



CHESTERFIELD WFA

Newsletter and Magazine issue 48

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Christopher Pugsley FRHistS

Lord Richard Dannat GCB CBE MC
DL

Roger Lee PhD jssc

Dr Jack Sheldon

Branch contacts

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

Mark Macartney
(Deputy Chairman)
Markmacartney48@gmail.com

Jane Lovatt (Treasurer)
Grant Cullen (Secretary)
grantcullen@hotmail.com

Facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/157662657604082/>
<http://www.wfchesterfield.com/>

Welcome to Issue 48 - the December 2019 Newsletter and Magazine of Chesterfield WFA.



For the final meeting of 2019 we welcome Tim Lynch

Going Back: Pilgrimages on the Western Front
Even before the Great War had formally ended, visitors had begun to visit the trench lines of the Western Front and a booming tourist trade had started to develop. Battlefield Guide Tim Lynch looks back at 100 years of tourism and commemoration and what it is that continues to draw many thousands of people to the sites today.

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

Grant Cullen – Branch Secretary



Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2020

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

January	7th	. AGM and Members Night
February	4th	Graham Kemp `The Impact of the economic blockage of Germany AFTER the armistice and how it led to WW2`
March	3rd	Peter Hart Après la Guerre Post-war blues, demobilisation and a home fit for very few.
April	7th	Andy Rawson How Sheffield's smaller industries turned their hand to war work.
May	5th	Nick Baker . The British Army has always fought a long battle with the debilitating cause to its soldier's efficiency through venereal disease, a combination of behavioural change and civilian interference resulted in an 'epidemic' of VD which threatened military effectiveness.
June	2nd	Rob Thompson 'The Gun Machine: A Case Study of the Industrialisation of Battle during the Flanders Campaign, 1917.
July	7th	Tony Bolton `Did Britain have a Strategy for fighting the Great War or did we just blunder from crisis to crisis? "From business as usual to total war" `
August	4th	Beth Griffiths `The Experience of the Disabled Soldiers Returning After WWI`
September	1st	John Taylor. 'A Prelude to War' (An Archduke's Visit) - a classic and true tale of `what if` ?
October	6th	Peter Harris Tanks in the 100 Days. Peter will present some of his researches for his Wolverhampton MA course
November	3rd	Paul Handford Women Ambulance Drivers on the Western Front 1914 - 1918.
December	1st	John Beech 'Notts Battery RHA - Nottinghamshire Forgotten Gunners'

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CHESTERFIELD WFA BOOK GROUP

Our next book club meeting will be on Tuesday 10th Dec, 7pm at our usual venue, the Labour Club, Saltergate when we will discuss 'Haig's Enemy' by Jonathan Boff, in which he discusses the role of Crown Prince Ruprecht of Bavaria and sheds new light on many of the controversies of the Western Front from a German point of view.

Publisher: OUP Oxford; 1st Edition (12 April 2018)

ISBN-13: 978-019-967046-8

Hardcover: 400 pages (also available as Kindle and Audible)

Message from our Branch Vice chair and Member of the WFA EC, Mark Macartney

Hi All,

The full version of the WFA 2019 Cenotaph Video is now on youtube and the WFA's latest news section on the web site

Please have a look at it remembering that every year, on the 11th day of the 11th month, The Western Front Association honour those who fell in the service of their country during the Great War.

<http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/latest-news/november-2019/video-the-wfas-armistice-day-commemoration-2019-at-the-cenotaph/>

<https://youtu.be/FKPqdjru8Ng>

Good to note that the 2019 commemoration was attended by over 3,000 people and is one of the most important events in London on Armistice Day. and in Rich Hughes (Legal Trustee) words "*the Centenaries are now over but the Western Front Association will be here every year, and it's very important that we keep the memory going*", and adding "*in our Chairman (Colin Wagstaff's) words, we started off with literally a few men and a dog, and the police didn't even stop the traffic, but it's built into the event that we see today.*"

Mark



A Personal Note from the Chair (39)

The season of official remembrance is now over for another year, I hope many of you were able to attend Memorial Services in your local communities. Obviously, the Remembrance Sunday Service and the WFA sponsored commemoration at the Cenotaph on the actual Armistice Day are the focal point at a national level but as I expect Tim Lynch will tell us on Tuesday memorialisation was and still is at many levels. I would like to remind members that attendance at the Armistice Day commemoration at the Cenotaph is open to all WFA members. This year's video of the event is available on the WFA website and is well worth accessing. It was therefore disappointing that there was a minor spat when it was incorrectly tweeted that the WFA were not represented at the Menin Gate Ceremony on the 11th.

On a different but related note, in the new year the WFA will hold its Chairman's Conference in London, this happens every two years and it is an opportunity for branches to influence the way the WFA operates and develops. Many local members have views about these matters but I am aware there may not be a suitable way for these to be made known to either the Branch Committee or indeed the national Executive Committee. In the new year I hope to include in the next Branch Newsletter a brief survey which can be fed back to both your local and national committees. It would be great to get a good response and that is why I am giving advance warning so members and guests can think about what it is the WFA could be doing differently or better. This survey unlike a vote in the AGM will be open to all recipients of the Newsletter so it is hoped we can get some feedback which I can take along to the Chairman's Conference.

Nationally October and November saw one of the best increases in new membership for many years this is encouraging as many feared the centenary of the Armistice would result in a fall off of interest. As part of the initiative to keep the WFA alive and well I will unusually be making an appeal to those who come to our meetings or receive this newsletter to consider joining the WFA, if for no other reason the excellent publications are well worth the modest subscription.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Grant and all the Committee for their support, you will see later in this newsletter they have again arranged an interesting and informative programme of talks for next year. If anyone would like to do a presentation to the branch or would like to see a talk on a particular topic please let the Committee know.

Finally, I wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year and hope to see as many as possible at our January AGM.

Best regards,

Tony Bolton Branch Chair

Secretary's Scribbles



Welcome to issue 48 of the WFA Chesterfield Branch Newsletter and Magazine.

Welcome to issue 48 of our Newsletter /Magazine, this being the last in 2019.

Our speaker on Tuesday is Tim Lynch, no stranger to those who attend regularly as Tim has presented before and is a frequent attendee at our meetings. Anyway here is a little bit of info about the man himself !

Tim does have a proper grown up job but spends part of his working week messing about as a freelance military historian and battlefield tour guide specialising in WW1 and 2. Much of his time is spent leading schools trips to Belgium and France and he has a particular interest in how commemoration of the war has changed over time. In 2018 he led a group as part of the Royal British Legion's commemoration of the Great Pilgrimage to Ypres and this was the prompt to developing the talk.

On Tuesday the topic of Tim`s talk will be ***Going Back: Pilgrimages on the Western Front***

Even before the Great War had formally ended, visitors had begun to visit the trench lines of the Western Front and a booming tourist trade had started to develop. He wil look back at 100 years of tourism and commemoration and what it is that continues to draw many thousands of people to the sites today.

As Tony Bolton has mentioned in his `From the Chair` notes, we want to try a bit of a different format for our January meeting which of course commences with the important business of the Branch AGM. To follow we would like to have at least three members make short presentations on a topic of their choice, each presentation taking about 20 minutes. Hopefully we can give members a chance to showcase some visits or research they have, or are in the process of doing. Please get in touch with me using the contact details below. To put things in place, advance notice etc, let me have your suggestions no later than Christmas.

The programme of speakers for 2020 is included in this newsletter, a blend of familiar faces and new ones, but overall, hopefully, there will be something of interest for everyone.

To conclude these brief notes, thank you all for your continued support of the Branch and good wishes to you all for Christmas.

I look forward to seeing a good turn out on Tuesday evening - see YOU there !!

Grant Cullen - Branch Secretary

07824628638 grantcullen@hotmail.com

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



The Western Front Association's 2020 calendar is now available for pre-order. Once again it features images of the battlefield taken by a team of volunteer photographers. It includes a bit of a Canadian theme this year The scenes depict points of interest in France and Belgium (and, incidentally, Italy, not forgetting Cobbers image to The 5th Australian Division, and the Vancouver Corner image to commemorates the Canadian 1st Division, there is also reference to Canadians on the Courcellette British Cemetery text) ditto to New Zealand because of what is written in February) some of which are well known but others 'off the beaten track'.

As well as providing superb images of a dozen views of the First World War battlefields, the calendar provides detailed commentary to each image helping to set the scene in context.

This is a high-quality product which, every year, receives superb feedback. The sales of the calendar also assist the WFA to continue its work.

The WFA's 2020 calendar is available via [the WFA e-shop](#) or by phone on 0207 118 1914.

The URL for the calendars on the Eshop is here <http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/shop/wfa-branded-items/wfa-calendar-2020/>

If you prefer to order by post just complete the order form accompanied by a cheque (details on the form) the URL for this is

[file:///H:/WFA/\(2\)%20Branded%20Goods/\(15\)%20Calendar%202020/calendar%20leaflet%202020%20\(1\).pdf](file:///H:/WFA/(2)%20Branded%20Goods/(15)%20Calendar%202020/calendar%20leaflet%202020%20(1).pdf)

The calendars can be ordered NOW

It is clearly the case that members like to see the calendar images first before they purchase the calendar'

These images can be seen in this URL .

[file:///H:/WFA/\(2\)%20Branded%20Goods/\(15\)%20Calendar%202020/Calendar,%20Final%20Images%20.pdf](file:///H:/WFA/(2)%20Branded%20Goods/(15)%20Calendar%202020/Calendar,%20Final%20Images%20.pdf)

Of course Orders in addition to (as stated here) may be made over the telephone to Sarah in WFA Head Office, please ring 0207 118 1914, with credit card details to hand, or purchase on the Eshop , the Eshop link is under, you can purchase at the Branch for the same price of £10, and when purchased at branch , £5 is retained at branch level and £5 sent to the WFA.

The calendars are now available for dispatch .

Just a few images here, but if you click on the link all images are there, all 13 of them,



Above: May 2020 - Prowse Point Military Cemetery (photo: John White)



Above: November 2020 - Sacrario Militare Del Monte Grappa (photo: Jonathan Dyer)



Above: April 2020 - Vancouver Corner (photo: Steve Kerr)

November Meeting

Branch Chair Tony Bolton, welcomed all to this our November meeting, commenting that it was good to see such an excellent attendance, given it had been a miserable day weatherwise and there was the counter attractions of bonfires and fireworks displays. He then called upon John Beech to speak Binyon`s Exhortation, followed by a short pause of silent remembrance . Tony then introduced our speaker for the evening, Jonathon D`Hooghe, Chair of the Lincoln WFA branch, and someone whom he had first got to know about 7 or 8 years ago when they were on the Birmingham University MA course.



Nowadays on University reunion trips to the Western Front they tend to travel together.

Jonathon started by explaining his Flemish name although he is very much a Nottingham lad, his family arriving in Nottingham over 100 years ago because of the lace trade and they still had a factory in Nottingham as late as the 1930s.

The `Robin Hoods` - the 7th Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters was a Territorial Battalion recruited in the City of Nottingham.

Jonathon then posed the question, why does he have such a fascination with the Great War and why does he have such a great interest in the particular battalion? One of the reasons, he said, was that, as a quite a young man finding on his father`s bookshelf a battered old book - which Jonathon had brought along - the 1920-21 edition of the history of the 7th Battalion which he had read, as a child, but not really understanding what he was reading. It was written, as books of that type were read at the time, full of `derring-do`, great bravery and everything else. His grandfather had served in the war, losing an eye in 1915 and Jonathon said he had got to know him very well as he lived to a ripe old age with a rather misshapen face and glass eye. In the fullness of time, Jonathon inherited all his medals and papers and with the start of the 1914 centenaries this had a great effect on people wanting to know about their families` participation. So Jonathon started to trace his, he of course, knew his grandfather who went to war aged 17 in the cavalry, the 20th Hussars. Then there was Jack, his brother, Jonathon`s great-uncle, who was killed on the Somme in 1916. The more he went into it, he found they had nine cousins who also served, giving a total of eleven men from his family, all in France or Belgium. Jonathon then went through the `list`...starting of course with his grandad...giving brief accounts of their ages and regiments . He finished with Herbert who was a Robin Hood. Jonathon then showed a picture of a chap in the Robin Hoods - how do we know? - the cap badge and buttons are black - a designated rifle battalion had these in black brass. Jonathon had a small display with him, including a typical Robin Hood cap badge and he invited attendees to view these after the meeting.

Rather than just give a short history of the battalion, where they went, what they did etc, Jonathon said he wanted to look at the men who actually served in the battalion and try and work out what its character was.

So, where did it all start. Although the Napoleonic wars had ended about forty years previously, the country still feared the threat of invasion and in 1859 a notice was published for volunteers to assemble at Nottingham Castle and on the first night only 6 men turned up but by August of that year almost 400 men were able to be inspected by the Duke of Newcastle and the Lady Mayoress of Nottingham...at that time Nottingham Castle was the home to the Duke of

Newcastle - Jonathon reminded us that Nottingham Castle is currently closed to visitors to allow a multimillion pound refurbishment to take place. The Lady Mayoress bestowed that title The Robin Hood Rifles on the men and they were allowed to wear the `rifle green` uniform. They of course, eventually become the 7th Battalion the Sherwood Foresters. By 1860 there was 1000 men on the roll and following the Childers army reforms of the late Victorian period they become the third rifle battalion of the Notts and Derby regiment.

Jonathon White a recently retired professional soldier was credited with bringing together an assortment of `butchers, bakers and candlestick-makers` and creating a fine territorial battalion. Following the outbreak of the Second Boer War in October 1899, the 200 men of the battalion volunteered and went to South Africa where they arrived in December. They were stationed in the Orange Free State and took part in fighting under General Sir William Gatacre. From April 1900 they were part of the 21st Infantry brigade under General Bruce Hamilton. It was estimated that while chasing the Boers they marched backwards and forwards some 1700 miles ! . The Robin Hoods were granted the Battle Honour `South Africa` and that appears on their black badge - the only battalion that holds that Battle Honour.



St Mary`s Church on Nottingham`s Lacemarket is the Battalion church and in the church there is a plaque commemorating four men of the Robin Hoods who died in South Africa.

The church is full of other Robin Hood memorials and Jonathon said it was well worth a visit.

After the bloody nose given to the British army by the Boers, and despite there being a Liberal government more intent on introducing its social policies we were fortunate to have Richard Haldane as Secretary of State for War and most of us are

aware of the Territorial Act when the Territorial Force came into being, the city battalion becoming the 7th Battalion , the Sherwood Foresters, keeping their title the `Robin Hood Rifles`. Despite this, these changes were not universally popular with the men as the numbers had to fall as the army was reorganised into regular and territorial battalions. These reductions in battalion companies meant there was less opportunities for officers, ncos etc .It was not a good time but really, Haldane put us on a good footing when war breaks out.



By 1910 the battalion was back at full strength, 29 officers and 980 other ranks.

The 8 companies drilled in two groups of four, one group at the Corn Exchange , Vernon Street and Victoria Baths at Sneinton - the latter giving those training there the opportunity for a wash! Despite there being a Liberal government there was money going into this Territorial Force with a new rifle range being built at Trent station and a new Drill Hall being built on Derby Road, the latter opening in 1912.



Soldiers outside the Drill Hall in Derby Road

The organisation of the TF saw the Notts and Derby Regiment raise four first line battalions, the 5th, Derby, 6th High Peak and of course the Nottingham lads in the 7th with the 8th Newark and Mansfield, and together they formed the 139th Brigade of the 46th North Midland Division. Eventually, such was the demand for manpower second battalions were formed and they eventually go to France in 1917 and form part of the 59th North Midland Division.

Jonathon then posed the question...were the Robin Hoods an `elite` rifle battalion?...did they fancy themselves a bit more?. By 1911 they had 22 men rated marksmen whilst the other battalions had only 23 marksmen between them. The Robin Hoods, with their own range placed a lot of store on marksmanship with at least 70% of the men being rated as `first class` shots. A first line, regular battalion would generally have 50 - 90 marksmen. Recruiting from such a small area, 4 square miles around Nottingham city centre created a close knit community of men.

Not everyone was enamoured by the `Saturday afternoon` soldiers of the TF men and when, on August 4th 1914 when war breaks out, Kitchener who happens to be back in the UK, and who had served against, basically, native forces in places like Sudan, and is not enamoured by our Territorial soldiers and the first thing he does is round up about 30 Territorial battalions in the UK and sends them off to outposts of the empire to release regular battalions for service in Europe. However, despite the numbers joining up - the `Kitchener Volunteers` these are totally untrained and the onus falls back on those territorial battalions which are fully trained to fight and of course Haldane`s plan was for the territorials to be available in times of emergency primarily for home defence, stemming any attempted invasion.



So those willing to serve overseas were entitled to wear an Imperial Service badge.

The first TF battalion to go to France was the 1/14th City of London (London Scottish) battalion who arrived as early as September 1914 and had a hard time, given they were all civilians a couple of months before, at Messines in the First Battle of Ypres, although they acquitted themselves with honour.

The London Rifle Brigade were much put out for when they battalions were numbered they were given number 5 despite being the oldest militia in London and felt they should have been given number 1 - they didn't get it - the Royal Fusiliers got numbers 1 - 4.

The Robin Hoods were at summer camp in north Yorkshire when war was declared, mobilised, and spent the rest of 1914 training in the UK before arriving in France in February of 1915, the 46th North Midland Division being the first full Territorial division to arrive at the Western Front up until then it had just been individual battalions. It was quite a shock for the men come 4th August when full military discipline took over rather than the relaxed `chummy` atmosphere when they were part time soldiers.

On December 19th a second battalion is formed - the 2/7th Battalion and are subsequently sent to Dublin where they help to quell in the Easter Rising of 1916 and eventually they form a Brigade of the 59th North Midland Division



Geoffrey Vickers (later Sir Geoffrey) won the VC whilst with the 7th Battalion, Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment).

Captain Vickers was awarded the Victoria Cross on 14 October 1915 (his 21st birthday) in the Hohenzollern Redoubt for the following action:

"When nearly all his men had been killed or wounded, and with only two men available to hand him bombs, Captain Vickers held a barrier for some hours against heavy German bomb attacks from front and flank. Regardless of the fact that his own retreat would be cut off, he had ordered a second barrier to be built behind him, in order to ensure the safety of the trench. Finally, he was severely wounded, but not before his magnificent courage and determination had enabled the second barrier to be completed."

Captain Vickers survived the First World War and went on to serve as a lawyer, administrator, writer and pioneering systems scientist. During the Second World War, he served as Deputy Director General at the Ministry of Economic Warfare, in charge of economic intelligence and a member of the Joint Intelligence Committee. He received a knighthood for his services 1946. He died 16 March 1982.

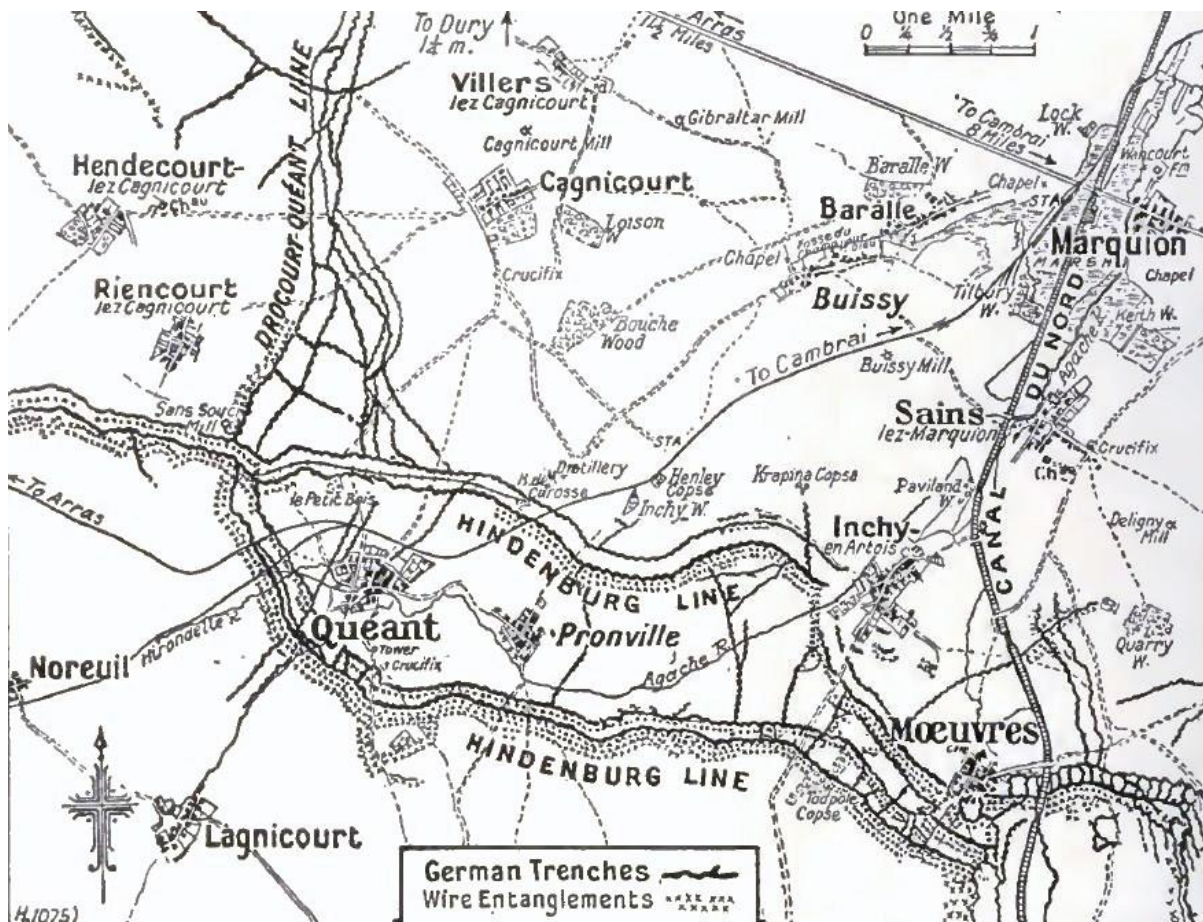
Initially the 1/7th, the Robin Hoods go into the line in a quiet sector Ploegsteert, before moving slightly north to the Menin Road, then Kemmel east of Ypres where they witness the first use of flamethrowers. Moving south they participate in the Battle of Loos, the Hohenzollern Redoubt where Vickers wins his VC on October 13th 1915. Following this action the 46th Division is earmarked for Egypt but only get as far as Marseille before they are ordered north again going into the line at Vimy. Jonathon mentioned the 1/7th sister battalion the 1/6th which was virtually annihilated at Gommecourt on the Somme in that diversionary attack. 1917 sees the battalion holding the line in several sectors with a bit of fighting around Lens but they miss the worst of the fighting at Passchendaele. January 1918 the decision is taken, the British Army as a whole to reduce infantry brigades from four battalions to three to enable battalions to be brought up to strength after the losses at Passchendaele and Cambrai in late 1917. Was this a political decision....Lloyd George wanting to hold men back in the UK whilst Haig wanted these men on the Western Front ?. 200 men and 12 officers from the 1/7th leave the 46th Division to join the 59th Division forming a composite battalion which is again annihilated on March 21st, the first day of the German Spring Offensive. Reformed with drafts, they face the onslaught again in Operation Georgette and in May 1918 it is reduced to cadre strength and was never back in the line by the time the armistice comes in November 1918. They actually miss out on the most famous day in the history of the 46th North Midland Division, the taking of Riqueval Bridge on the Hindenburg Line, the 5th, 6th and 8th battalions are involved, but not the 7th who have been so badly cut up they really don't exist as a fighting force by the end of the war .

Jonathon then put up a picture of King George V, escorted by Lieutenant Colonel Reginald B. Rickman, inspecting the remnants of the 7th Battalion (Robin Hoods), Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment (Sherwood Foresters, 59th Division) at Hermin after the Battle of Bullecourt, 30th March 1918. 2 officers and 12 men.



So who were 'The Robin Hoods'? - Jonathon then looked at a snapshot in time by looking at death records and he put up a slide showing a list of officers and men, all of whom had died in 1915, particularly those who were killed at Hohenzollern Redoubt, an opinion Jonathon said, he held, that the battalion was at its zenith at this point - that doesn't mean to say that the battalion of 1918 was any less brave or the men were any less worthy. He compared this with a similar sample killed in March / April 1918. So, Jonathon said, what am I trying to prove? He recommended a book *The Territorial Force* by Craig Mitchinson - primarily about the London Rifle Brigade - a battalion that did not allow any working class men into the ranks pre war and it was not until conscription was introduced that manual workers were admitted. Originally men had to pay an annual subscription to belong to the battalion, indeed the book reveals that when war was declared in August 1914 how many of those men were behind with their subscriptions! Were the Robin Hoods as good as that - certainly there was no subscription by Jonathon said he considered them to be quite an elite unit. Jonathon then put up a list of the officers killed in 1915 and briefly described each. He said that we usually consider the Kitchener Battalions the 'Pals' Battalions but such was the camaraderie of Territorial battalions like the Robin Hoods these were the original 'Pals' battalions. He pointed to the tight geographical casualty list - a city in mourning - the four square miles guys.

Jumping forward now Jonathon looked at March 1918 an amalgam of 1st, 7th, 2/7th, all part of 59th Division and he put up a map of the Hindenburg Line around Queant.



The Robin Hoods battalion was near Noreuil on the left of the map and you can read about the fighting there in 1918 in Martin Middlebrook's book 'The Kaiser's battle'. His book was written while many of the veterans were still alive and he interviewed a number of the Robin Hoods, particularly about the attacks on March 21st when 170 were killed and almost 500 wounded or

taken prisoner - only 2 officers and 12 men managed to get away - recall the picture of those men meeting the King a week later. The battalion takes more casualties that morning than any other battalion on the British Front. Ernst Junger in his book `Storm of Steel` recalls that battle from the German standpoint.

After a short break Jonathon resumed discussing more of the officers and men with an emphasis on where they stayed pre-war. So, on the surface of it, by 1918 they had been out on the Western Front for 3 years and the first batch of officers still fit the bill, still from the better families - public school, university, profession etc.

The second lieutenants are all out in the front, in rifle and machine gun pits when, on March 21st they are overrun and mostly killed. Jonathon went on to discuss these lads, where they came from and a bit about their background noting that they were not from the upper echelons of society but illustrated that boys from the grammar schools replaced those from the public schools as the war carried on, most of the latter being dead or maimed by now. Jonathon mentioned two men, Mycock and Wilson, both recipients of the Military Medal who had been commissioned from the ranks. Despite incomers from as far away as Carmarthenshire there was still in 1918 a good Nottingham city thread but the identity of the battalion is changing, as is the British army as a whole, socially as well.

Jonathon then discussed sergeants of the 2/7th, this composite battalion, indeed of the original 1000 men who went, only 11 are still serving, but this was not uncommon, being widespread across the British army, the general attrition of a standard battalion of the time.

Having discussed officers and ncos, Jonathon turned his attention to `other ranks` looking at two samples, 1915 and 1918 and there was still the same four square mile pattern, with so many of them losing their lives on the morning of March 21st 1918. But there were many from further away, West Bridgeford, Kirby in Ashfield, Southwell, Bingham etc, most from manual jobs, labourers, errand boys, not the same educational class. Indeed there were a few from London, Tyneside, Manchester, even one from Sunderland. There were also a few convalescents, men who had been at front, wounded and now fit enough to return, such was the shortage of manpower.

So, after the virtual annihilation of the Robin Hoods on March 21st they reform and face the second German onslaught in mid April again taking hefty casualties and Jonathon put up another list showing where these men came from around the Nottingham area but there was still a thread of the original battalion there.

Jonathon reminded folks of the Lincoln WFA Seminar held in September 2018 (which was attended by a goodly number from Chesterfield Branch) and he produced some records left by their guest speaker, Peter Barton, particularly the German `After Action Report` on the 7th Battalion.... `Interrogation of Prisoners - captured 15th April, it lists the make-up of the Division...then reports that the prisoners stated exceptionally heavy losses in March, indeed the captured men appeared to know detailed figures for losses of officers and men. The Germans found out that on 2nd April the battalion was joined by 80 men discharged from an English military hospital which we know was correct and these were supplemented by a further 400 conscripts, men who were thrown in with little training. Germans are rightly pleased with themselves... `The effect of German weaponry and the capture of prisoners`. The prisoners appeared to be angry with their officers, who after `pointing the men in the direction of advance were never seen again` One prisoner was quoted... `no leader, no food, no allies...that is the grand army we belong to`.

The battalion became predominantly conscripts and Jonathon stressed that he was not in any shape or form denigrating the commitment or courage of these raw recruits who ultimately held the Germans...they buckled but didn't break.

To conclude Jonathon said that 1000 men actually died whilst serving with the battalion. What did Haig think of them ? He recalled that at the critical stage of the operations in late March 1918 he says that he was "really worried because le had only one battalion of British troops available in that part of the line and the General to whom I confided my anxiety replied...it`s all right sir, it`s the Sherwood Foresters and they are as good as any German division.

Jonathon advised folks that, if they are ever in central Nottingham to go to St Mary`s Church in the Lacemarket to see the wonderful memorial.

As post script, the war ends in November 1918, the battalion is at cadre strength not having fought again after April 1918. Post war the Territorial Army replaces the Territorial Force. In 1936 they become the 42nd Robin hoods Anti aircraft Battalion, Royal Engineers. August 1940 transferred to the Royal Artillery as the 42nd Robin Hoods searchlight regiment. Arriving in France in late 1944 they serve in France and Belgium until the end of the Second World War. They survived in various guises until disbandment in 1999.

As is our custom, there was an excellent Q & A session when Jonathon finished with good input from Stuart Wilson (good to see Stuart back amongst us), John Beech and Rob Nash. Tony Bolton then wound up the evening by asking all present to accord Jonathon a hearty vote of thanks for his efforts on our behalf.

07 November 2019

CWGC STATEMENT IN RELATION TO THE UNREMEMBERED DOCUMENTARY

The CWGC has been saddened by media articles that ran yesterday in advance of a Channel Four documentary which claims 'Britain dishonoured its African First World War dead'. The Commission's involvement in the programme amounted only to one interview, the subject of which was obfuscated. Instead of engaging with us in a dialogue about their research, as we asked, the programme makers have refused to disclose their subject matter, their claims, their sources, or discuss the allegations off camera, or even to show the film to the CWGC ahead of its transmission.



The article by David Lammy in the Observer makes some assertions we'd dispute. We have seen no documentary evidence that the claims about Voi cemetery are true; indeed our archives make no reference to African war graves in the town. Antonny Kimani, the caretaker for our cemetery in Voi is not a historical authority - there's nothing to suggest the area he indicated contained war graves, though of course it may have contained burials of some kind. The CWGC's archive offers open access for the public so the "clandestine research" referred to would simply not have been either necessary, or possible. As has unfortunately happened in many places across the world, the cemetery at Pugu Road in Dar es Salaam was lost to development by the local authorities, but the names of those men now appear on the memorial wall at the nearby Upanga Road Cemetery.

The treatment of black people in the 1910s and 20s was a far cry from today, and it's true that many African combatants and support workers who died during the First World War have no known graves.

Where the CWGC has their names, they are recorded on memorials, just like thousands of Europeans with no known graves, but sadly we have known since the 1920s that the names of the East African Carrier Corps lost in the conflict were never recorded or made available to the CWGC by the Colonial Governments. The IWGC worked with Colonial authorities for ten years after the hostilities to find a way to do this and agreed eventually to create the much loved Askari memorials in Mombasa, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

Today, new additions to the list of war dead are agreed every day where omissions are discovered - there is nothing racist or selective about this. Huge credit goes to the In From The Cold Project who have been working tirelessly since 2012 to find these names. Where we can, we rededicate the graves and care for them, and where no grave is known, the names are entered on a memorial. Where it can, the CWGC today is working to keep cemeteries open and accessible, and to commemorate men and women previously forgotten. Projects now well advanced include:

A new memorial to four East Africans whose names had been omitted through clerical error during digitisation, was erected in Mozambique earlier this year.

After the city council removed illegal squatters from the Kariakor site in Nairobi this month, the CWGC is tendering the work for a new memorial garden to be built as an amenity for local people, preserving the cemetery plots within the area and working with the Museums of Kenya and local stakeholders to tell the story of the Carrier Corps. Planning consent was lodged in 2017.

The CWGC is working with the South African authorities in Cape Town to erect a new memorial to 2000 South African Labour Corps workers whose details recently came to light, and will deliver a major community engagement programme highlighting the role of black South Africans

In 2016 we relocated a number of black and white Africans from cemeteries under threat of development in Walvis Bay, Namibia, reburying their remains together at nearby Swakopmund.

All these projects precede the production of this film and were covered in the unedited interview with David Lammy. There are no names lurking in the CWGC archives awaiting commemoration, and no way now, 100 year on, the Commission can identify, or reclaim, alleged abandoned sites (which would almost certainly have contained the burials of both civilians and Carrier Corps).

As the Director General acknowledged when she met David Lammy, this is a sad situation. But whilst there's no simple fix to the past, we will be considering the programme in the coming months and discussing what more can be done to highlight the contribution and sacrifice of so many.

Ending the taboo of soldiers with 'broken faces'

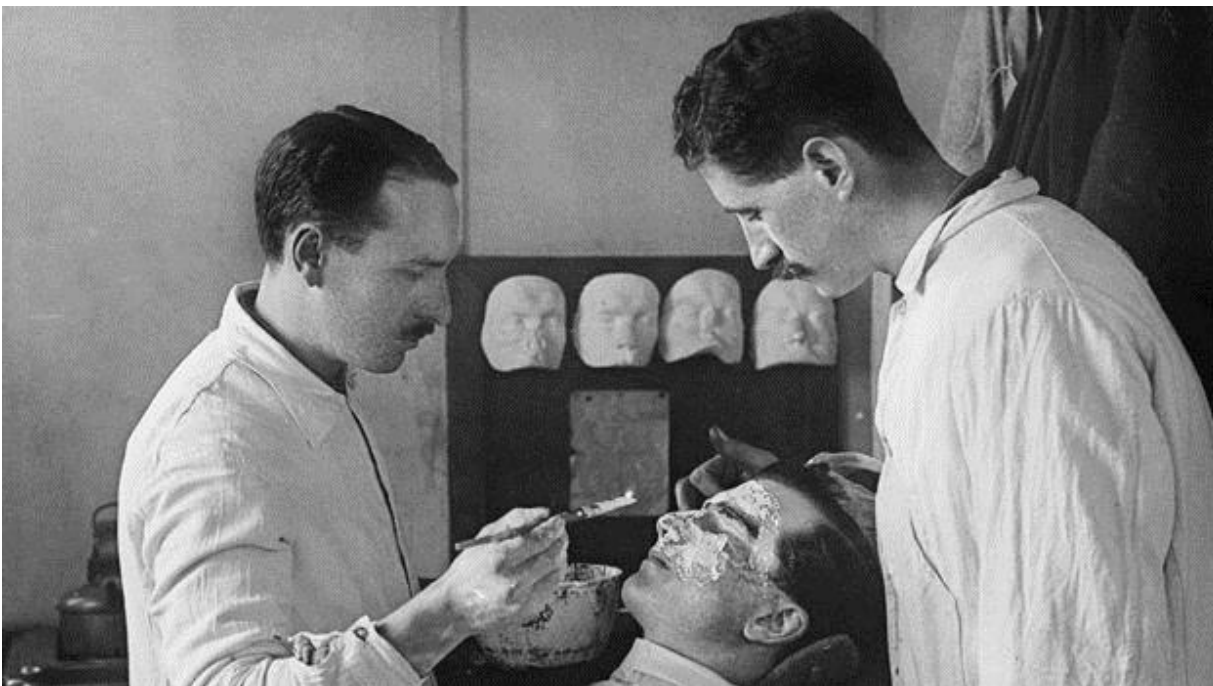


A World War One memorial to soldiers whose story has been described as an unresolved "taboo" is set to be unveiled.

Historian Ellie Grigsby has designed a statue commemorating the thousands of soldiers who suffered terrible facial disfigurements and who often found themselves shunned rather than welcomed back as heroes. The statue is to be unveiled by descendants of some of the soldiers, at Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup, Kent, where many of the men were treated. Ms Grigsby has researched the soldiers with "broken faces", whose uncomfortable memory she says has been neglected in war commemorations.

Mirrors banned

Her postgraduate research at Goldsmiths, University of London, found that many soldiers who returned, with their faces changed by shell and shrapnel injuries, faced social rejection and isolation.



"I came across stories of mirrors being banned from hospital wards, children cowering from their fathers who came home from the front with a new face, and sweethearts who couldn't bear to look at their lovers," she says.

With today's awareness of mental health problems, Ms Grigsby says their post-war experiences must have been deeply traumatic. The homecoming for these disfigured young men could involve a complete loss of status, broken relationships and being turned away from jobs.

She researched one soldier who was rejected by his wife - "she couldn't bear to look at him" - and was not allowed to serve customers in his old job as a tailor. But in a twist in the tale, he ended up marrying his wife's sister. It wasn't only about appearances. Some soldiers who had injuries to their jaws and mouths struggled to eat for the rest of their lives.

Buried in a mask

In some cases, where parts of the face were missing or irretrievably mutilated, men wore metal masks.

These tin masks were painted and had artificial moustaches and eyebrows to reflect how the soldier once looked, based on photos from before the war. Ms Grigsby says some disfigured soldiers wore these masks all the time, at home as well as in public, never showing their injuries.



"They never showed their family, some children wondered their whole lives what the face looked like, because they never saw it," she says. Some were even buried still wearing a mask. "They lost not just their faces but their identities," says Ms Grigsby. They had literally become the unacceptable face of war.

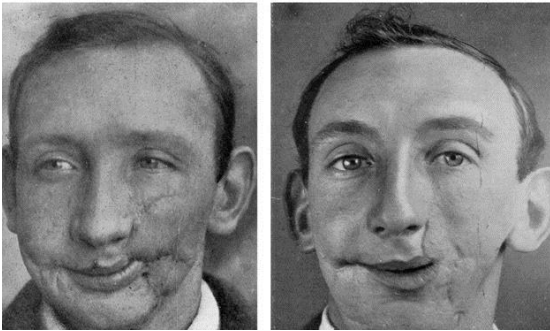
Pioneer surgery

The efforts by doctors to help these soldiers, carrying out thousands of operations, drove advances in reconstructive surgery. These medical pioneers, who used their experiences at the hospital in Sidcup, have been widely recognised. But Ms Grigsby says the injured soldiers



themselves have had much less attention - with an awkwardness and public discomfort about their fate.

The monument to be unveiled will include words from Ward Muir, an orderly working at the hospital who wrote about working with men whose "hideous" appearances could be so unnerving.



"He finds that he must fraternise with his fellow men at whom he cannot look without the grievous risk of betraying by his expression, how awful is their appearance," he wrote.

"Hideous is the only word for those smashed faces. To talk to a lad who six months ago, was probably a wholesome and pleasing specimen of youth, and is now a gargoyle, and a broken one at that, is something of an ordeal."

'Airbrushed' out of memorials

Ms Grigsby has become a campaigner for their cause - raising the funds for the monument, with her design including a real World War One helmet. But why would someone in their 20s be so engaged by this?

She says the shunning of people over their appearance has a particular resonance for today's young people who are under constant pressure over how they look.



"Social media has a huge influence on how people identify as individuals," she says.

In a culture of selfies and "narcissism", the idea of being blamed for looking unusual or unattractive still has a contemporary relevance, she says.

There is also a sense of righting an injustice. Ms Grigsby says there are many memorials to World War One, with often elegant depictions of heroic soldiers. But she says there has been an "airbrushing" of the stories of men whose personal struggles continued for decades after the war.

"Memory is a choice," she says. *The memorial will be unveiled on 24 November at Queen Mary's hospital, Sidcup*

MARGARET BRIGGS – BARNSELY VICTIM OF SCARBOROUGH

SHELLING RAID ON 16 DECEMBER 1914

By Jane Ainsworth

I have researched this story following a lead provided by Gill Nixon in Barnsley Archives – she had been given the name by a man who is researching ALL women casualties in WW1.

Margaret Briggs was the third child of 9 and the oldest daughter of Samuel Briggs (born c1859 in Pontefract) and Margaret Meredith (born c1855 in Shropshire). After getting married in Pontefract in 1880, Samuel and Margaret moved to Hemsworth before settling in Barnsley by 1891. (They lived in 58 Honeywell Street, 1 Vernon Street then 11 Sherwood Street). Samuel was a Groom and Coachman before becoming a Cab Driver. Margaret was born in 1885 in Hemsworth and by the age of 17 she was working as a General Servant Domestic for a Wholesale Drysalter, in Sowerby Bridge. (*Drysalters were dealers in a range of chemical products, including glue, varnish, dye and colourings. They might supply salt or chemicals for preserving food and sometimes also sold pickles, dried meat or related items. Drysaltery is closely linked to the occupation of **salter** which in the Middle Ages simply meant someone who traded in salt. Later salter was also used to refer to people employed in a salt works, or in salting fish or meat, as well as to drysalters. Wikipedia.*)

Her sister Eliza was also in service in Sowerby Bridge in 1901 at the age of 14, but she later returned to Barnsley to work for a neighbour of her parents. The other five siblings all lived with their parents in Barnsley and the two oldest brothers were working locally. At the time of the 1911 Census, Margaret was working as a General Servant Domestic for Mr John Henry Turner, a widowed Solicitor, who was living in a large house "Dunollie" at Filey Road, Scarborough, with his two adult children.

No-one could have anticipated the events of the morning of Wednesday 16 December 1914, when between 8 - 10am four German warships launched an attack on the East Coast, shelling Scarborough, Whitby and Hartlepool, their main target. They killed 137 people, most civilians, seriously injured nearly 600 and caused great destruction of property. This action was in breach of the Hague Convention which required 24 hours notice to be given of any such attack to enable civilians to evacuate the area. The German ships managed to carry out the raid and escape home unharmed as the British Navy failed to stop them.

Newspapers around the country carried outraged front page stories with graphic details of the attacks and the consequences; some had photographs of the damage. Barnsley Chronicle printed its story on the back page of its next edition noting "Barnsley Woman Slain". The raid on Scarborough took place from 8am for half an hour when more than 100 shells were launched from a distance of about 600 yards from the coast, hitting hotels, churches and many homes. 17 inhabitants were killed of whom 8 were women and 4 were children, aged from 4 months to 15. Margaret Briggs was one of those who died, aged 29.

The Inquest was held the following day at which the Verdict returned was “killed in the bombardment of Scarborough by an enemy’s ship”, although some wanted to call it murder.

John Henry Turner, Solicitor and formerly Sheriff of York, gave evidence at the Inquest and described his terrible experience. His home had been bombarded and 13 bombs were later found at the back plus 3 at the front. He felt responsible for his servants and had been leading two to the boiler house at the back when he looked for Margaret in the Library. “He found her sitting on the end of a couch covered with debris. He called her name and shook her but got no response. He satisfied himself that she was dead. Her legs were broken and both feet were blown away”. Margaret Briggs “had been for 10 years a respectable and trustworthy domestic servant in his employ”.

Other accounts reported that Alfred Beal, a Postman on his delivery round, was killed whilst handing letters to Margaret Briggs at the doorway of the residence of Mr Turner. The bomb landed between the two people killing them both - Alfred's head was blown off !

Barnsley Chronicle on 19 December 1914 added details about Margaret Briggs under a separate heading “A BARNSELEY VICTIM”.

She was very well liked by her many friends in Barnsley and great sympathy will be felt with her relatives. Her father is a very well known cabman and dog fancier. From all accounts Miss Briggs was intending very shortly to return to her home and the tragedy is made all the more pathetic by the fact that she had already sent on some of her luggage in advance. Miss Briggs was killed on the doorstep of the house while taking letters from a postman who was also killed. “Dunollie” is one of the most southerly of the buildings hit in Scarborough. The shell struck the gable end of the house nearer the sea and then appears to have dropped straight in front of the main entrance where Miss Briggs was standing.

Margaret's body was taken to Barnsley, where she was buried in Barnsley Cemetery on 20 December 1914 in the same grave as two infant brothers John and John William. Her parents were buried in the same grave; Margaret in 1919 and Samuel in 1924. There is no headstone.

Jane Ainsworth

NEW MEMORIAL TO MARGARET BRIGGS IN BARNSELEY CEMETERY



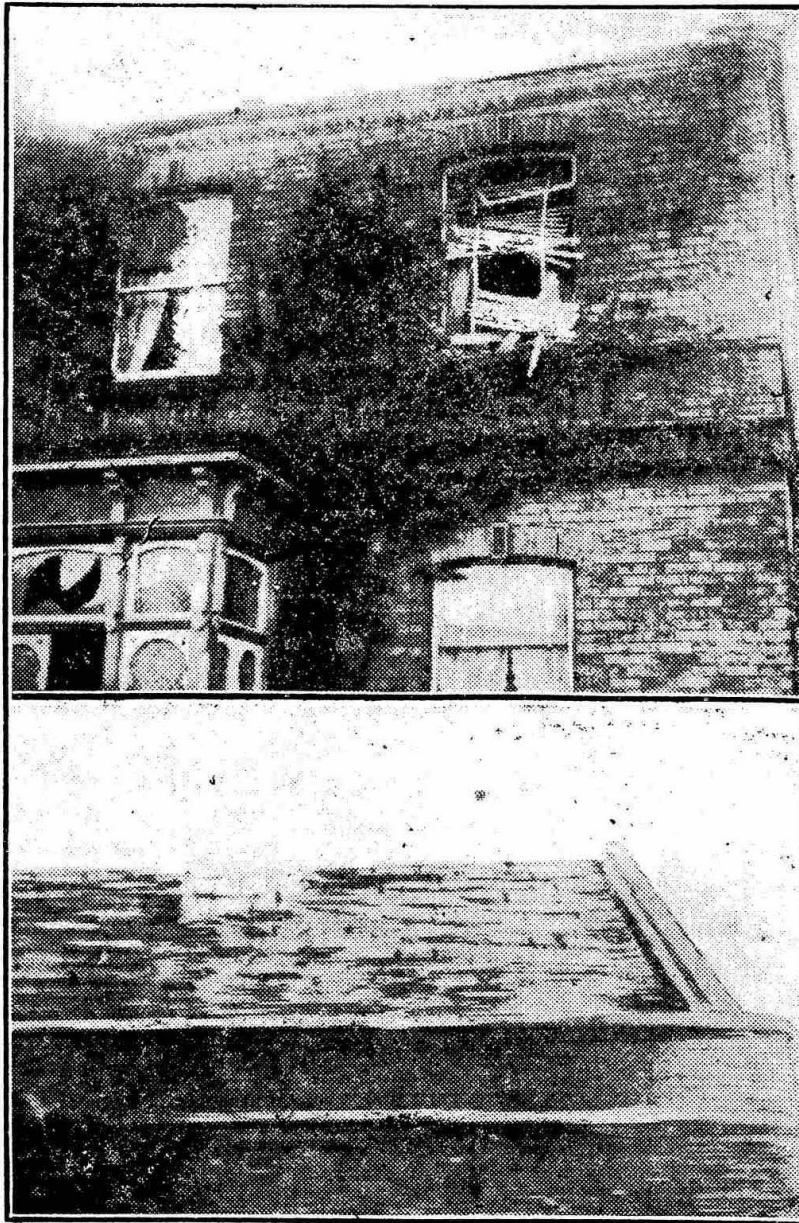
The Friends of Barnsley Cemetery liaised with Barnsley Bereavement Services to ensure that Margaret Briggs' grave was marked for the Centenary of her death in the Scarborough Bombardment.

Photograph courtesy of Anthony Devonport

—Special Photo by W. Watson, Hull.

**PICTURES TAKEN IN SCARBOROUGH, YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, SHOWING
DAMAGE DONE TO PROPERTY BY THE GERMAN SHELL FIRE.**

Photos show (1) Soldiers guarding some of the shells used by the Germans. These "live" shells were packed in straw in the cart seen in the photograph; (2) The damage done to the Co-operative Store.



—Special Photo by W. Watson, Hull.

A FURTHER ILLUSTRATION OF REAL "HUNS" WORK.

The attack on a peaceful watering place is nothing less than a dastardly and cowardly business. Our Photographer and our Special Representative went to Scarborough and back by motor car in nearly "record" time.

Photos show (1) How the shells took effect on the St. James's Vicarage; (2) The damaged roof of one of the churches.

I recently received the undernoted from WFA member Paul Foster

Hi

Many of you will know of or heard Emma Brown, the international mezzo-soprano, who constantly performs across the Western Front as well as at remembrance events from both World Wars across Europe and far beyond.

Emma made a CD earlier this year that is now is finally on line and I thought you may enjoy it:

<https://open.spotify.com/album/7JRuTLY3kOx39JPjVdNJbX?si=s8sBmjBUS8G2ABLvpwOdog>

You can see and hear Emma performing at a wide range of events on the following link:

https://ejebrown.com/remembrance_herdenking_veterans/

She is always keen on being invited to remembrance events so if you have any you can recommend to her, please email Emma at: emma@ejebrown.com

Hope you enjoy the above and please do feel free to copy this email onto others you feel may be interested or publish details in your publications, website etc if you feel able to.

All best wishes

Paul Foster, FRSA
WWI Author and Tour Guide
www.remembering1418.com

PS If you are ever passing through the Mosel area in Germany I run a bed and breakfast, everyone is welcome! <https://www.wilhelmsmoselblick.com/>



Emma Brown and friend

Cardiff woman 'reunites' WW1 soldier with family

24 November 2019



Cemetery.

Gwyneth Jones has been contacted by the family of Pte Robert Deans

A soldier who died in World War One has been "reunited" with his family thanks to a curious stranger.

Gwyneth Jones travelled to France to visit the grave of the soldier who lived in her Cardiff home more than a century ago. Grangetown Local History Society sent postcards to the last known addresses of more than 400 men who died. A relative of Pte Robert Silvester Deans said it was nice to know someone else cared about him.

Details of his life were sent to Ms Jones' home on Clive Street to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the war. The 25-year-old died near the town of Albert, on the Somme, in 1916. Now Ms Jones has been contacted by three members of his family who read **how she had been moved to visit his grave** in Bapaume Post Military



The postcards sent to Grangetown residents last year that started Ms Jones' search. "When I returned home from a Remembrance Day service, a note had been posted from someone who had read the story and was Robert's relative," she said.

"They were thrilled that I had been to the grave as they hadn't been able to. "I'd felt so sorry for this young man that I wanted to reconnect him with his home. Now I feel that I've reconnected him with his family. It's wonderful."

Another to contact Ms Jones was the soldier's second cousin Pamela Campbell, 69, born in Cardiff but now living in Lincolnshire. "It was so lovely to think someone had been to the grave to lay flowers because we haven't had the opportunity to go there," she said. "Gwyneth's curiosity has added to our knowledge. We knew he had died but it was nice to think someone else cared about him."



Pte Francis Leonard Bell died less than two weeks before the end of World War One

In a final twist, Ms Jones has since discovered her great uncle is buried nearby.

Pte Francis Leonard Bell, of the Lancashire Fusiliers, died in France from gas poisoning on 29 October 1918 - just 13 days before the armistice.

She said: "I had almost adopted this other family's soldier but I had no idea I had a relative of my own who had fallen in the war."

From the Gallipoli Association.....

German National Day of Mourning Commemoration

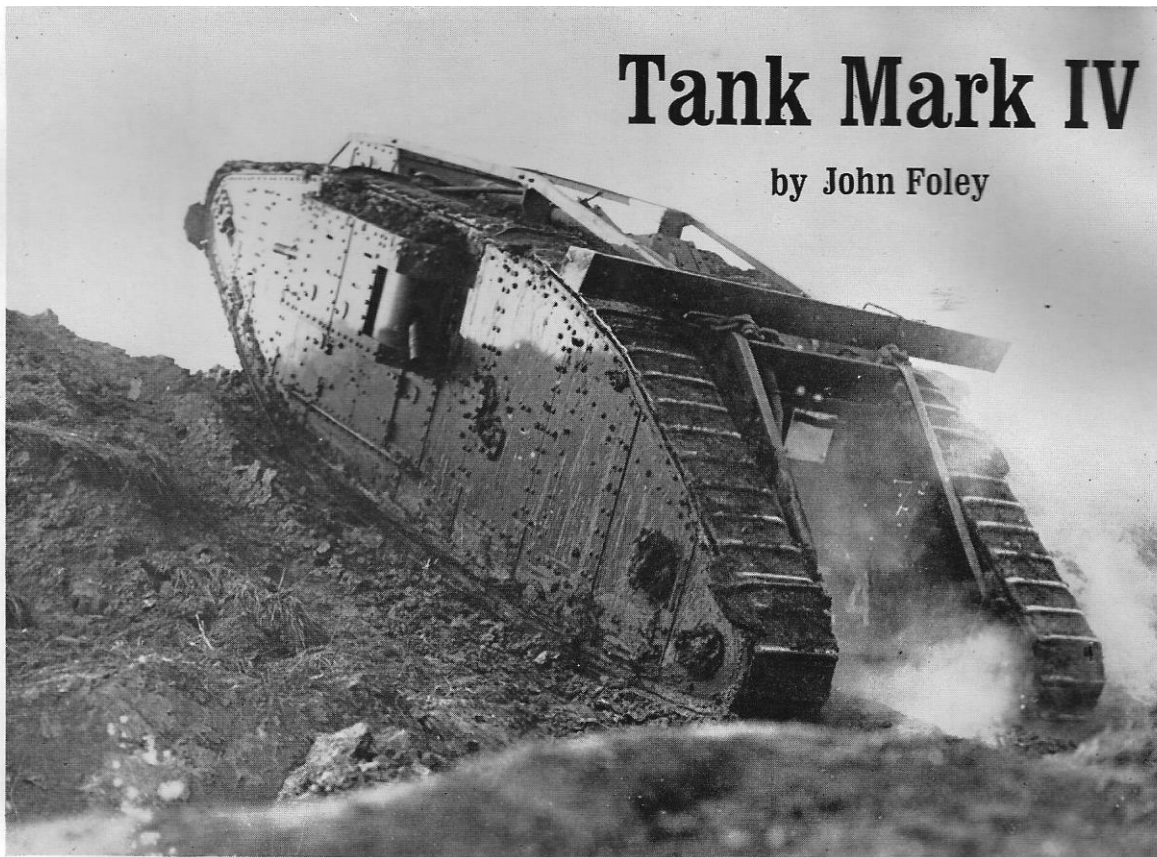
In preparation for the German National Day of Mourning commemoration ceremony on the 17 November, Gallipoli Association member Klaus Wolf and Bundeswehr soldiers assigned to NATO in Istanbul clean up the gravestones in the German Military Cemetery in Tarabya, Istanbul, Turkey. The white marble commemorative plaques and tombstones are subject to the sometimes harsh Bosphorus winter climatic conditions, which had rendered some of them unreadable. Inaugurated in 1914, this cemetery in the park of the summer residence of the German Ambassador in the Tarabya suburb of Istanbul and contains the graves of German soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilians of both World Wars.





Tank Mark IV

by John Foley



The New Dawn—A Mk. IV female goes “over the top” into the morning sun at Cambrai, 20th November 1917. This was the moment at which the tanks ended the machine guns’ dominance of the battlefield. (Photo: Chamberlain collection)

GENERAL Officers do not, as a rule, personally lead their troops into battle. Indeed when General (later Sir) Hugh Elles announced his intention of leading the Tank Corps into action at the Battle of Cambrai on 20th November 1917 the idea caused consternation among his Staff. His G.S.O.I. Colonel (later General) Fuller—later to become the world’s most famous and original author on armoured warfare—remonstrated with him, pointing out that if he were badly wounded or killed, it would be disastrous for the Tank Corps. Writing of the incident Fuller said:

“But he held out and persisted, and he was right and I was wrong. To lead his command was to give life and soul to all our preparations—it was spiritually the making of the Tank Corps, and in value it transcended all our work.”

To lead the attack, Hugh Elles chose *Hilda*, a Tank Mark IV of “H” Battalion and although he made his choice because this particular tank happened to be situated in about the centre of the attacking line, there was something symbolic about his selection of a Mk. IV since this was archetypal of all the heavy tanks of World War I. The Battle of Cambrai has a special place in the history of the Royal Armoured Corps, and indeed of armoured forces throughout the world. It was to be the final factor in the decision whether or not to continue with these unorthodox and expensive weapons. Ever since the original Mk. I Tanks (*Profile 25*) had been introduced at the Battle of Flanders in September 1916 their popularity had swung rapidly from one extreme to the other. Some commanders regarded them as having almost magical qualities, and ordered them into action in circum-

stances where it was inevitable that they would fail; usually across quagmires of formidable terrain.

DAWN OF THE TANKS

Zero hour for the Battle of Cambrai was 06.20 hours and a little before that time the crews of “H” Battalion were gathered in the increasing light, drinking cocoa and trying to keep off the keen November frost. *Harrier*, *Hong Kong*, and *Hilda* were parked fairly close to one another and the crews were astonished to see their commander, General Elles, coming towards them, alone and unescorted. Under his arm he carried an ashplant stick wrapped in some sort of fabric. He talked to the Company Commander for a little while and then pointed to *Hilda* and said “I’ll travel in this one”. Prompt at 06.20 the barrage started, and the tanks rumbled forward with *Hilda* in the lead. As soon as they started to move the General stood up in the tank with his head and shoulders out of the front hatchway. Then the mysterious ashplant was unfurled to reveal a red, brown and green flag, and with this Tank Corps flag waving from the hatchway, *Hilda* and the Tank Corps rode into battle.

General Elles stayed in *Hilda* for just under two hours, during which time the crew took a vigorous part in the action and the 6 pdr. gunner in the port sponson suffered a painful wound in the eye. It was not until 08.15 when *Hilda* became ditched on one of the Hindenberg Line trenches that the General finally left the tank to make his way back to his headquarters. In later years the tank battalions became regiments, and the alphabet letters became numbers; thus “H” Battalion became 8 Royal Tank Regiment. But ever

since Cambrai the Commanding Officer's tank in 8 R.T.R. was always called *Hilda*. And when in 1960 the 8 R.T.R. and 5 R.T.R. were merged the old link with Cambrai was perpetuated in that one of the three Squadrons is called "H" Squadron instead of the more usual "A". And although 5 R.T.R. is not at present equipped with tanks, if and when it is the Commanding Officer's tank will again be called *Hilda*, in memory of "H" Battalion, General Elles, the Battle of Cambrai—described later in this *Profile*—and the famous victory won there which saw the dawn of armoured warfare.

MARK IV DEVELOPMENT

The Tank Mark IV was the natural successor to the Mk. I and embodied many lessons learned by the crews of the Mk. I in France. Chief of these was that the armour thickness was increased from 12 mm. in front and 6 mm. at the sides, to 16 mm. in front, 12 mm. at the sides, and 8 mm. elsewhere. This extra thickness proved of great advantage, since the Germans had carried out penetration trials with armour-piercing bullets against captured early Marks, and the introduction of the Mk. IV at the Battle of Messines Ridge (July 1917), came as an unpleasant surprise to them and a first example of the technical race which has continued now for 50 years to match new weapons with better armour.

The other main improvement which the Mk. IV had over its predecessors was in retractable sponsons. These fixed gun turrets bulging out at either side of the tank were separate units on the Mk's. I, II and III, and projected out about 3 ft. They had to be removed before the tank could travel safely by rail and, since each sponson weighed 1 ton 15 cwt., removing and replacing them involved up to eight hours work and the expenditure of a good deal of sweat and skinned knuckles. The sponsons on the Mk. IV were made slightly smaller and were arranged to slide bodily inside the tank in one piece and one easy movement. This had unexpected disadvantages for until crews got used to them it was not unknown for the sponson of the Mk. IV to slide inwards unintentionally when the tank lurched, sometimes doing the gunner a serious injury.

Experience with earlier Marks of tank had shown



"Hilda"—the most famous of the tanks, is only remembered in a faded album at the R.A.C. Tank Museum, Bovington, Dorset.

that the original 6 pdr., 8 cwt., 40 cal. guns, supplied by the Navy, were too long and fragile for land use. On steep descents they tended to bury their muzzles in the mud, and they bent rather easily on impact with houses or trees. So the male Mk. IV mounted a short 6 pdr., 6 cwt., 23 cal. and this remained the standard tank armament up to the end of the war. The Mk. IV was also the first tank to use the Lewis machine gun, earlier tanks using either Hotchkiss and/or Vickers. The Lewis was an excellent gun, accurate and reliable, but being air-cooled it tended to overheat in the close confines of the tank. Moreover, the engine cooling fan tended to draw the gun fumes into the gunner's eye thus making it impossible for him to see his target. Later models, therefore, were equipped with a special tank version of the Hotchkiss machine gun.

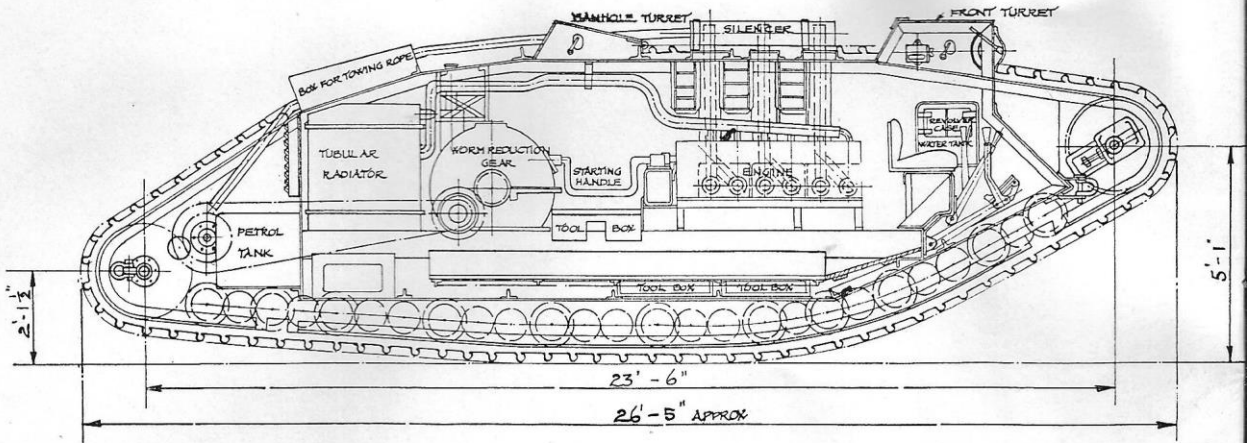
FIRST TANK v. TANK BATTLE

On 24th April 1918 a Mk. IV tank of 1st Battalion

Early Mk. IVs arriving in France were still armed with the long-barrelled 6 pdr.

(Photo: Chamberlain collection)





Machine Mk. IV—Sectional Elevation.

(Copyright: R.A.C. Tank Museum)

(which "A" Battalion had then become) commanded by Lieutenant Frank Mitchell, engaged a German A.7.V. tank (*Profile 7*) in the first tank v. tank battle in the history of warfare. It was a male 6 pdr. tank accompanied by two machine gun-armed females. In fact it was, appropriately, No. 1 Tank, No. 1 Section, "A" Company of the 1st Battalion. Several shots were exchanged between the two opposing tanks and eventually Mitchell's Mk. IV succeeded in knocking out the German tank. But when Mitchell turned to see what had happened to the two female tanks of his Section, he noticed that they were withdrawing from the field of battle with, as he says, "great holes in their sides, leaving them defenceless against machine gun bullets, and as their Lewis guns were useless against the heavy armour-plate of the enemy they could do nothing but withdraw". One of the results of this encounter was the modification of a number of Mk. IV and Mk. V female tanks so that one sponson carried a 6 pdr. and the other a machine gun. This modified type was called, appropriately enough, the "hermaphrodite" version.

MARK IV PRODUCTION

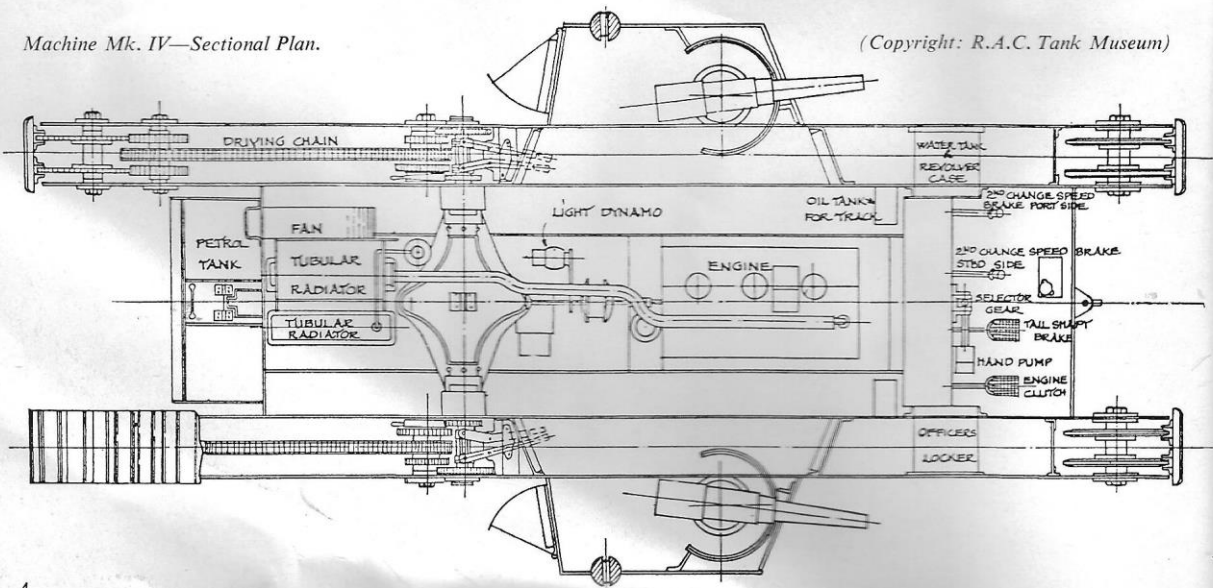
The Mk. IV was designed by Mr. (later Sir) William Tritton and Major (later Colonel) W. G. Wilson. This was the team which, in fact, designed all the Mk. IV's

predecessors. Wilson was a designer of talent amounting almost to genius. He designed the original Armstrong-Whitworth car and was also the inventor of the famous Wilson Gearbox—which has had a profound influence on AFV transmission to the present day—and the founder of the company bearing that name. Tritton was a director of William Foster & Company of Lincoln (now Gwynnes Pumps Ltd.)—the world's first tank arsenal—and it was in this factory that many of the Mk. IV's were produced.

The achievements of these gifted pioneers were not without some preliminary vicissitudes involving arguments over the value of tanks between higher authorities of a kind which have become all too familiar to tank men since those early days. After the initial success of the first tanks at Flers-Courcelette in September 1916 the British Commander-in-Chief in France (Haig) was convinced of the value of the new weapon and gave orders for the production of a thousand. But not all the military chiefs were equally convinced; and some senior officers made great play of the tanks' defects. Thus the order for 1,000-plus, placed on 19th September 1916 was cancelled by the Army Council on 10th October—21 days later. And there the order—and indeed the concept of the tank itself—might have died except for the dedication and

Machine Mk. IV—Sectional Plan.

(Copyright: R.A.C. Tank Museum)





A Mk. IV dived in test pit at Tank Corps Central Stores, Erin, N. France, September 1917. Note single sponson turret, short 6 pdr. and machine gun ball mounting of this male tank.

(Photo: Imperial War Museum)

noise from this attracted the enemy's attention. On the Mk. IV, therefore, the exhaust pipe was carried over the back, down between the rear horns and fitted with a silencer. The Mk. IV also embodied steel plates with pinhole perforations for the driver to see through, in place of the earlier glass prisms which had splintered when hit, blinding the driver.

UNDITCHING BEAM

Perhaps one of the biggest troubles of the early tanks had been "ditching", in which the tank tracks sank into soft ground while the belly became fixed on a tree stump, rock, or a patch of harder ground so that the tracks revolved helplessly. Eventually the weight of the tank caused the belly-plate to bow inwards and bind on the underside of the engine flywheel, thus finally rendering the tank helpless. In the Mk. IV an attempt was made to overcome the ditching problem by the provision of "spuds" or iron shoes clamped at intervals along the tracks. But the most successful device was the provision of a squared beam of wood, reinforced with metal, weighing nearly half a ton and long enough to project on either side of the tank. This was carried on top of the tank, fastened to a pair of rails. A length of chain attached to each end of the beam could be attached to the top run of the track on either side. The revolution of the tracks then pulled the beam under the belly and in most cases the tank was able to extricate itself.

MARK IV DESCRIBED

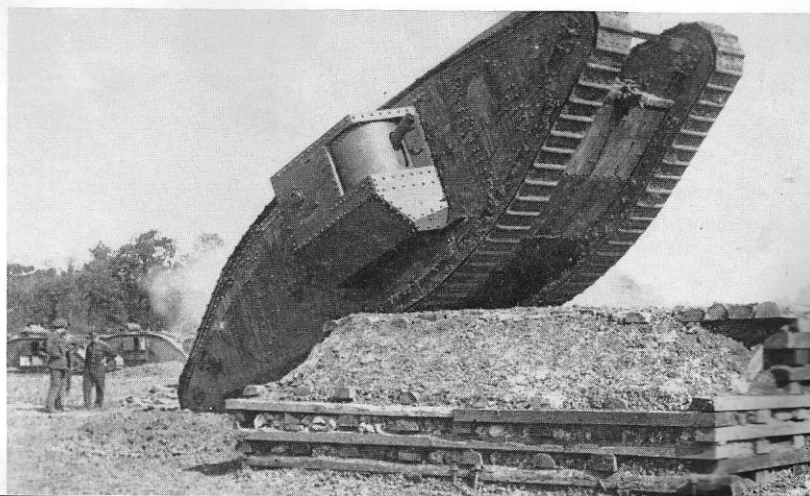
The Mk. IV male tank dimensions were closely similar to the earlier Marks. It weighed 28 tons and was 26 ft. 5 in. overall length, 12 ft. 10 in. wide and 8 ft. 2 in. in height. It was powered by a Daimler 6 cylinder engine, developing 105 b.h.p. at 1,000 r.p.m., located in the centre of the main or fighting compartment. The power/weight ratio of the engine in terms of

determination of Major (later Sir) Albert Stern, Director of the Tank Supply Department. Albert Stern appealed for help to Winston Churchill, Minister of Munitions, who himself played a large part in promoting the tank concept. But Churchill, with uncharacteristic mildness, took the view that if the Army Council did not want tanks, they should not be forced to have them. So then Stern went to see Lloyd George at the War Office. Lloyd George, although Secretary for War, had not heard of the tank cancellation order and promptly issued instructions for the order to be reinstated. The order was, in fact, for 1,015 fighting tanks of which 405 were to be male and the balance female. Later, in February 1917, a further order for 205 Mk. IV tank tenders, with boosted, 125 b.h.p. Daimler engines, was placed. Of the total of 1,220 Mk. IV, 850 were to be built by the Metropolitan Carriage Wagon and Finance Company at their works at Wednesbury, Staffordshire, and the balance of 370 at Fosters of Lincoln, although Major Wilson was made responsible for the supervision of production at both factories.

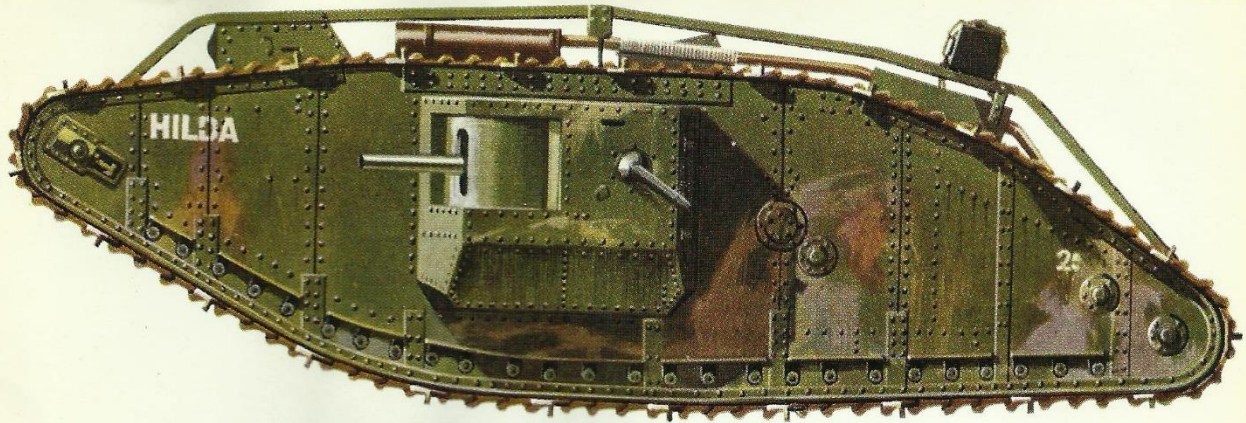
Production began at once, and the first Mk. IV's arrived in France in April 1917 and went into action on 7th June at the Battle of Messines Ridge. Other improvements embodied in the Mk. IV included the provision of an armoured 60 gallon petrol tank mounted outside the vehicle between the rear horns. In the Mk. I there was a considerable risk of fire because the whole petrol supply was carried in two inside tanks on either side of the driver's position. A further difficulty with the Mk. I was that the petrol was gravity fed and was cut off if the tank was caught in a steep tail or nose down position. In early Mk. IV's this was replaced by pressure feed which proved even more dangerous. Finally an Autovac suction system was installed. On the Mk. I the exhaust pipe, with no silencer, had opened direct on to the roof and at night the sparks and

The test ramp at Erin. Unsprung track rollers took the full 28 ton weight and were a weak component of early tanks.

(Photo: Imperial War Museum)

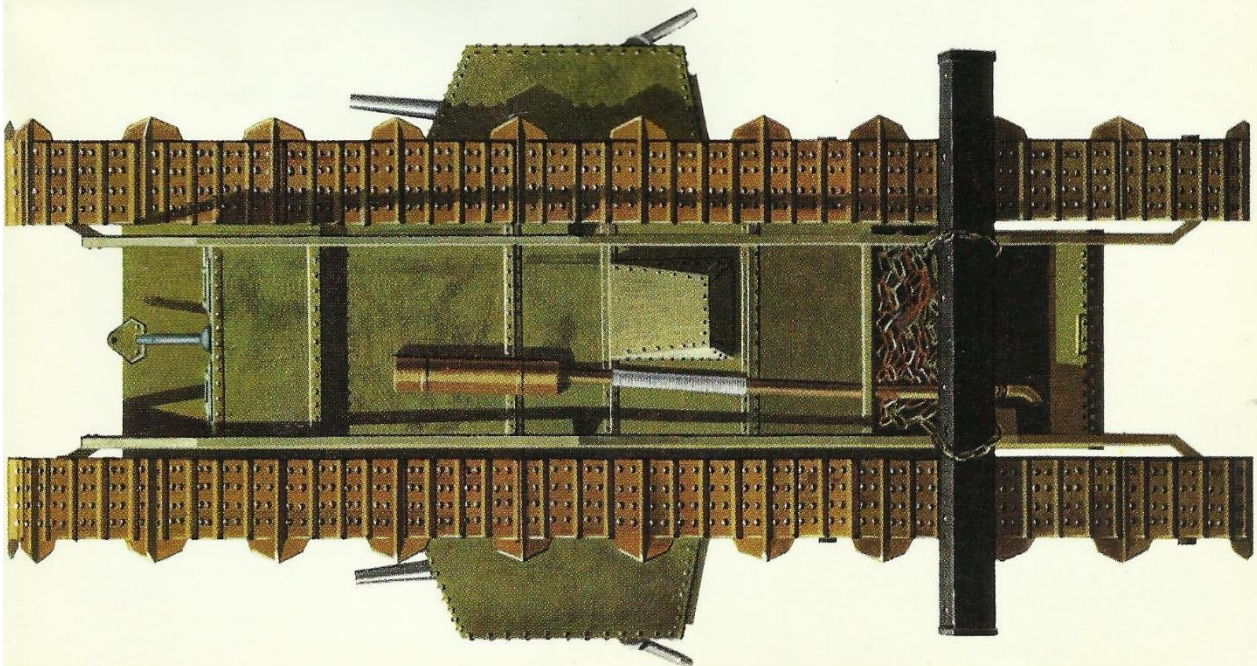
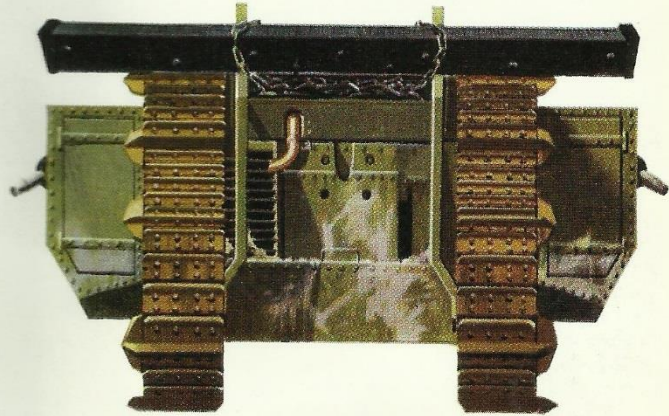


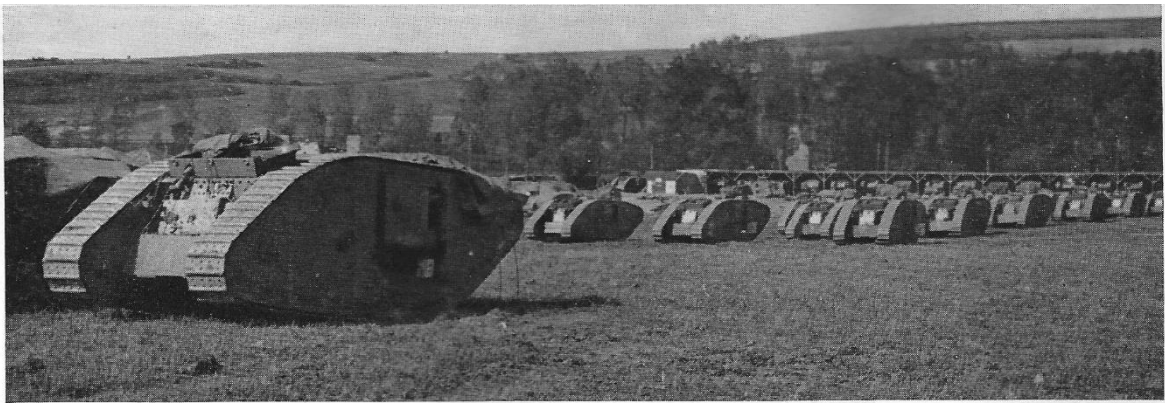




TANK MARK IV

On 20th November 1917 *Hilda* was "H" Battalion No. 1 Tank, commanded by Lieutenant T. H. de B. Leach, and formed the Tank Corps front rank with *Harvester*, *Harrier* and *Huntress* for the attack on the Hindenberg Line at Cambrai. For this reason General Hugh Elles, commanding the Tank Corps, chose *Hilda* to carry the new Corps' colours into the first great tank assault in history. Each of the leading tanks carried a bundle of fascine above the front turret. These were used to fill the German trenches which had been widened to 12 ft. in a vain attempt to halt the tanks.





New Mk. IVs lined up at Erin, September 1917 before the battle of Cambrai. By October 700 were delivered.
(Photo: Imperial War Museum)

b.h.p. per ton, was 3.7. As with all the early tanks this was extremely low—for example, the fast British Cromwell of 30 years later (*Profile 5*) had a ratio of nearly 22—and severely restricted speed. Transmission was through a two speed main gearbox, then via worm drive and differential to two secondary gearboxes on differential output shafts. The final drive was by a Coventry chain on either side to sprockets each carrying two heavy pinion wheels in constant mesh with the track drive sprocket. The engine, main gearbox and differential were based on the pre-war Foster-Daimler tractor. This proved design was followed both for reliability and to speed production. The final drive chain on the Mk. IV was also enclosed in a casing. In Mk. I, II and III it was open and used

to feed liquid mud back through the secondary gears until after several hours running the inside deck was several inches deep.

The tracks were 20½ in. wide, giving a track pressure of 27.8 lb. per square inch on hard ground and 11.1 lb. per square inch sunk to belly. They were unsprung and consisted of 90 armour plate shoes rivetted to two track links, each link connected to the next by a mild steel, oval-headed pin secured by a split pin. They were supported on the upper surface by two long steel rails and ten small bronze blocks. On the underside the weight was supported by 26 pairs of rollers, one in three being flanged to guide the tank along the track and counteract sideways movement. With its low power/weight ratio and unsprung suspension it is not surprising that the top gear maximum speed was 3.7 m.p.h.

The Mk. IV armament consisted of two short 6 pdrs., four machine guns, and it carried 332 rounds of 6 pdr. ammunition and 6,272 rounds of machine gun ammunition.

The eight crew included one driver, two 6 pdr. gunners, two gearsmen and three machine gunners. The Mk. IV female tank had the same basic specification as the male, with the following differences due to the lesser width of the machine gun sponsons and lower weight: width, 10 ft. 6 in., power/weight ratio, 4.04 b.h.p./ton.

Track pressure was 25.8 lb./sq. in. on hard ground and 10.7 sunk to belly. The other basic difference, of course, was that the female carried no 6 pdr. guns; instead it mounted five machine guns and because it carried no 6 pdr. ammunition it was able to stow a total of 30,080 rounds of small arms ammunition.

One of the main characteristics of the Mk. IV and its predecessors was the fact that steering the tank involved four men: the driver; the tank commander (sitting alongside the driver and, as well as commanding the tank, responsible for operating the brakes to half the right or left track according to the direction in which the driver wished to steer); and the two gearsmen who were responsible for engaging high or low ratios on the secondary gearboxes controlling the track speed. The driver had control over the two output speeds of the primary gearbox but had to signal the gearsmen operating the two secondary boxes to obtain third and fourth. Reverse gear was controlled by the driver from the primary box. Unfortunately it gave a higher ratio than the lowest forward speed which explains why it was often so difficult to reverse these vehicles out of a nose-down ditching. The differential could be locked by the driver to prevent one track skidding during trench crossing or on soft ground.



Cambrai—20th November. "Hyacinth" of "Hilda's" "H" Bn. ditched in the second line trenches of the Hindenberg Line.
(Photo: Imperial War Museum)

Cambrai—23rd November. One of the victorious Mk. IVs flying her tattered flag tows home a captured German 5.9 in. naval gun.
(Photo: R.A.C. Tank Museum)





Cambrai—23rd November. The initials stand for Wire Cutter. This Mk. IV disabled in front of Ribecourt was used as an observation post. (Photo: Imperial War Museum)

In addition to operating the brakes, the tank commander was also responsible for firing the forward-pointing machine gun, positioned between himself and the driver, although there is at least one case on record of the driver taking over this weapon and driving the tank with one hand and firing the machine gun with the other. The two 6 pdr. gunners (machine gunners in the female version) were stationed in the right and left sponsons respectively. The gun cradle was carried on a pivotal mounting protected by a circular shield. It was manually traversed with a handwheel and shoulder controlled for elevation. Limit stops for elevation and traverse, and position locks, were incorporated in the mounting. The gun, which was intended only for short range work, had two recoil springs mounted underneath the mounting and a recuperator cylinder on top. The breech blocks were of the falling type, worked by a cranked handle on the side of the gun.

FIRE POWER

The 6 pdr. ammunition carried by the male Mk. IV was of two types: high explosive (HE) and case shot (in some early manuals referred to as "K-shot") for anti-personnel fighting. Armour piercing (AP) ammunition was developed in 1918 and provided for the Mk. IV's still in service then. Sighting for the 6 pdrs. was by telescope, although open sights were also available for emergency use. The sighting telescopes had a small magnification and a 20° field of view. Range was adjusted by means of a calibrated drum on the side of the mounting which depressed or elevated the telescope in relation to the axis of the bore of the gun.

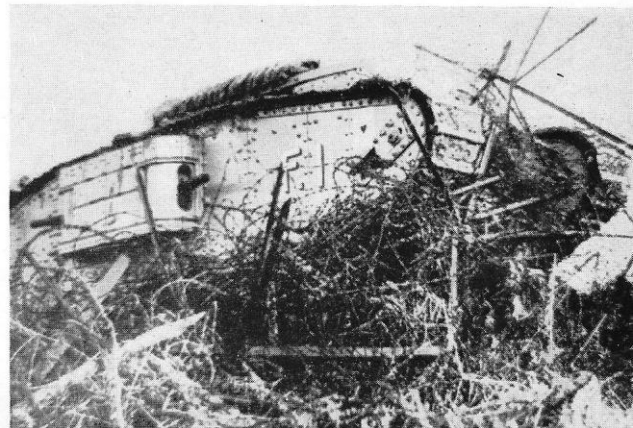
Armour plate for the Mk. IV was cut and drilled as soft steel and then hardened to resist enemy fire. In those days, of course, electric welding was not available and the high speed drill was not in general use. The tank was therefore constructed by rivetting sheets of post-hardened plate to butt straps and angle iron.

This inevitably resulted in gaps at the plate joints and through these gaps molten lead penetrated whenever the tank came under intensive small arms fire. Production difficulties bedevilled the output of armour-plate, particularly as the technique of hardening was then in comparative infancy. Plates were liable to crack during manufacture or else to be so brittle that they failed when subjected to the stresses of a tank in motion.

MARK IV VARIANTS

Apart from the basic differences between the male and female Mk. IV's already mentioned, as production progressed one or two variations were developed, chief of which was the *Tank Tender*, which stemmed from the Mk. IV. 205 of these were ordered in July 1917, and delivery to the battlefield commenced soon afterwards. The main difference between the Tank Tender and the fighting tank Mk. IV was in the engine, which in the tender was a specially boosted

One of the greatest breakthroughs achieved by the tanks was clearance of barbed wire. Artillery bombardments before great battles consumed up to 4½ million shells to achieve the same end. (Photo: R.A.C. Tank Museum)





*Captured Mk. IV re-armed with a Russian Sokol 57 mm. cannon.
(Photo: Chamberlain collection)*

125 b.h.p. Daimler. The 105 b.h.p. Daimler was the only power-plant available but because the need for greater power was widely recognised it was boosted to give 125 b.h.p. at 1,250 r.p.m. by the use of aluminium pistons and by raising the compression ratio from 4.2 : 1 to 4.75 : 1 and installing a new pattern of carburettor. On trials in the hands of experts the new engine behaved well, but on active service it did not stand up to the more robust handling of the soldiers, and the need for more horsepower and more reliability had to await the development of the Ricardo 150 b.h.p. engine in the Mk. V (*Profile 61*). The tenders, which were used to carry tank supplies into battle had the normal sponsons replaced by square box-shaped sponsons made of mild steel. These protruded 3 ft. from each side of the tank and provided a key identification factor. The square sponsons allowed more stores to be carried, but they limited the cross-country performance of the vehicle because the square edges caught in the ground and prevented any further movement.

Another variation involved the use of "The Tadpole Tail" which consisted of a pair of mild steel rear horns to replace the standard pattern. The effect of these was to lengthen the tank by 9 ft. and to considerably improve its normal 10 ft. trench crossing capacity. "The Tadpole Tail" was fitted by a system of butt straps and rivets and was braced with diagonal stays. A longer

track was needed when the tail was in position (an extra 28 track plates each side) and drive to the final sprocket was achieved through an intermediate chain pinion eccentrically mounted. The same pinion also allowed for the adjustment of the primary chain.

Although not strictly a variation of the Mk. IV, some mention should be made of fascines. These consisted of bundles of brushwood 4 ft. 6 in. in diameter and 10 ft. long, bound together with chains. The chains were tensioned by two tanks pulling in opposite directions. Fascines were carried above the nose of the tank and could be released by the driver so that they rolled down the front horns of the tank and thus made the task of crossing extra-wide trenches more practicable. They were first introduced at the Battle of Cambrai for crossing the deep and wide trenches of the Hindenberg Line which averaged at least 2 ft. more than the maximum 10 ft. trench crossing width of the Mk. IV.

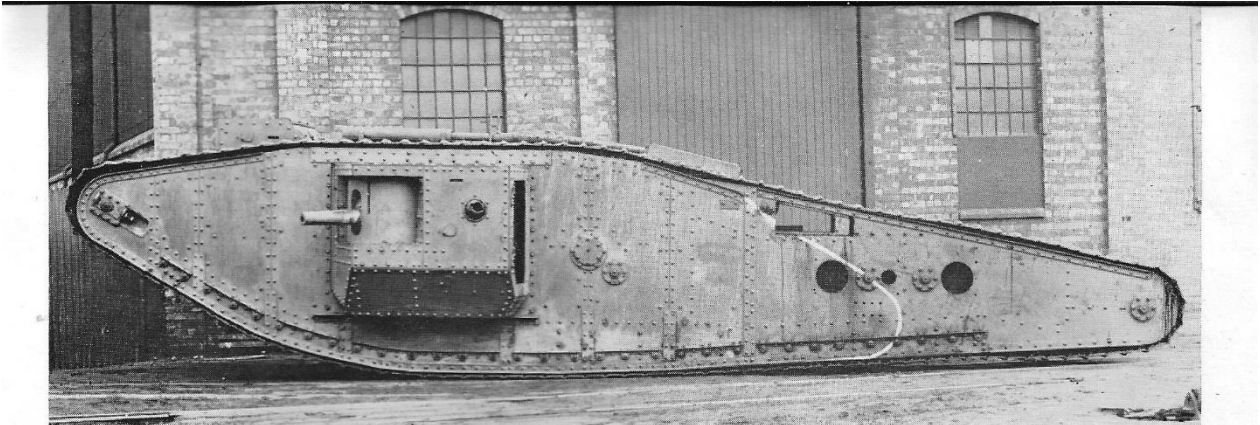
TACTICAL USE

Like its predecessors, the Mk.'s I-III, the Mk. IV tank was regarded primarily as a counter-measure to the barbed wire and machine gun which, until the introduction of the tank, had resulted in virtual stalemate along the entire length of the Western Front. Chronologically, its place in history is immediately before the Medium Mk. A Whippet (*Profile 49*) which began production in December 1917 just as production of the Mk. IV's was coming to an end. It was, therefore, primarily an infantry support weapon, and although the concept of independent action by tanks had not been fully accepted by the General Staff—and thus was not a consideration in drawing up the specification of the Mk. IV—nevertheless it was the performance of this tank at the Battle of Cambrai which first convinced the military authorities—or at least the less

Misuse of the new arm. Before Cambrai tanks were used wastefully in Flanders mud where they foundered like mastodons.

(Photo: R.A.C. Tank Museum)





Mk. IV Tadpole. The painted outline of the original hull shows the extent of the lengthened tail. (Photo: Chamberlain collection)

hide-bound of them—that armoured fighting vehicles could undertake roles previously the exclusive province of the cavalry.

Mark IV tanks were among the first AFVs to take part in desert warfare and on internal security duties. These spearheaded the capture of Gaza from the Turks during General Allenby's drive into Palestine in November 1917. Another detachment was used in Ireland in 1919. The Mk. IV was captured and used by the German Army in March 1917. A small number were also delivered to the Italian Army.

CAMBRAI

There were some bitter soldiers in the Tank Corps in 1917. They felt they had not been given a reasonable opportunity to show what they could do in conditions which gave them at least an even chance of success. They had been used across shell-torn, waterlogged ground; they had been used in penny packets of three, two and—on at least one occasion—one; they had been expected to ford rivers and negotiate swamps which swallowed horses and limbers without trace. At Cambrai they were, at last, given a chance to show what they could do. The country south-west of Cambrai is good, rolling downland of well-drained chalk. It had not been fought over a great deal and the ground was relatively free from craters and surface water. Over 450 tanks were employed—virtually the whole of the Tank Corps—and the plan was for them to advance with five infantry divisions on a front of nearly six miles. On the left with 62nd Division was

“G” Battalion with one company of “E”; then came the 51st Division with “D” Battalion and the other two companies of “E”; then 6th Division with “H” and “B” Battalions; the 20th Division with “A” and “I” Battalions; and on the extreme right 12th Division with “F” and “C” Battalions.

At zero hour—6.20 a.m.—the tanks advanced, and one driver of “G” Battalion has left a diary recording: “What a joy it was to be driving on good, dry ground without having to crawl in bottom gear with mud up to your sponsons”. Tank Corps Headquarters had devised a special drill for crossing the triple trench system of the Hindenberg Line which was one of the most formidable trench systems of the War. The tanks operated in sections of three, and basically the drill was for the leading tank to drop its fascine into the first trench, cross and turn left; the other two tanks would cross by the first fascine and make for the second trench where No. 2 tank would drop its fascine, cross and turn left. No. 3 tank crossed by the same fascine and drove straight for No. 3 trench, where it repeated the dropping, crossing and turning left drill. Apart from a hold-up on the 51st Division's front—entirely due to the bad planning and mishandling of the formation by the Divisional Commander—the attack went like clockwork. The tanks advanced in top gear, the infantry working with them—no doubt enjoying the unusual sensation of crossing firm grassland instead of crawling through deep slime—captured trenches and gun positions, and by the time darkness fell on 20th November an advance of more than five



Tank Mark IV—Male—Serial 2341—Completed by Foster & Company, Lincoln, on 10th March 1917 at a cost of £6,000 donated by Mr. Eu Tong Sen, Member of the Federal Council, Malay States. Chinese eye motto: “No have eyes, how can see?” Posted to “F” Bn. 36 Bde., Summer 1917, christened “Fly-Paper” (Cdr.: 2nd-Lt. J. M. Oke). Re-christened “Fan-Yan” for Battle of Cambrai (Cdr.: Lt. H. A. Aldridge) where it reached its objectives on 20th November at Pam Pam Farm and the Masnières Road. Fought in battle for village of Fontaine-notre-Dame on 27th November. All crew seriously wounded but returned to base. Re-numbered 6/36 and posted to 6 Corps during German offensive, Spring 1918 (Cdr.: 2nd-Lt. J. Munro). Returned to workshops 19th June 1918.

(Photo: Chamberlain collection)



Supply Carrier Mk. IV clearly identifiable by widened sprockets and lack of armament.

(Photo: Imperial War Museum)

miles had been made along the whole front—a penetration deeper than the Passchendaele offensive had made in four months.

Yet the gains were not held. The basic battle plan was sound from the tank viewpoint, and it worked. But at Army level unsound planning—and probably a certain amount of scepticism about the ability of the tanks to achieve what they said they would—resulted in there being no reserves to take over and hold the positions captured by the assaulting force. Thus, when the tanks had to regroup for replenishment and repair,

and the enemy launched a rapidly-mounted counter-offensive, the absence of these reserves made it inevitable that the counter-attack would succeed.

Nevertheless, the success of the tanks on the green downs of Cambrai had ensured for them a place in the future armies of the world, and was a fitting illustration of the Tank Corps motto based on the colours of the flag carried at Cambrai: “Through Mud and Blood to the Green Fields Beyond”.

© John Foley, 1967.

Armour in Profile Series Editor: Stevenson Pugh.

SPECIFICATION—Tank Mark IV

General

Designation: Tank Mark IV.

Crew: Eight.

Driver—right of front compartment.

Tank Commander/machine-gunner (also brakeman)—left of front compartment.

Two 6 pdr. Gunners—right and left sprockets respectively. (N.B.: In female version these were machine-gunners.)

Two machine-gunners—right and left sprockets respectively.

Two Gearsman—right and left of rear of main compartment.

Battle weight: 28 tons.

Dry weight: 26½ tons.

Power/weight ratio: Male, 3.7 b.h.p./ton. Female, 4.04 b.h.p./ton.

Ground pressure: Male, 27.8 lb./sq. in. on hard ground; 11.6 sunk to belly. Female, 25.8 hard ground; 10.7 sunk to belly.

Dimensions

Length overall: 26 ft. 5 in.

Hull length: 23 ft. 6 in.

Height: 8 ft. 2 in.

Width without sprockets: 8 ft. 8½ in.

Width over tracks and sprockets: 12 ft. 10 in.

Track centres: 7 ft.

Track width: 20½ in.

Main Armament

Male: two Hotchkiss short 6 pdr., 6 cwt., 23 cal. QF guns.

Female: nil.

Auxiliary Armament

Male: three Lewis .303 in. machine guns. One in each sprocket and one in forward compartment between driver and commander.

Female: as for male, plus two additional Lewis machine guns also in sprockets, one facing forwards and one rearwards in each sprocket.

(Note: in later models the Lewis guns were replaced by short barrel .303 in. Hotchkiss machine guns.)

Fire Control

By voice and hand signal.

Ammunition

Male: 6 pdr. shell—184; 6 pdr. case shot—20; S.A.A.—5,640.

Female: S.A.A.—12,972.

Sighting and Vision

Drivers: early models of the Mk. IV had a reflector box for driver's

vision. This was later replaced by a rotatable shutter which either closed the observation slit, narrowed it, or brought a line of small holes ¼ in. diameter opposite each eye.

Commander: a trapezoid shaped hatch protruding above the roof and fitted with loopholes.

Gunners: Telescopic sights with 20° spread and a small magnification. Open sights were also available for emergency use.

Communications

Between driver and gearsman: by hand, later by coloured electric lamps. External communications: by flap shutter on pole and by pigeon.

Armour

Cut and drilled as soft steel and subsequently hardened.

Sheets rivetted to butt straps and angle iron.

Front: 16 mm. thick.

Sides and back: 12 mm.

Roof and belly: 8 mm.

Engine

Daimler 6 cylinder, sleeve-valve, in-line, petrol engine. 105 b.h.p. at 1,000

r.p.m. (Increased in a limited number of later models to 125 b.h.p.).

Capacity: 70 gallons fuel stowed in external armoured tank between rear horns.

Transmission

Two-speed main gearbox, worm drive and differential with two secondary gear boxes on differential output shafts. Chain drive to sprocket reduction gear.

Suspension

Unsprung: 90 armour plate shoes supported by 26 pairs of rollers.

Electrical System

None.

Performance

Max. speed: 3.7 m.p.h., road or cross-country.

Max. gradient: (no record).

Vertical obstacle: 4 ft. 6 in.

Max. trench crossing: 10 ft.

Wading depth unprepared 4 ft. 6 in.

Fuel consumption: 1 m.p.g. approx. Radius of action: 35 miles.

Special Features

Unditching beam mounted on rails above the tank, to be attached to the track by chains.

WW1 German pistol appeal after firearms amnesty find



A museum is appealing for information about a World War One German pistol handed in during a firearms amnesty.

The 1911 Luger pistol, given to Wiltshire Police, is believed to have been taken as a souvenir during the 1917 tank advance at Cambrai in France. Police have donated the weapon to the Tank Museum in Bovington, Dorset. Curator David Willey said: "We'd love to trace the family that it belonged to so we can perhaps find the records of the man who brought it home." The 1908-model Pistole Parabellum, commonly known as a Luger, has a leather holster with the inscription: "*Souvenir of the Big Advance at Cambrai November 1917. To Alice from HUD, Jany 21 - 18.*"



Museum curator David Willey said: "The Battle of Cambrai on 20 November was a hugely important moment in the history of the Royal Tank Regiment and is still celebrated today. "It was the first ever large-scale and effective use of tanks in warfare, with almost 400 fighting tanks that advanced without any prior bombardment so the enemy had no warning."

After advancing for about six miles, the British were halted and later the Germans launched a counter-attack.