necessary to the wounded soldier as food and drink.' (See 'Smoking and curing' below)

The 1 December 1915 issue of TTR (p.397) reproduces the short but fascinating letter sent by General Sir John Hart Dunne (1835–1924) to the editor of *The Times*, attacking the Bishop of Hereford's recent recommendation (despite being himself a non–smoker) that everyone should give up tobacco in the interests of national economy. The general reminds readers that:

General Sir John Hart Dunne photographed c. 1920

> '…as a smoker in the Army for more than sixty–three years my experience is that smoking has done more than anything else to put a stop to the excessive drinking that was so prevalent in my youth… . In that terrible winter of 1854–5 in the Crimea, when we were often half–starved and had to spend long nights in slush and snow in the trenches, we found that a pipe of tobacco soothed the nerves and kept off the pangs of cold and hunger.'

How many servicemen would have cheered in agreement with the wise words of this old soldier? To the tobacco trade they are manna from heaven: well worth reprinting in the trade journal and quoting to customers anxious to bring a little comfort to their men away on active service.

Smoking and curing

The famous army chaplain, poet, author, orator and champion of the poor, Geoffrey Anketell Studdert Kennedy MC, himself a heavy smoker, earned his nickname *Woodbine Willie* from his habit of associating the word of God with a Woodbine given to wounded and even dying men at the front. His advice to a fellow chaplain, fresh out from the UK, included the words:

> 'Live with the men, go everywhere they go … . Men will forgive you anything but lack of courage and devotion … . Take a box of fags in your haversack and a great deal of love in your heart, and go up to them: laugh with them, joke with them.' (6)

He knew that the *comfort* (which, etymologically, does not refer to 'wellbeing', but 'the sharing of strength') he could bring to men in a state of extreme distress should be in a language they understood. The cigarette acted as a mediator.

The warnings of 'smoker's heart' given by military men like Baden Powell (see above) and many others, including eminent psychologists such as T S Clouston, author of *The Hygiene of Mind* (1906), quoted in Hendrick (1990, p.135), and who considered tobacco, alcohol and even tea as dangerous brain stimulants, were echoed by the respected comrade–in–arms of Baden Powell, Lieutenant General Sir Herbert Plumer, GOC Northern Command until February 1915. Mindful of the evil effects of smoking on the health of the troops, he gave the order on 4 November 1914 that smoking was 'not to be permitted on any occasion when men are under arms or on fatigue', as reported, without comment in the 1 December 1914 issue of TB (p.45).

Notwithstanding these strong views, countless appeals and charities provided tobacco and cigarettes for the sick and wounded in hospitals and convalescent homes: precisely the category of young men in need of all their strength and vigour and who should accordingly be protected from dangerous drugs of all kinds. The 1 November 1914 issue of TB relates with glee that:

> 'There was an amusing scene on October 15 outside the Orthopædic Hospital, Great Portland Street, W., where Belgian and British wounded are under treatment. A Belgian on the balcony had secured a cord, to which he attached a small iron ring. Then he commenced to 'fish'. Pedestrians stopped, and 'Cigarettes for the wounded' came the cry. The hint was taken and a packet purchased at the tobacconist's shop next (sic) the hospital.

This, unsubstantiated and anonymous report underlines the comradeship–cum–ingenuity of the British and Belgian wounded, whose alliance can be reinforced through buying them cigarettes.

TTC and TB contain numerous advertisements featuring wounded servicemen enjoying–and apparently recovering–thanks to the beneficial effects of a particular brand of cigarettes. A typical example of this can be seen in the full page advertisement appearing in the 1 December 1914 issue of TB (p.6) for the medium–priced *de Reszke* cigarettes, reproduced below. Of note are the association of smoking this brand with the pretty, smiling, tantalising nurse, holding the hand of a handsome, clearly besotted, cavalry officer (unaccountably wearing his spurs and riding boots in hospital), asking for 'just one more', while cupid prepares to wound him a second time from behind a medical supply chest which contains–of course–more boxes of *de Reszke* cigarettes. Tobacconists are informed that this (very effective) advertisement is currently appearing in all the major newspapers and that they would be well advised to buy in a large

An advertisement for De Reszke *cigarettes, produced by Fisher's Advertising Agency and published in the 1 December 1914 issue of* Tobacco

supply of *de Reszkes* in readiness for record Christmas sales. There is no doubt that wounded servicemen and the mingling of the sexes and classes brought about by the war is–or should be made to be–good for business. So deeply imprinted on the public consciousness was the association of the convalescent serviceman with smoking that C S Peel, was to write over a decade later of 'the wounded soldier in his blue suit and red tie and the cigarette without which he did not seem complete' [7]

Supply

The government was quick to realise in the absence (pre–1916) of organised divisional and battalion canteens, that the private soldier's basic pay of 1s 0d a day was insufficient to maintain even a modest smoking habit. The 1 September 1914 issue of TTR (p.352) announced the War Office's decision to supply 'free to each British soldier on the Continent 2oz a week of Wills's Capstan tobacco.' This move provided good advertising, ensured W D & H O Wills a steady contract and showed the government in a favourable light with the troops, who could now enjoy the equivalent of forty free smokes a week. Meanwhile, the National Relief Fund, a servicemen's charity, whose honorary treasurer was HRH the Prince of Wales and to which ITC and BAT had already contributed £25,000 and £15,000 respectively (TTR as above, p.365) was good publicity for the monarchy and the big tobacco manufacturers.

The 1 November 1914 issue of TB (p.61) carried a short article informing readers of some exceptional wartime postal regulations of importance to the trade. In particular, thanks to the French government's having agreed to waive customs duty on tobacco and cigarettes addressed to British troops serving on the continent, small packets could now be sent letter post, at a cost of 1d per ounce (which, incidentally, is the price of a packet of five cigarettes). Readers are reminded not to send parcels to 'The Military Forwarding Office', or 'care of the Embarkation Officer, Southampton'. All parcels under 11 lbs

> '… should, in addition to the name, rank, regiment, etc., of the addressee, bear only the address 'British Expeditionary Force', or, if intended for Indian troops, Indian Expeditionary Force, care of the India Office.'

The latter would be principally for British officers attached to the Indian Army units already serving in France. Precise instructions are also provided for the despatch of the much needed, though often neglected, safety matches.

Thus, during 1914–15, the main supply of smoking requisites for men on active service came in the form of parcels sent either by their families or direct from manufacturers and retailers. A glimpse of this trade may be seen in Wills's export summary for August 1915, [8] which records a consignment of 200 *Gold Flake* cigarettes in 50s tins as having been sent to E A H Grylls, BEF for the price of 14s 0d, plus 1s 0d postage, while a Second Lieutenant B N Hare, BEF received 200 *Three Castles* in 100s tins at a cost of 21s 0d, plus 1s 0d postage. The orders are followed, respectively with the handwritten names W M Thomas, Redruth and W H Dunn

A 100's tin and a 50's drum of the popular Wills's brand Three Castles

(no locality mentioned), being presumably those of the tobacconists who handled the orders. Private soldiers' consignments are usually of 200–500 cigarettes, mainly *Wild Woodbine*, and *Gold Flake*. However, the same W H Dunn is recorded as having handled an order for 1,000 *Three Castles* and 100 *Star* for a Sapper A Cameron, BEF who was either a man of means and a particularly heavy smoker, or the correspondent of a local unofficial cooperative at the front.

Each monthly issue of TB contained a column entitled 'War Brevities', whose miscellaneous items often described the generous donations made by firms, associations or private individuals of tobacco and cigarettes to hospitals or to the BEF, usually to local regiments, and often acknowledged by the GOC. Here are two items taken from the 1 December 1914 issue of TB (p.i):

> 'The Workers of the Weavers and Drawing–in Department of the Grove Weaving Co., Belfast, have sent 4,500 *Park Drive* cigarettes and 16 lbs of *Wrestler* plug tobacco in 20 oz. plugs to the boys in the fighting line.'
>
> 'The Cheshires at the Front have received 1,760 cigarettes and a quantity of tobacco collected by Miss Brown, a Chester lady.'

All did not run perfectly smoothly however, as an item taken from the same column sadly illustrates:

> 'A particularly mean series of thefts of cigars, cigarettes and other 'comforts' sent to wounded soldiers in the Western General Military Hospital, Manchester,

> … when three members of the Royal Army Medical Corps (Territorials) … were charged with stealing the things and were fined £5, and costs, each, or one month's imprisonment.'

With the exception of the final item, the numerous instances of generosity reported each month illustrate the public's wish to 'do one's bit'–and see it reported in the press.

The astounding efficiency with which the postal services and the army handled the enormous weekly tonnage of personal letters and parcels, many of which contained tobacco, to and from the BEF, gives a clear indication of how important a factor these were in the maintaining of morale. The 1 November 1914 issue of TB quotes an unsolicited testimonial for *Murray's Mellow Mixture* in a letter home from a soldier who expresses thanks for a recent gift of tobacco, adding 'Dug myself 6 ft. deeper in the trench after I had a pipeful of *Murray's Mellow* brand–puts new life into one'.

Brands

We finish this piece with a look at branding and packaging and their role in the ever–growing popularity of the cigarette during the war–years.

The gradual triumph of the cigarette over pipe smoking, snuff and chewing tobacco, particularly among younger consumers, as illustrated in Bruce Bainsfather's cartoon 'Entanglements', in which, as usual, old Bill smokes his pipe, while young Bert prefers a cigarette, was well under way during the Great War. The small format, quickly smoked cigarette, the most popular brands of which were Wills's *Wild Woodbine*, *Capstan* and *Gold Flake*, and Player's *Weights* and *Navy Cut 'Medium'*, all aimed at the new mass market, was a cheap [9] substitute for beer or chocolate, both of which deteriorated in quality and increased in price over the war years. [10]

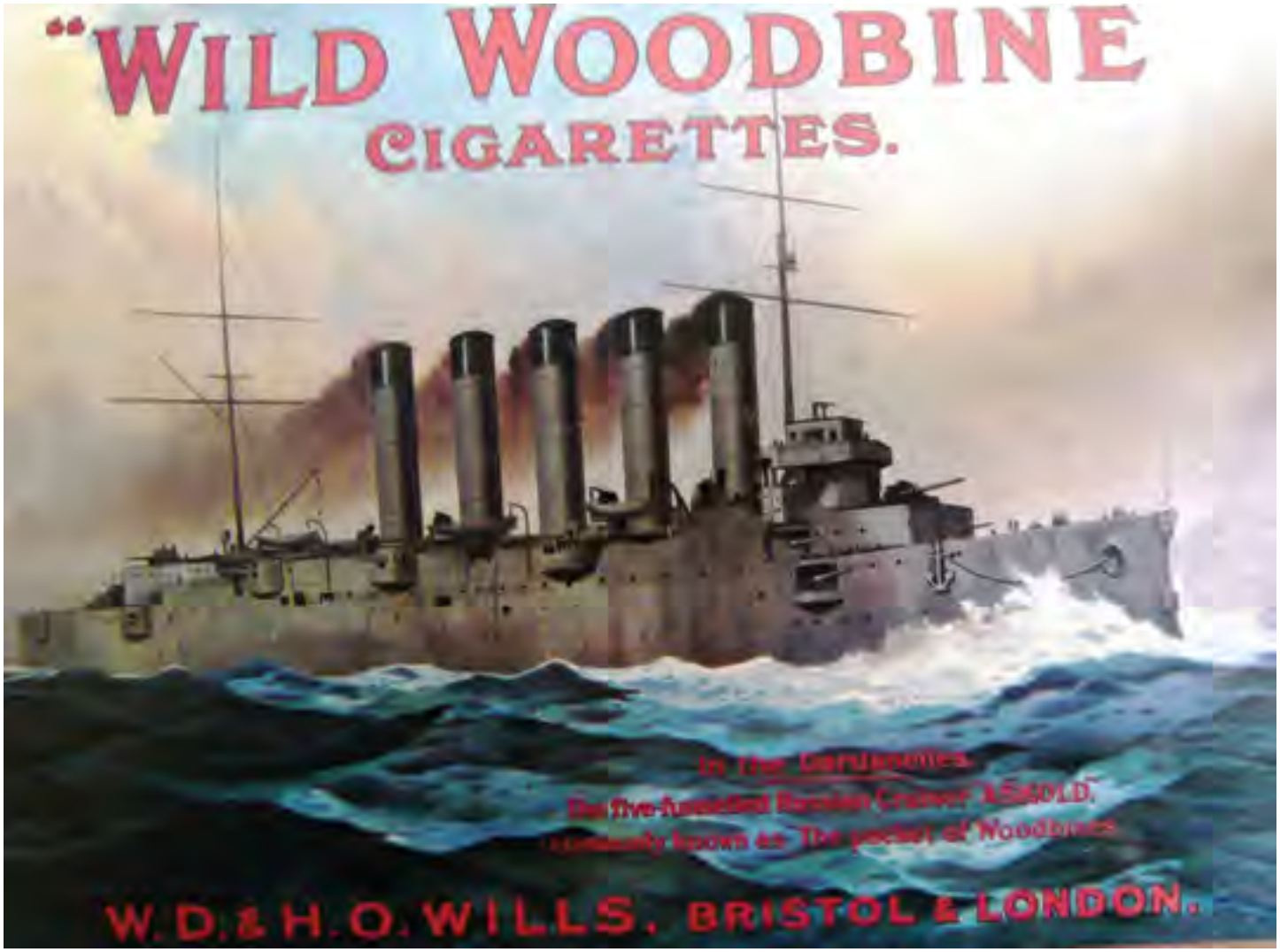
Military and naval themes

The Tobacco Year Book 1918 Index contains 659 brands which are unmistakeably evocative of military and/or naval matters. Together, these amount to some 6 per cent of the total index: not a large percentage. It should be born in mind, however, that among the military/naval brands were some of the best selling cigarettes and tobacco mixtures (eg Player's *Navy Cut/Navy Cut Gold Leaf/Mild/Medium*; Wills's *Capstan*; and *Red Hussar* and Major Drapkin's *The Greys*), which meant that reminders of military and naval life had a disproportionately high market profile. [11] In the following three lists a representative selection of brands are given, many of which clearly reflect the conditions of the present conflict.

A well–known Bruce Bairnsfather cartoon depicting the contrast between the sad state of the troops and an attractive, fashionable young lady and juxtaposing the pipe–smoking Old Bill and the cigarette–smoking Young Bert

Martins Glory Boys *cigarettes. In addition to this brand of cheap 'green' cigarettes, Martins of Piccadilly also marketed another wartime brand* 'Arf a Mo' *cigarettes featuring Bert Thomas' drawing on the front, with Lord Kitchener, or a message of goodwill from the* Weekly Despatch *on the back.*

Bert Thomas' famous drawing, which was first printed in the 11 November 1914 issue of the Weekly Dispatch *as part of its 'Tobacco for the Troops' fund appeal*



A show–card promoting Wills's Wild Woodbine*, depicting the Russian Cruiser* Askold*, whose five funnels are deliberately elongated so as to resemble cigarettes*

Military brands (325 listed)
Eg *'Arf a Mo'; Black Watch* (x4) [12]; *The Buffs* [13]*; Bugle and Drum; Fall In; Field Service; General Staff; Glory Boys; Guardsman; Gunfire* [14]*; Kitchener; Marksman; Old Soldier; Red Hussar; Sapper*.

Naval brands (204 listed)
eg *Admiralty; Armour Plate; Captain Hayward's RNR; Dockyard; Gibraltar; HMS Magnificent; Jack's Best; Marline Spike; Navy Cap; Night Watch; Sailor & Lass; Searchlight; Turret; Twin Screw; Undaunted*.

Aviation brands (21 listed)
eg *Aerial; Aero Club; Aerodrome; Aviator; Biplane; Dual Control; Flight; Flyer; King of the Air; Monoplane; Parachute; Propeller; Seaplane; Sky Pilot; Zeppelins*.

All Services brands (74 listed)
e.g. *Alliance; Blighty; Britain's Might; Britannia; British Heroes; British Standard; Duty; La Gloire; Mates in Arms; The Great War; Navy & Army; On Service; The Patriot; United Service; War Cloud*.

Whether the manufacturer's intention, in using military/naval brand names, of associating the enlisted smoker's pleasure with feelings of duty and patriotism was successful cannot be ascertained. Perhaps these brands were mainly aimed at givers of presents, or men too young, too old, or unfit for service, anxious to sport a martial air. It seems likely that most men on active service would have preferred to be reminded of such themes as peace, beauty, fresh air (eg contemporary brands: *Al Fresco; Evening Snooze; Meadowland; Summer Garden*) and love and sex (eg *Bonnie Lassie; Cheshire Girls; Dashing Barmaid; Love's Delight*), rather than be forced to look into the mirror of war. However, a fag was a fag; a smoke was a smoke, whether it was called *Bloomsbury Shag, Flirtella* or *Sniper's Smoking Mixture*.

Palliative

Like so many manufacturers and suppliers of food and drink, patent medicines, special clothing, personal equipment and comforts, the British tobacco industry was not slow in responding to the increased demand for its products as from August 1914. As we have seen, considerations of the long term detrimental effects of smoking (hypothetical and remote when compared to the shocking reality of industrialised warfare) were pushed aside in the interests of increasing sales, while tobacco was promoted through being associated wherever possible with the monarchy, patriotism and the fighting spirit, and portrayed as an aid to recovery from wounds and as a token of love for sons, husbands and sweethearts on active

A war casualty? Was it this Wills's Gold Flake 50s airtight drum that saved a soldier's life? This drum has evidently met with a violent end, having been torn apart, possibly by a splinter and brought home as a souvenir. Courtesy Andy King, Senior Curator, Industrial & Maritime History and Working Exhibits, Bristol Museums Galleries & Archives

service. In the light of subsequent research into the dangerous consequences of smoking, the idea that so many young people became lifelong tobacco users as a result of their war service appears sad today. Two things should be noted here, however. The first is that, with the rise in popularity of the cigarette for men as well as for an increasing number of women during the years 1901–1914, it is quite likely that just as many people would have become smokers even if the Great War had never happened. The second is that, as all smokers know, the pleasure of a cigarette can provide temporary relief from pain, hunger, cold, sickness and fatigue and can act as a palliative against feelings of terror, distress, frustration, insecurity, loneliness and boredom, all of which are abundantly reported in personal accounts of life at sea or at the front. In the extreme and often bewildering situation in which so many people found themselves during the first eighteen months of the war, it was, all things considered, very fortunate that imports of Virginia tobacco were relatively unaffected by submarine warfare, a mercy which made it available to all those who needed it.

Acknowlegements

A special word of thanks, for their help in compiling the information and illustrations contained in this article, goes to Raymond Rushforth, Computer Scientist; Andy King, Curator of M Shed, Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives; Ms Pam Redwood of Imperial Tobacco; Mr Barry Russell, Secretary of the Cigarette Packet Collectors' Club of Great Britain; Ms Anne Bradley and the staff of the Bristol Record Office.

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(1) The thirteen founder–companies were, in order of importance: W D & H O Wills Ltd (Bristol); Lambert & Butler Ltd (London); Stephen Mitchell & Son (Glasgow); John Player & Sons Ltd (Nottingham); F & J Smith (Glasgow); Hignett, Brothers & Co. Ltd (Liverpool); Franklyn, Davey & Co. (Bristol); William Clarke & Son Ltd (Liverpool); Edwards, Ringer & Bigg Ltd (Bristol); The Richmond Cavendish Co. Ltd (Liverpool); Adkin & Sons (London); D & J Macdonald (Glasgow); Hignett's Tobacco Co. Ltd (London). These were joined at various times during the following year by Mardon, Son & Hall Ltd (Bristol); W A & A C Churchman (Ipswich); W T Davies & Sons (Chester); W Williams & Co. (Chester); W & F Faulkner Ltd (London) and Salmon & Gluckstein (London). For more details see Hilton (2000: 83–87).

(2) Baden Powell, 1908: 198. See also Hendrick (1990:134–135) for more contemporary alarmist views on juvenile smoking. Interestingly, there was a 1930s French, or possibly Swiss, brand of cigarettes called *Louveteau Boy Scout* cigarettes. *Louveteau* actually means 'wolf cub', not 'boy scout', thus targeting an even younger consumer. The front of the packet shows a fresh–faced and rather effeminate scout smiling fondly at the smoking cigarette between his fingers.

(3) In 1911, 89 per cent of the British working population had been employed in manufacture and transport, as compared to only 34 per cent in France (Fuller, 1990:149). Accordingly, the infantry, the majority of whom were drawn from the major cities, were largely cigarette–smokers.

(4) The brands are not named in the article. However, they were probably *Ariston*, *Classic or Navy Cut* for the troops and *La Ban*, *Neb–Ka* or *Protection* for the officers (B Russell, personal communication).

(5) An ambitious project, the fund set out to deliver a Christmas gift to each of the c. 145,000 sailors serving under Admiral Sir John Jellico as well as the c. 35,000 men serving under Field Marshal Sir John French. Four contractors together supplied the boxes, at a cost of $6^{1/4}$d each, the main difficulty lying in the securing of an adequate supply of the brass strip necessary for production. Though the initial estimate of the cost of the operation was c. £60,000, total subscriptions, the majority from ordinary members of the public, amounted to £162,591 12s 5d. The surplus allowed the extension of the scheme to every man 'wearing the King's uniform on Christmas day 1914'. Despite severe problems of shipping and distribution, a total of 426,724 boxes were delivered to men abroad or at home in time for 25 December 1914. For more details see Condell, 1989; Fulton, 2008; Russell, 2014, pp.38–45.

(6) Holman , 2013, p.165.

(7) Peel, 1929, p.127.

(8) These documents can be consulted at the Bristol Record Office, Wills archive, file 38169/Sa/26/2.

(9) In 1914, *Wild Woodbine* and *Weights* were selling at 2d for ten, *Capstan and Navy Cut* at 3d for ten, *Gold Flake* (a larger cigarette representing better value for money) at $3^{1/2}$d for ten.

(10) C S Peel (*op. cit*. p.106), speaking of the home front, says, 'As time passed, chocolate became both scarce and nasty. Cigarettes, however, could be obtained without difficulty, and the nervous strain from which we suffered explained doubtless the increased consumption of them by men and women.'

(11) *The Greys*: The Scots Greys Regiment.

(12) Four manufacturers (Carrick & Co.; Kinnear, Ltd; F & J Smith; and W D & H O Wills) used *Black Watch* as a brand–name.

(13) *The Buffs*: The Royal East Kent Regiment.

(14) In the military slang of the Great War, *Gun fire* referred to 'the early cup of tea served out to troops in the morning before going on parade, whenever possible… . The morning gun in a garrison town suggested the name probably.' (Fraser & Gibbons, 1925, p.113).

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War Art

by David and Judith Cohen

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Second Lieutenant Thomas Ivester Lloyd (1873–1942) Royal Field Artillery

This wonderful collection of on the spot drawings shows life behind the lines on the Western Front, mainly during 1915 and 1916. A collection of Ivester Lloyd's First World War drawings were reproduced in The Great War *magazine, Part 29, dated March 6 1915. Page 365 featured 'Sketches of Equine Life from an Officer at the Front.' He was an incredible artist.*

Thomas Ivester Lloyd (1873 – 1942) was born in Liverpool and was a self–taught artist who exemplified the early 20th century British sporting scene in both his lifestyle and his art. He married Florence Mary Bunting of Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, where he remained for most of his life. From childhood, he was involved with foxhunting and beagling and eventually became the Master of the Sherington Foot Beagles, who hunted the country around Newport Pagnell in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire. He was a pillar of the community and lived at Roadside Cottage in Park Road, Buckinghamshire from 1910 to 1942.

During the Great War, Ivester Lloyd saw service in France with the Remount Service, a posting he had in common with many other equine artists. He was later commissioned into the Royal Artillery. The British Empire Exhibition of 1924–1925 at Wembley contained thirty dioramas of battles in British history by Ivester Lloyd.

As well as his equine portraits, Ivester Lloyd illustrated a number of books and became very famous for his hound sketches. Many people thought his horse portraiture was some of the best of his time. The majority of Ivester Lloyd's work was serious, but he also made some humorous illustrations. The pony books he illustrated were all written by his son, John Ivester Lloyd. Thomas' brother, Stanley Lloyd, was a more prolific illustrator of the pony book: the brothers both illustrated John Ivester Lloyd's *The People of the Valley*, which was published after Thomas Ivester–Lloyd's death.

Our complete collection of Ivester Lloyd drawings are now in the hands of the National Army Museum, Chelsea.

Acknowledgements

Jane Badger Books
Carol Hewson, great granddaughter of Thomas Ivester Lloyd.

Note from the Authors

This is the last article that we will be contributing to Stand To! *Our first appeared in* Stand To! *41, way back in 1994. Our grateful thanks to everyone who has read, commented and enjoyed our articles over the last twenty–two years and also to those who have attended David's talks around the country. David will be giving his last WFA talk to the London Branch in October.*

We have also ceased trading as David Cohen Fine Art after thirty–two years and our remaining stock will be on sale at Dominic Winter Auction House in Cirencester on 11 November 2016. The website will be active for the next few months, but no sales will take place.

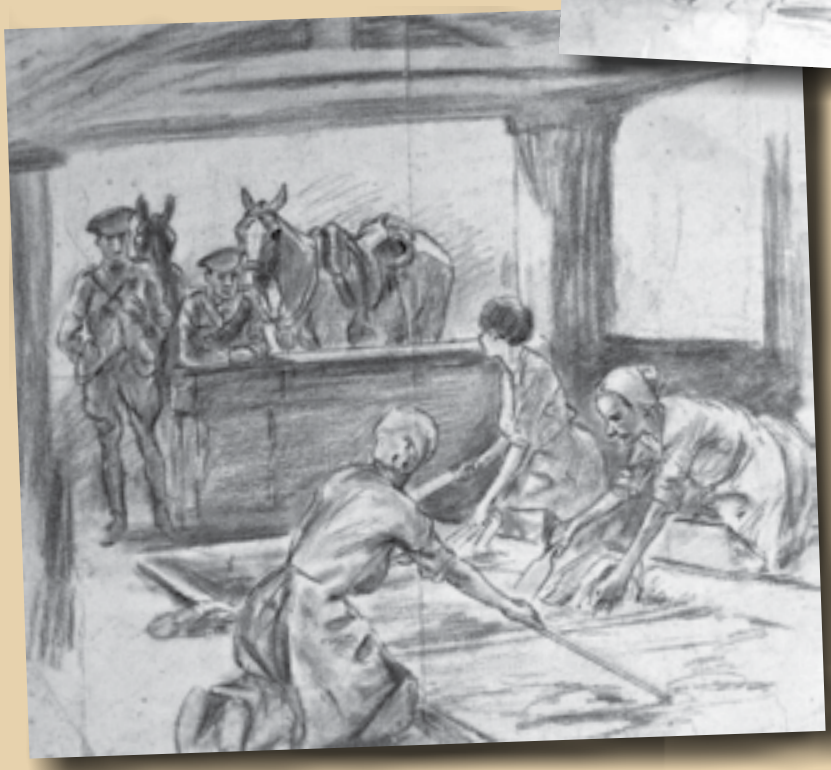
And now we begin a new chapter in our lives!

Best wishes
David and Judith

'Ally Sloper's Cavalry to the rescue'. The Army Service Corps was nicknamed 'Ally Sloper's Cavalry' after the comic book character of the time

'Water'. Getting a drink for the horses travelling on a train

'The Widows of France'. A cavalry officer salutes a French war widow and her child



'French washerwomen'. A group of French women are doing the washing while two troopers and their horses watch them

'Passing the Vet'

'A boxing competition in a rest camp. Bantam weights – 'a knock out.' The Padre referees'

Horses detraining

An incident on a French road. An artillery column has to deal with a fallen horse and its rider

'A scene in the Big Push – "Hurrying on"

An everyday scene in the French war zone. A British field artillery gun team passing workers tending their crops

'The Village Crier'

A British Tommy rescuing a drowning dog

An Indian Sowar with his unwilling horse

Spahi farriers at work. The Spahis of the French Army were recruited primarily from the indigenous populations of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco

'Spahis: Taking their usual morning exercise, 'somewhere in France'

'Spahis feeding'

'A French farrier on 'Permission' [leave] buys two working bullocks'

A family reunion somewhere in France

'The Spahis' Field Kitchen'

Extraordinary Friendship

December 1915 on the Western Front: A Leicestershire Perspective

by Karen Ette

The well–known Christmas Truce of 1914 is often considered a unique anomaly within the violence of the Great War. It has often been represented as a total cease–fire on Christmas Day 1914, although, as Malcolm Brown and Shirley Seaton point out, different versions of the Truce occurred across a significant area of the front, making generalisations unwise. [1] *The popular version of the event suggests that the truce was universal across the trenches and was an effort by the soldiers to prevent continuation of the war.*[2] *However, such views are challenged by eyewitnesses. In February 1915 a letter was printed in the Leicestershire village of Syston's parish magazine.*[3] *The letter was from Guardsman Percy Pollard, a Leicestershire soldier serving with the Coldstream Guards. Writing home to his mother on 26 December 1914 his closing lines read: 'We were in the trenches Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It did not seem much like Christmas. We did not have any Christmas carols, but instead the sound of German guns.' Due to censorship, Guardsman Pollard was unable to tell his mother where he was, but he does disclose that all was not quiet along the entire Western Front at that time. In The Truce, The Day the War Stopped Chris Baker gives an exacting account of the experiences of those serving in France and Flanders during December 1914 showing how small truces took place as a 'hopeful aberration in an otherwise terrible period.'* [4] *However, Christmas 1914 was not the only documented suspension of hostilities during the First World War. Using new documents alongside regimental diaries and other accounts,* Karen Ette *investigates another truce in December 1915 and examines how soldier and author Ernst Jünger chose to represent the possibly unofficial temporary ceasefire in a novel he reworked as late as 1978, focussing on the events surrounding it and the death of a German who may not have been quite what he seemed.*

Elliott Exchange

This cessation of the fighting – in December1915 – is far less known, mainly because any form of fraternisation was strongly discouraged by the military authorities on both sides. The event only came to wider attention in 1920 with the publication of Ernst Jünger's *In Stahlgewittern*. Its original title in English was: *In Storms of Steel: From the Diary of a Shock Troop Commander, Ernst Jünger, War Volunteer, and Subsequently Lieutenant in the Rifle Regiment of Prince Albrecht of Prussia (73rd Hanoverian Regiment)*. The family gardener, Robert Meier, was designated as the publisher.[6] In 1929 the book became a bestseller in Britain and the United States of America when its modified 1924 edition was translated into English as *Storm of Steel.*

Ernst Jünger, a lieutenant with the 73rd Hanoverian Fusiliers, was entrenched at Berles–au–Bois in northern France, when he took part in an initially peaceful exchange with soldiers of the 8th Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment (8/Leicesters), an exchange which ended in the unexpected death of a German soldier. Serving with 8/Leicesters at the time was Captain Charles Aubrey Babington Elliott, whose diaries and letters have recently been deposited by relatives at the Leicestershire and Rutland County Records Office.[7] To date, these papers have not been fully explored even though they contain Captain Elliott's correspondence with Ernst Jünger in the aftermath of the publication of the English translation of *Storm of Steel* in 1929.

The Christmas Truce at Ploegsteert Wood 1914. Painted by and with permission of Soren Hawkes [5]

Map of the area showing Berles–au–Bois, Monchy–au–Bois and Douchy

Ernst Jünger, very much as he would have appeared at the time the incidents recounted here took place

Diary

Ernst Jünger kept diaries throughout the Great War, eventually filling sixteen pocket–sized books containing a total of 1,000 pages. He did not allow these to be published during his lifetime, but he drew upon them in writing *In Stahlgewittern (Storm of Steel)* and *Das Wäldchen 125 (Copse 125)* so he effectively published the material he intended to be read.[8] Ernst Jünger died at the age of 102 in 1998, and in 2009 his widow, Liselotte Lohrer published his diaries under the title *Kriegstagebuch (War Diary)*.[9]

Jünger's biographer, Helmuth Kiesel, who arranged the transcription of the diaries, told *Der Spiegel* magazine that he was unaware of any other diary, in any language, which describes the war over such a long period of time and in such great detail.[10] In his journals, Jünger does not appear to show any hatred for his enemies either, merely seeing them instead as something to be coldly destroyed, as one would vermin.

This attitude troubled many of his readers. On 26 November 2010 an article by Allan Hall entitled 'Soldier's diary celebrates slaughter in the trenches' appeared in *The Times*. The article stated that 'many of the pages are filled with the images of British dead as Jünger faced them on the battlefield,' and gives some graphic accounts of soldiers dying, observed with cold detachment. Hall states that the accounts are 'far different from those of the British literary canon as exemplified by the likes of Robert Graves, Isaac Rosenberg, Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen,' and that 'Jünger saw nothing to be pitied or regretted about combat; instead he celebrated the slaughter of the trenches, regarding it as "a great test of manhood."'[11] *In Stahlgewittern* became a bestseller and was considered by the Nazis to be a stark contrast to the pacifism demonstrated in *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque.[12] Unlike Jünger's work, Remarque's books were banned by the Nazis and burnt. Jünger's work remains controversial and is rarely accorded literary status, not least because he is often believed to have helped prepare the way for Nazism although he never supported the Nazi party unreservedly and purposefully distanced himself from it.

Comparison

Captain Elliott also kept pocket diaries, six in total, and from these he compared Ernst Jünger's accounts of the war in *Storm of Steel* with his own.[13] On 19 December 1929, after writing five pages of notes, Captain Elliott wrote to Jünger from his home in Oadby, Leicester:

> 'I have just been reading your *Storm of Steel* and find that for many months we lived within a few hundred yards of each other. Our Battalion, that of the 8th Leicestershires, relieved the French at the beginning of September 1915 and held the line.
>
> 'Our life was much like yours except that till the spring we never got further back than B [a position Elliott had indicated on a map that he had enclosed with his letter]. We too had our large chalk caves, but only had to use them on two occasions. We always heard that you had stopped at Monchy–au–Bois, and that many French soldiers got entrenched in them. Was that true?' [14]

Jünger replied on 30 December 1929:

> 'Much esteemed Mr Elliott,
>
> Your kind letter gave me great pleasure, for it is curious enough, after such a long time, to receive intimate particulars from a former enemy, whom one scarcely knew, although one lay barely one hundred metres from him.' [15]

He then went on to confirm what Captain Elliott had asked:

> 'I came only to Monchy at the end of 1915, but I know that at the close of 1914 there was hard fighting round the village. There were, in this village, graves of a German Guards regiment, as well as those of French Cuirassiers,

including that of the Commander of the regiment. Later we brought our dead back to Douchy where, on our retreat, we left a large cemetery, for our losses were very great on some days and we stayed there a long time.'

Captain Elliott then compared his diary with the novel:

'On referring to the loyal diary I kept, and comparing it with your book, I found many interesting sentences. For example, on the 8th February 1916 two German officers are shooting in the morning, stopped for lunch, then more shooting afterwards.'

In another comparison for the same day Jünger had written: 'On the 8th February, C sector was badly shelled. At midday we had three dugouts smashed in.'[16]

Captain Elliott's diary for that day records that: 'Several gunner officers up registering this morning, 106–107 shelled a bit.'

Captain Elliott then compared their notes concerning the weather noting that: 'Our stories regarding weather conditions are almost the same.' He continued to quote from *Storm of Steel*, for 30 October 1915:

'Owing to heavy rain in the night, the trench fell in in many places, and the soil mixing with the rain to a sticky soup turned the trench into an almost impassable swamp. The only comfort was that the English were no better off, for they could be seen busily scooping water out of their trench.'

'Ghost in daylight'

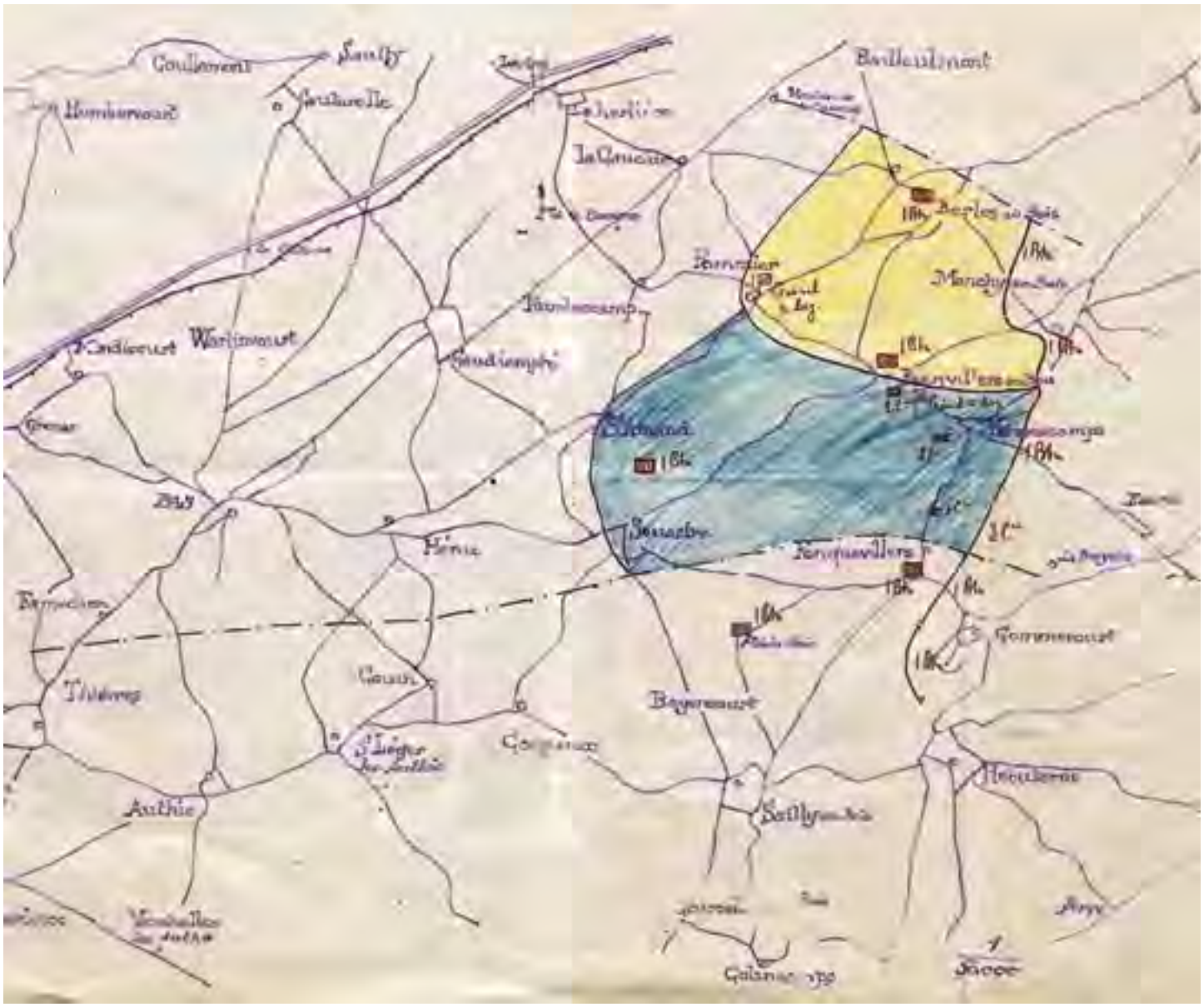
The weather then dominated the writing of both men for quite some time, as they remembered flooded dug–outs and a roof dripping like a watering can.

In *Storm of Steel* Jünger recounts his surprise when he left a shelter he had been staying in for some time.[17] Unfortunately no date is given, but it would have been late December as an earlier note referred to 11 December 1915. His novelistic account reads as follows:

'I couldn't believe the sight that met my eyes. The battlefield that previously had borne the stamp of deathly emptiness upon it was now as animated as a fairground… The throng of khaki–clad figures emerging from the hitherto so apparently deserted English lines seemed as eerie as the appearance of a ghost in daylight.'

He then goes on, describing a lively exchange of schnapps, cigarettes and uniform buttons.

'The surreal harmony then disintegrated; a shot rang out and a German soldier lay dead. Jünger tells of both sides scurrying back to their trenches whereupon he moved to a different part of the line, which fronted a British sap, and called out that he wanted to speak with an officer.[18] Several British soldiers went back and later returned with 'a young man from their firing trench with a somewhat more ornate cap.' For ease of exchange, they spoke in French. Jünger castigated the officer for such a deceitful shot. The officer said it was from the rifle of a soldier in a different company and not his. When shots hit the ground close to him, the British officer called out, *'Il y a des cochons aussi chez vous!'*[19] Jünger would have liked to have exchanged souvenirs, but the two men had agreed that war would recommence three minutes after their negotiations were concluded.[20] After the talks ended, the German artillery began firing, but once again Jünger was astounded when he saw four British stretchers being carried out into the open ground, and firing ceased. He wrote that he was very proud of his troops.



A French map of the Monchy au Bois sector handed to the British 37th Division when it took over responsibility for the sector in early September 1915

'Hindustani Leicestershires'

Jünger's writing also identifies the British regiment involved in this sportsmanlike exchange. In chapter five, 'Trench Warfare, Day–by–Day' he observes 'From the British cap–badges seen that day, we were able to tell that the regiment facing ours were the Hindustani Leicestershires.' [21] The exchange had happened before Christmas as Jünger wrote that they 'spent Christmas Eve in the line and, standing in the mud, sang hymns, to which the British responded with machine–gun fire.' The 8th Battalion were not in the trenches on Christmas Eve and relieved the 6th Battalion on 27 December 1915. The war diary of the 6th Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment corroborates Jünger's account:

> 'December 24th
> Enemy rifle and machine–gun fire very brisk. Our machine guns caught several parties of Germans leaving the communication trench owing to it being impassable. A large number of these men were hit. We sent over many rifle grenades, which appeared to have good effect. Rained hard.'[22]

On Christmas Day Jünger tells of a German soldier being shot in the head and the British attempting a 'friendly gesture' by holding up a Christmas tree, which the Germans immediately shot down. The British replied with rifle grenades: it was a less than merry Christmas. The war diary recorded that:

> 'There was a good deal of sniping on both sides and in the evening from 10pm to 12 midnight we continually sent over bombs accompanied by machine–gun fire. This seemed somewhat to stop the sniping.' [23]

'Fratting' was unacceptable and opposed. In *Footprints of the 1/4th Leicestershire Regiment, August 1914 to November 1918* (1935), John Milne recollects how:

> 'The Hun had made a herculean effort to exterminate the 4th Leicesters in October 1915, but failed and the 4ths had no wish to fraternise – they had lost too many comrades and besides, the Brigadier would not have liked it.' [24]

The war diary of the 8/Leicesters for 12 December 1915 states that a 'German officer called from opposite trench 93 to talk to an English Officer and asked that hostilities might cease for a few days so that men could work on their trenches. His request was immediately refused.'[25]

Which battalion?

After the publication of *Storm of* Steel, the magazine of the Leicestershire Regiment, *The Green Tiger*, published an article entitled 'Which Battalion?' and quoted Jünger's words regarding identifying the regiment from their cap badge. [26] An earlier request for information printed in both *The Leicester Mail* and *The Leicester Mercury* had sparked a volley of response. Many letters were received from soldiers who had also witnessed the event in December 1915 and in February 1934 a number of them were printed in *The Green Tiger*. Colonel H Tyler, MC, who was the platoon commander on Christmas Day 1915, refers to Jünger's account as 'complete moonshine' and members of the 6th, 7th and 9th Battalions denied any involvement. But


The Green Tiger

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Extract from the front cover of the Green Tiger *magazine of February 1934. The article 'Which Battalion?' can be seen listed under the contents. Courtesy the Royal Leicestershire Regiment website at http://www.royalleicestershireregiment.org.uk/archive/journals/green–tiger–1930–1939/1934*

members of 8/Leicesters confirmed Jünger's story and a Lieutenant A C Cave corroborated the cease–fire whilst the four stretchers were brought into no man's land. There was also a series of denials and accusations of 'gross exaggeration'.

Returning to Captain Elliott's correspondence he tells Ernst Jünger:

> 'I was on a course at the time when both sides were driven to the surface and conversations were held. It was my friend, Captain Abbott of A Company, to whom you spoke. He says you were wearing a blue and white disc on your cap and that you suggested exchanging pipes as souvenirs.'

Jünger replied:

> 'I remember Captain Abbott quite well. We spent a very nice quarter of an hour chatting and arranged to have a glass of beer together after the war in Berlin. My cap had not a blue and white, but black and white cockade as I belonged to a Prussian regiment. I should have liked to have exchanged reminiscences with him, but I refrained from leaving the Trench on account of the men. The Commandant, Colonel Von Oppen, did not approve of our fraternising, but I thought it great fun.'

Identified

Having identified Captain Abbott through the correspondence, I turned to an account in *The Green Tiger* by a sergeant with the 8/Leicesters. He confirmed that the young officer with 'a somewhat more ornate cap' who spoke with Ernst Jünger was the then Lieutenant J Abbott. [27] He said that 'The Officer who went out to round them in was the late Captain J Abbot (then lieutenant). He personally spoke those words which Lieutenant Jünger relates: *Vous avez des cochons aussi chez vous.*'

Another account was sent in by 'No. 12555, 8th Leicesters'. The regimental number is that of a Private John Hunt.[28] His story is re–told in the *Leicester Mercury* of 5 August 1964.[29] 'Lieutenant Jünger's account is quite true for I was among those who were holding this 'Peace Treaty' – and who could blame us?' he begins. He goes on to tell of the appalling conditions at the front with bodies buried by the French projecting into the trenches. 'They decided it would be better to be shot than drowned,' he continued:

> 'They transmitted the words 'if you no shoot, we no shoot.' … It was my duty at that time on signals to report every night on ammunition expended and for nights my report was: 'ammunition expended – nil.' Both sides were gentlemen.'

He concludes by saying:

> 'For myself, I did not go to the centre, but stood and watched. This was a bit of heaven – then a shot – and back to hell we all went. During those days many lives had been spared and perhaps the life of the man who fired the shot. The least he could have done was to put it into the air. From which side it came I cannot say, but I do know that after that shot many lives were lost.'

'No fraternising'

Another letter was to reveal the identity of the man who said he fired the shot, which killed the German soldier. He had been a corporal with 6/Leicesters and his story was also recounted in the *Leicester Mercury* on 5 August 1964.[30]'Captain Wetenhall paraded the Company and said the troops in front had been fraternising with the enemy. He pointed out how foolish this was and that exchanging souvenirs was extremely childish.' During the night the company was sent to an isolated stronghold only a few yards from the German line. The corporal was the last to go in to what he described as a 'terrible hole.' An officer took his arm and said to him: 'Remember, no fraternising!'

These are the corporal's words:

> 'At the dawn of the day, there was some movement in the front opposite. We were on the alert at once. There were cries of '*Kamerad*' and 'good morning'. I looked over the parapet and saw several Germans waving arms and beckoning us to go across. Someone shouted 'get down!' I shouted several times 'get down you fools, there's a war on,' but the Germans continued. A shot

rang out. I fired that shot. I don't think I intended to kill – more frighten. But the shot had that effect. Lieutenant Jünger's version of 'moles down a hole' was modest if you had seen how fast those Germans moved. I never heard any arguments between officers at all and don't believe there was any. Nothing was said to me and no–one ever thought of 'treachery'. We tried to uphold the good name of the Leicesters.'

More letters were sent to *The Green Tiger* including one which revealed that the German who was shot by the corporal was known simply as 'Paul', a young man who had once worked in London as a waiter. Paul was the German soldier who began the fraternisation by asking about the conditions of the British trenches and shouted 'if you no shoot, we no shoot' before it was transmitted among the men and agreed on.[31]

In his letter to Captain Elliot, Ernst Jünger may be alluding to this man when he mentions that 'We used to hear your music in Berles sometimes. A man who used sometimes to sing English songs belonged to my company, he fell, shot through the head.'

Captain Charles Aubrey Babington Elliott of 8/Leicesters. Courtesy Tom Elliott via Matthew Richardson, author of Fighting Tigers – The Leicestershire Regiment at War

Captain Elliott concludes: 'If you feel inclined, I should be very pleased indeed to hear from you and be informed on some of the things I have mentioned.' Jünger, of course, did reply and in his closing paragraph said that on some days, whilst in Douchy, they buried more than thirty dead at the same time. He ends by saying that in September 1916 they left and went to Guillemont on the Somme and compared to that, the days in Monchy and Berles were a holiday.

In Brown and Seaton's *The Christmas Truce, The Western Front, December 1914* the sole reference to the rumoured December 1915 cessation is a paragraph from *Storm of Steel*.[32] Stanley Weintraub's *Silent Night*, *the Remarkable Christmas Truce of 1914* (2001) stresses that any attempts at a Truce during any Christmases after 1914 were forbidden and that 'there was to be an attempt to repeat this custom of old–time warfare at Christmas 1915, but it was a small isolated one and the fraternisation of 1914 was never repeated.' [33]

Myth and reality

This article has considered if there was a second Christmas truce anywhere along the front line in December 1915 and revisited Jünger's exposition from a Leicestershire perspective. The battalion diaries of the Leicestershire Regiment for Christmas 1915 tell mostly of sniping and shelling. [34] This suggests that the reports of a truce were indeed fabrication. But if 'fratting', as it was known, was forbidden, then one would assume that it would not have been recorded in the official diaries.

An inspection of original, primary sources connected with the 1915 Christmas Truce reveals the significant differences between myth and verifiable reality. Whilst there is some discontent with Ernst Jünger's account, and whilst what happened in December 1915 cannot be considered an accomplished truce but a series of fraternisations, this rare exchange allowed two officers on opposing sides being able to find an armistice through the written word.

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(3) Pollard, P, Letter dated 26.12.1914 in *The Parish Magazine of St Peter and St Paul*, Syston, February 1915, p.4.

(4) Baker, C, *The Truce, The Day the War Stopped,* (Amberley,:2014), p.13.

(5) The Christmas Truce at Ploegsteert Wood, 1914 by Soren Hawkes, http://www.passchendaeleprints.bigcartel.com

(6) Jünger, E, *Storm of Steel*, trans. Michael Hoffman, (Penguin:2004), p.viii.

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(12) Remarque, E M, *All Quiet on the Western Front,* (Putnam:1929).

(13) Pocket Diaries of Captain C A B Elliott, 8th Battalion, The Leicestershire Regiment, 1914–1920s, (Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, DE8402/1–6).

(14) Draft of Elliott's letter to Jünger (Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, DE8402/56).

(15) Three translations of Jünger's letter (Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, DE8402/58/1/5). Jünger uses metric measurements, Elliott imperial ones.

(16) Ernst Jünger, *In Stahlgewittern* (J G Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger GmbH: 1920), p.58.

(17) Jünger, *Storm of Steel*, pp.56–57.

(18) A sap is a trench made by digging outwards from an existing front line one, usually into no–man's land. See Martin Pegler, *Soldiers' Songs and Slang of the Great War* (Osprey, 2014), p.164.

(19) 'There are some pigs on your side too.'

(20) 'For clarity's sake, we gave a solemn mutual declaration of war, to commence three minutes after the end of our talks, and following a "Good–night" on his part, and an "Au revoir!" on mine, to the regret of my men I fired off a shot that pinged against his steel loophole, and got one myself that almost knocked the rifle out of my hands.' Jünger, *Storm of Steel*, p.57.

(21) Jünger, *Storm of Steel*, p.58. Hindoostan was superscribed on the cap badge in recognition of the Leicestershire Regiment's commendable conduct whilst serving in India between 1804 and 1823.

(22) War diaries of the 6th Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment for 24 December 1915. Private Collection.

(23) War diaries of the 6th Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment for 25 December 1915. Private Collection.

(24) Milne, J, *Footprints of the 1/4th Leicestershire Regiment, August 1914 to November 1918,* (Edgar Backus:1935), p.73.

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Tunnelling Companies on the Somme
Part Two

by David Whittaker

On 1 January 1916, with the introduction of an Inspector of Mines based at GHQ and a Controller of Mines appointed to each Army, a chain of command for mining activities was put in place for the first time. From this point onwards it was stipulated that major mines were only to be fired in conjunction with an infantry attack. The Battle of the Somme was the first occasion on which this joint venture between the tunnelling companies of the Royal Engineers and the infantry was applied. Although the work of the tunnelling companies was completed successfully and on time, David Whittaker believes that the part they played in the first day of the battle has never been fully acknowledged. It will be seen from the histories of the tunnelling companies presented in this two–part article – which concludes here – that from their formation in 1915 until 1 July 1916 they successfully completed the many and arduous tasks demanded of them.

179 Tunnelling Company
Formed Rouen – 10 July 1915 under the command of Captain E O Alabaster

On 8 August 179 Tunnelling Company (TC) entrained for the HQ of the Third Army where Captain Alabaster met with Commandant Thomas, OC the French Corps du Génie, to explore the possibility of the British taking over the French mining system at La Boisselle. Capitaine Piraud, the officer in command at La Boisselle, subsequently agreed that the company should work alongside the French miners to gain experience of the mining system. On 14 August Second Lieutenant H Humphrys and a small party of men were sent to Albert as an advance party. On the 20th when the French engineers left to work elsewhere, 179 TC took full control of the mining system. It immediately became apparent that a new survey of the system would have to be undertaken as the maps supplied by the French were inaccurate. Four days later a camouflet was prepared to halt the advance of the Germans who had been heard working very close to Dohollue trench. While the camouflet was being tamped and the leads tested it became apparent to both Captain Alabaster and Lieutenant Humphrys that the enemy was closer than previously thought. It was essential therefore to fire the charge without delay before the enemy had a chance to fire theirs first. However, before the camouflet could be fired, the leads were cut by an enemy grenade and firing was delayed. At 2.40pm following a hasty repair to the leads, a camouflet of 300lbs of ammonal was fired – the first firing carried out solely by 179 TC.

For three days previously the Germans had been heard working near 'A' shaft, so at 5.00am on the 29th the decision was taken to fire a camouflet of 600lbs of guncotton. At 2.10pm the enemy retaliated by firing a mine, burying both Sapper William Goldsborough and Private Henry Atherton alive. Neither man survived, becoming the first casualties of the company. Goldsborough is remembered on Panel 1 of the Le Touret Memorial and Atherton on the Thiepval Memorial.

The first half of September was quiet as far as mine explosions were concerned. However, on 14 September this period of calm ended when the enemy fired a camouflet which destroyed the heading of gallery E–3. Private James Comaskey (alias J Kershaw) working in the gallery at the time was killed. Following the explosion Lance Corporal Albert Parker descended the shaft in an attempt to rescue Kershaw, but was overcome by gas and died. Next to descend the shaft was Second Lieutenant Cecil Calvert, but he too was overcome by gas and died. Kershaw's name appears on the Thiepval Memorial, with Parker and Calvert being buried at Albert Communal Cemetery Extension.

Grave of Second Lieutenant Cecil Calvert

Enquiry and court martial

At 2.00pm on 26 September 1915, 179 TC fired two mines in galleries D–4 and D–5. Following the firing seven men were reported missing and a Court of Enquiry was set up to investigate their disappearance. Eventually it was found that they had been killed accidentally during the firing of the mines. Corporal Douglas and Lance Corporal Lindell were held responsible for the deaths and on 2 October were tried by Field General Court Martial. However, on the 6th the GOC 53 Brigade judged that no further action should be taken against the two men. The men who were killed – Corporal William Lynch, Lance Corporal Arthur Wood, Privates Sidney Percey, David Williams, Robert Roberts, Bert Woollan and Walter Williams – are remembered on the Thiepval Memorial.

On 17 October Captain Henry Hance joined the company, assuming command on the 20th – Captain Alabaster left 179 TC on 1 November to join 89 Field Company RE.

Captain E O Alabaster

At 1.30am on 22 November the Germans fired a mine (15,000kg being the size of the charge discovered during research into German records by Peter Barton of the La Boiselle Study Group) with devastating consequences. Prior to the explosion Captain Hance, who suspected that the enemy were working close by, had ordered a charge to be laid. He later cancelled the order being fearful that the enemy were ready to fire a camouflet as soon as they detected a similar move by the British. Some time earlier a charge of 6,000lbs, untamped but left ready until required, had been prepared along a gallery leading from W shaft. The enemy firing detonated this previously laid mine killing six sappers and eight Infantry men. As a result of these detonations twelve men were buried at Albert Communal Cemetery Extension and two are today mentioned on the Thiepval Memorial. [1] Captain Hance in his report stated that 'Should it prove that this charge is still intact we can fire it again, but I almost fear that the violent concussion of the enemy's charge must have detonated our own. In that case much of the gas produced must have come from our own charge which was untamped.'[2] Before any rescue was attempted a canary was lowered down the shaft to test for poisonous gas. It was raised one minute later and found to be dead. A little later a second canary was lowered but it too was dead when raised. Eventually one of the rescue crew wearing a Proto apparatus kit descended the shaft, where upon reaching the

bottom he found two men dead. Meanwhile, despite being at the top of the shaft and in the open air, the men assisting in the rescue attempt were affected by the gas emitting from the shaft. It was reported that due to the volume and toxicity of gas created 'that there was no hope for the others; they were certainly poisoned if not killed by the explosion.'(3)

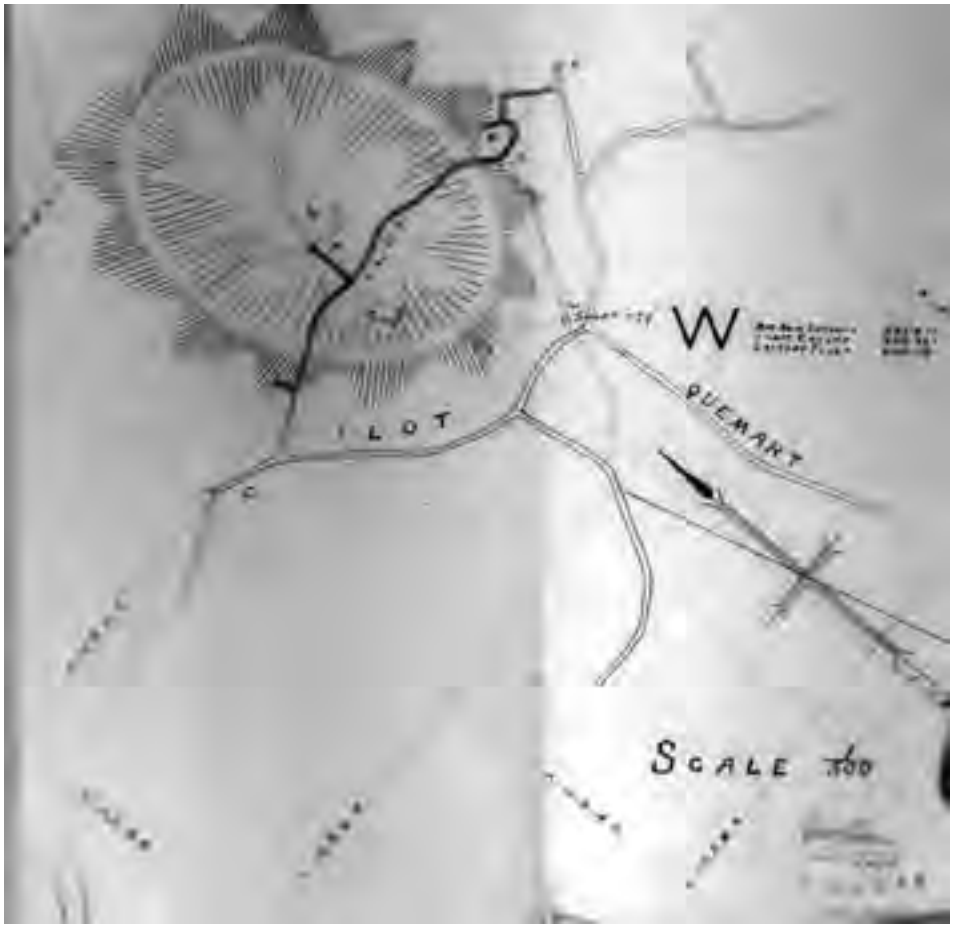
The discovery, in the summer of 2013, of the remains of several British soldiers during excavations undertaken by the La Boisselle Study Group (LBSG) at the Glory Hole site in La Boisselle, appeared to cast doubt on the identities of at least eight of the men killed in the German detonation of 22 November 1915 who are now buried in Albert Communal Cemetery. A recent report, written on behalf of the LBSG, has drawn attention to the fact that the there was no record of the recovery and burial eight men of 10/Essex killed that day – Harry Carter, Harry Fensome, Albert Huzzey, William Marmon, George Pier, Charles Ruggles, Edward Toomey and Charles Aldridge. A full archaeological survey took place in November and December 2013 during which the bodies of two men of 10/Essex were recovered. Unfortunately the group's contract with the landowners expired before further work could be completed. Genealogical research begun by the LBSG, allowed the Ministry of Defence Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) to locate and make contact with all the descendants of the eight soldiers named above. DNA analysis finally identified the first man to be found as William James Marmon aged 21 from St Pancras, London, and the second as Harry Carter, also 21, born in West Ham, Essex. This confirmed that they were indeed two of the eight men killed by the mine explosion of 22 November 1915.

The reburial of William Marmon and Harry Carter was due to take place at 11.00am on 19 October 2016 in Albert Communal Cemetery Extension – the same cemetery in which the men were believed to have lain for over a century. (4)

1 July

The war diary entry for 1 July 1916 states:

> 'Attack on enemy position launched at 7.30am. The under mentioned mines were successfully fired by this Company at 7.28am. 40,000lbs (17.85 ton) of ammonal in chamber head of D transversal under Y Sap. 60,000lbs (26.78 ton) of ammonal in two chambers at end of Locknagar (sic) drive. 8,000lbs (3.57 ton) in N–2 straight, 8,000lbs in number five right Inch shaft workings. All these mines did considerable damage to the enemy field works. This was ascertained by actual inspection after the infantry had carried the position. D transversal and Locknagar severely wrecked his surface works, whilst the Inch Street mines wrecked his underground mine system in that vicinity. All the mines caused casualties. All trench mortar emplacements constructed at the ends of the various saps on the fronts of the 8, 32 and 36 Divisions were completed and opened up. The Company met with no casualties in carrying out the above. (5)



179 Tunnelling Company: Sketch of the ilot showing the position of W shaft where a charge was left un–tamped in an adjacent gallery leading to the deaths of fourteen men

174 Tunnelling Company

Formed Croix–du–Bac – 5 March 1915 under the command of Major Bertram Danford

On 27 April 1915 sounds of German mining were thought to have been heard for the first time in number 6 gallery at Houplines. Work was suspended and a period of listening took place to ascertain whether the sounds heard were the result of hostile mining. There was some doubt as to whether any sounds had been heard at all so work re–commenced. The following day when sounds of enemy pick work were heard distinctly, an auger was used to bore a nine foot deep hole at the face of the mine towards the hostile sounds. Much louder sounds were heard on the 29th and a charge of 500lbs of gun powder was immediately put in place and tamped. Throughout 1 and 2 May sounds continued to be heard in number 6 gallery. Captain Edwards of 2/Monmouth Regiment subsequently visited and estimated that the enemy was less than five feet away. The situation had become critical and on the following morning the decision was taken to fire the charge. At 8.30am on 3 May 1915 the mine was successfully fired, forming a large crater and destroying the enemy gallery – the first mine fired by 174 TC.

On 11 May the company took over a listening gallery at Railway Fort at Le Touquet. Two days later the enemy fired a mine just 30 yards short of the British trench. The explosion had the effect of blowing in part of the gallery and killing two listeners who were positioned there at the time – the first deaths experienced by the company due to enemy mining. Their names are not known.

At 8.30pm on 15 May hostile mining was heard immediately above a gallery at Railway Fort. The commanding officer of D Company of the Sherwood Foresters was informed and he ordered the immediate firing of a charge. At 9.00pm the charge was fired. By midday on the following day the sappers had resumed work. Then at 6.15pm it was reported that miners had been gassed and rescue work was started. Lance Corporal J Beardall of the Notts and Derbys Regiment, attached to 174 TC, and Sapper S Lenton of 174 TC, died of gas poisoning during the rescue attempt, with one officer and six sappers of 174 TC being rescued. Beardall and Lenton are buried at Strand Military Cemetery, Belgium.

On 21 July a notice was received from III Corps advising the company of a move to a different sector and at 10.30pm on 23 July 174 TC entrained and left for Mericourt – arriving at 9.00am the following day. From Mericourt they marched to Bray where they were to take over mining operations from the French 20th Mining Company, under the orders of the French Army until the arrival of the British 5th Division.

At 6.30pm on 5 October 1915 the Germans fired a mine in the Fricourt centre sector killing six men who were working in the gallery at the time. They were Sapper Herbert Ferguson, remembered on the Thiepval Memorial and Sapper W Dickinson along with four infantrymen of the Dorset Regiment – Privates William Blandford, Edwin Gardiner and

A rescue party about to enter a mine

William Skinner – who are buried at Point 110 Old Military Cemetery, Fricourt. The name of the fourth private is not known. Lieutenant Stokes, Second Lieutenant Norman Isherwood and Corporal Hope distinguished themselves by trying to rescue any survivors, but were only able to retrieve three bodies – a further two bodies were found and removed the following day. On 8 October 1915 Second Lieutenant Isherwood together with Second Lieutenant John Paynter and Sapper John Burns, were listening at the face of a mine in the Fricourt left sector for sounds of German working. At 4.10pm a camouflet was fired killing all three men, who are buried at Point 110 Old Military Cemetery, Fricourt.

On the 16th Major Danford, CO of 174 TC, was transferred to the Third Army as Staff Officer for Mines. He was replaced as CO of the company by Lieutenant Ralph Stokes who would rapidly be promoted to the rank of captain.

Gas accumulation

In a report Captain Stokes mentions an enemy explosion which took place on 25 October 1915 affecting the gallery known as C–3. His report noted that following the explosion there was an accumulation of gas, with the explosion also damaging the firing leads of one of the company's charges. The report goes on to say that on 1 November Sergeant Dawson and Sappers Crossley and Regan, who had entered the gallery to continue the work of retrieving the charge, released a pocket of gas whilst removing some sandbags As a result both miners were overcome. Answering a call for help from Sergeant Dawson, Sergeant J Whittaker and Corporal A Turnbull went to his assistance and attempted to rescue Crossley. However, they too were overcome. Lance Corporal R Ward then entered the gallery and tried to help both Whittaker and Turnbull. Ward managed to get the men part way out of the gallery when he himself was overcome. Next to arrive on the scene were Sergeant Barnett and fatigue men from 1/Cheshire Regiment who successfully rescued Whittaker, Turnbull and Ward. At the same time Privates Robinson, Jefferson and Flannigan again attempted to rescue Crossley who was lying unconscious near the face. However, like those before them they were rapidly overcome by gas. Captain L Hutchison and Second Lieutenant P Whitehead arrived next and between them successfully brought the three privates from the Cheshire Regiment and Sapper Crossley to the surface. They were followed by a mine rescue team which, because the gallery proved too narrow to accommodate their Proto Sets, was unable to rescue Sapper Regan. It became impossible to continue with the rescue attempt and by this stage Regan was showing no signs of life. Sapper Regan is buried at Point 110 Old Military Cemetery, Fricourt.

A second report by Captain Stokes relates to an enemy camouflet which was fired on 13 November 1915. This camouflet, fired at 5.15am between galleries C–6 and C–7, caused damage to the lower gallery of C–7. Gas began filtering slowly through the soil, entering gallery L–18 and making its way onwards into gallery L–18–3 where Lance Corporal Elliott, Sappers S Wood and D Barber and an infantry fatigue man were working. Sapper Buswell who was at the entrance of C–7, made his way to the entrance of L–18 where he called down the shaft to see if the men were well. The four men had already started to make their way out and Elliott called back to Buswell to say they were well. However, the four men were already beginning to feel the effects of gas. Proto rescue men were immediately called and were able to haul the men up the shaft to the surface by rope. By the time the last man was rescued an hour had elapsed since the firing of the camouflet. Although all the men were given oxygen and sent to hospital, Sapper Barber died on his way there. He is buried at Point 110 Old Military Cemetery, Fricourt.

On 9 January 1916 Captain L G Hutchison took command of the company when Captain Stokes left to take up the position of Assistant Inspector of Mines at GHQ.

On the 13th plans were made to place a charge of 15,000lbs of blastine at a depth of 70

Fricourt Sector: 174 Tunnelling Company. Sketch showing the enemy camouflet fired on 13 November 1915 between galleries C–6 and C–7 which led to the death of Sapper D Barber

feet in gallery L–18–2. There was a difference of opinion between the Controller of Mines and Captain Hutchison regarding whether the charge would be sufficient to break the surface. Hutchison was convinced that the charge was adequate and at 4.59pm on 17 January it was fired with great effect resulting in a crater 45–50 yards across – believed to be the largest charge fired to that point.

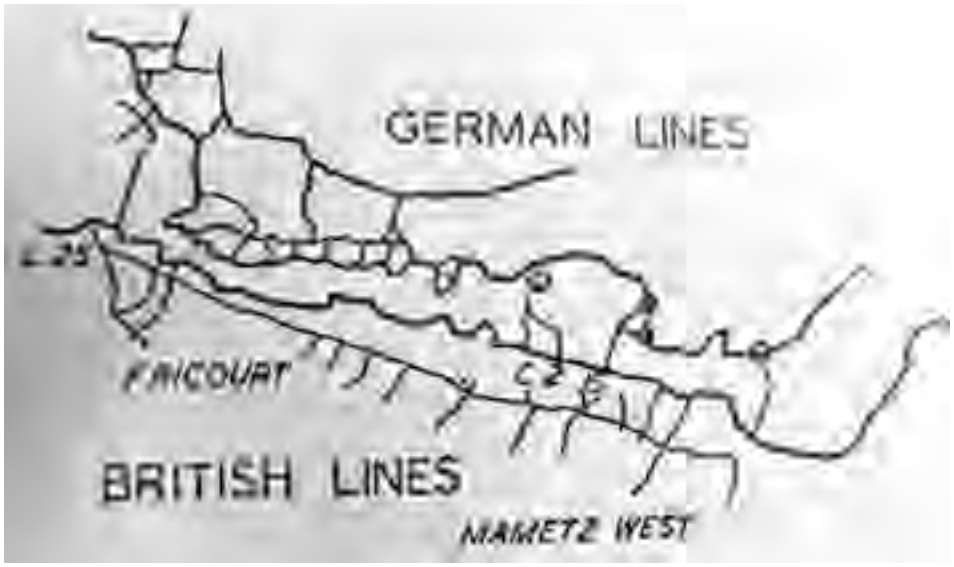
At 6.30pm on 25 March 1916 four powerful mines were fired. It was reported that at the moment of firing the ground shook violently and up to three hundred yards of the enemy parapet was destroyed. Throughout the night the German injured were heard groaning and calling for help. The following day the Germans flew a Red Cross flag in order to rescue their injured without coming under fire.

1 July

The Official History states that 'Four small mines of 500lbs each were exploded under the German line south of Hidden Wood, where much mining had already taken place and a frontal attack was not to be made.' [6] One of the mines, known as C–3 Sap, was fired by 174 TC with the other three mines being fired by 183 TC. Two of those mines contained 660lbs of ammonal and one contained 600lbs of ammonal; not 500lbs in each as mentioned in the Official History.

174 TC's L–25 Sap was driven towards the enemy trench known as Aeroplane Trench to a length of 750 feet for the emplacement of two Lewis guns. Other galleries were enlarged to accommodate the infantry. Before the attack no less than 1,500 troops of 20/Manchester Regiment and 1/Royal Welch Fusiliers, along with Stokes mortar teams and machine gunners, were to shelter there without a single casualty. The galleries would also be used extensively by the reserves.

Two letters of congratulation were received by the company, one from General Sir Henry Rawlinson KCB and the other from Lieutenant General Henry Horne. The first letter from General Rawlinson to the Reserve Army reads:

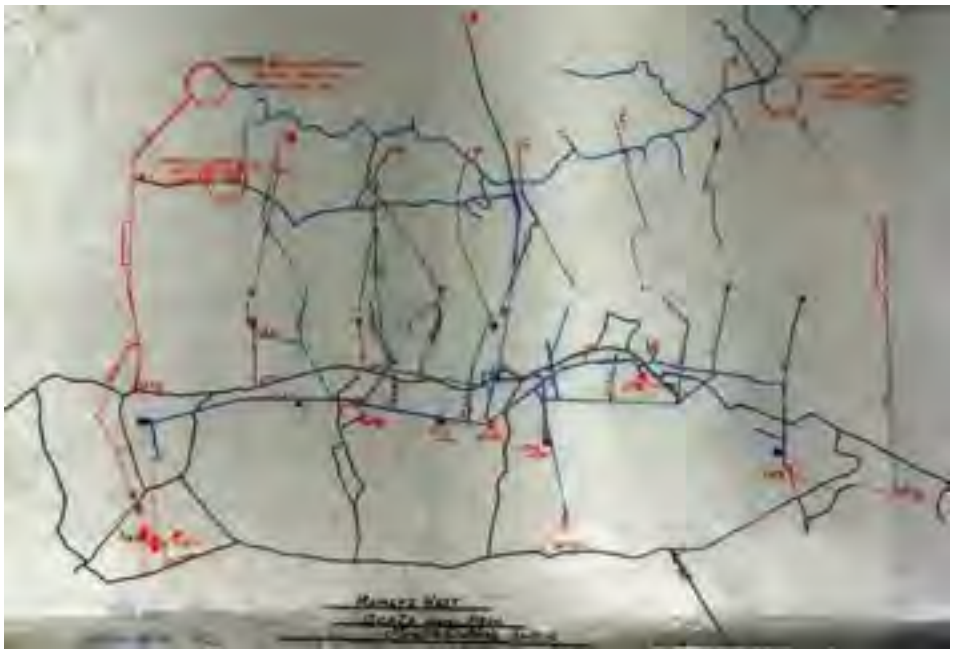


The L–25 sap dug towards Aeroplane Trench on the Mametz West sector is clearly visible on the left of this sketch

> 'They have done exceedingly good work during the time that they have been with the Fourth Army, and I am sorry to part with them. In the area where they have been employed below ground they have had a hard task and by dint of strenuous labour succeeded in establishing a complete defensive mining system, as well as undertaking offensive projects successfully in several instances.
>
> The work they have done during and immediately prior to the Battle of the Somme, has been in every way satisfactory.' [7]

The second letter received from the Commander of the XV Corps, reads:

> 'I should like to take this opportunity of placing on record my appreciation of the skilful work and gallant conduct of this Company.
>
> Prior to the assault of 1st July, the 174 Company had been for a year engaged in underground warfare with the German miners and by the end of June 1916, had succeeded in driving them back from their position under our trenches until the latter were fully protected. They sustained many casualties during this period. During the period immediately preceding the assault (they) enlarged their galleries to shelter 1,500 men during the bombardment and assembling for the attack.[8]



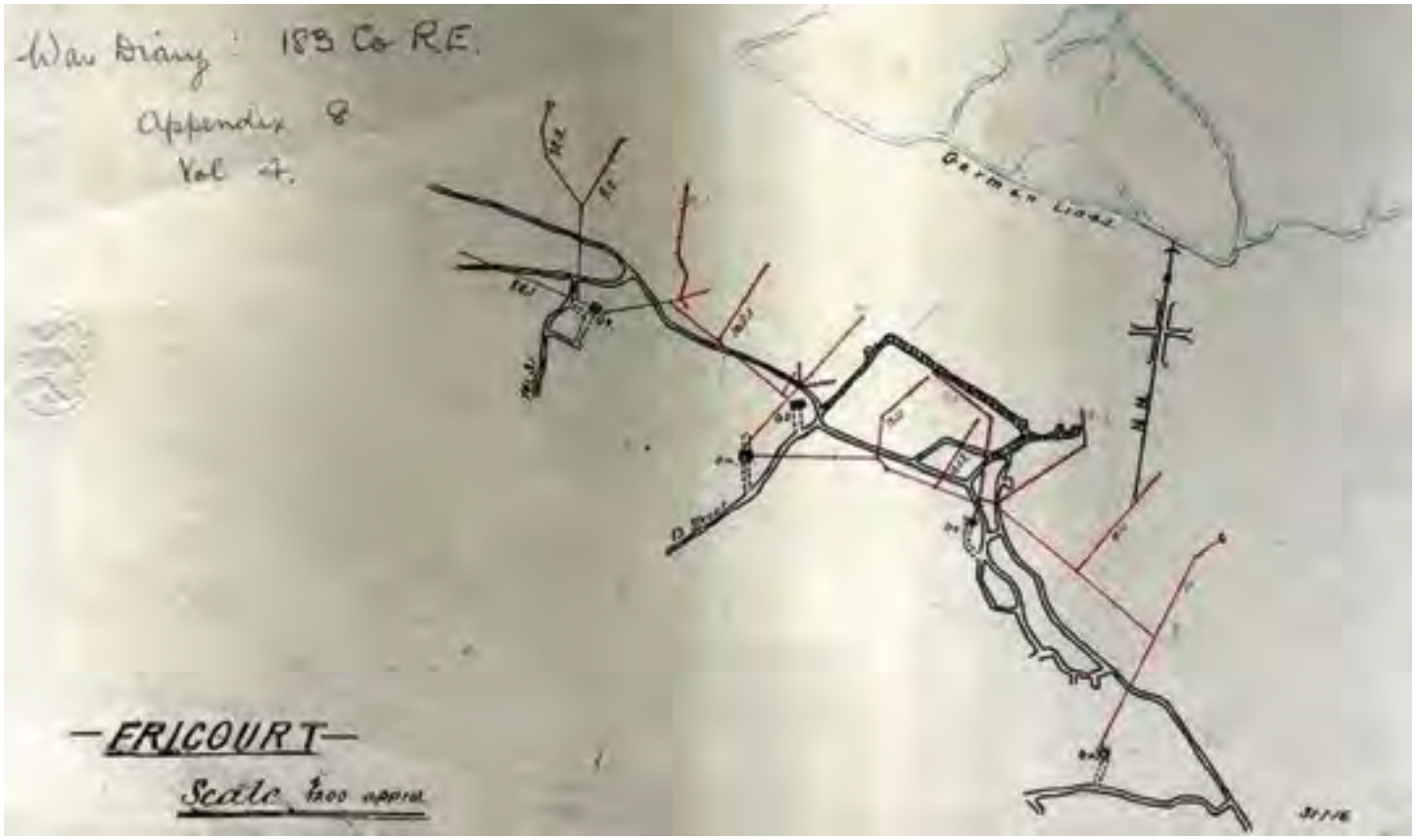
Mametz West: sketch showing the three mines fired by 183 Tunnelling Company on 1 July; the two mines on the left contained 660lbs of ammonal and the one on the right 600lbs of ammonal. None of the mines contained 500lbs of ammonal as described in the Official History

183 Tunnelling Company

Formed Rouen – 9 October 1915 under the command of Major Horace Hickling DSO, MC

By 18 October 1915 183 TC had moved to Fontaine–Les–Cappy to take over the Jeanny and Filipi sectors at Fay started by 2/Wessex Field Company, handing over the sectors to French engineers in early November. By 12 November the company's HQ had been relocated to Froissy.

During the period from 22 to 30 November the Germans were heard driving a gallery towards R–1 and R–2 galleries in the Fricourt sector. It was decided to fire four camouflets, two in R–1 and two in R–2, with 1,500lbs of ammonal in each gallery. As the Germans continued their approach both galleries were charged and tamped and at 3.20pm on 1 December they were fired – the first charges fired by 183 TC. At 8.00pm on the same day the enemy fired a retaliatory mine close to R–3–2 and R–3–1–1 galleries. This had the effect of destroying both galleries and seriously damaging R–3 shaft. The explosion was to lead to the deaths of ten men, five dying in the collapsed galleries, two gassed whilst trying to escape and Lieutenant Harold Llewellyn Twite and two men being killed when the lodgement they were working in collapsed. It is likely that Sapper L Kent, who was working in gallery R–8 which had previously been clear of gas, died as a result of the unexpected gas contamination caused by the German explosion. Six men are buried in Citadel New Military Cemetery, four remembered on the Thiepval Memorial and one



Fricourt Sector: sketch of 183 Tunnelling Company's mines fired on 26 January 1916 to destroy German galleries close by

remembered on the Ploegsteert memorial.[9]

During January 1916 there had been a build up of poisonous gas in the mining system in the Fricourt sector. Consequently listening for enemy activity became impossible and had to be suspended. In the meantime a lateral gallery was completed to provide ventilation to the mine system. Although strongly suspected, it was impossible to know with certainty whether the Germans were active due to the enforced inactivity of the listeners. With this in mind the company decided to charge the mines in galleries 8–1, 8–2, 10 and 9–1–1 with a view to destroying any enemy galleries in the vicinity. At 5.45pm on 26 January a charge of 8,000lbs of ammonal was fired in gallery 8–1 and a charge of 4,500lbs of blastine fired in gallery 8–2. At 6.15pm, with a delay of ten seconds between the two firings, charges of 6,000lbs of blastine were fired in galleries 10 and 9–1–1. All four charges were fired at a depth of some 70 feet. As a result no enemy activity was heard for several days following the firings.

Working in silence

Between 24 and 28 January 1916 the enemy could be heard working at four places in the Carnoy sector and it was decided to make ready two camouflets in galleries 4 and 3–2 for firing. During 29 January there was heavy enemy bombardment of the British lines making it impossible to hear whether the Germans were working in their mine system. On the 30th the Germans could again be heard advancing steadily closer to the company's system. By 5.45pm it was decided that they had come close enough and that a 'blow' now would have maximum effect. At a depth of approximately thirty five feet with forty feet of tamping, 4,000lbs of blastine was fired in gallery 3–2 and 4,000lbs of mixed ammonal and blastine fired in gallery 4. Following the blast no further sounds of working were heard. The decision to fire the two camouflets had achieved its purpose, not only destroying the enemy galleries but also their miners. Between 5 and 6 February the Germans were heard working in the Fricourt sector close to gallery 9–2. It appeared that the German miners paid little attention to working silently, with the company's listener reporting distinct sounds of them walking in their galleries. They could be heard listening for five minutes, going away and then returning about an hour later to continue their work. It is evident that in understanding the importance of working silently the British miners gained a valuable tactical advantage over their German counterparts.

At 3.45pm on 7 February 1916 the Germans fired two mines. The first explosion, although large, failed to cause a crater, but the second cratered close to number 8 shaft. The majority of the company's men who had been working in the vicinity had left the mining system when the explosions took place. Rescue work was immediately started from number 10 shaft to bring in any sappers still remaining in the mine. A report on the incident written by Major Hickling states:

> 'Flame appears to have occurred in 10–1 from 10–1–2 to 10 shafts. Three sappers were overcome and collapsed. From the distance the bodies were found from the shaft it would seem they were overcome by gas first. Proto men went down 10 and sent up one sapper who was close to bottom badly gassed. He then brought out the second who was still breathing though badly cut and burned. He then dragged third body to shaft but got no answer to his signal to pull up. He satisfied himself there was no one else below and then went up and found the officers and men winding in the shaft lodgement were overcome by gas. With assistance he got all these out.
>
> A rescue party arrived who rendered valuable assistance at this point and who brought up the last body. Infantry had 3 men killed by gas.' [10]

The three Infantrymen mentioned in the report are Privates Arthur Edwards, Charles Harman and J Ingram, who are all buried at Citadel New Military Cemetery. Sappers W Lee and Patrick McNally also died and are buried at Citadel New Military Cemetery.

Lathbury saves the day

On 12 February 1916 the enemy fired a camouflet close to gallery 9–2 in the Fricourt sector. It was noted on the following day that gas had seeped through to gallery 8–1. Five days later a man was gassed at the entrance to gallery 11–1–1. Many sappers were working in the mine system at the time and it became imperative to find the source of the gas. Second Lieutenant W Ridley descended number 10 shaft wearing a Salvus Set. When he arrived at gallery 8–1 he found it full of gas. While he was investigating the gallery he accidentally hit a timber frame dislodging his mouthpiece. As a consequence he breathed in poisonous fumes and, convulsed by a fit of coughing, dislodged his nose clip. Now unprotected by the Salvus Set he became prey to the deadly fumes. Despite being partially overcome Ridley managed to struggle to shaft 11 where he raised the alarm. Two rescue men, also wearing

Salvus Sets, descended the shaft to continue the rescue operation. They managed to rescue some of the men but as the operation progressed and time wore on they found that their Salvus Sets were no longer effective. In the hope that the gas had dissipated they decided to discard the sets. However, gas was still present and both men were overcome. More men descended the shaft in an attempt to save them, but they too were gassed. At this point Lieutenant Lathbury arrived. Descending shaft 10 he found no gas present in gallery 8, but discovered gas was present in the branch into gallery 8–1. Lathbury closed the gas door at this point and clean air soon began to flow through the system. He continued towards shaft 11 where he found four men overcome by gas who he managed to revive. Others arrived on the scene and with their help the men were rescued and everyone returned to the surface. It was assumed that the sudden increase in gas from gallery 8–1 was the result of ground settlement.

Experimental explosions

On 15 May 1916 Russian saps were started from AP3 and AP4 in the Maricourt sector. Both saps would be used eventually for Stokes mortar emplacements at the beginning of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July. On 20 May 183 TC's officers decided to drive an 8–inch experimental bore hole from the face of a sap charged with 300lbs of ammonal. The subsequent firing created a crater approximately sixty feet long and at least three feet deep. There was also an experimental explosion using a Push Pipe which was driven to a length of five feet, the detonation of which created a trench approximately three feet deep, with a further four feet of easily removable earth broken by the explosion. In the light of the forthcoming battle these experiments proved vital in showing that the provision of quickly constructed communication trenches was achievable.

The majority of German activity during the month took place in the Carnoy and Mametz West sectors. In the latter sector the enemy were getting too close to the company's galleries and it was decided to fire a camouflet. However, to the great relief of 183 TC the threat subsided and the camouflet remained unfired. The company's whereabouts had therefore remained secret, leaving them free to concentrate all their efforts on the construction of the galleries to be used on 1 July. June 1916 proved to be a very wet month, with heavy rain at times hindering work in several of the British mines. On 10 June an order was received requiring all special work to be completed by the 30th. Between 11 and 17 June almost all work ceased in the deep levels, with work being concentrated on completing the Russian saps in time for 1 July. By the 18th preparations were almost complete. On 21 June, much to the consternation of the officers who were concerned that the Germans may have been alerted to the close proximity of the British, a sapper using an auger broke into a void in the Carnoy sector thought to be an enemy sump. A listener was positioned all night at the break–in point, reporting the following day that no sounds had been heard. On the same day in the Maricourt sector it was reported that the hydraulic pipe pushing in gallery AP3 had reached its limit at 210 feet and in AP4 further advance was impossible due to the pipe pushing having struck solid chalk. On 23 June in gallery 2–3 in the Mametz East sector the sappers bored into a German dugout. Loud talking was heard, whereupon the sappers silently sealed the hole without the enemy apparently being aware that the British were so close. By 25 June all work had been completed, with only small parties of sappers remaining to repair any damage caused by the forthcoming bombardment. Orders were received on the 28th announcing the postponement of 'Z' day. On the following day damage to the galleries caused by both British and German shell fire was reported. 183 TC was confident that any damage would be repaired by 7.30am on 1 July.

1 July 1916

The war diary entry for 1 July 1916 concludes:

> 'Our casualties during the whole of the operation, from the commencement of the bombardment were 2 officers and 13 other ranks.'[11] None of the casualties died as a result of their injuries.'

References

(1) Sappers John Lane, Ezekiel Parkes, Robert Gavin, J Glen, A Taylor, William Walker. All recorded as 21 November. Privates A Huzzey, C Aldridge, Harry Carter, F Fensome, W Marmon, J Pier, C Ruggles, E Toomey. All recorded as 22 November.

(2) The National Archives (TNA), WO95/244 war diary 179 Tunnelling Company RE.

(3) TNA, *op. cit.*

(4) 'British First World War soldiers Identified through DNA Testing', La Boisselle Study Group, 8 September 2016. See http://www.laboisselleproject.com/2016/09/08/british–first–world–war–soldiers–identified–through–dna–testing/ Accessed 29 September 2016.

(5) TNA, *op. cit.*

(6) Official History 1916 Vol. 1, p349.

(7) TNA, WO95/404 War Diary 174 Tunnelling Company RE.

(8) TNA, *op. cit.*

(9) Lieutenant Harold Twite, Sappers Stephen Davey, F Eddy, John Eva, James Higgins, Stanley James, W Jenkin, G Matthews, George Reed, Richard Thomas, L Kent.

(10) TNA, WO95/406 war diary 183 Tunnelling Company RE.

(11) TNA, *op. cit.*

Somme and Rhine

The Memoirs of Major Edward Ison Andrews

Part Two – From Recovery to the Rhine

Edited by Michael Lucas

A memoir written by Major Edward Ison Andrews, MBE, TD, in old age and now edited by Michael Lucas, recalls being a Yeomanry trooper in England; his brief Western Front service as a subaltern with 1/5 Battalion, the Cheshire Regiment; being seriously wounded at Gommecourt on the first day of the Somme; lengthy recovery from wounds and service in the Rhineland in 1919.

In this concluding part Andrews recalls his recovery from wounds received on the Somme on 1 July 1916 and his service until 1919. In editing the memoir for publication Michael Lucas has made relatively minor cuts and corrections and added clarifications in square brackets. Lengthier explanatory material – in addition to extracts from his surviving letters – has been added in italics.

Edward Andrews as a young officer. Courtesy Richard Andrews

A group of nurses and RAMC orderlies from No. 3 General Hospital in Le Treport where Edward was treated initially. Courtesy Richard Andrews

Tubes and castor oil

My movements [after being wounded at Gommecourt] are not at all clear. I remember with horror finding myself sitting up in a French railway carriage, which [seemingly] had square wheels, and began to feel really unwell. I next remember finding myself in what seemed a very primitive ambulance with an equally primitive driver – at least as far as gear–changing went. I think I must have arrived at hospital in a state of collapse because I don't remember anything until I found myself in a ward with about four others. The hospital was the Trianon Hotel [No. 3 General Hospital] at Le Treport. Surgery in those days was fairly primitive: a tube was inserted in the wound and it was treated with H 2 S. I didn't mind the tube in my shoulder, but I hated it when the tube was changed in my groin. I still remember with displeasure the French barber called in to shave my parts. The instrument he operated with was shaped like a razor, but there the resemblance ended. Next was a St John's Ambulance nurse, with fuzzy hair, plump figure and brown uniform. Her speciality was holding one's face down with a damp hand and washing it with the other. The innards were disinclined to function, and it took a lot of castor oil to persuade them otherwise. The foreign body in my groin attracted some attention and I remember the M[edical] O[fficer] at my bedside, trying to decide whether it affected my waterworks in any way. Anyway, they decided to leave it where it was and so it has remained ever since. I was in that hospital for about six weeks. One day the water jug started to dance about in its basin as if an earthquake had hit us (in the event it was the Boche who had bombed an ammunition dump at Calais).

On 3 July, Edward wrote to his mother,

> *'I expect you will have heard by now from the War Office that I have been wounded. I've got a revolver bullet in my left shoulder and a piece of shrapnel in my right leg so I think I am jolly lucky to get off with what I've got. It was in the push that I got pushed about 8.0 on Saturday morning in the German 2nd line trenches which we afterwards lost & so I had to make my own way across no man's land on one leg & one arm amid a hail of shrapnel, m. gun fire & snipers in broad daylight and I only got a graze with a bullet on my right hand. I don't know how long I shall be here as it all depends on how the wounds go. But I think we go to England from here. I'll write again when I can.'*

Writing again to mother on 9 July,

> *'I have been expecting to hear from you to–day but so far there is nothing doing. I am getting on quite decently and can toddle as far as the bathroom with the help of an orderly now. The doctor saw my wounds today and was pleased with the state of them, although I have still got 3 tubes in one. I expect to stay here till I am fit to travel. I shall be jolly glad to see England where you can get decent food & newspapers & other such luxuries. I have heard no particulars yet as to what happened to the rest of the battalion but I think our company got worst of all. This hospital used to be a big hotel situated on the cliffs overlooking the sea. I suppose the view would be called lovely but I am a bit prejudiced. Our names ought to be in the casualty lists soon as we were wounded on July 1st. I see I am entitled to [a] piece of gold braid now according to the new Army order which says each officer and man must wear a piece for each occasion on which he was wounded. The only souvenir I have got of the show is a pair of muddy blood stained breeches which belonged to your honourable.'*

'Wounded hero'

There was a curious practice that if you had a head wound, a bottle of Champagne was produced and the cork extracted and a small glass would be offered to the sufferer. The cork was then replaced and I assume the bottle was returned to the medicine cupboard. It was popularly supposed that if you were on the part–worn Champagne list, you were really

for it. I also recollect that I was given a book to read – *The Picture of Dorian Gray.* I was feeling damned ill at the time and how I hated that book and have done ever since.

I was a stretcher case, and when the sister in the hospital ship asked me where the leg wound was, on being informed that it was in my groin, wilted visibly and summoned a male orderly. Such was the power of sex.

We eventually arrived at Mayfield Station Manchester, and I remember a crowd around the ambulance which took us to Whitworth Street Hospital, originally a school. There I was put to bed. It was a large ward with maybe twenty or so cases in it. Some wounds were pretty painful, especially nerve wounds, but fortunately I was not in that category. The nights were rather noisy as there were one or two cases in pain, and very vocal. There was also the canal which passed by the ward and carried a bargee, who addressed his nag in strident tones – always in the early hours of the morning.

The MO was an eminent, mature Manchester surgeon who liked to discuss where he would make the next incision before you were carted off to the operating theatre. Finally, the sister in charge of the ward got fed up with the procedure of dealing with my wounds and all the tubes and dressings it entailed. She decided to put no tubes in the shoulder in the hope it would heal itself, which it promptly did. The surgeon had the rank of colonel, and on state occasions was attired in breeches and spurs; on one occasion he brightened the outlook for several of us by appearing with the spurs upside down. My parents came and visited me, and my uniform appeared from somewhere. We were allowed out to tea in the afternoon and were rather a popular spectacle. I had my arm in a sling and walked with a limp and with the aid of a stick – just what a wounded hero looked like, at least in popular conception. We had tea at Parkers in St Anne's Square, where there was almost a riot caused by the other customers when the waitress told us we couldn't smoke. Tea was also to be had at the Midland Hotel, where the waiters were attired in a kind of livery and the orchestra played *When You Come to the End of a Perfect Day* – Edwardian England was dying hard. One very decent old boy stopped us in the street and took us all to tea at his house.

Light duty

After several weeks during which my shoulder was massaged, with no visible improvement, I was sent to Heaton Park on the outskirts of Manchester – a kind of rehabilitation centre. It was designed to get you fit for further service. This idea was not greeted with much enthusiasm, as most of us were still suffering from wounds – some more than others. Looking back, the place was most destructive of morale, and I think this was recognised, as some types from the War Office were sent round to attempt to sort out the sheep from the goats, though I fear with little success. One can, of course, sympathise with those who had been 'over the top' more than once and still managed to survive.

After several weeks I was sent on sick leave and told to report to my home–based unit for light duty. This was the one I had left about nine months ago. It was still in huts at Oswestry. Now began a period of utter boredom, which I tried to overcome by volunteering (unsuccessfully)

Young masseuses – 'Ourselves when young did eagerly frequent cheap photographers'. Courtesy Richard Andrews

for any kind of job that came along. All it did was to make me unpopular with the permanent staff, who were unable to understand why anyone wouldn't want to remain there for the 'duration.'[He was promoted lieutenant on 1 July 1917.]

The unit eventually moved to Kinmel Park Camp near Rhyl in North Wales. There, a draft of Welsh miners arrived and I volunteered to help to train them. They were, as I remember, a very decent crowd of men, who did not resent being called up, though I have no recollection of how successful the training was! The year was 1917/18 and the casualties were such that there was an acute shortage of manpower.

About this time there was talk of the unit having its own transport and I, as an ex–yeoman, was mounted for the job of Transport Officer and sent on a transport course at the RASC School at Blackheath. There I made my first acquaintance with mules, and also with driving a G S Wagon, powered by a pair of the said animals! I somehow found myself, by accident, in London on Armistice Day. I speedily left the celebrations which left me more than a little unnerved.

Army of occupation

I started to think of what I should do now the war was ended. I hankered after staying in the army, but my war record was not impressive, and anyhow the army showed no signs of wishing to retain my services, at least on a permanent basis. I was determined not to return to the bank, and in the end postponed any decision by volunteering for the Army of Occupation. This was to be composed of Y S [Young Soldier] Battalions and officered by blokes like myself, who couldn't think what else to do, and was to occupy the Rhineland.

Under the Armistice's terms, the Germans were required to evacuate for Allied occupation, all their lands west of the Rhine, and its major bridgeheads.

The battalions were commanded by regular officers who, owing to demobilisation, were also unemployed.

Some officers and men volunteered for service on the Rhine, receiving enhanced pay, whilst young conscripts were either deployed in their own units, or transferred to others to make up numbers. Initially, Edward was serving with 53/Cheshires, which was incorporated

Relaxation on the Rhine. The Signals cricket XI of 9/East Surreys, August 1919. Michael Lucas collection

into 9/Cheshires, in 1 Brigade of the Western (formerly 1st) Division in April 1919.

Given the background of the Russian Revolution, and strikes at home in the Army and police, and the popular idea was that now the war was over who [would want] an army – much less to serve in one? The only thing that maintained some semblance of discipline was the knowledge that the 'Young Soldiers' had done no service on account of their age and were therefore not due for demobilisation, and a good deal of tact on the part of the officers. My platoon was stationed at Kardorf, a country village standing back from the Rhine, not far from Bonn.

I was billeted in a farmhouse where I slept in an enormous four–poster bed with a canopy and a feather mattress. I used to go for a run before breakfast, round the countryside, much to the astonishment of the natives. The farm grew a lot of black cherries which the family turned into very good *obstkuchen* [fruit cake], which I used to enjoy, until I observed how the cherries were being stoned with the family hairpins.

The land was very fertile because nothing in the way of fertiliser was wasted. Each farm possessed its own 'S S [?] Wagon'. There was one moving moment when the local wagon was being wheeled down the village street, and, having arrived opposite the company cookhouse, it broke down and deposited its load in the road. This may have been 'malice aforethought', but anyhow in my best German I mobilised the village youths and the situation was dealt with!

Our relations with the local population were pretty good – everyone being exhorted to be on their best behaviour. My own relations with the farmer's daughter were reasonably cordial. Her photograph, suitably inscribed, is in my archives and shows she had a fine figure, due possibly to its encasement in a kind of stockade.

Relations were, indeed, pretty good. The troops were happy to enjoy a good standard of living, comfortable housing, much sport and recreation, relatively light duty and generous leave. Many Rhinelanders were happy to be spared the revolutionary and counter revolutionary chaos in other parts of Germany, and British occupation was not very oppressive. Orders forbidding fraternisation with the local inhabitants were soon a dead letter.

Writing to his mother on 5 April, Edward describes the newly amalgamated battalion:

> *'The CO who brought us out here is at present the CO of the new 9th but I believe he is giving way to an ex–brigadier who is coming to take command. I hear he is very hot stuff, but he will have plenty of scope for his abilities here as … the Bn. is very slack. The CO amongst other things is not visible till 10.30 each morning and always has his breakfast in bed. We have had a bit of a row in our coy. this week. I'm second in command; the Coy. Commander and two of the subalterns are more or less rotters and have practically done no work except get drunk since we left England, the remaining three subalterns are ex – RFC people and positively haven't the brains to do any work. I got a bit fed up with this crowd as the Coy. was going to the dogs and last Tuesday turned out indescribably filthy for CO's inspection. Luckily the Coy. Commander and his two subalterns choose to spend Monday and most of Tuesday in Cologne, so of course when CO blew on parade there was trouble. For the rest of the day I was in command of the Coy. and I threw my weight about and generally made myself disliked especially by my pet subaltern whom I fetched from his dinner to go and look at the men's. The following day the captain (having turned up) and I had a long postponed row but I flatter myself I had him stiff and by the time we had finished he had repented for all his past sins and apologised for all he had said. Today he was relieved of his command and a captain sent from the 9th to take over the Coy.'*

The new battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Morton, proved to be as great a change as expected. Edward wrote home 31 May,

> *'Under our new CO we haven't a big lot of time to ourselves. One of his dictums is that the only men who are excused doing work in his battalion are dead ones. He makes men who go sick and get excused duty from the doctor work and consequently he and the MO are at loggerheads. We have had several visits lately from the divisional general* [Major General Sir Peter Strickland] *and ADMS* [Assistant Director Medical Services] *who are hot stuff, I have successfully avoided them somehow so far but shall no doubt be run to earth shortly. Our musketry officer who used to be a major on the instructional staff was caught by the general yesterday with a platoon and got it in the neck. The ADMS found so much to say to the QM* [Quartermaster] *that he reported sick this morning… .It's still very hot here and what with route marches, battalion drill and strenuous training combined with an appalling diet I'm getting rather fit.'*

Mules and munitions

Occasionally I visited Cologne and Bonn – it must be remembered that Germany itself had not sustained any direct war damage, but suffered only from lack of food and certain raw materials due to the Allied blockade. The war ended before the fighting reached the German frontier and life speedily returned to normal. Shops were full of locally produced goods, with the exception of food, which was strictly rationed as far as the Germans were concerned. In night clubs there was an ample supply of local wine and not very attractive females. I remember the name of one night club in the *Hohe Strasse,* the *Ewige Lampe* [Eternal Lamp]. The only thing I remember about Bonn was the students' club and its superb *vomitorium,* which was well up to Roman standards.

This presumably had Brechbecken – *small basins with handles each side and no plugs! 'Johnnie' Johnson (*Wing Leader *pp.301–2) records encountering similar facilities in 1945.*

My platoon was moved to Corps HQ at Euskirchen, and thus terminated my relationship with the farmer's daughter There my platoon was required to staff what was termed an 'animal collecting camp'. In reality this was a sale ring where all the animals (mostly mules) surplus to the army's requirements were auctioned to the local farmers. The mules were as wild as blazes and were always breaking loose. In consequence, the proceedings resembled a kind of rodeo conducted in three different languages; German, English, and that of the mules' own lingo, which no–one understood. It was thoughtfully laid down that the mules were to be sold without their army headstalls which, it was assumed, the German farmers would replace with their own gear. Unfortunately, these were non–existent. When the purchaser endeavoured to lead his mule away with any old piece of rope, chaos obviously ensued as no self–respecting mule would miss an opportunity like this! At first it was thought that I, and my not so very merry men, were there for the express purpose of catching the so–and–so animals but after one or two ineffectual efforts this idea was abandoned. I encouraged the British Military Mounted Police to also have a go, but all they achieved was a very sweaty and dirty mount, and saddlery which would take them a long time to clean, so that idea was abandoned too.

I was quartered at the local office of the German AEG [?], where I occupied the manager's suite, and took my meals at the local station hotel, the dining–room of which possessed a large plate glass window reaching from floor to ceiling. One morning at breakfast I saw the window suddenly collapse, and the German waiters disappeared as one man through the exit, followed by a helluva bang in the distance. It transpired that some bright spark had lit a fire in the local barracks over the spot where the previous occupants had buried some ammunition.

Corps HQ contained an educational unit staffed by Scottish female school teachers. I established relations with one whose knowledge of German and other subjects was quite extensive. However, the ACC [?] was closed down before my education could be much improved. I and my platoon were sent back to our base at Kardorf and from thence to England to be demobilised.

Early in 1919 the British Army of the Rhine was ten divisions strong. Plans were made in May for an advance into Germany, if needed, to induce her to sign the peace treaty. With Germany's reluctant signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919, the British force was reduced to five brigades by that autumn. 9/Cheshires moved back to Britain at the end of August.

I remained in the Territorial Army [promoted captain 1927 and major 1935] and was once again mobilised when the second war broke out.

In this war, Edward served as a liaison officer with American forces in Ulster, arriving in Germany with the Americans by early 1945. He was awarded an MBE in 1948. Edward suffered pain and some disability to his shoulder from his Somme wounds for the rest of his life. Rather than return to banking, he become a chartered accountant, working in the cotton spinning industry in Stockport, Cheshire until 1958. He then moved to Woodbridge, Suffolk and worked in an Ipswich accountancy practice for many years. He died in 1986.

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My gratitude goes to Neil Andrews who shared his father's memoir with me; to his sister Sally and brother Richard, who added letters, photographs and information and to Elizabeth Andrews, old friend and NHS colleague, for her helpful comments. Thanks also to Hazel Basford, The Powell–Cotton Museum's Archivist, for identifying the young masseuses as such.

187 Brigade Royal Field Artillery Firing the Salute to mark the signing of the Treaty of Versailles – Cologne 19 June 1919. Michael Lucas collection

Garrison Library

Lieutenant Colonel Bob Wyatt co–ordinates reviews in his capacity as *Stand To!* Review Editor.

All reviews – at or around 400 words in length – should be sent direct to him at 33, Sturges Road, Wokingham, Berks. RG40 2HG, UK, along with a good quality copy image of the front cover for illustrative purposes.

A WATERY GRAVE

INNES MCCARTNEY

Jutland 1916 – The Archaeology of a Naval Battlefield

Conway, 2016, £27.00 (£21.99 for download), 272 pp.

ISBN: 9–781–844–864–164

Not only the battle of the Somme had its centenary in summer 2016; the largest naval battle of the Great War took place off the coast of Denmark at the end of May 1916; Skagerrak to the Germans but Jutland to the Royal Navy. Its anniversary has seen a number of new books reassessing the battle. This volume is linked to the Channel 4 television programme which aired in May 2016. The introductory chapter contains a short overview of the battle, although so brief that a better knowledge of the battle is probably necessary. It also contains a description of the methodology used to identify the various wrecks. The remaining chapters deal with relocating and investigating the sunken warships using a Remotely Operated Vehicle and (in 2015) side–scanning sonar. The loss of each ship is dealt with in detail, with analysis of the testimony of witnesses, photographic evidence, and the information acquired by diving and the sophisticated sonar images.

The above has resulted in an accurate reassessment of the positions of some of the wrecks, whose locations had originally been identified in 1919 by Captain J E T Harper, head of the Royal Navy School of Navigation, using the navigation and other logs of participant warships linked to the datum point of the wreck of HMS *Invincible,* which was definitely located in 1919. Navigation at Jutland having been mainly by dead–reckoning, some of the wreck positions determined by Harper are quite a long way out. HMS *Indefatigable* for example lies more than six nautical miles away from Harper's estimate. The new imaging and examination of thee wrecks has also resulted in a modified assessment of the events of the last moments of the larger vessels (principally the British battle cruisers).

Liberally furnished with colour photographs, both of the present state of the wrecks, and of the sophisticated sonar images, and with a selection of Harper's charts, this book is a major addition to our knowledge of events at Jutland, but possibly only for the true Jutland enthusiast.

If there are faults in this volume they are that the charts are far too small to be viewed without a magnifying glass, and the photographs are also very small – perhaps the publisher should have put copies on a CD, although that may not be such a problem with the e–book. Finally, Dr McCartney draws attention to the damage that has already been done to the wrecks by illegal plundering for non–ferrous metals, and to the pitifully minimal efforts of the Royal Navy and the UK Government to prevent it.

Niall Ferguson

BIG BOMBER

ROB LANGHAM

Bloody Paralyser: The Giant Handley Page Bombers of the First World War

Fonthill Media, 2016, £16.59 (£9.99 for download), 208pp.

ISBN: 9–781–781–550–809

Books about the heavy bombers of the Great War – or the Independent Air Force which was to operate them – are pretty rare, so a volume covering all three Handley Page 'heavies' (the 0/100, 0/400, and V/1500) is a major event for those interested in the Great War in the air. This book certainly gives a full history of all three types and a potted history of Handley Page from its inception in 1906 until the late 1930s. Unfortunately, although the information is interesting and appears accurate, there are significant production errors that make the book – particularly its first three chapters – a difficult read. It seems that editorial and proof–reading input from Fonthill Media has not been of the highest standard – there are numerous grammatical errors and typos. After the initial three chapters the readability improves considerably (although grammatical errors still occur far too frequently), but the first part of the book, dealing with Frederick Handley Page's designs prior to the 0/100, and the heavy bomber itself until it entered frontline service, contains frequent sentences that lack verbs, and a multitude of curious errors of grammar such as, *'...the new Rolls–Royce Eagle III engines, which gave an impressive 70hp extra than the original Eagle II engines...*' or, '*...by placing a contract with companies in the USA to 1,500 Eagle engines in part form and have them assembled in Derby...in anticipation for the arriving parts*.'

Chapter 3 of the book has a long description of the constructional details of the 0/100, and would have benefitted considerably from some drawings to help the reader understand what is being described.To return to the contents of the book, the wonder is that the RNAS contracted with Frederick Handley Page to produce such an enormous aircraft, considering that his company (himself and twelve employees) had previously produced only five aircraft, almost all of which had crashed during testing!

Most of the book consists of excerpts from the reports and reminiscences of those who flew in the aircraft, or were otherwise involved in the bomber offensive, and gives a real insight into what it was like to fly night bombing missions over enemy territory. One can have only the greatest admiration for the young men who carried out these missions in huge (for their time) open–cockpit aircraft, at night, and in all weathers, a miniature forerunner of the strategic bomber offensive of the Second World War – they deserve to have had their story told.

Niall Ferguson

NEW ZEALANDERS

GLYN HARPER

Johnny Enzed – The New Zealand Soldier in the First World War 1914–1918

Exisle, 2015, $NZ 55.00, 664 pp, illustrations maps and appendices.

ISBN: 9–781–775–592–020

'Johnny Enzed', much like the term 'Tommy' was used in relation to the British 'everyman' soldier of the Great War, was one of several generic descriptors of the New Zealand Expeditionary force soldier in the same conflict. This book is part of a series published by Massey University and the New Zealand Ministry of Defence to focus on fresh perspectives of the contribution of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the War in which 60,000 of the 100,000 men and women who served became casualties; a figure which is described as 'a tragedy on an unmitigated scale'.

The narrative aims to provide new insights into the soldier's experience of the conflict. Using a wide variety of first–hand sources

including letters, diaries and a large selection of informative and useful photographs, the story of 'Johnny Enzed' is told in remarkable detail, covering training and all theatres of war. The training experienced by the New Zealand troops is given an unusual amount of space and the narrative of the men is accompanied by some surely hitherto unseen photographs of training and training camps. The frustration of the having to wait so long in Egypt is expressed in a poem written by a private in the Auckland Battalion. What is described as the 'indescribable hell' of the New Zealand campaign in Gallipoli is in fact described vividly and intimately, again using a wide variety of first–hand sources. Action on the Western Front is well documented and interspersed with explanations of strategy and tactics.

The chapter on life on the Western Front gives the reader a change of focus with section headings such as 'body lice', 'no plaster saints' and 'mail from home' indicating the tone of the chapter. This is, however, followed by detailed and sometimes harrowing accounts of the battles at Messines, Passchendaele and Polderhoek in which the New Zealand troops played key roles. At the same time as the conflict on the Western Front the Johnny Enzeds were deployed in the Middle East. Many New Zealand Troops had leave in the United Kingdom and were invalided to hospitals there. Over 70,000 spent time there during the war and chapter ten explains the importance of this to the men. The return home and its implications for the soldiers are dealt with sensitively in the conclusion.

This is a vast and detailed account which does justice to the contribution of the New Zealand forces during the Great War. The detailed sources drive the narrative, but there is enough supplementary information to make the action clear to the non–military reader. The text is complemented by images which are truly evocative of 'Johnny Enzed' at war.
Linda Parker

FIGHTING SAXONS

ANDREW LUCAS AND
JURGEN SCHMIESCHEK
Fighting the Kaiser's War: The Saxons in Flanders 1914/1918
Pen & Sword Military, £25.00, 256pp.
ISBN: 9–781–783–463–008

The realisation that the Great War military records of Bavaria, Saxony, Baden, and Württemberg were held in their respective capitals and had avoided the destruction of the Prussian archives in February 1945, has resulted in an increasing number of books dealing with the Western Front as seen by those sections of the Central Powers. They tend to divide themselves into three broad groups: photographic volumes with extended captions, readable books that give a broad overview and highly detailed reference volumes. This volume manages to successfully combine all three types, although the authors acknowledge that it is primarily intended as a reference book.

The bulk of the written text (the initial nine chapters) consists of a detailed chronological account of the various actions that the Saxon Army fought during the war, divided by year and unit. A variety of maps and unit orders are included, all of which are apposite to the actions described. Next, and of immediate notice on opening the book, there are over 300 well–reproduced photographs and other items such as postcards (most not previously seen) giving a well–rounded view of the Saxon experience on the Western Front. There are, of course, many more such items from the German side of no man's land as German troops were positively encouraged to take amateur photographs in order to improve morale both at the front and at home, whilst for the BEF such behaviour was a court–martial offence from early in 1915. Nonetheless, the authors are to be commended on the collection of photographs that they have assembled. All are well–annotated and increase one's appreciation of the events described. Worthy of particular praise are the authors' efforts to identify the units and individuals portrayed.

Finally one reaches Chapter 9 where the individual stories of twelve members of the Saxon Army are recounted, including excerpts from their letters, and photographs. These provide a well–rounded insight into what it was like to fight as a German ally during the Great War. At the very end of the book there is an extremely short section on the Home Front, followed by a number of short appendices including a glossary of German ranks and awards, notes expanding on some of the text, an index, and a bibliography. This must be one of the most detailed and complete volumes on the Saxon Army's role in the Great War and should become the destination of first resort for anyone seeking information about what that army did from 1914 to 1918. It demands a place on the bookshelf of anyone with a serious interest in the German Army during the Great War.
Niall Ferguson

A BETTER PERSPECTIVE?

OTTO KORFES
(TERENCE ZUBER translator)
The German 66th Regiment in the Great War: The German Perspective
The History Press, Gloucs, 2016, £20.00, 320pp, line drawing ills and selected map sections, index.
ISBN: 9–780–750–962–001

Although British military historian Jack Sheldon's books have revealed the wealth of information contained in German regimental histories, translations of the German language originals in English remain 'hen's teeth' rarities. The American ex–soldier Terence Zuber believes them to be extremely important, rating them as, effectively, primary source material, not least because of the destruction of many German Great War operational archives – beyond those of Bavaria, Baden, Saxony and Württemberg – both during and after the Second World War.

As an historian Zuber is not without his critics. Indeed criticism that his opinions never fail to extol the unique excellence of the German Army from top to tail frequently elicit the comment, 'Well, if they were so bloody good, then how come they lost the war' in debate. *Reductio ad absurdum*? Certainly, but one does recognise the author's willingness to both bat and bowl for the other side. His views, which many judge trumpet the unparalleled excellence of the Imperial German Army too frequently – have ruffled many British feathers. After all do we not know that the first six divisions of the BEF were 'a perfect thing apart'; that the Germans using blustering frontal attacks at Mons were slaughtered because of tactical ineptitude; that they were convinced they were facing machine guns and not the '15 aimed rounds a minute'. Well, like much else that we 'know' as 'fact' Zuber has shown that if not exactly mythical, then these views were over egged. But, the West Virginia–based Zuber certainly knows the German Army of 1914 – its tactics, strategies and doctrines.

Here, in his translation of a German regimental history the author is less likely to create dissent. Although I am happy be corrected, Terence Zuber's English regimental history of 3rd Magdeburg Infantry Regiment Number 66 is the first publication of an English translation of any such work. Overall the translator regards some German regimental histories as 'among the best descriptions of tactical combat anywhere at any time'. This volume he judges '... in the upper middle range' of these works. The original work, edited by Otto Korfes is 458 pages long – of which 382 describe operations. Zuber claims that his version is better organised and edited than the original. This work is heavy on tactics, combat and personal experience and its illustration by Döbrich–Stegliz is a joy. Maps, though numerous are largely inadequate and frequently too small and it must be said the index is a disgrace for a book of this quality. *The German 66th Regiment in the Great War* is likely to be of particular interest to Brits since the 66th served throughout the war in France and Flanders. The regiment fought the British at Mons, Le Cateau, on the Somme from 1 July 1916 until Hebuterne in November, in the German March offensive and during the final '100 Days'.

German books on the war – novels, diaries, personal accounts – offer writing, views and accounts which have a very different texture and feel to those of the Brits. Not least they often seem to display greater emotion than the average British 'regimental'. This does not make them obviously better or worse, but definitely different and hard to define.
David Filsell

GERMAN OFFENSIVE

JACK SHELDON

The German Army in the Spring Offensives 1917: Arras, Aisne and Champagne

Pen & Sword, Barnsley, 2015, £25.00, 384pp.

ISBN: 9–781–783–463–459

One result of the reunification of Germany was the realisation that not all official records of German units in the Great War had been destroyed in Berlin during the later conflict – many still existed in peripheral centres as the German Army had still been based on the various kingdoms that existed before 1870, such as, Saxony and Württemberg. This has resulted in the regular appearance of publications derived from those sources, particularly by authors such as Jack Sheldon; this volume being the seventh in his ongoing series. Fortunately Sheldon avoids the almost eulogistic attitude towards the German army seen in the works of authors such as Zuber, and presents a much more balanced view of events on the other side of the wire.

Between the end of 1914 and the spring of 1918 the German Army (with the notable exception of the Battle of Verdun) was almost exclusively on the defensive in the west, and was assaulted by the Allies repeatedly during that period. During the spring of 1917 the Germans were attacked by the BEF north and south of the River Scarpe, around Arras, and at Vimy, whilst the French launched their fairly disastrous Nivelle Offensive in Champagne and along the Chemin des Dames. Jack Sheldon covers all these actions from the German perspective in his usual well–researched and highly readable manner. Despite that, the narrative is not a particularly easy read: that is no fault of the author but is a result of our lack of familiarity with German regiments, trench geography and, not least, ranks – there being at least twelve different words to describe an infantry private! This meant that this reviewer was reduced to repeatedly referring to the appendix listing the equivalent ranks – as he was forced to when reading *Dr Zhivago* many years ago!

One thing Sheldon does demonstrate is that, despite the German Army's excellence in defence, the power of British artillery meant that, although being in no doubt about the forthcoming Arras offensive, the destruction of their artillery, trenches, and deep dug–outs meant that the Germans had serious difficulties halting the British assault. As a result, the Germans were unable to capitalise on the failures of the French and their subsequent mutinies because the extension of the Arras offensive by the BEF, and the subsequent attacks at Messines and Third Ypres, meant that they lacked the necessary resources. This volume is an excellent addition to the series, not least because it places the British actions in context with the considerably larger French offensives; offensives that occupied the attentions of the German High Command far more than did those of the BEF.

Niall Ferguson

SELECTED

FELICITY TROTMAN (Ed.)

The Writer's War, The Great War in the Words of Great Writers Who Experienced It

Amberley, 2016, £9.99, soft covers, 350pp.

ISBN: 9–761–445–655–352

This selection of prose and poetry is both inspired and inspiring, in turns patriotic, cynical sentimental and thought provoking. The reality of the war is conveyed in first–hand accounts from authors and poets who experienced the war on many fronts including the home front. The chronological arrangement of the extracts enables the reader to empathise with the changing fortunes of war and the differing responses to them, from Thomas Hardy's *Channel Firing (1914)* to G K Chesterton's bleak post war *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*. The collection contains well–known works with some surprising and effective choices from authors from all of the combatant countries, with women being well represented. This collection will be welcomed by students and general readers of both literature and conflict, taking us beyond the battlefield to the emotional and intellectual reaction of contemporaries to the situations in which they found themselves. It certainly encourages the reader to explore in more depth the works of some of the authors selected.

Linda Parker

SURGEONS' LIVES

L O STUNDEN

Lord Kitchener's One Hundred – World War I Surgeons Biographies and Diaries

Symphony of Peace Pty Ltd, 2015, £35.00, 552pp, ills, bibliog., index.

ISBN 9780958086844.

At the start of the Great War the number of doctors available in the British Army was in the region of 1,500 both regular and reserve, with others in the Territorial Force. As the war progressed it became obvious that with the raising of Kitchener's Armies there would be a need for more doctors. The call went out both to the United States to supply medical officers to serve in British infantry units, albeit in US uniform, and also to Australia. Australia was asked for 100 volunteer doctors to serve in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Many of those who volunteered were not doctors of great experience but in many cases were students in their final year at medical school whom, on volunteering, had their studies fast tracked.

Once these men had signed up they faced the long voyage to England, unaware of quite what the future held for them. The majority of them left Australia in March 1915 and on arrival in England they proceeded to London where they were fitted for their uniforms, paid and then sent off to training camps in Aldershot, Eastbourne and Salisbury.

It was not long before these volunteer doctors were on their way to the war. What the author has done is, by using diaries, accounts and letters, laid out one of the main sections of the book in chronological order by British Army divisions, and then by theatres of war. Some of

these diary extracts have been supplemented with illustrations and photographs. This section takes up quite a large proportion of the book but is well worth reading. Some of these accounts are quite graphic, not only of life in the trenches but how these doctors coped with the English snobbery with some of them suffering resentment and antagonism against them for being colonials. Bill Newton, for example, was told it was a disgrace that the RAMC had taken men with colonial medical degrees. Although the final section of this book gives the biographies of these 100 officers some career details accompany the diary extracts.

It must have been quite frustrating for some of these doctors to find themselves serving on the Gallipoli Peninsula with British units when their own countryman were slogging it out further up the coast at Anzac, but several of them did find themselves in this situation. There are several pages of honours and awards to these men accompanied in some cases by photographs of their medal groups. These pages are followed by photographs of the graves and memorials to many of those who paid the supreme sacrifice.

Of course the meat of this book is the 152 pages of bibliographic details of Kitchener's One Hundred, in many cases accompanied by individual photographs. This really is a magnificent piece of research not only to those interested in the medical services and Australia in the First World War but as a lasting memorial to these brave Australian men and their contribution to medicine through those dark years of the First World War. Copies of this excellent book are available in the UK from the Army Medical Services Museum shop priced £35.00 (01252 868612)

Peter Starling

BLACK DOCTORS

W DOUGLAS FISHER and
JOANN H BUCKLEY

African American Doctors of World War I – The Lives of 104 Volunteers

McFarland and Co., 2016, $45 US, 277pp, illustrated, bibliog., index.
ISBN: 9–781–476–623–177

When America formally entered the war in 1917 and a draft was established this draft would eventually include 400,000 African Americans of whom 200,000 served in France with the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), a fifth in the two African American divisions – the 92nd and 93rd. It is not surprising that there was both a call for, and voluntarily enlistment of, African American doctors. It should not be forgotten that this was at a time of great racial discrimination and segregation in the United States. This became acutely apparent when African American doctors joined up. They were not sent to the main training camps for the other medical officers in the army but to a camp set up to train black officers. Fisher and Buckley's book outlines the initial problems facing these doctors in their early days in the Army and gives a brief insight into both their medical and military training. The units that these doctors were eventually assigned to took part in many of the actions that have gone down in the annals of the military history of the AEF including Meuse–Argonne and St Mihiel/Metz.

After the war these brave men returned to the United States where, despite their service to their country they were still discriminated against even though many went on to achieve distinguished careers in medicine and their local communities. Some suffered from the effects of their military service for the rest of their lives.

The biographies of these 104 doctors are arranged alphabetically and are split into themed sections such as '*Roots', 'Military Service'* and *'Career after the War'* and give footnotes for each man. These biographies average three pages each and where possible includes a portrait photograph. The biographies hammer home the point that the colour of their skin made these men no less brave than their white contemporaries and that enemy bullets and shells do not discriminate in any case. Although this excellent book may not appeal to those with a general interest in the First World War, to those who have an interest in the US Army's contribution and the medical services in the war (this reviewer especially) it will be a welcome addition and fills an important gap in the history of the US Army Medical Department.

Peter Starling

YOU CAN GET THE STAFF!

PAUL HARRIS

The Men Who Planned the War: A Study of the Staff of the British Army on the Western Front, 1914–1918

Routledge, Ashgate Studies in First World War History, 2015, £95.00, 271pp, 19 figures, notes and refs, 12 appendices, bibliog., index.
ISBN: 9–781–910–294–956

OK – let's get the price out of the way first. This book costs £95.00 – on Amazon! I can only question the intelligence, judgement and competence of Routledge Taylor Francis Publishing's marketing department. But, tragically, stupidly, I fear the deserved success of *The Men who Planned the War* was doomed from the outset by a company who do not know a good thing when they see it.

Paul Harris's book is a very important study of an aspect of key importance to any study of the British Army in the Great War – one which still triggers misunderstanding and debate. In deploying the title *The Missing Element* to his introduction, and aided by statistical analysis, Paul Harris aptly identifies the lack of research and consequent lack of any real sensible awareness, of the role and work and life of staff officers. How persuasive is his research, analysis and writing in filling periodic table of the First World elements in the search for victory? The answer is clear. He does so exceptionally and at every level from brigade to GHQ with skill and with a keen eye for telling detail in this cogent and well–written work.

Of course, there are a few personal narratives, and books, by highly capable individuals (like Charles 'Tim' Harington) which underline the efforts and abilities of staff officers. Mostly, however, their efforts have gone unnoticed, unrecognised. Virtually every lazy, derivative, book on the Great War, and many of the better ones – personal accounts, battle narratives, even volumes of the OH – have drummed the 'facts' into us. The 'château generals' were aided and abetted by languid 'château' staff officers whose primary objective, if they visited the front line at all, was serious infantry, artillery and engineering 'embuggerment–duty'.

Harris presents the British Army as one faced with massive management and control problems in 1914 and 1915 and living with the consequences of those in 1916. How did a small army, capable of putting just two Corps in the field in 1914, with an inadequate cadre of trained staff officers, build a machine to prevent defeat and gain victory? How did it continue to perform even adequately in the field while absorbing a terrific number of extra regular, Kitchener and territorial divisions? How, quite simply, did it find, train, deploy and direct competent, but untrained people to command and control what became a huge and massively diverse corporate mechanism employing vast numbers of men, and uncountable material, to plan movement, logistics, intelligence, defensive and offensive actions to end what was, until then, the most challenging war in history? Harris shows that it was done with difficulty, slowly, but with huge success.

Here Paul Harris' examines the role of the staff, recognises and evaluates their responsibilities, defines the agonising work load, the learning essential and the growth of competence of the British Army's staff in supplying, directing and commanding a war–winning army and the length and breadth of their responsibilities. Important books like this on key aspects the Great War are still teaching us to 'know different' about the war. Rigorous and carefully evaluated work by a crop of new military historians like Paul Harris from university war studies departments is assisting in re–examining and re–evaluating myths and realities, finding new answers.

Few outside academia – even the most ardent and dedicated of Great War students – will be able to justify buying this book it at this price – and good luck to those who wish to use that once great, now increasingly failing, institution, the inter library loan! *The Men who Planned the War* is an excellent book from a publisher in need of good staff officers. Personally I'd 'degom' their GSO1 sharpish, haul the prices down… and sell more books.

David Filsell

A FAILURE OF LOGIC

PETER R HODGKINSON

British Infantry Commanders in the Great War

Routledge/Ashgate Studies in First World War History, 2016, £70.00, 250pp, no ills, bibliog., indices – names and places and regiments, units, formations and armies.

ISBN:9–781–472–438–256

This is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the British battalion command in the Great War from Routledge/Ashgate Publishing. And, yet again – at the risk of severing my supply of worthwhile books for review from the company – in line with the publisher's usual lack of marketing nous and apparent failure to understand the market for books about the Great War, its recommended retail price is a dreaming spires £70.00. (At the time of writing the best Amazon price for a pre–owned copy was £58.00 and, although I have no idea why, apparently copies are available from US book dealers at $30.) It seems to me clear: Birmingham University needs to speak, immediately, to Helion which undertakes a similar publishing operation for the excellent, sensibly, priced Wolverhampton University Military Series under the series editorship of Steven Badsey.

That stated, there is no doubt that this is an important book. The research is impressive, the text clear, the conclusions are sound and illuminating – even if at times apparently a tad too dependent on anecdotal evidence for my taste. But this is a mere quibble. However, I do not intend to offer a vastly overpriced work the further oxygen of publicity in a detailed review. The key point before buying is that a free copy option is available online – the author's original thesis upon which the book is based is available at: http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/4754/1/Hodgkinson14PhD.pdf Whilst I have not compared the two texts, the thesis itself may either provide the information the reader needs or enable readers to judge for themselves whether to shell–out at Ashgate's price or buy from the USA.

Whether the publication of the thesis is the author's revenge on the publisher or not I have no idea – but I hope so. Certainly one recent Ashgate author in the series has pleaded – and failed – to get the publisher to reduce its price before publication. Would be authors can always try other publishers first of course! Thus far Ashgate has listened, but failed to respond to my enquiries about its pricing policies? All very sad.

David Filsell

THE STUTTERNG ARMY

SPENCER JONES (Ed.)

Courage without Glory: the British Army on the Western Front 1915

Helion, 2015, £25.95, 446pp, 61 ills, 15 maps, notes and refs, index.

ISBN: 9–781–910–777–183

Courage Without Glory, is the tenth book in the Wolverhampton Military Series. Like the first (the highly acclaimed *Stemming the Tide; Officers and Leadership in the British Expeditionary Force in 1914*) this new volume draws together essays on key aspects of the British Army in the crucial year which followed the virtual destruction of the original BEF; the year before it felt, or indeed was, capable of mounting serious offensive action.

Fifteen Great War military historians 'led' by editor Spencer Jones place key aspects of the development and the stuttering and stumbling performance of the BEF in 1915 under the spotlight of latest thinking. Here we see perceptive evaluations of a nation seeking to rebuild its shredded ranks with half–trained amateurs, 'weekend soldiers' and green officers while seeking to cope with the realities of new weaponry, tactics *et al* to fight what the most perceptive recognised as a new, industrialised, siege warfare. The authors spread their net wide in their choice of topics to illustrate a year in which the Territorials and Kitchener volunteers joined the regular divisions and faced a mountain of learning. Editor Jones leads with a sound evaluation of the realities which the British Army faced in 1915. Essentially the problem was shortage. Shortages of the right numbers of the new weapons of war, of skilled officers and fully trained men in the ranks, of guns and ammunition to awareness of the realities of 'modern' warfare and principles of command and of control.

Within the next five chapter/essays, munitions supply, the relations between the fading John French, the ultra–competent 'Wully' Robertson and the profoundly ambitious Haig, Horne's performance as a divisional commander, the growing importance of the RFC, and the role of the Indian Army Cavalry on the Western Front are all keenly scrutinised. Focus then shifts to evaluation of the BEF's performance in the hard 'learning battles' of 1915. Here the authors reveal the performance of the insufficiently experienced directors, managers, foremen and workers at war within what was a burgeoning corporate entity. The inadequacies and inexperience became very clear in the operations examined here at Ypres, Festubert, Loos, Bois Grenier and the Hohenzollern Redoubt.

Without doubt this is another highly–valuable work of evaluation, analysis and historical judgement by writers unwilling to simply retread tired views of British valour and competence. It is to be hoped that similar volumes will cover 1916, '17 and '18. Equally, Helion proves my point. It is possible for publishers to produce valuable works of academic standard at sensible prices. (*Stemming the Tide*, the first book in the series, has I am told proved to be a very 'big seller' and has now been reprinted in paperback!)

David Filsell

THE RISING

FEARGHAL McGARRY

The Rising: Ireland Easter 1916 (Centenary Edition)

Oxford University Press, 2016, £20.00, 370pp, 21 plates, 4 maps, notes and refs, index.

ISBN 978–0–19–873234–1

The Rising: Ireland Easter 1916 earned considerable and well–deserved praise when first published in 2010. Although John Dorney, the author of *The Story of the Easter Rising, 1916* then noted of McGarry's book, '... first time readers should perhaps look at a general history (of the rising) before coming to this work'. It is no secret, the Rising is difficult to unpick and yet I do not fully agree with this view. Despite the fact that the Irish nationalistic politics which necessarily infuse this book were, and remain, complex, this reprint of McGarry's work, with a new introduction, is a fascinating evaluation of events in Dublin during Easter week 1916 in the year of the event's centenary.

Whilst guiding the reader through Ireland's many political, personal, and religious complexities, through the desire for Home Rule, opposition to it and the factionalism of

NOTICE TO BATTLEFIELD VISITORS

Wartime relics, such as shells, grenades etc are usually in a highly dangerous condition and still cause death and injury. Any such object found during visits to the battlefields should be left strictly alone. Also, most of the land is private property and must be respected as such. Strict laws (which are being enforced) apply in respect of the collection and export of battlefield detritus.

Irish independence movements and individuals, the book's narrative is driven by eyewitness experiences of the Rising of many shades of opinion; it is the book's vital ingredient and great strength. The material is drawn from the records of the Republic of Ireland's Bureau of Military History; recently released prior the book's original publication – there had been a bar on its use until the last 'veteran' of the rising had died. The archive comprises over 1,700 individual first person accounts of events in Dublin and elsewhere in the country. This, as Fearghal McGarry notes is '... one of richest – in relative terms – most comprehensive oral history archives devoted to any modern revolution'. Together the accounts encompass views, opinions and actions across the full and complex spectrum, of Irish 'revolutionary' movements – as well as those who simply witnessed events.

The fact is, much of the presented story of the rising is a Chimera: militarily, for those who rebelled, morally in the actions of the British following the event and politically for all parties. However, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom – the balancing votes of Irish parliamentarians had earned Home Rule (its implementation being delayed only by the events and implications of the Great War). The Irish judiciary was independent, elections were democratic. The Germans had no wish to become other than peripherally involved in Irish affairs. The population was not prepared to rise, nor the dissenters' troops adequately armed, trained or led. Attempts to rise outside Dublin failed and during Easter week many in Dublin, and of all classes and political persuasions, positively, publicly resisted the rising. Some were rifle butted or shot for their pains by republicans; many others – 'in the way' by the British.

The witness statements reveal the shambolic on/off nature of the rising, its lack of effective command and control, of strategic and tactical nous and competence displayed by its organisers – and the preparedness of many to die for their cause. Yet, there was little lack of blind courage. Britain and its army gained, and deserved, little credit for its actions during or after the convulsions in Dublin in 1916 (or in the period leading to the civil war). In Dublin inept British political and military leadership, poor tactics, and the limited military skill of part–trained troops and the vindictiveness of individuals were viewed and witnessed realities on the streets of Dublin.

The post–event executions of the rising's leaders created martyrs and it is now clear, it was not the events of Easter 1916 in Dublin and elsewhere but 'hand me down' realties of the event that became important. They became the symbols which triggered emotional acceptance within Southern Ireland that the 'blood sacrifice' of 1916 could only be redeemed by future independence. Although some considered that 'all that could have been expected' had been achieved, many, rightly, judged that Irish people 'would now see the light', and that that the Rising had 'started a new advance'. As Yates put it, 'A terrible beauty is born'.

The Easter Rising is easy to dismiss as a fascinating – if short and localised – Great War 'sideshow'. Yet it was one with enormous – and yet un–ended – consequences. Easter 1916 was the trigger which later fired off two years of guerrilla war between the Irish and the British at a cost of some 1,400 lives. It was also the forerunner of an eleven–month long civil war between Irish Republicans and Irish Nationalist over the Anglo–Irish Peace treaty (during which it is estimated between 1,000 and 4,000 further active Irish patriots and civilians were killed) and its echoes ripple still. *The Rising: Ireland Easter 1916* is a greatly recommended evaluation of political and military ineptitude and both Irish and British failure.

David Filsell

THE HUNTER HUNTED

ELAINE McFARLAND

'A Slashing Man of Action': The Life of Lieutenant General Sir Aylmer Hunter–Weston MP

Peter Lang, £32.00, 2016, paperback, 336pp, 10 ills, 4 maps, bibliog., notes and refs, index.
ISBN: 9–783–034–302–906

I have stood on the rim of the Hawthorn mine crater near Beaumont Hamel and heard Lieutenant General Air Aylmer Hunter Weston damned by others as the prototypical 'donkey'. I have read much the same. He has become the operatic villain of British Great War generalship: the buffoon, the military commander whom, it has been claimed, when saluting the glorious dead in a trench, actually raised his arm to a sleeping drunk. Yet although he remains the subject of anecdotal criticism from subordinates which have damned him, his long military career has never merited a biography, never been analysed in detail, despite the fact that his copious personal records, letters and analyses remain intact.

Elaine McFarland, Professor of History at Glasgow Caledonian University has had full access to her subject's vast 'cartulary'. If not a total analysis of H–W the soldier, the result is valuable, her authorship crisp, authoritative and objective, which lends better understanding and greater sympathy to her toward her subject than anything on Hunter–Weston since Elizabeth Balmer's overview of the general's critical pre–landing expectations on the misadventure of Gallipoli.

'A Slashing Man of Action', displays H–B's loquaciousness, his theatricality – similar in tone and action to Montgomery's – and his increasing tendency towards what is now termed 'micro–management'. Yet despite the oft–quoted comment 'What do I care about casualties', his devotion to getting the job done – and to the men he commanded and his belief in them – is clear throughout the book. In offering what I consider a more rounded view of 'Hunter–Bunter' than offered hitherto, the author, wisely, leaves readers to draw their own conclusions about the man in the round.

It is rarely recorded that as a student at 'The Shop', and in passing Staff College, H–B became an 'educated soldier' – both a sound Royal Engineer and staff officer. He gained a reputation for decisive in action in both the Indian sub–continent and in the Boer War. Like most senior commanders – not least Gough and Capper – he also believed in the vital importance and positive values of offensive spirit, of high morale and strived for both in all his commands. Equally it is now clear that he became a sound trainer of the formations he commanded and enjoyed a strong commitment to new military technology.

Hunter–Weston's rapid rise from command of brigade to corps commander underlines the early confidence of his superiors. His performance on the Aisne was generally judged sound and competent. (Haig thought highly enough of him after the inevitable disaster of Gallipoli to plan the later – and ultimately discarded – proposal for a British seaborne invasion of Belgium.)

It becomes hard to do other than accept the strictures which he faced in the disastrously misconceived Gallipoli operation – weak planning, impossible logistic support, lack of artillery and ammunition, largely inexperienced troops and poor commanders facing a competent foe defending his homeland. It remains a fact that the operations of his VIII Corps on the Somme were disastrous – if actually only little more so than others. He was aware that he had a tough nut to crack, concerned about the strength of the defences his corps faced, of the inadequacy of artillery support and its preparatory bombardment and the overreach of operations on 1 July 1916; their objectives 4,000 yards from the British trenches. Faced by Haig's inflexibility he bowed to the demands dictated to him, willing himself to retain unjustifiable optimism.

Hunter–Weston's performance on 1 July was little better or worse than that of most corps commanders. However, no work on him can evade discussing the reputational scar created by the early blowing of the 40,000lb mine beneath the Hawthorn Redoubt. The author notes that her subject was refused permission to blow it at 6.00pm the previous evening as he had requested to create uncertainty about intentions amongst the Germans. Yet, while he accepted responsibility for the decision to blow it at 7.20am in a letter to the Official Historian, others fled theirs. Even the Official Historian found it 'difficult to get to the bottom of the issue'. Equally, it should not be forgotten that in 1918, while a Member of Parliament, and commanding a corps fighting a more mobile war, his performance gained little criticism.

Whatever his overall competence at Gallipoli and on the Somme Hunter–Weston faced particularly difficult planning, command and operational decisions without the success for which he strived. Thus, it is not without interest to note his overall motivations and his opinions on both battles. In a letter to his wife on 23 March 1918 he noted: 'It is a curious fatality that at Gallipoli, on the Somme and here again now [in the Ypres sector] I have to carry out a policy with which I disagree, and as to which I have expressed myself strongly to my commanders. However as a subordinate commander, after making my point of view quite clearly to my superior and making him see the reasons from my point of view, my duty as I say then, is to carry on to the best of my ability whatever is

decided. There must be only one man to make a plan and that must be Commander–in Chief.'

This, if nothing else, sums up what Hunter–Weston saw as his duty as a soldier (as it does the responsibilities of a soldier today). If not a vindication of the man, Elaine McFarland's biography provides a firm hand on the tiller of judgement of Aylmer Hunter–Weston, man, soldier and, later, the dutiful parliamentarian. This is a very greatly recommended book – even at the academic paperback price of £32.00.
David Filsell

TANKS

ALARIC SEARLE (Ed.)
Genesis, Employment, Aftermath: First World War Tanks and the New Warfare, 1900–1945
Helion & Co., 2015, £26.96 (but available for £12.51 new from Dagwood Books), 256pp.
ISBN: 9–781–909–982–222

This book contains nine essays (better described as 'papers') on the development and employment of tanks by Britain, France, Germany, and Russia (in the Civil War between Whites and Reds) through to the continuing use of the Renault FT–17 in 1940. Whilst some of the papers go over old ground that is covered in more depth elsewhere (particularly the contributions on British and French tank development in 1916–17) there is an interesting discussion on the difficulties of getting good intelligence and reconnaissance information to aid tank deployment both before and during action. The section on French heavy tanks quotes a number of original sources but also makes extensive use of fairly well–known secondary sources published in French, such as *Les Chars de la Victoire* and *La Chair et l'Acier*. These will, of course, be new to non–Francophones. Even allowing for that, there is useful information on the various modifications made to the Chamond and the chapters on the development of the A7V tank by the Germans and on the use of tanks by the White and Red forces in Russia are much better. They certainly added to this reviewer's knowledge of those matters. It would seem that the development of the tank in Germany used the same bureaucratic methodology later beloved of the Nazis – put a number of different government departments against each other and see who wins!

For this reviewer, perhaps the most interesting and informative chapter is that covering the long existence of the Renault FT–17, undoubtedly the longest serving tank design in the world as it entered service in 1917 and survived in use not just (as is fairly well–known) into 1940, but was actually used in action during the Russian intervention in Afghanistan, three being discovered in a scrap yard in Kabul in 2003 (one of which is now preserved in Kabul and another one in Poland)! It almost goes without saying that a fairly good general understanding of the development and use of tanks in the Great War is a given requirement to getting the most out of this volume. That said, this is definitely a worthwhile addition to the bookshelf of those interested in the development of tanks in the Great War.
Niall Ferguson

SCOTTISH VERSE

LIZZIE MacGREGOR (Ed.)
Beneath Troubled Skies: Poems from Scotland at War 1914–1918
Scottish Poetry Library, £12.99, 152pp.
ISBN: 9–781–846–973–321

Listening to a WFA lecture by Tom Scotland during which he brilliantly interwove the poetry of Sorley and Owen with an explanation of the huge advances made in the treatment of front–line casualties in the war, it became apparent that there can be a marriage of poetry with military history. The two disciplines can be mutually supportive rather than antagonistic.

It is a view recognised by Sir Hew Strachan introducing this important new anthology: 'poetry carried an immediacy,' he writes, 'denied to prose. It lived in the present so was relieved of hindsight'. The best of the 'soldier poets' conveyed the emotions – anguish, fear, anger, frustration, and – yes – often a sense of the futility of it all – with all the power and accuracy of a sniper's bullet. By contrast, military historians are tasked with 'slogging up to Arras with rifle and pack', explaining how in 1918 military victory was at last achieved by forces whose commanders had experienced a painful learning curve. Wordsworth's definition of poetry taking its origins 'from emotion recollected in tranquillity' was denied many of the war poets. Manuscripts of some of Sorley's poetry were found in his knapsack after his death at Loos.

It is this 'immediacy' that gives the work of the Dundee journalist – artist, Joseph Lee, and Domhnall Ruadh Choruna, 'Red Donald of Choruna' in the Uists their power. Poems such as 'The Green Grass' and 'Oran a' Phuinnsean' ('The Song of the Poison') are at least the equal of better–known works. Here were men repulsed by slaughter on an industrial scale, yet compelled by duty, comradeship and belief in the justness of their cause to continue fighting. In their art they wrestled with this fearful contradiction. *Beneath Troubled Skies* follows the war year by year. When peace finally came, the braggadocio of 1914 seemed an echo of another world. This painful understanding was not felt alone by the war poets. The anthology contains the poetry of Scotswomen, especially Violet Jacob and Mary Symon, both writing in Doric, gracefully and fluently. Symon's 'The Glen's Muster–Roll' (1915) and the post–war 'The Soldier's Cairn' are two sides of the same coin. As a poet she stands comparison with the better–known Vera Brittain.

Here is a wonderful addition to Great War studies, encapsulating in verse and accompanying commentary, Scotland's significant role in the conflict. And readers who do not know Doric 'needna fash and girn' – get bothered and complain – each poem written in this language is fastidiously translated, as are the Gaelic verses.
Ron Grant

CHURCH AT WAR

JEAN MORRIS
The Church Lads' Brigade in the Great War. The 16th (Service) Battalion The King's Royal Rifle Corps. The Long, Long, Trail
Pen & Sword, 2015, £25.00, xii, 259pp, ills, bibliog., index.
ISBN: 9–781–783–463–589

Usually a regimental or battalion history relates the story of the work and character of a unit against a backdrop of the wider aspects of the events in which the unit participated and they can be judged on that. From its title, that is what one expects of this book which, apart from a short work by their padre – published at the time – is all we have. One expects a Great War unit history to be based, apart from general histories of the campaigns, on a wide range of sources, from the various war diaries of unit and associated formations, contemporary local papers, memoirs and, with this subject especially, the KRRC annual chronicles and Church Lads Brigade (CLB) magazine, there may be also material held in local archives and even wider sources. Maybe the author had access to all of this, but it does not show in the final result. There are two pages reproduced from the war diary and a page containing names from the *Accrington Observer and Times*, but this reviewer could not read them. No use was made by the author of this information as there are no lists of names or details of honours and awards and casualties.

The book begins with a history of the KRRC, to which the CLB was affiliated, all that was needed about the parent regiment could have been condensed to a couple of pages and details given as to why the KRRC was selected to receive the 16th – and the 19th for that matter – Service Battalions. There is quite a lot about the history of the CLB, and I admit that this was necessary in an attempt to discover why the Church of England wanted a unit for their members in which they would feel more comfortable each time they had to break the Commandment 'Thou Shalt Not Kill'. Quite a lot has been written about that. Too much space has been given here to general history with photos of a gift box with much detail, unconnected photos

of a group of five medals and on a very early page we see that the 11th Scottish Rifles of the Cameron Highlanders has become the 'Cameroons'. A good deal of material written by Chris Baker was also found to have been reproduced almost verbatim from his The Long, Long Trail website without permission, a transgression which, when pointed out, elicited an apology from the publisher and a promise to acknowledge it in future editions. This book then is not a unit history as it concentrates on seven or eight members of the unit describing their lives, which it does quite well. The means and material to give us a much better book was there – a pity that the opportunity was not taken. Take a look at the next book as an example of what can be done. We still need a history of the CLB battalions – those Pals deserve one.
Bob Wyatt

SUNDERLAND VOLUNTEERS

CLIVE DUNN
The Fighting Pioneers. The Story of the 7th Battalion DLI
Pen & Sword, 2015, £25.00, 278pp, ills, bibliog., nominal rolls, index.
ISBN: 9–781–473–823–488
Now this is a proper unit history. It uses all the sources plus the result is one of the better unit histories recently published. The 7th Durham Light Infantry (DLI) sprang from the Napoleonic War Volunteers of Sunderland and was revived in the 1860s as Rifle Volunteers, as the 3rd Volunteer Battalion DLI in 1887 and finally as 7/DLI as part of the 1908 Territorial Force reforms with six companies at Sunderland and two at South Shields. A preliminary chapter includes descriptions of former recruits which gives an insight into the life of TF soldiers with a wealth of photographs. Once formed and trained they volunteered to serve abroad and were in France by April 1915, were gassed and suffered many casualties at Second Ypres. In November 1915 they became a pioneer battalion of 50th (Northumbrian) Division providing the men with extra pay for a lot of extra work. This did not remove them from the fighting, they sent out teams to dig and improve trenches, dugouts and build huts. They still operated as infantry, all of them going up to the front line in April 1916, later working on roads and tram lines. They were at Arras in 1917 and Third Ypres the following spring. The book contains good descriptions of the March 1918 retreat. In the July of 1918 the 7th absorbed the 22nd Battalion and experienced booby–traps during the advance. A chapter of the book describes the work of the second line battalion in England – training and providing replacements for the front line battalion which was later sent to Murmansk and Archangel.

The 7th was demobilised and became part of the new post–war Territorial Army as 47 (AA) Battalion RE in 1937 which perhaps deserves a book on its own. Appendices include awards (with citations), medal entitlements (a list of the Territorial War medals awarded), a list of officers and of all men who landed in 1915 noting casualty details which rounds off this first class battalion history by someone who really understands the subject nicely.
Bob Wyatt

WAR DIARIES

The Naval and Military Press – Unit 5, Riverside, Brambleside, Bellbrook Industrial Estate, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1QQ (www.naval–military–press.com) – is well known for making Great War archives available at affordable prices. They have covered the Official History, Naval and Air Force casualties, medal rolls, Soldiers Died, Silver War Badge and rolls for awards of MC, DCM and MM and the National Roll of the Great War with a valuable consolidated index, all with search facilities.

In 2014 they brought out a DVD–ROM, searchable on Amazon Kindle and on line, which contains a smart index in which each diary page has been indexed chronologically with place and date. In addition to that, all operational orders, map titles, title pages and other miscellaneous documents are indexed by date and title. When a diary has been located its contents list may be viewed and individual pages or the entire diary downloaded which can then be printed out. All this can now be yours for £350 plus VAT and postage.

This is a huge undertaking covering 3,300 diaries and over 1.5 million pages, taking up some 250–feet of shelf space – a luxury available to very few of us. All of that data is now available and searchable but there has ever been a problem in accessing war diaries at battalion or unit level. There is a huge index in the WO95 series at the National Archive at Kew but it requires an understanding of the structure of the Field Forces. It is all there in the list of files in the series but a searcher needs a military understanding and not a little stamina to tackle a search – which of the 1.5 million pages do you want to see? The histories are filed by division and most units moved around from one to another so the individual diaries are not all collected together.

Now it has been made a little easier. N&M has produced an index. A place and date can be requested and a list will appear from which the diary can be selected. From now on – even if you do not have the DVD – you can obtain a facsimile of each diary in full colour bound in laminated covers at prices varying from £15.00 to £90.00 for the volume containing thousands of pages. To assist there is a printed index at £10.00 plus postage (Order No 24896) which can be accessed on orders@nmpbooks.com/wardiarieshtml. The book has 242 pages of index plus a range of examples of the content, they are listed by division and each of the sub units with its WO95 code, ISBN and price so that a hard copy can be ordered with ease. Study the index before you start your search as the divisions are not in strict numerical order and they are a bit scattered about. In an ideal world someone with a hundred years to spare could produce a unit index!

The diaries included are for units within British and Indian Divisions on the Western Front during the Great War. That includes headquarters diaries for each division and brigade, all fighting and pioneer battalions, other units actually under the direct command of divisions or brigades such as trench mortar and machine gun batteries, field artillery and related ammunition columns, Royal Engineer and signal companies, field ambulances and divisional trains. Cavalry Divisions are likewise also included.

Diaries not included are: theatres of war other than the Western Front, all army and corps headquarters diaries and those for all other units whose command was not devolved from those armies and corps to divisions. For example, heavy artillery, tank and most Army Service Corps companies as well as several smaller specialist units such as Base Post Offices and Mobile Laboratories. Also not included are diaries for Lines of Communication troops or those in the Australian, New Zealand and Canadian Divisions. Some war diaries were deliberately destroyed during the war for operational reasons. A few others have been lost for a variety of reasons during the intervening years, so by no means is everything covered here.

N&M are now working on another huge project – a digital record of all the Great War military entries from *The London Gazette – The War Gazette*. Imagine having an indexed version of that! Our thanks must go to Chris and Gary Buckland and their team for making this all possible.
Bob Wyatt

SHORT NOTICES

We apologise to David Filsell for wrongly attributing two of his short reviews on poetry books – one being the *Telegraph* poetry book – on p.141 of ST 106. We do try, but get it wrong sometimes, sorry David and sorry Bob.

Those members who attend our Surrey Branch meetings will have heard Graeme Hodge speaking about the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames's War Memorials Association. After fifteen years of research into the 2,200 men and women from the area a newsletter filled with details of the Fallen has been published. The issue, which was due out in June 2016, includes Somme casualties. Those wishing to download past issues can do so from www.local–hero.org.uk and Graeme can be contacted at 37, Aldridge Rise, New Malden, Surrey KT3 5RL.

Over recent months Pen & Sword, one of the most prolific publishers of books about the Great War, has introduced an ambitious new series in soft back entitled: 'Your Towns and Cities in the Great War', they vary in size from 125 to 215 pages and are priced between £9.99 and £12.99. Their content also varies. The one covering Aldershot has 215pp and contains many illustrations. Murray Rowlands, its author, found to his surprise that no previous history existed of this important military town, even more surprising when one of the greatest military publishers of all time: Gale & Polden, was located there. Remarkably, there are no names of the Fallen on the town's memorial but the author has included many Aldershot casualties in the Roll of Honour. (In

passing, I have been told that a history of Gale & Polden is nearing completion and I hope to be able to publish details shortly). Norwich is also covered in the series which deals with the memorials, including Nurse Cavell's – a local resident. Grimsby – home of the Grimsby Chums – by Stephen Wade is strong on the Home Front and women at work in factory and hospital; Dartford covers the names on the War Memorial and contains many useful biographies; Gloucester is particularly well illustrated and Brighton, with 272 pages, again with many rare illustrations, is strong on the local hospitals. Pen & Sword continues the series with ***Weymouth, Dorchester & Portland in the Great War*** by Jacqueline Wadsworth, a 144 page soft cover (£12.99, ISBN: 9–781–473–822–726). Dorchester housed up to 4,500 Germans in its PoW camp: civilian internees to begin with before the captured service men arrived. Hundreds of men were treated in local hospitals and had their convalescence in a most appropriate seaside location at Weymouth. Anzacs from Gallipoli helped to swell the numbers where they had a great impact on the locals. Nearby Langton Herring was one of only fifty–three 'thankful' villages in the Kingdom to which all of the men returned safely, the memorial board contains the names of thirty–one who served – all of whom survived. The work of women in factory and on the land is well covered using contemporary sources. Enhanced by many photos this well–written book presents a vivid account of the forgotten life in the area a century ago. Watch out for a volume covering your town. *Bob Wyatt*

A similar title is: ***Portsmouth's World War One Heroes: Stories of the Fallen Men and Women*** by James Daly, The History Press, 2016, Soft cover, £14.99 (£14.24 download), 222pp. ISBN: 9 780–752–491–493.There have been a number of books recounting the stories of the men recorded on local war memorials – to do the same for a major city is a much larger task. Over 6,000 men from Portsmouth died during the Great War, a significant proportion of them, not surprisingly, serving in the Royal Navy. To deal with such numbers the author has divided his story into nineteen chapters, sixteen of which deal with specific groups or individuals such as '*Portsmouth's First World War Submariners*' or '*The Royal Naval Division*', each dealing with representative individuals. I am a former pupil of Portsmouth Grammar School and other former pupils are well represented, possibly because the school has produced a Roll of Honour of former pupils killed in the Great War. See http://www.pgs.org.uk/pgs–association/archive/first–world–war–old–portmuthian–commemoration–project/honouring–the–131/ . *Niall Ferguson*

***The Diary of Corporal Vince Schürhoff,* 1914–1918** is the Army Records Society's 2016 volume. Although a number of hitherto unpublished 'ranker's accounts' of their war appeared since 1914 few, if any, which I have seen has added much of real value to our knowledge of the lot of the Great War soldier. Edited by Jim Beech this publication offers the writings of the German–fathered Schürhoff – a fluent German speaker – from his joining the 1st Royal Warwicks, with whom he served until 1916, before his attachment to signals intelligence and later the Royal Engineers Signal service. In the meantime he was awarded a Military Cross. The Society judges the book to be, 'an excellent window into the physical and mental worlds of a middle ranking NCO', recording the 'nuances of life in the trenches and behind the lines' to offer 'a rare contemporaneous account of grassroots intelligence work during the war'. Sadly neither author nor editor provides the reasons for Schürhoff's removal from the front line to work at a prisoner of war camp at the same time as three other German– born soldiers in the BEF. The Army Records Society annual subscription, which includes the cost of its annual publication, is £25.00. Details from The Army Records Society, Membership administration: Heritage House, PO Box 21, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5SH Tel. 01462–896688. Future planned publications include *Sir John French's Command Diaries and The Military Papers of Major General JFC Fuller. David Filsell*

Roger Deason has written a memorial record of Dulwich Hamlet, ***'When Shall Their Glory Fade?' Dulwich Hamlet: First World War Roll of Honour***, Hamlet Historian, 2015, 24pp, soft covers, ills, (www.thehamlethistorian.blogspot.co.uk) the book contains biographies of the twenty–two dead from the hamlet, some with portraits. More senior members of the Surrey Branch will remember Stan Bird, a veteran who died at the age of 98 in 1993 who served as a stretcher–bearer in the 1st Surrey Rifles. He was a bandsman to begin with and was a part of the medical team serving in France, Macedonia, Egypt and Palestine where he caught malaria and was sent to hospital. A phenomenal memory and an ability to write combine to make his a worthwhile and interesting little book: ***'An Ordinary Soldier'. His Experiences of Services in the First World War*** by S A Bird of the First Surrey Rifles (ISBN: 9–980–950–148–199) can be obtained from Cadhas Publications, 183, Banstead Road South, Suttton. SM2 5LW, at £6.00 post free UK. *Bob Wyatt*

Captain by Sam Angus, Macmillan Children's Books, 2014, Paperback: (ISBN: 9–781–447–263–029; £6.99, 246pp. Also available as an ebook) is Sam Angus' third book. Billed as a children's book, I am not sure it would be suitable for very young children as they would find it an extremely 'hard' read. Personally, I never got past *The Famous Five*! This is a book in the Michael Morpurgo *Warhorse* school. A (largely) improbable tale, which I quite enjoyed reading! For once, instead of being set on the Western Front, the action concerns a yeomanry unit, which first sees action at Suvla Bay in August 1915. Written in the first person by a fifteen–year old trooper – who all his colleagues know is too young as they come from the same community – the title derives from the hero's name for another boy of a similar age who is in charge of a donkey taking supplies up the line. They survive Gallipoli and then spend the rest of the war fighting the Turks in Palestine culminating in the capture of Damascus. The author has apparently done much research in the IWM for her novels and in that sense this book had an authentic feel in the descriptions of the appalling hardships endured by both men and beasts. I think there is a strong message in this book for young people about friendship and loyalty. Part of my enjoyment came from reading about battles that I have just recently been drawing maps for! *Barbara Taylor*

Craig Gibson has written ***Behind the Front – British Soldiers and French Civilians 1914–1918,*** Cambridge University Press hb, 480pp 2014. Sometimes it is a bad idea to judge a book by its cover, or in this case it's title, principally because Gibson's well researched, wide–ranging survey embraces Belgian as well as French civilians. He draws on an impressive range of sources, including official and unofficial war diaries, literary works and unpublished manuscripts from British, Canadian, French, Belgian and Australian archives to tackle a subject that he readily acknowledges to be vast. The author addresses what may be termed the small business of war and the politics of occupation thematically, extending from formal territorial domination and military control to 'nuts and bolts' transactions involving food, money, booze, sex and violence. Though the book acknowledges that many a 'Tommy' persistently looted and casually damaged farm property and crops, compensation for material losses could be secured via Divisional Claims Officers and Town Majors. The claims for redress provide a tangible example of more or less successful mediation by the military but Gibson concedes that civilian attitudes to soldiers defy analysis, principally due to lack of reliable contemporary evidence. This is a scholarly work that captures well the shift from mutual incomprehension to the author's general identification of an uneasy symbiosis that developed between civilian communities and soldiers behind the lines. As a good, general introduction to a hitherto neglected aspect of life behind the front lines, this book is a well–structured and clearly expressed piece of work. It is a thoughtful and intriguing study that invites more detailed exploration of the economic, social and political aspects of British military occupation on the Western Front and other theatres of war. Another expensive book from an academic publisher but shop around for the best price. *Julian Putkowski*

Newcastle Commercials. Newcastle's Very First Volunteer Battalion of the Great War – 446 pages on high quality A4 glossy paper – is one of the finest books produced to date telling the story of the civilian soldiers from the northeast of England who bravely fought and died in the Great War. Containing over 300 photographs, 30 maps and 21 colour plates with moving stories and tragic letters interlaced with humour and optimism, this book is a must for every household of the northeast. This second edition is a much enhanced version including many more soldiers' stories and unseen photographs. There is a comprehensive Roll of Honour and an updated and accurate Roll Call from the attack on the Somme of 1 July 1916. Self–published with only a small print run of 350 copies it is priced at £19.95 plus £3.50 p&p and can be ordered direct from Ian Johnson at lestweforget@hotmail.com. Profits from the sales will be donated to Royal British Legion. *Bob Wyatt*

www.westernfrontassociation.com

The Western Front Association was formed with the aim of furthering interest in the period 1914-1918, to perpetuate the memory, courage and comradeship of those of all sides who served their countries in France and Flanders and their own countries during the Great War.
It does not seek to justify or glorify war. It is not a re-enactment Society, nor is it commercially motivated. It is entirely non-political. The object of the Association is to educate the public in the history of the Great War with particular reference to the Western Front. Applications for membership are welcomed from anyone with like mind.

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WFA Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph and in the Guards Chapel on Friday 11th November 2016

Attendance at the Cenotaph and in the Guards Chapel is open to all Western Front Association members.Those attending the ceremony must assemble in King Charles Street behind the archway and NOT at the junction with Whitehall. This will assist the marshals and will allow an orderly column of members to proceed to the Cenotaph.

Attendees must assemble no later than 10.20am as the Columns will form up at 10.30am for briefing and March Out at 10.40am. Please note that the column will be moving out to the Cenotaph 10 minutes earlier than previously.

Wreath layers please note! Please order your own wreath from the Royal British Legion early. (Tel: 01622 717172). On the day please report to Barbara Taylor. Instructions regarding the order and method of wreath laying will be conducted by Barbara between 10.10am and 10.20am. It is most important wreath layers attend this. Medals should be worn. **A very limited amount of disabled parking** will be available in King Charles Street, provided that the driver remains with the vehicle at all times. Vehicle details must be communicated to the Parade Marshal John Chester <jhonchst@btinternet.com> by the 2nd November to obtain access to King Charles Street.