



THE Poppy





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A Display of German Pickelhaubes at Fort de la Pompelle

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The photograph on the front cover was taken by the Editor on the 2015 Branch Battlefield Tour
It shows the Neuville-Saint-Vaast German Military Cemetery near Vimy

From the Editor

With the end of 2019 approaching as I write this, it may be time to reflect on the last five years of remembrance of the Great War and what it has achieved. The first thing may be to define what one means by the “end” of the Great War. Hostilities, of course, ceased on 11th November 1918, but a formal state of war between the two sides persisted for another seven months, until the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28th June 1919. Even that was not the absolute end to the war.

The United States Senate did not ratify the treaty despite public support for it, and did not formally end its involvement in the war until the Knox–Porter Resolution was signed by President Warren G. Harding on 2nd July 1921. For the United Kingdom and the British Empire, the state of war ceased under the provisions of the *Termination of the Present War (Definition) Act 1918* with respect to:

Germany on 10th January 1920

Austria on 16th July 1920

Bulgaria on 9th August 1920

Hungary on 26th July 1921

Turkey on 6th August 1924

However, the negotiation of the treaty with the Ottoman Empire was followed by strife, and a final peace treaty between the Allied Powers and the country that would become the Republic of Turkey was not signed until 24 July 1923, at Lausanne. Under its terms, the Allied forces left Constantinople on 23 August 1923.

So, what did the four years of commemoration produce? Certainly, for myself as one of the book review team for *Stand To!*, it produced an enormous number of publications, both ‘popular’ and specialist, about the conflict, a veritable tidal wave that, perhaps not surprisingly, now seems to have receded to a trickle. It also produced an annual period of focus for our Branch Battlefield Tour, although in 2014 we actually followed the 4th Berks Territorials as they travelled around the Western Front throughout the conflict.

By 2015 we were truly on the centenary track, and concentrated on 1915 – 2nd Ypres, Festubert, Aubers Ridge, Neuve-Chapelle, and Loos, as well as the French 2nd Battle of Artois. 2016 saw us on the Somme, whilst in 2017 we returned to Cambrai, also covering the events of Easter 2017 at Arras. For 2018 we covered the final events of the Hundred Days including lesser-known battles such as Valenciennes, and the Canadians at Iwuy.

For 2019 we were in Compiègne for the actions on the Chemin des Dames in 1917 as well as the British, French, and American actions during the 2nd Battle of the Marne and a visit to the site of the signing of the Armistice in November 1918. For 2020 we intend to cover the rest of the 2nd Battle of the Marne as well as other American actions, and possibly a bit on the Marne Battle of 1914.

With time to indulge my personal choice of reading material, I am at the moment reading *Futile Exercise?* an analysis of the British Army manoeuvres between 1902 and 1914 and whether they helped in preparing for the opening months of the Great War. After that, something completely different: *The British are Coming*, a new history of the American War of Independence.

2020 Branch Battlefield Tour

At the end of 2019 eighteen people have expressed an interest in joining our 2020 Tour, from Sunday 7th to Friday 12th June 2020. We will be based at Hotel Hexagone in Chateau Thierry as it is a location from where we can cover the battlefields in Champagne around and to the east of Reims that we were unable to visit this year, including a further look at the Second Battle of the Marne, the British actions at the Battle of Tardenois, various US actions, and the French IV army under General Gouraud around the Fort de la Pompelle and the various battles of Champagne.

Eighteen participants means that we will be able to use only one minibus plus one or two cars (depending on final numbers). We will be asking for a firm commitment by the end of January accompanied by a non-returnable deposit of £60.00p and a form requesting payment will be circulated to those who have expressed an interest before then.



The Affair at Souhain 1915

Chris Nash

The WW1 battlefield sites east of Rheims are perhaps less well-known to British visitors yet this region has many sites of great interest to war historians.

A short drive out of the east of the city is the impressive ruin of the *Fort de la Pompelle* completed after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and with an excellent WW1 museum including a magnificent and very comprehensive display of elaborate German helmets representing the many political and geographic pre-war German States .



The Pyramid of the *Ferme de Navarin* is an impressive and dominating memorial. Nearby the Orthodox Church in the Russian cemetery at St Hilaire is an unusual presence in this area.

Further east in the small town of Suippes is the excellent *Marne 14-18 Centre d'interprétation de Suippes*'.

At the approach to the museum close to the town church is a striking memorial that prompts further study by anyone interested in WW1 history.



A sculpture of four executed French soldiers unveiled in 2007 tells of a tragedy in this sector of the French battlefield during 1915 as described here

In March 1915, units of the French Army holding a section of the Western Front through Champagne had seen no tangible results despite two months of fighting. After two recent unsuccessful attacks, the 21st Company of the 336th Infantry Regiment (part of the 60th Infantry Division) was ordered by Général de division Géraud Réveilhac to retake positions captured by the Germans north of the village of Souain in the Marne. A bayonet assault would begin at 5 am on March 10th against a stretch of enemy trenches that was heavily defended by machine guns and barbed wire. Several unsuccessful attacks had already left this part of No Man's Land strewn with French dead.

However, on the morning of the planned assault, a preceding artillery barrage dropped shells on the French trenches instead of the German lines. That also ploughed up the ground over which the assault troops were ordered to cross.

When the first wave of troops started "going over the top," most became casualties of the undamaged enemy machine guns. The remaining soldiers of 21st Company, who were both exhausted after days of front line duty (in 1915, French Army troop rotation was much slower than later in the war) and demoralized by failure, refused to leave their trenches.



On hearing that the troops were refusing to attack, General Réveilhac ordered his divisional artillery to bombard their positions to force them out of their trenches. The division's commanding artillery officer, Colonel Raoul Berubé refused to obey without a written order, but Réveilhac did not issue one.

With the failure of the assault that he had ordered, Réveilhac demanded that action be taken against the soldiers of the 21st company. Its company commander, Captain Equilbey, was ordered to produce a list of names that included six corporals and 18 enlisted men chosen from the two youngest members in every squad.

On March 15, Réveilhac announced that all 24 men would be court-martialled as an example to the others. On March 16, 1915, the tribunal was convened under the auspices of the 60th Infantry Division. General Réveilhac opened the case by stating it was about his troops' "refusal to leap out of

the trenches," but Corporal Théophile Maupas, one of the defendants, refuted the claim:

He stated that, "anyone there had the choice of being killed by the shells from our side or by the fire of the German machine gunners." Nevertheless, the verdict of the tribunal was to sentence all 24 defendants to death.

However, the 18 enlisted men received a stay of execution on the grounds that they were arbitrarily chosen from the ranks, and two corporals, named Gosselin and Lorin, were shown clemency because they had not heard the order to attack. Only four corporals, three from Manche and the fourth from Brittany, did not have their death sentences commuted:



In the early afternoon of the next day, the four men were executed by firing squad in front of the assembled 336th Infantry Regiment. Two hours after the executions word arrived that the French High Command had commuted their death sentences to forced labour.

This was not to be the end of the affair.

A Posthumous Pardon

In April 1915, Blanche Maupas, the widow of Théophile Maupas, contacted the League of Human Rights (La Ligue des droits de l'Homme) about the execution of her husband. They then began a

two-decade long fight to have her husband's and other men's convictions annulled. On April 11, 1920 France's Ministry of Justice refused to review the case. On March 26, 1922 and April 21, 1926, a folder concerning the Souain corporals was rejected by

France's Court of Cassation de guerre. Despite these setbacks, Blanche Maupas created the "Maupas Committee" (Comité Maupas) which in 1928 became the Comité national pour la réhabilitation des victims (National Committee for the

rehabilitation of war victims).

Eulalie Lechat, the sister of Corporal Lucien Lechat, also established a committee in 1923 with the help of the League of Human Rights. Her brother was re-interred in a cemetery at Le Ferré, Brittany on October 16, 1924. Together Maupas and Lechat hosted and organized meetings throughout France. They also got stories in the regional and national press. Many supporters were from the associations for war veterans. Eventually protests were held in front of the Chamber of Deputies asking for posthumous pardons for the Corporals of Souain.

Eventually, on March 3rd 1934, almost 19 years after the four men were shot, a judge at the Cour spéciale de justice (Special Court of Justice) agreed to exonerate the four corporals.

He concluded that the order had been "impracticable" and the "sacrifice" exceeded "the limits of human strength". It was therefore that with "some doubt on the willingness [...] to commit disobedience for which they were convicted, they cannot be held criminally responsible. The Special courts, which - for parity - had benches made up of both judges and veterans representatives, had been established in 1932 to re-examine the decisions and sentences made by the French military's wartime tribunals.

Following the decision, the families of the executed men received a symbolic franc in respect of damages. However, the main outcome was that the four men had been exonerated. Their families could also claim their pension rights.

Aftermath

These executions which occurred in the vicinity of Souain on 17 March 1915 are considered to be the most egregious and most publicized military injustice during World War I in France. The events inspired the 1935 anti-war novel Paths of Glory by Humphrey Cobb, later adapted for the famous film by Stanley Kubrick.

The Maupas Affair was a *cause célèbre* in France in the years after WWI thanks to the strenuous efforts of Mme. Blanche Maupas in fighting to clear her husband's name.

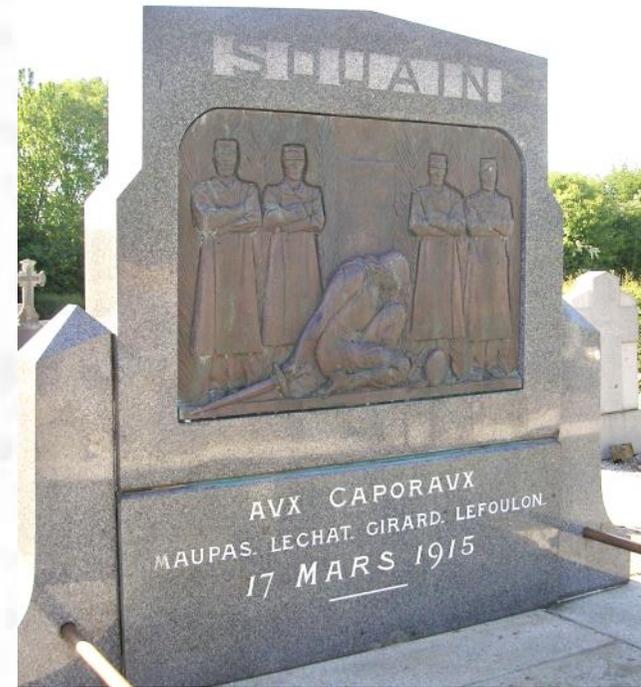
Blanche Maupas was familiar with the dire situation in the trenches as Théophile had written to her regularly giving some of the details. After his arrest he wrote to her:

"I have done nothing to reproach myself for, I am neither a thief nor a murderer. I have not sullied the reputation or the honour of another person. I can walk with my head held high".

After their executions the soldiers were buried in unmarked graves. Pressure from relatives and others after the war saw them reinterred in the French war cemetery at Suippes.

In 1923 Blanche Maupas persuaded the authorities to reinter her husband's body in his native village of Sartilly in Normandy.

A bronze memorial was erected in 1925 showing all four soldiers blindfolded standing proud behind the figure of Justice bent over a knocked over set of scales .



The Memorial to the Four Executed Soldiers

2020 Branch Photographic Competition

The annual branch photo competition will be held at the February meeting. Entries need to be with Mike Lawson by **week ending 15th February 2020**. You can hand your entries over personally at the January meeting. Photographs need to have been taken in the last two years. Max four entries 5" x 7". His address and contact details are:

Stewards Field
Mill Road
Dilham
North Walsham NR28 9PU
01692 535184



Dedications

As a mark of respect to all those who perished during the Great War the meetings last season were dedicated to the memory of a local man who died on that date during 1914–1918. If during your travels you happen to be near to where any of these soldiers are buried or commemorated kindly pay a visit.

26th September 2019

The dedication for this month was to **Frederick Janes Private 40580 Dorset Regiment transferred to 635827 288th Prisoner of War Company Labour Corps**

Frederick Janes died on 3rd September 1919 aged 37. Frederick has a CWGC headstone but no further information is available about his cause of death as no military records are available.

What is known is that he had been born in Bray, Maidenhead. The census of 1901 indicates that he was the eldest born to his parents Francis and Edith Janes. At the age of 19 years Frederick was working as a bricklayer's labourer. By the time of the 1911 census he had been married to his wife Edith for seven years and they had three children. The eldest was seven year old Elsie, and Albert 10 months. The family were living at 67 Foxhill Road, Reading. Frederick gave his occupation as a general labourer at Huntley and Palmers Biscuit Factory.



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Fred Janes' Grave in Reading Cemetery. The Regimental Crest is of the Dorset Regiment; headstones with the Labour Corps crest are very rare.

The family home was in the Redlands Ward of the town in the east of Reading and not very far from the Reading Cemetery where Frederick was buried. At the time of his death the children were 15, 11 and 8 years old.

Regarding Frederick Janes' transfer to the 288th Prisoner of War Company The The family home was in the Redlands Ward of the town in the east of Reading and not very far from the Reading Cemetery where Frederick was buried. At the time of his death the children were 15, 11 and 8 years old.

Regarding Frederick Janes' transfer to the 288th Prisoner of War Company, Labour Corps: The Labour Corps company was defined in Army Orders when the Labour Corps came into existence in 1917. It was formed from existing Labour Battalions, and from British Soldiers who were unfit or too old for front line service, who were to serve unarmed and within the range of German guns for weeks or even months at a time undertaking labouring tasks. Its standard composition was defined in Army Council Instruction 611 of that year, and a Labour Corps Company consisted of 467 Privates with attached junior officers and NCOs under a Major. By November 1918 the Labour Corps numbered 350,000 men.

Labour Companies were formed from existing regimental Infantry Labour Battalions and Infantry Labour Companies. All Warrant Officers and NCOs serving in those units and who were required in the new structure would be transferred to the Labour Corps; all Privates would too. Those Warrant Officers and NCOs not required would be transferred elsewhere.

Prisoners of War were also used directly as labour by the armies fighting the war, This varied from the improvised use of newly captured prisoners to help carry the wounded from the battlefield to the much more sophisticated employment of Prisoner of War Labour Companies, permanent units made up of captives that remained at or near the battlefronts to do heavy manual work such as loading and unloading shells, road building and maintenance and on occasion, trench construction work. Until mid 1916, German prisoners were sent to England. From this time onward, prisoners were initially sent to Abbeville. Men with useful skills, notably forestry and engineering, were drafted into companies of about 100 men each, for use in POW Forestry Companies and ASC and RE workshops, respectively. Forty-seven such POW labour companies were attached to the Labour Corps when it was formed. Such formations required guards, and it would appear that such was the role of Frederick Janes.

Unfortunately, neither his Medal Card nor his Pension Record Card gives a cause of death.

31st October 2019

**Lionel Victor Wellman M.M. Corporal
155th Field Company Royal Engineers.**

L.V. Wellman was probably known as Vic or Victor.

Corporal Wellman served with 155 Field Company, Royal Engineers. Victor signed up at the beginning of the war but it has not been possible to find his Military Records. He was awarded the Military Medal (MM) during his service in the army but again it has not been possible to find details of the citation.

Victor Wellman was the son of John and Jane Wellman of 51 Weldale Street, Reading. He died aged 25 on the 31 October 1919. The 1901 census indicated that his father was a Coach Smith. By the time of the 1911 census John Wellman was still working as a Coach Smith on his own account, assisting father Victor is buried in the Reading Cemetery and his grave is marked with a CWGC war headstone. He was one of three brothers to serve in the war.



Grave of L V Wellman in Reading Cemetery

His brother Jack, was killed in action on July 16th 1916.

Lance Corporal D. J. Wellman 3614 'A' Company 2nd/4th Royal Berkshire Regiment

He is buried at Laventie Military Cemetery, La Gorgue. Location II. C. 17. He had worked at Huntley and Palmer's until January 1916, and had only been at the front for two months. He was in the Signalling Section of the 2nd/4th Royal Berkshire Regiment.

Their brother, Tom, served in India, and they also had a sister, Dolly.

The death of Vic was particularly hard to bear as this short poem which appeared with the notification of death in the *Standard* of 8th November 1919 indicates.

"In loving memory of our dear and eldest son, L. V. Wellman, who passed away on October 31st, 1919, after suffering from gas poisoning. Although just recently discharged, he had served 3yrs in France with the RE; also won the MM.

*The war was over, victory won,
How gladly we rejoiced
To think that our Vic, would soon be home,
Having his duty done.*

*But, alas, our joy was but in vain,
He only came home to leave us again;
Not to that battlefield where our Jack was slain,
But to Heaven where he will find rest without pain.*

From his loving Mum and Dad.

The sorrow continued, although the Wellman family were typical of their stoical generation.

Reading Standard July 17th 1920:

In loving memory of Lance Corporal D. J. Wellman of 51 Weldale St. Reading – KiA July 16th 1916 – From mother and father, sister and brother.

*Some may think that we forget him
When at times they see us smile;
But they little know the sorrow
Which that smile hides all the while.*

*When a brother is good and kind,
It's then that you miss him most;
And although you are gone from us, dear Vic,
You'll always be in our mind.
From his only sister Doll and brother Tom in India*

28th November 2019

Charles Thomas Twitchen

Sergeant 137931, 237th Field Coy., Royal Engineers

Charles Thomas Twitchen's grave in the Reading Cemetery is marked by a CWGC war pattern headstone.

The Reading Standard of 1st November 1919 carried the report of his death at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, from lobar pneumonia and bronchitis. He was aged 41 years. Charles Twitchen was the dearly loved husband of Mary Twitchen, of 151, Belmont Rd. Reading. The 1911 census indicated that the couple were serving as the stewards of the Working Men's Club, Pangbourne.

Another account also appeared in *The Reading Standard* of 1 November 1919 entitled **Reading's Own Entertained in the Town Hall**, and included a picture of men from the 32nd and 35th Divisional Signal Companies and the 237th Field Company. These companies were raised wholly in Reading under the auspices of the then mayor Leonard Goodhart Sutton. Mr Sutton lost four of his five sons in the war. At the celebration reference was made to the death of Sergeant Twitchen' who had served with the 237th Field Company.

"A very sad incident occurred, only two days before the dinner, to one who was looking forward to be present, namely, Sergeant Twitchen, of the 237th Field Co. He was wounded and gassed at the front, but recovered and was demobilised a week or two ago. When he was discharged he went straight to his work and refused to put in an application for a disability pension, as he said he was quite fit for a good day's work still, though his wife, knowing his weak condition, urged him to do so. He suddenly caught a cold, however, and owing to his debilitated state he developed pneumonia, and getting rapidly worse, died on the evening of October 22nd. It is particularly unfortunate that he was not examined for disability when leaving the army, as his wife is now ineligible for any pension or gratuity.



The late Pte. C. V. SCHOFIELD, 69, Donnington Road, Reading.—Died of wounds.

If there are any of his old friends who would like to contribute to a fund for his wife, any sums will be gratefully received by Sergeant L.V. Earthy, 80 London St. or Mr Leonard Sutton, Market Place, Reading and handed to the widow as a token of sympathy from his late comrades, which would be very much appreciated and a great help

19th December 2019

Charles Victor Schofield Private 26744

3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards

Charles Victor Schofield was the son of Richard and Emma Schofield. The 1901 census has the family living at 7, Donnington Road, Reading. The family then consisted of both parents and their four children. Richard 22 was an architects assistant, Elizabeth 19 a School Board teacher, Edgar 16 a shoe repairs assistant and the youngest was Charles who was 9 years old. In 1911 the family were living at 135, London Road and only Charles and Edgar were living at home. By this time Charles was a gasfitter and his brother a photographic printer. His photograph which was printed in the *Reading Standard*, indicates a different address for Charles; 69, Donnington Gardens. By the time CWGC registers were compiled after the Armistice his father, Richard William Schofield, had moved to 359, Elgar Rd.

No service records are available for Private Schofield. The CWGC register indicates that he died of wounds on 20th December 1917 and is buried at St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, location P.V.D. 3B. It is not known how or when he was injured.

The British advance on Cambrai had started on the 20th November 1917. The Grenadier Guards had been involved in severe fighting during Third Ypres and their Division was involved in fighting at Bourlon Wood and the counter offensive at Cambrai. Rouen was the home to several military hospitals and Private Schofield would have experienced the full range of Army Medical Corps services from battle front to base hospital before he died.

Programme for the coming months

Details of the speakers for the second half of our 2019–20 season until June 2020 are set out below and offers a variety of different subjects to meet most interests. Should you have any comments on the programme or suggestions for future topics and speakers please let us know. This programme is also available for viewing on: www.westernfrontassociation.com/thames-valley. For a description of the talk just double click on the talk title.

All meetings are held at the Berkshire Sports and Social Club, Sonning Lane, Reading on the last Thursday of each month from September to June inclusive (except December when it is on a different Thursday) commencing at 8.00 p.m.

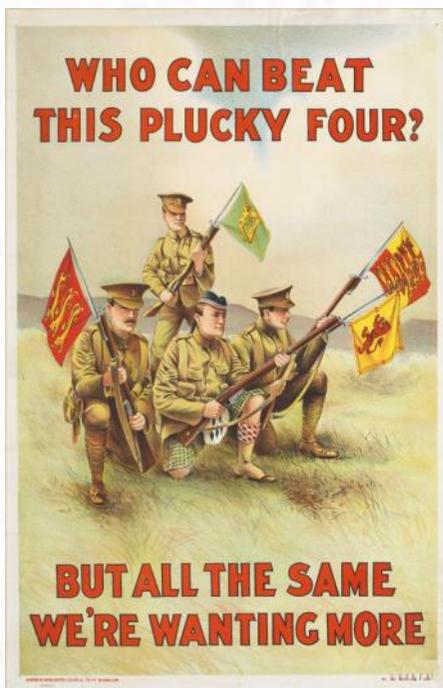
30th January 2020 – Professor Gary Sheffield
Amateur soldiers in Britain and the Empire 1912 – 1920

Branch member, President of the WFA, and Professor of War Studies at the University of Wolverhampton, Gary will give his customary lecture on his latest area of research—not to be missed on any account.

27th February 2020 – Gerry White

The Last General Absolution of the Munsters at Rue du Bois

Gerry White is the author of a number of books on Irish military history in the period before and after the Great War. He is a founder member of the WFA Cork Branch and its chair since 2010. Gerry served in the Irish Defence Forces for forty-three years and represented Ireland at the Somme Centenary Commemoration in 2016. He has recently been appointed as the WFA Island of Ireland Trustee. Included among his publications are: *The Barracks, a History of Victoria/Collins Barracks, Cork For Their Country – The Great War Dead of Christ Church Parish, Cork*.



Together with Brendan O'Shea, he published *The Irish Volunteer Soldier 1913-1916* and edited *A Great Sacrifice - Cork Servicemen who died in the Great War*. The artwork bearing the same name as the talk was painted by Fortunino Matania and depicts events on the Rue du Bois (near Neuve Chapelle) on 8th May 1915. The next morning the Munsters took part in the Battle of Aubers Ridge, suffering heavy casualties, including the death of their C.O. Lt.-Colonel Victor Richard



Fortunino Matania's Painting of the events

26th March 2020 – Patrick Crowley

General Sir Charles Monro

Patrick Crowley is currently the Chief Executive of the South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association. He leads a Tri-Service team which promotes the Reserves and encourages the Cadet experience in the nine counties of the South-East. This follows 34 years of service with the Queen's Regiment and The Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment, of which he is still Deputy Colonel. He is a keen military historian, having published four editions of the *Guide to The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment; The Infantry Regiments of Surrey; Afghanistan – The Three Wars*; and *Kut 1916*. A second edition of *Kut 1916* was published in early 2016.

His latest book, *Loyal to Empire, the Story of General Sir Charles Monro*, was published in May 2016. Patrick is also a battlefield guide, is on the Council of the Army Records Society and on the General Committee of the Military Historical Society.

General Sir Charles Monro is, along with General Horne, perhaps one of the least-well-known generals from the First World War, yet he was one of the small number of army commanders on the Western Front. He was one of the first divisional commanders in the BEF in 1914, and commanded at level as well. He was a staff officer who was involved in the evacuation of Gallipoli in the face of political opposition. He was also a key helped improve tactics before the and was the advised the Gallipoli in the and military went on to India at a critical period (1916-1920), and the massacre occurred during his stewardship.



General Sir Charles Monro

He had no result sources scarce, so this (Retd) Patrick excellent discover more but important Patrick Crowley published *Loyal to Empire; The Life of General Sir Charles Monro 1860-1929* in 2016. Some of you will remember his talk to us about another of his published subjects; *Kut 1916*.

30th April 2020 – Peter Hodgkinson

Clearing the Dead 1919-39

Dr Peter Hodgkinson has an MA in First World War Studies and PhD on the subject of Infantry COs. He has published six books, one on Infantry battalion Commanders; one entitled '*Glum Heroes*', concerning soldiers' resilience and coping; one on the Battle of the Selle with an accompanying guide book; a biography of an artillery battery commander who invented an anti-aircraft ranging device; and a new history of the 6th Infantry Division.

There is currently considerable interest in battlefield archaeology. Between the process similar archaeology was attempt to ing and bury IWGC ceme- this done? were their ex-



The Exhumation of Bodies on the Battlefield

Dr Peter about the required after recover and iden- diers, and the teams that scoured the battlefields and carried out the exhumations.

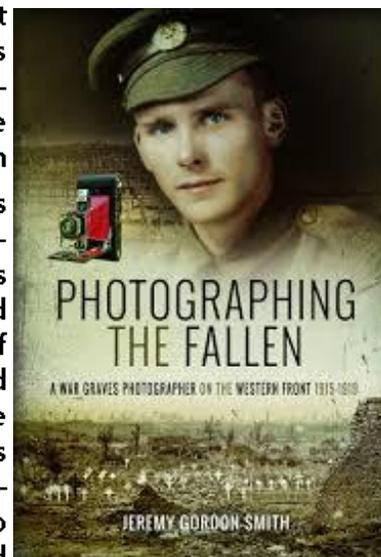
Wars, however, a to modern ar- carried out to unearth the miss- them properly in teries. How was Who did it? What periences?

Hodgkinson talks huge effort re- the war to try and tify the dead sol- organisation of the

28th May 2020 – Jeremy Gordon Smith

Photographing the Fallen— A War Graves Photographer on the Western Front 1915-19

While working as a therapeutic counsellor in private practice, Jeremy has a keen interest military history. His Ivan Bawtree's dia- graphic archive a fascination with



The talk follows Ivan Bawtree dur- War, which was graph and record diers on behalf of travelling around Northern France notably the Ypres of only three pro- phers assigned to the newly formed Commission in 1915.

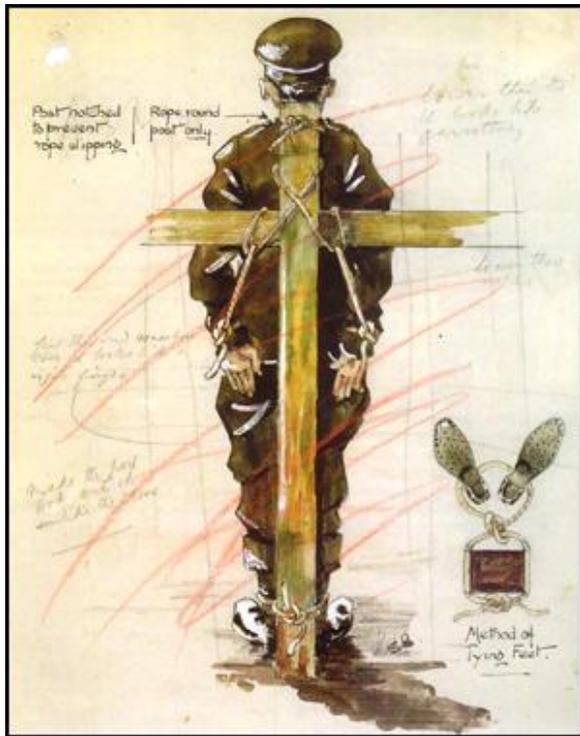
in photography and great great uncles and photo- have helped foment the Great War.

the unusual work of ing the First World largely to photo- graves of fallen sol- grieving relatives, numerous parts of and Flanders - most Salient. He was one fessional photogra- this task, hired by Graves Registration



Major General His Honour Gordon Risius CB qualified as a solicitor in 1972 and served as a military lawyer from 1973 until 2003, latterly as Director Army Legal Services and the first Prosecuting Authority for the Army. After retiring from the army he was a Circuit Judge from 2003 until 2014, latterly as the Resident Judge at Oxford Crown Court and the Honorary Recorder of Oxford.

Public interest in military law during the First World War has concentrated disproportionately, if understandably, on the 346 soldiers executed by sentence of court-martial and now pardoned. The cases of those reprieved, along with the 250,000 courts-martial which did not result in a death sentence, have received less attention. This talk will compare and contrast military law in 1914-1918 with the tri-service arrangements which govern our armed forces today.



Field Punishment No.1

Alice Liddell Connections

Barbara Taylor

For our meeting in June 2019 we welcomed Marietta Crichton Stuart from the WFA London branch, who came to give us her talk on Alice Liddell's connections to the Great War. Many well-known characters appeared during the course of this story and much discussion afterwards. One member who was present wrote to me afterwards suggesting that I should write an article giving a bit more detail. As our editor is agreed that I and write it.



tions to the Great known and not so actors appeared of this story and much discussion member who was me afterwards suggesting that I should write an more detail. As ways looking for *The Poppy* it was should go ahead

As I am sure most people know, Alice Liddell was the inspiration for Lewis Carroll's (Charles Dodgson) *Alice in Wonderland* story.

Alice Liddell dressed as St Agnes
An image by Julia Margaret Cameron

(Charles Fair) At this

branch we have had two talks in which a young man called Francis (Toby) Dodgson appeared. He was a distant relative of Charles Dodgson and was killed in action in front of Contalmaison on 10th July 1916. He has a private memorial on the Western Front and is buried in Serre Road No 2 Cemetery. Toby appeared in Charles Fair's talk about his family. Toby was engaged to Charles' grandmother, Marjorie Secretan. He also appeared in Jerry Rendell's talk about his great uncle, the (at the time) well-known silhouettist Captain Harry Oakley, with whom he served in the 8th (Green Howards) Yorkshire Regiment. As a young woman, Alice Liddell's name was linked to Queen Victoria's youngest son, Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany.

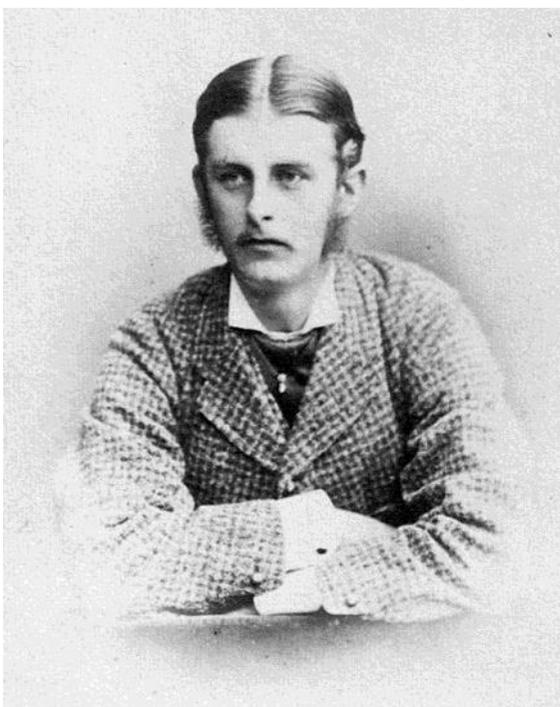


They seemed to be close friends and it was thought by some that they might marry. They didn't and possibly this was for the best. Leopold was haemophiliac and any children they had may well have been affected; indeed his daughter Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone became a carrier. Princess Alice was Queen Victoria's longest-lived granddaughter, dying aged nearly 98 in 1918. It was thought that maybe she was named after Alice Liddell, but it was far more likely that she was named after Queen Victoria's daughter Alice, who had

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Alice Liddell
She and her
Reginald
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they lost the
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The Rifle
one of his
was a young
Norman
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slides and he was a first cousin of Winston Churchill, being the second son of Sir John (Jack) and Lady Leonie Leslie. The Leslies are Irish nobility and Leonie was the youngest sister of Winston's mother Jennie, Lady Randolph Churchill. There was a third sister, the eldest, Clara. These women were the daughters of the fabulously wealthy American, Leonard Jerome.



Reginald Hargreaves
Husband of Alice Liddell

1878. I rec-
Princess Al-
For My
dren. She
what acci-
and I found
very funny!

did marry.
husband,
Hargreaves,
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War. The
Alan, was in
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best friends
man named
Leslie, also
gade.

appeared
Marietta's

Lord Randolph marrying Jennie rather started a fashion for the impoverished nobility to marry wealthy American heiresses! Clara married a most impecunious man, Moreton Frewen, who was always involved in some money-making scheme and, in the process, one of those he almost ruined was the Earl of Lonsdale, the famous 'Yellow' Earl of the Lonsdale Belt fame. In reality, he was more involved with the AA, hence their colour being yellow.

Almost inevitably, Norman was Leonie's favourite son and, almost as inevitably, he was killed by a sniper very early on in the war on 18th October 1914 and is buried in Chapelle D'Armentieres Old Military Cemetery. Norman was rather prone to making unwise romantic attachments and was noted for being the last British officer to fight a duel - over a woman! His mother was a friend of Queen Victoria's third son, Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught. He had presented Norman with his sword on his graduation from Sandhurst, which was lost when he was killed. After the war, it was found in France. As the inscription mentioned HRH, it was sent to him, and he returned it to Lady Leonie.

Another well-known figure who appeared in Marietta's talk was the later Field Marshal Sir Harold Alexander, Earl of Tunis, a younger brother of the bachelor 5th Earl of Caledon, which links us to Clare Sheridan, Winston's only female first cousin on his mother's side. Her parents were the aforementioned Moreton and Clara Frewen. Always strapped for cash, they wanted Clare to marry 'money', but Clare fell in love with William Frederick Sheridan, a great grandson of the playwright, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, whose family wanted him to marry for money too! Eventually they got their way and married in 1910. They had three children, but their second daughter, Elizabeth died in infancy. Clare's grief was assuaged by her discovering a talent for sculpture and she ultimately sculpted many famous figures of the day. Wilfred (as he was known in the family) was desperate to join up once war started. He served with the Rifle Brigade and was killed in action on the first day of Loos at Bois Grenier. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial.

While recovering from this and the birth of their son, Clare went on an extended stay with Aunt Leonie at Castle Leslie in Ireland, where-upon they went visiting the neighbours. The bachelor Earl of Caledon lived nearby. Leonie had a bash at matchmaking, but Clare preferred the “handsome brother Alex”! Much too young and, as her aunt said, a “real” soldier!



Le Trou Aid Post Cemetery
Photo by the editor on the 2015 Battlefield Tour

After a brief romance with the much younger Earl of Wilton (more on his part than hers, I think) she fell for Lord Alexander Thynne, the younger brother of the Marquis of Bath. It is likely they would have married, but as you may have guessed, he was killed in action just two months before the Armistice. He is buried in Bethune Town Cemetery. Clare never remarried, but had an eventful life and career as a sculptress.

Owing to the Prince of Wales’ (later Edward VII) ‘louche’ ways, the weekend house party became the vogue in the late Victorian era and ladies tended to attract admirers.

Lady Randolph’s most well-known admirer was Count Charles Kinsky and for Lady Leonie it was the Duke of Connaught. Clara’s was King Milan of Serbia, who was later assassinated. According to Jennie he could barely use a knife and fork!! Jennie married twice more after the death of Lord Randolph. Her life ended as dramatically as it was lived. She died of a haemorrhage following the amputation of her left leg.

Alan Hargreaves was killed in action on 9th May 1915 during the Battle of Aubers in the pretty Leetery that we have sold (Rex) Harwounds received 1916 and is buried in Guillemont Road Cemetery, Asquith. The young-lived the war, manded barrage then as a diplo-Madeleine Hanow of Marietta’s friend, Felix killed in



Alice Liddell (1852-1933) aged 80

Ridge. He is buried Trou Aid Post Cemetery on tour. Leogreaves died of on 25 September in Guillemont quite near to Raymond and Edward Tenest son Caryl surviving initially combat. He married Tracy, the widow of Marietta’s best friend, Felix Hanbury Tracy, 1914.

Further reading. There has been much written about the Jerome/Churchill connection and their offspring but the books written by their granddaughter/great niece, Anita Leslie give a good insight into their lives.

If you would like to read about the action at Bois Grenier, see Alun Thomas’ chapter *8th Division and the Action at Bois Grenier, 25 September 1915* in Spencer Jones’ *Courage without Glory*.

Marjorie’s War, eds Reginald and Charles Fair.

Profiles of the First World War, Jerry Rendell.

Click below to link to the Leslie family website

<https://monaghan.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CASTLE%20LESLIE%20BETWEEN%20TWO%20WORLDS%20ONLINE.pdf>

