



CHESTERFIELD WFA

Newsletter and Magazine issue 61

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Welcome to Issue 61 - the January 2021 Newsletter and Magazine of Chesterfield WFA.

Best Wishes to all our Members and
Friends for Christmas and New Year.

Thank you for your continued interest
and support . Hopefully, at some point in 2021
we can look to resuming live meetings but
at the moment in view of the current public
health pandemic crisis there will be no `open`
meetings until we are advised by the
authorities that it is safe to do so.

In the interim this Newsletter / Magazine will continue

We would urge all our members to adopt all the government's
regulations that way we can keep safe and hopefully this crisis will be
controlled, the virus defeated, and a degree of normality restored.

Stay safe everybody - we are all - in the meantime -
`Confined to Barracks`

Grant Cullen – Branch Secretary

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January 2021 WFA Webinar (Planned Presentations)

WFA ZOOM MEETINGS for January, but please keep an eye on the Website and this page as sometimes additions are added during the month Follow these links for registering (please note dates and times, as this is to accommodate viewers)

04 JANUARY - ; THE TANK CORPS AT THE BATTLE OF AMIENS 8 AUGUST 1918 BY GEOFFREY VESEY HOLT. [HTTP://WWW.WESTERNFRONTASSOCIATION.COM/EVENTS/ONLINE-THE-TANK-CORPS-AT-THE-BATTLE-OF-AMIENS-8-AUGUST-1918/](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/events/online-the-tank-corps-at-the-battle-of-amiens-8-august-1918/)

11 JANUARY - JOHN TERRAINE AS A MILITARY HISTORIAN REVISITED' BY PROF GARY SHEFFIELD [HTTP://WWW.WESTERNFRONTASSOCIATION.COM/.../ONLINE-JOHN.../](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/.../online-john.../)

14 JANUARY GENERAL SIR HERBERT LAWRENCE - THE UNSUNG ARCHITECT OF VICTORY? [HTTP://WWW.WESTERNFRONTASSOCIATION.COM/EVENTS/ONLINE-GENERAL-SIR-HERBERT-LAWRENCE-THE-UNSUNG-ARCHITECT-OF-VICTORY/](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/events/online-general-sir-herbert-lawrence-the-unsung-architect-of-victory/)

18 JANUARY JOHN TERRAINE AND ME AND THE 46TH DIVISION: A PERSONAL ODYSSEY' BY PROF JOHN BOURNE, [HTTP://WWW.WESTERNFRONTASSOCIATION.COM/.../ONLINE-JOHN.../](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/.../online-john.../)

25 JANUARY MURPHY'S LAW ON THE SOMME, 1916 BY ANDREW RAWSON [HTTP://WWW.WESTERNFRONTASSOCIATION.COM/.../ONLINE.../](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/.../online.../)

28 JANUARY 'THERE IS NO MISTAKING A GIANT HOWITZER': THE ROYAL ARTILLERY WAR MEMORIAL AND THE WORK OF THE VETERAN AS SCULPTOR BY PROF MARK CONNELLY [HTTP://WWW.WESTERNFRONTASSOCIATION.COM/.../ONLINE-THERE.../](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/.../online-there.../)



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Christmas and New year's Greetings

The Executive Committee and I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you, your Branch Committee and those who normally attend your branch meetings, the very best of seasonal greetings.

I am sure no one would argue that this year has been one of the most unusual, depressing and in many instances frightening that we have faced since the last war. Many older members and those with underlying health issues have been self isolating for most of the year. Our inability to hold our usual branch meetings has been a cause for real concern. At various times through the year, it has looked as if socially distanced meetings could return but all such hopes have been dashed.

As I write this message another swathe of the country is heading for Tier 3 restrictions however on the positive side, I don't remember a time when people were actually looking forward to a job in the arm so enthusiastically.

Judging by the numbers of very positive and supportive emails received in the office, members have recognised the efforts of the Committee to try to compensate for the lack of branch meetings by the introduction of webinars at national level and indeed many branches have been equally active in providing local or cluster webinars. There has been a ramping up of all social media activity and to make sure that those members who chose not to use emails or the web are not overlooked a fourth edition of *Stand To* will be published next year. The result has been that the long term decline in membership has been reversed.

Whatever 2021 throws at us, the WFA is well positioned to continue to support members, the programme of webinars extends well into next year and whilst we all hope normality will return soon, the Committee are investigating ways in which it can help 'jump start' branch activities.

Once again all the very best wishes to all Branch Committees and members.

Tony

Tony Bolton , Chair



Secretary's Scribbles

Dear Members and friends, welcome to Issue 61, the January 2021 Newsletter & Magazine of the Chesterfield Branch of the Western front Association.

Some of you may be wondering why you are receiving this. The answer is you will be members who have recently joined the WFA and our Admin lady, the lovely Sarah Gunn in London distributes membership lists to branches on a rough `catchment area` basis. Our area is North East Derbyshire,

South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire. It is probable that you will also appear - depending on where you live - on the East Midlands (Ruddington) and Lincoln lists. Anyway, I hope you enjoy and find this Newsletter / Magazine of interest. If you don't wish to receive further correspondence from the Branch, let me know and I will take you off the mailing list. Of course WFA members are not just `members` of any one Branch, your membership permits your attendance at any of our meetings, anywhere - if you do visit (when we are allowed) another Branch, please say `hello` to the Branch officials.

Well, 2020 has been, for, I am sure the vast majority of us an *annus horribilis* a situation, given recent developments, that will be with us for some time to come. We managed to squeeze three meetings in at the beginning of the year before the tsunami of the pandemic overwhelmed us and live, open meetings were ruled out. Fortunately, along with our friends at Lincoln branch and ably organised by WFA member Dudley Giles, we managed to have a series of `virtual` on-line meetings which were well supported by members and allowed some excellent speakers to showcase their researches and efforts in a medium, which was, to most, an unusual experience in presentation.

As there is no end in sight to the present circumstances, both branches are looking to have further such presentations into 2021. Then there has been the highly popular - indeed in some cases over-subscribed - WFA Webinars featuring some of the best known and knowledgeable speakers on wide variety of subjects. These will continue into next year and full details, including joining links, are included in this Newsletter / Magazine.

There being no open AGM Meeting in January, there will be a short Newsletter published first week in January with the Branch financials and an opportunity for members to confirm, or indeed add to, the members of your Committee for 2021. As this issue is going out before Christmas, may I take this opportunity of thanking everyone for their continued interest and support in these troubled and trying times, Best Wishes for Christmas and New Year to you all. Stay Safe

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

HMS BULWARK 1902-1914

NEIL McCART

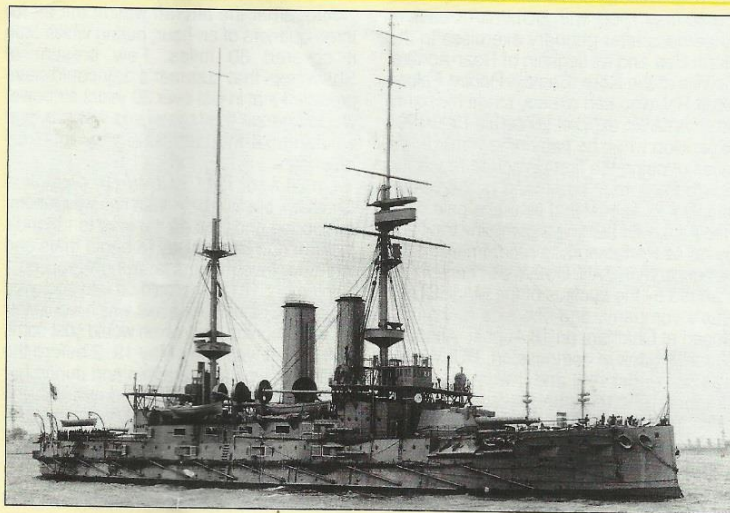
Today, if one of the Royal Navy's major warships was completed, from the laying of the keel to commissioning for the first time, in just three years there would be high accolades for the shipyard concerned. At the turn of the 20th century this is what Devonport Royal Dockyard accomplished, although it did involve just a little cheating.

HMS BULWARK was a first class battleship of what became known as the London class, and she was built under the 1898/99 Naval Estimates. With a deep load displacement of 15,700 tons, a length overall of 431 feet, a beam of 75 feet and a draught of 26 feet, she was an improved version of the earlier Formidable-class battleships. With her twin funnels and two pole masts BULWARK was a powerful looking battleship. She was a twin-screw vessel powered by two sets of vertical, triple-expansion steam reciprocating engines which were manufactured by the Tyneside company, Hawthorne Leslie & Co. The steam was provided by 20 coal-fired Belleville boilers, and altogether her main propulsion machinery developed some 15,000 IHP, giving her a speed of 18 knots. Her main armament consisted of four, 12-inch breech-loading guns in two armoured barbettes, one forward of the bridge and one aft of the mainmast. She was also equipped with 16 12-pdr quick-firing guns in casemates, 16 12-pdr quick-firing and six 3-pdr guns.

In addition she carried an assortment of Hotchkiss quick-firing guns, 12-pdr guns, 8 cwt field guns for landing with Naval Brigades or the Royal Marines Detachment, and eight Maxim heavy machine-guns. She was also armed with four submerged 18-inch torpedo tubes.

The first keel plates for BULWARK were temporarily laid on 17 December 1898 in a vacant shed at Devonport Dockyard, and over the following four months the battleship's frames were bolted together as the hull took shape. This was not her building slip, however, and on 20 March 1899, following the launch of IMPLACABLE, BULWARK's temporary superstructure was dismantled and officially laid down on the recently vacated building slip. With much other hull plating having already been cut it was relatively easy to reconstruct the hull again, and just four weeks after the 'official' keel laying, the double bottom compartments were being pressure tested. By early June 1899 over 3,100 tons of steel had been built into the hull, a rate of progress, it was claimed, that exceeded the building of both HMS OCEAN and HMS IMPLACABLE.

On 18 October 1899, less than seven months after the 'official' keel laying, BULWARK was ready for launching and on a beautifully clear day, in the presence of over 20,000 spectators, the ship was prepared for the ceremony. At intervals during the day blocks were removed from beneath the keel, so that by 11.50 only 13 remained in position. Ten minutes later Lady Fairfax, wife of the Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth, broke a bottle of wine against the ship's stem and after wishing, 'success to the ship and all who sail in her', to the cheers of the spectators, the



STEVE BUSH COLLECTION

The first class battleship HMS BULWARK was laid down in 1898 at Devonport Dockyard and commissioned on 18 March 1902.

accompaniment of the Port Admiral's Band and a cacophony of ships' sirens BULWARK was sent down the ways and into the waters of the Hamoaze. Then, as the tugs were towing her to the fitting-out berth, dockyard workmen began preparing the slipway for the keel of HMS MONTAGU (see *Warship World* September/October 2004). In May 1901 BULWARK ran her contractor's trials in the Channel, and by the end of the month she had returned to Plymouth Sound and to her berth in the dockyard.

On Tuesday 18 March 1902, at Devonport Dockyard, BULWARK was commissioned into the Royal Navy by her first commanding officer, Captain F. T. Hamilton RN. A few weeks later she sailed with her ship's company of 781 officers and men for the Mediterranean Station to relieve HMS ROYAL OAK as the flagship of Admiral Sir Compton Domville, Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Station, who was relieving Admiral Sir John Fisher. During her first commission BULWARK visited all the usual Mediterranean ports which were so familiar to the officers and men of the Royal Navy in the early years of the 20th century. In June 1904, leading other units of the Fleet, BULWARK visited the Italian port of Spezia where Admiral Domville was invited to the launch of the Italian battleship REGINA ELENAL and sailors from all the British ships marched from Rome's Trastevere Railway Station to St Peter's Square, where they were received by Pope Pious X. In December 1904 Bulwark left Malta to return home to Devonport where she paid off. On 3 January 1905, having undergone a short maintenance period and with a new ship's company, the battleship was recommissioned. Two days later she left for the Mediterranean, where she again became the flagship of Admiral Domville. In May 1905, during her second commission in the Mediterranean, BULWARK received a visit from Queen Alexandra, who was touring the area in the royal yacht VICTORIA & ALBERT, and who had called at Malta before going on to Oran and Gibraltar. In June 1905

Admiral Domville was relieved as C-in-C by Admiral Lord Charles Beresford who, like his predecessor, flew his flag in BULWARK. On 27 January 1907, BULWARK arrived at Portsmouth from the Mediterranean to disembark the C-in-C, and four days later she paid off at Devonport. During the period which elapsed before she recommissioned her new ship's company was brought from Chatham to Devonport in the battleship RESOLUTION and BULWARK herself steamed from Devonport to Chatham with a nucleus crew from the cruiser ST GEORGE, which was to serve as a 'special service vessel' at Devonport, to man the cruiser AMPHITRITE. In late Victorian and Edwardian times such en masse transfers of personnel were commonplace and moving them in ships which were between commissions was often the most convenient way of transporting large numbers of men. BULWARK herself recommissioned at Devonport on 13 February 1907, and she then became the flagship of Rear-Admiral F. Finnis, Rear-Admiral, Home Fleet, at the Nore.

The completion of the battleship DREADNOUGHT in late 1906 (see *Warship World* November 2002) made BULWARK and all other battleships obsolete virtually overnight, but in 1907 the Royal Navy had only one Dreadnought and scores of older, slower battleships, and in the summer of that year BULWARK, together with her sister LONDON, and the MAGNIFICENT, MAJESTIC and VICTORIOUS took part in intensive tactical exercises with DREADNOUGHT in the North Sea. It was at 1718 on Saturday 26 October 1907, whilst BULWARK and VICTORIOUS were returning to Sheerness from such exercises off the Moray Firth that the former ran aground on the Leman Bank in the North Sea. The two ships had just altered course to avoid a large number of fishing boats, and despite going hard astern BULWARK hit the bank at 15 knots. Fortunately, she was quickly refloated and she was able to continue her passage to Sheerness. Although damage was described

officially as 'slight'. BULWARK was dry docked at Chatham and nine of her hull plates were replaced.

In March 1908 BULWARK was refitted at Portsmouth, before temporarily replacing VENGEANCE as part of the Channel Fleet. On 30 May 1908, with BULWARK back at Sheerness after gunnery exercises in the North Sea and as flagship of Rear-Admiral Colville at the Nore, Captain Robert Falcon Scott RN, who had already made his name as an Antarctic explorer during his 1900-1904 expedition when he had come within a few miles of being the first person to reach the South Pole, took command of the battleship. On 15 August that year she paid off at Chatham, with her ship's company travelling by rail to Portsmouth to recommission the battleship DUNCAN. BULWARK herself was manned by the nucleus of the MAJESTIC's ship's company, and she was recommissioned at Chatham on 18 August. Although she was back in commission, BULWARK was still under refit and it was not until 2 October 1908 that she left Sheerness for Devonport to embark the remainder of her ship's company and to join the flag of Admiral Lord Charles Beresford. In July 1909 she took part in the Royal and Parliamentary Fleet Review at the Nore, where warships of all shapes and sizes anchored in the River Thames between Sheerness and the Houses of Parliament.

By early 1910, with Captain Scott having left BULWARK to take command of the TERRA NOVA and to prepare for his second, ill-fated Antarctic expedition. BULWARK was transferred to the Nore Command where, on 19 March, she became the flagship of Vice-Admiral Sir G. Neville, commanding the 3rd and 4th Divisions of the Home Fleet. In May 1910, at Sheerness, she led the salutes and welcome ceremonies for Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II when he arrived in England for the funeral of King Edward VII. In the following month BULWARK was featured in all the national newspapers when she was subjected to a demonstration of the versatility of the new 'airplanes' which, only 12 months after the first commercially built models were available, were starting to be seen in the skies over Britain. On this occasion, flying a Short's No 27 biplane with a 60-horse power engine, Cecil Grace, a well-known aviator of the day, was on a flight over the Thames Estuary when, "seeing the warships anchored in the Medway, I dived from 500 feet to masthead

height and executed a series of curves, during which I circled round the masts of HMS BULWARK." Apparently, the escapade was greeted by loud cheers from officers and men in BULWARK and the nearby VICTORIOUS, before the pilot headed upriver.

Altogether the aircraft was in the air for three-quarters of an hour, during which time it covered 30 miles. Few present at Sheerness that summer's day could have predicted that in just over 30 years air power would change the face of sea warfare, and would make the battleship well and truly redundant.

On 24 April 1911 BULWARK paid off at Chatham, but four days later she was recommissioned and was on her way to Ireland's picturesque Bantry Bay to begin trials and work-up. Five months later, however, on 1 September 1911, she paid off into dockyard hands at Chatham for a refit which would last for eight months, and which would cost some £68,831. It was early May 1912 before the battleship was at sea again, and during her post-refit trials she grounded twice on the Barrow Deep Sands, close to the Maplin lightship between Shoeburyness and Foulness. An examination by ship's divers revealed extensive damage to the underwater hull on both port and starboard sides, with 12 badly buckled plates. This meant a further month in dry dock at Chatham, and it was 4 June 1912 before Bulwark commissioned for service in the 5th Battle Squadron at the Nore. Her arrival brought the squadron up to its full strength of eight Formidable- and London-class battleships. In July 1912 she took part in the Spithead Inspection of over 300 warships of the Fleet by Members of both Houses of Parliament. For two years, although hopelessly outdated, the battleships of the 5th Battle Squadron formed the backbone of the Nore Command, and in November 1913 BULWARK had her final change of command when Captain G. L. Sclater RN joined the ship.

In May 1914, some eight weeks before the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo, Europe was at peace and BULWARK spent the early part of that month carrying out gunnery exercises with IRRESISTIBLE. Each afternoon she would anchor off Margate and each evening of what was a warm and sunny spring, the ship's company would get a run ashore in the seaside town. On 9 May 1914, at Sheerness, she led the salutes to the King and Queen of

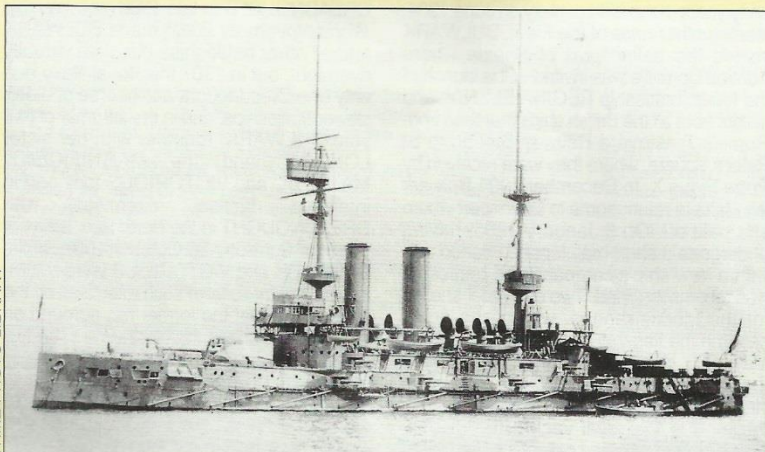
Denmark when they arrived at Sheerness in their royal yacht for an official visit. During the latter half of the month BULWARK was at Portland, where she carried out exercises with other units of the battlefleet. Finally, on 22 May she returned to Chatham for maintenance and to give leave to both watches of the hands. For most officers and men it would be the last time they would see their homes. It was 9 July 1914 before BULWARK was ready for sea again, and by this time political tensions in Europe were high, with the Royal Navy preparing for war. That day BULWARK steamed to Portsmouth where over the next seven days her complement was brought up to war strength, with men being drafted to the battleship from the manning depots EXCELLENT and VERNON. At 1000 on 16 July, in single line ahead, with PRINCE OF WALES, QUEEN, ALBEMARLE, IRRESISTIBLE and VENERABLE, BULWARK steamed out of Portsmouth Harbour to Spithead where she anchored for her final Royal Review - what is known today as the 'Mobilization Review'.

The Review itself took place during Sunday 19 July and the forenoon of Monday 20 July when, at 08.45, the royal yacht VICTORIA & ALBERT, with King George V embarked, left Portsmouth Harbour. This was the signal for the combined battlefleets to man ship, weigh anchor and steam slowly in line ahead, with black smoke belching from their funnels, past the royal yacht. Following the Review the fleets carried out a tactical exercise in the Channel before dispersing to their various stations. BULWARK steamed first to Torbay and then to Portland, from where, for the next few weeks, together with LORD NELSON, RUSSELL, FORMIDABLE and IMPLACABLE, in line ahead she steamed up and down Channel between Portland and Dover. When war came she was actually coaling in Portland Harbour, but with vital cross channel troop and supply convoys to protect the first months of the war were spent on this monotonous duty as she carried out sweeps of the Channel and the Strait of Dover, up to the Thames Estuary. From this early stage of the war the Royal Navy was left in no doubt about the extent to which new technology was altering the balance of power at sea, for within days of the declaration of war the cruiser AMPHION and over 150 members of her ship's company were lost to mines. In September 1914 the cruisers ABOUKIR, HOGUE and CRESSY, together with almost 1,500 officers and men, were lost to torpedoes fired by the submarine U-9, and in October the cruiser HAWKE and 500 members of her company were lost, again to U-9's torpedoes.

Later that month the battleship AUDACIOUS and the seaplane carrier HERMES fell victim to mines and submarines, but the greatest debacle came on 1 November 1914, when Admiral Craddock's squadron was defeated off the Chilean port of Coronel, with the loss of the cruisers GOOD HOPE and MONMOUTH and 1,800 lives. To the British public, who had been eager for another decisive 'Trafalgar', it was a time of disillusionment and a growing realization that, with casualty lists on land and at sea growing ever longer, there would be no quick end to what would be the most devastating war in Europe's history.

This, then, was the scene in late November 1914, as BULWARK lay secured to No 17 buoy at Kettlehole Reach, Sheerness.

HMS BULWARK at anchor off Sheerness.



ITIME PHOTO LIBRARY

For some days the seamen aboard BULWARK had been rearranging the 6-inch cordite charges in both the forward and after magazines. By the evening of 25 November the task was almost completed, with the cordite bags having been sorted into 'common' and 'armour piercing'. However, at least 30 6-inch cordite charges had been left uncovered in the forward ammunition cross-passage, and a similar number in the after cross-passage.

Some of the cordite was 13 years old and, in the cross-passages, was subjected to higher temperatures than those in the magazines and shell rooms. On the morning of 26 November work had started early, but at 0730 both officers and men had stood down for breakfast, leaving the cordite bags in the cross-passages, some of which were leaning against hot bulkheads. Suddenly at 07.55 the peace of the Medway was shattered by an enormous explosion which one witness thought was a Zeppelin raid with, 'the first bombs being dropped on English soil'. In fact the catastrophic explosion was BULWARK blowing up, and Lieutenant Benjamin Carroll RN, who was only 400 yards from the battleship, recalled: "I suddenly saw a spurt of flame aft, which seemed to run aft from the barbette to the after funnel. A loud explosion occurred and the upper part of the ship seemed to be blown into the air.

There was a dense column of smoke and everything in the air seemed to be mixed with burning debris from the ship." On board BULWARK, Able Seaman James Straits¹, the Gunner Lieutenant's Writer, was in the Gunnery Office on the ship's port side directly above the after ammunition cross-passage when, "The first thing I took notice of was a roaring noise like a large blacksmith's forge. I turned to look out of the office and a sheet of flame came on to me and shot through the door. I staggered back and there seemed to be an explosion in the distance on the opposite side of the ship. The electric lights went out and then the ship seemed to shake, and then I was struggling in the water. The ship seemed to fall to pieces underneath me."

¹ Able Seaman Straits, with his knowledge of the work which was being carried out in the magazines and shell rooms, became the crucial witness at the Official Inquiry.



HMS BULWARK at anchor with quarterdeck awnings spread.

Another survivor, Stoker Frederick Dufty, was on his mess deck on the starboard side of the cable deck when, "A big blinding flash came through the bulkhead door, and then I was in the water. I got out, but I don't know how."

Straits and Dufty were two of only 12 men who survived, most of whom were badly burned. Captain Sclater and his 50 officers perished in the explosion, which was heard as far away as Southend, Gravesend and Faversham. One witness on Southend Pier reported seeing "a vivid flash followed by a dense volume of greenish smoke; the force of the explosion shook the pier. The smoke lasted for about ten minutes before it suddenly ceased." The shock of the explosion was also felt by hundreds of civilian German internees who were being held on board merchant ships in Southend Roads.

Almost immediately, led by Lieutenant Carroll in the tender WILDFIRE, rescue operations got under way, but only 14 survivors, two of whom later died, and 30 bodies were

recovered. One eyewitness reported seeing a periscope, but this was quickly discounted.

The subsequent Inquiry found that BULWARK had been destroyed by a catastrophic explosion of the after magazines and shell rooms, and possibly the forward ones as well. It was strongly thought that cordite which had been left in the cross-passages had been ignited by the hot bulkheads against which it had been leaning, and that the ignition of one bag had triggered a train of explosions from the after to the forward ammunition cross-passages.

The luckiest member of the ship's company was the Royal Marines 'postman', for he had been landed early in order to deliver and collect the mail, and he was still on his way back to the ship when she blew up. Coming so soon after the loss of HMS GOOD HOPE and 900 members of her company, the loss of over 750 lives from BULWARK was yet another devastating tragedy for the city of Portsmouth, from where most of her ship's company came.

Garrison Library

I have now established the above containing a list of pdf papers which members and friends can have sent to them by e mail - please apply by sending a request for whatever paper(s) you want to chesterfieldwfa@gmail.com.

The Journal of the Royal United Services Institution. Gold Medal (Military) Prize Essay for 1918 “ *How can moral qualities best be developed during the preparation of the officer and the man for the duties each will carry out in war* ”

War in History. *Sir John fisher and the Policy of Strategic Deterrent 1904-1908*

War in History. *The Impact of War: Matching Expectation with Reality in the Royal Navy in the first Months of the Great War*

Journal of Strategic Studies. *The Morale Maze: the German Army in Late 1918*

War in History. *The Chemical Dimension of the Gallipoli Campaign: Introducing Chemical Warfare to the Middle East.*

NWC Review Summer 2007. *Expectation, Adaption and Resignation...British Battlefleet Planning, August 1914-April 1916*

Air Power Review. *Haig and Trenchard: Achieving Air Superiority on the Western Front*

WW1 Listserve *Falsehood in Wartime: by Arthur Ponsonby MP (1929)*

Christopher Phillips *Civilian Specialists at War: Britain's Transport Experts and the First World War*

Elizabeth Greenhalgh: *Ferdinand Foch and the French Contribution to the Somme 1916*

William Stewart: *When the Learning Curve Falls - the Ordeal of the 44th Battalion, Canadian 4th Division, 25 th October 1916*

Meleagh Hampton: *Hubert Gough, the Anzacs on the Somme. A Descent into Pointlessness*

Brett Holman: *Constructing the Enemy Within; Rumours of Secret Gun Platforms and Zepellin Bases in Britain, August to October 1914*

Gary Sheffield: *A Once in a Lifetime Opportunity - Personal Reflections on the Centenary of World War One in 2014*

Jim Beach: *Doctrine Writing at British GHQ 1917-1918*

Andrew Whitmarsh: *British Strategic Bombing 1917-1918. The Independent Air Force and its Predecessors*

Scientia Militaria. Ian van der Waag. *The politics of south Africa`s `Second Little Bit` and the War on the Western front 1914-18*

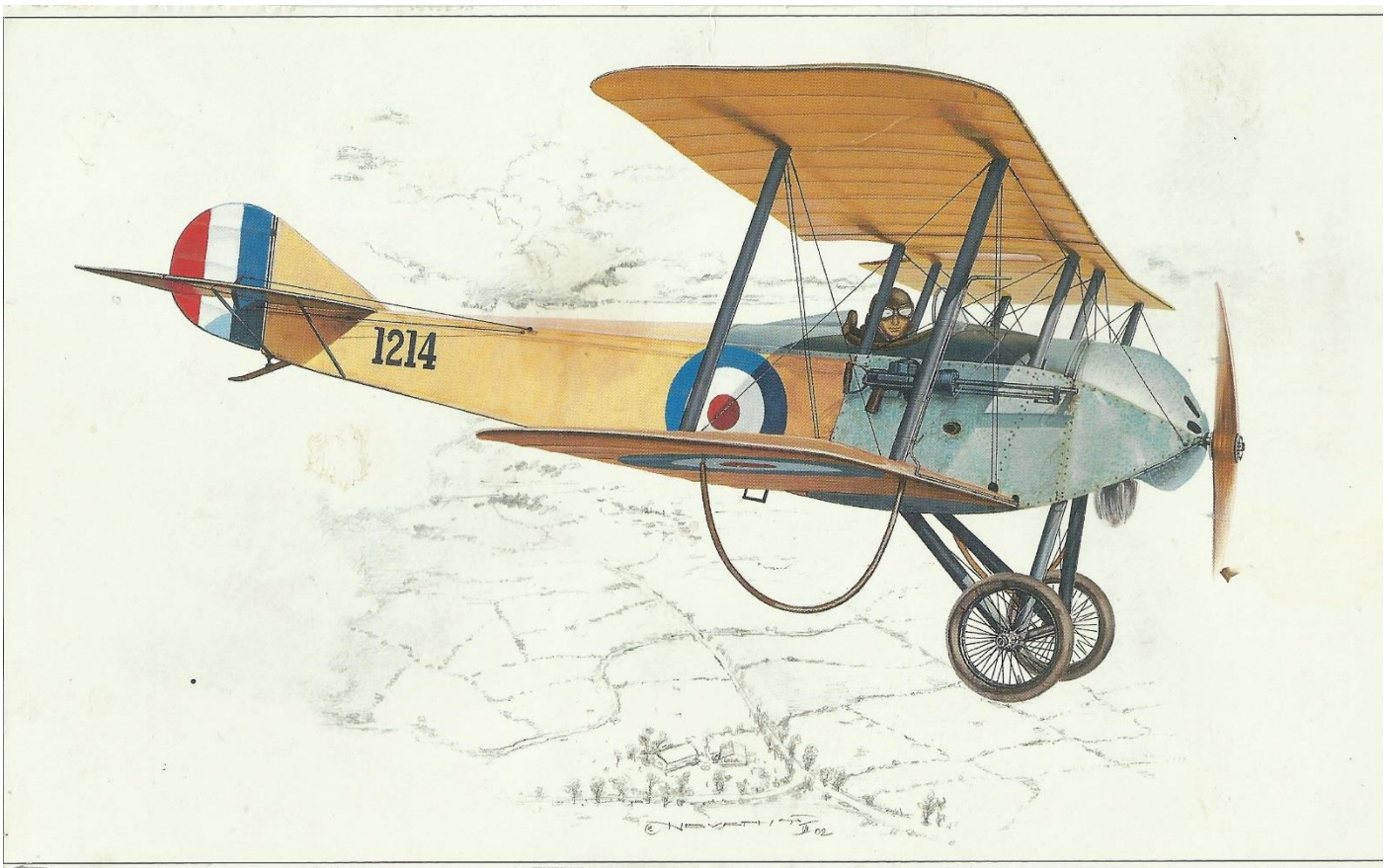
RUSI Journal ; Jonathon Krause; *Ferdinand Foch and the Scientific Battle*

Peter Doyle *Geology and the war on the Western Front, 1914-1918*

Simon Birch *The abortive British attack on the Gommecourt salient, in support of the IV Army assault on the Somme, 1 July 1916. An operational case study at divisional level.*

Dominiek Dendooven In Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres, Belgium *Indians in the Ypres Salient 1914-1918*

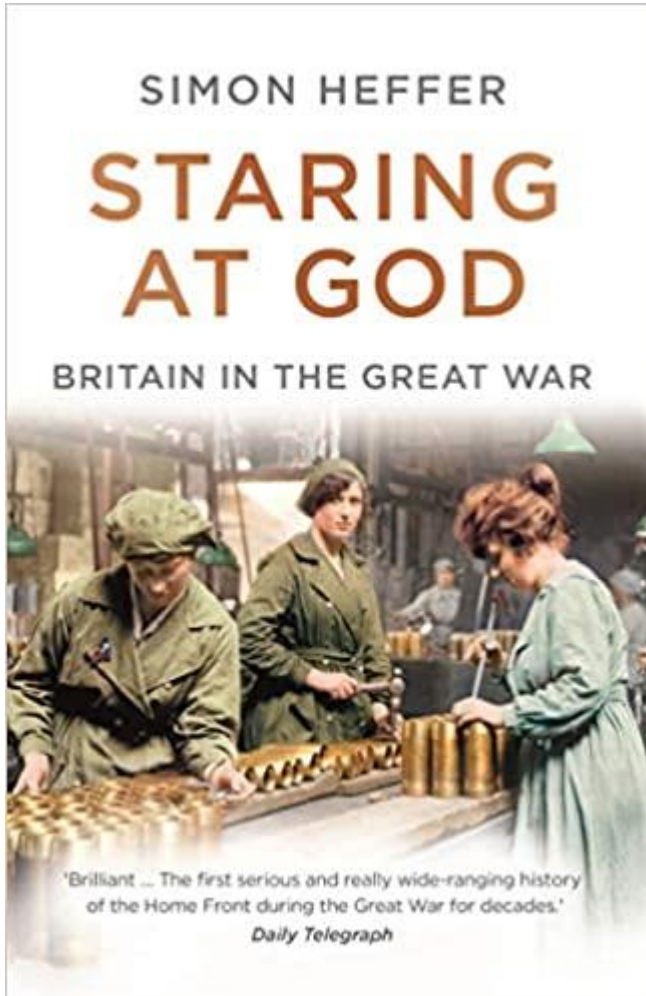
Sopwith Tabloid



My Books.....

I am sure that many of you, like me, in the absence of live meetings, will have turned to books to while away the time until we can gather together and listen to a speaker, grilling him or her after their presentation. Yes we have had the welcome - and well supported - WFA webinars and we as a Branch, along with our friends at Lincoln have endeavoured to maintain interest with a series of `virtual` meetings. I thought it might be of interest to share with you the books that I have acquired and read over the past nine months or so. I would be happy to hear from members as to what books they have read, their thoughts and comments, and what they would like to share with the rest of us.

So here goes.....



The Great War saw millions of men volunteer for or be recruited into the Army, their lives either cut short or overturned. Women were bereaved, enlisted to work in agriculture, government and engineering, yet still expected to hold together homes and families. But while the conflict caused social, economic and political devastation, it also provoked revolutionary change on the home front.

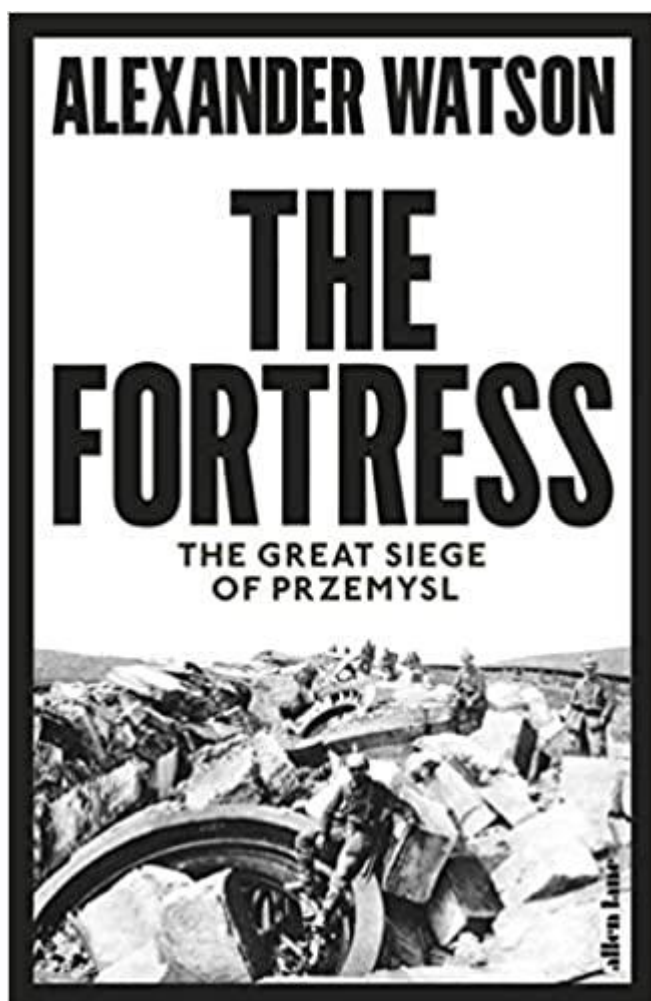
Simon Heffer uses vivid portraits to present a nuanced picture of a pivotal era. While the Great War caused loss on an appalling scale, it also advanced the emancipation of women, brought notions of better health care and education, and pointed the way to a less deferential, more democratic future.

A massive tome of over 800 pages, of which I have passed the 700 mark. It is undoubtedly the best account I have read of the Home Front, particularly the political machinations - jeez they were so disorganised - ferrets in a sack comes to mind - it`s a wonder the war was won, particularly after Lloyd George became PM someone who believed that he was a strategic genius and could dictate to the military. The influence of the press barons like Northcliffe and Beaverbrook was certainly not underestimated in this account.

My `Book of the Year` Available from Amazon from £10.65 - paperback

In the autumn of 1914 Europe was at war. The battling powers had already suffered casualties on a scale previously unimaginable. On both the Western and Eastern fronts elaborate war plans lay in

ruins and had been discarded in favour of desperate improvisation. In the West this resulted in the remorseless world of the trenches; in the East all eyes were focused on the old, beleaguered Austro-Hungarian fortress of Przemysl.



The siege that unfolded at Przemysl was the longest of the whole war. In the defence of the fortress and the struggle to relieve it Austria-Hungary suffered some 800,000 casualties. Almost unknown in the West, this was one of the great turning points of the conflict. If the Russians had broken through they could have invaded Central Europe, but by the time the fortress fell their strength was so sapped they could go no further.

Alexander Watson, prize-winning author of Ring of Steel, has written one of the great epics of the First World War. Comparable to Stalingrad in 1942-3, Przemysl shaped the course of Europe's future. Neither Russians nor Austro-Hungarians ever recovered militarily from their disasters. Using a huge range of sources, Watson brilliantly recreates a world of long-gone empires, broken armies and a cut-off community sliding into chaos. The siege was central to the war itself, but also a chilling harbinger of what would

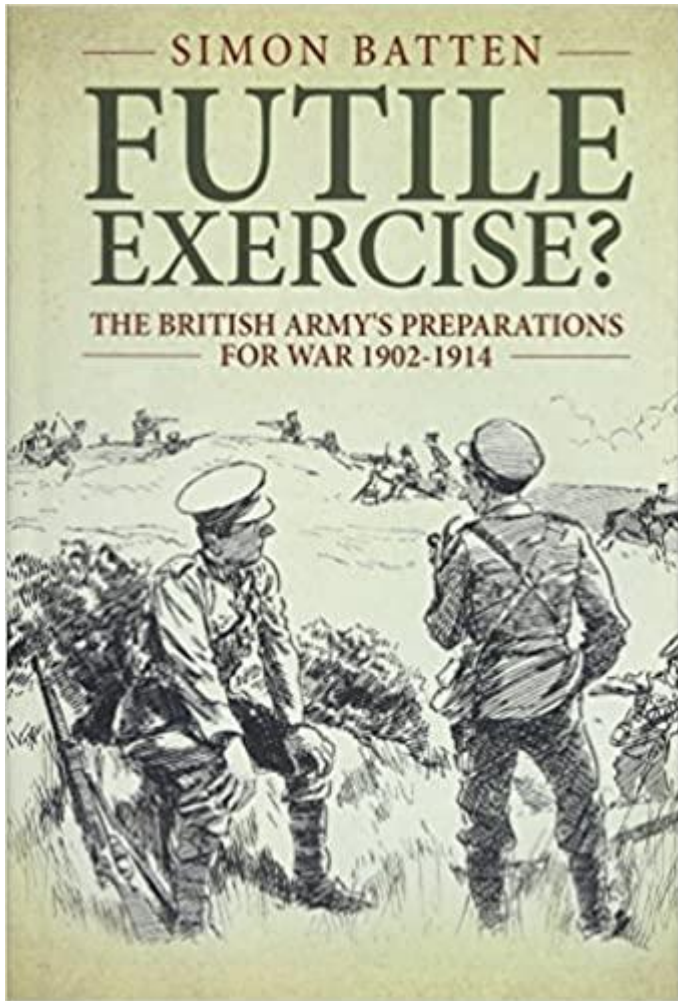
engulf the entire region in the coming decades, as nationalism, anti-semitism and an exterminatory fury took hold.

A harrowing account of the siege of the fortress city of Przemysl on the Eastern Front. I have to confess I don't know too much about the war on this front, but I sure got an education in this book. It details the suffering of the soldiers and civilians trapped in this city, surrounded by the Russian forces.

Some of the events and horrors were repeated a generation later in WW2...plus of course the policy of extermination and genocide.

Recommended if you want to learn about the Eastern Front

Available from Amazon in paperback from £9



According to the official historian Brigadier-General James Edmonds: 'In every respect the Expeditionary Force of 1914 was incomparably the best trained, best organized, and best equipped British Army which ever went forth to war'. There has been considerable debate over the extent to which Edmonds' claim was justified, and to which the British Army had learnt the lessons of recent events (above all, its chastening experiences in South Africa). Conventional wisdom has it that the British Army in 1914 was utterly unprepared for the development of trench warfare from October 1914 onwards, and that it took many lives and a costly 'learning curve' for the British to come to terms with the new conditions of warfare. Given that war was expected in the decade before August 1914 - and that a great deal of time and money was spent preparing for that war - it seems obvious to ask why the British Army was not better prepared for the war when it came. This raises important issues about how armies learn from their experiences and how they prepare for the unknowable - namely, a war - without employing bullets and shells. How realistic and useful were the exercises and manoeuvres the British Army used in the period between the end of the Boer War in 1902

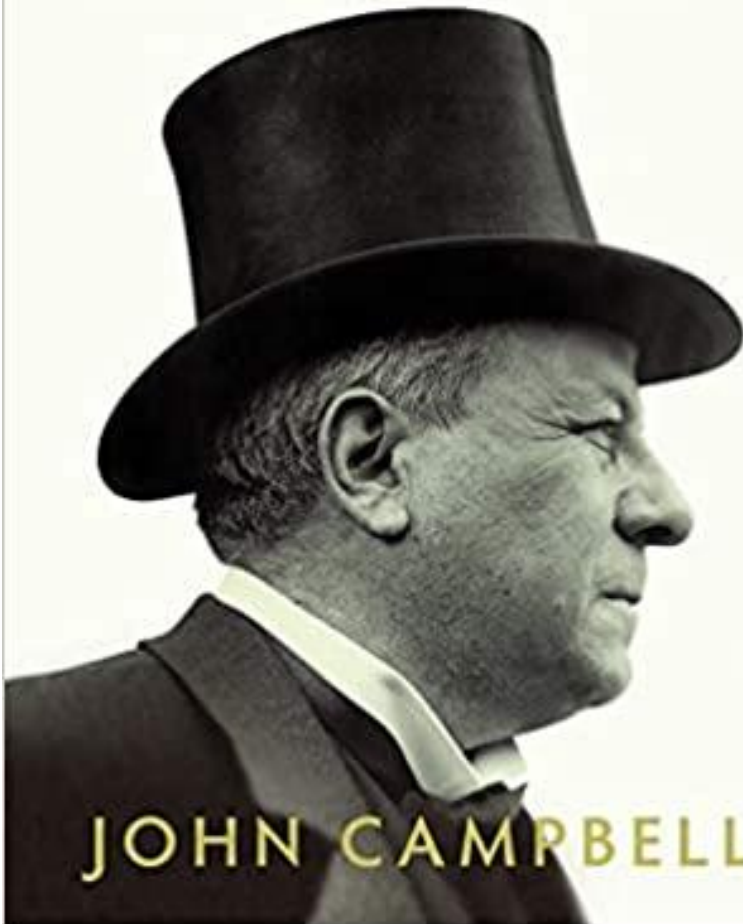
and the outbreak of war in August 1914? The approach of most historians has been either to ignore them, or to dismiss them as a waste of time and money. The manoeuvres carried out between 1902 and 1913 featured large forces - sometimes as many as 45,000 men and 12,000 horses - as well as guns, trucks, trains and the first sizeable force of military aircraft ever employed in Britain. Many of the names later familiar from the Western Front were involved - Haig, French, Rawlinson and Allenby - as well as a great many of the troops who would cross to France with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in August 1914. Their efforts were witnessed by large crowds, as well as politicians, representatives of foreign armies and journalists (some of them 'embedded' with army units); there was comprehensive and opinionated coverage in the newspapers of the time. What lessons were learnt, what value did these manoeuvres have and how do they relate to the events of the war - especially, its opening months.

The book is not cheap, £28 (including postage) for 236 pages making it relatively expensive and does (in my opinion) drag a bit and tends to be repetitive, in the descriptions of the various exercises, not unexpectedly though .

Should I have bought it? Probably not as I didn't get all that much out of it.

HALDANE

The Forgotten Statesman
Who Shaped Modern Britain



JOHN CAMPBELL

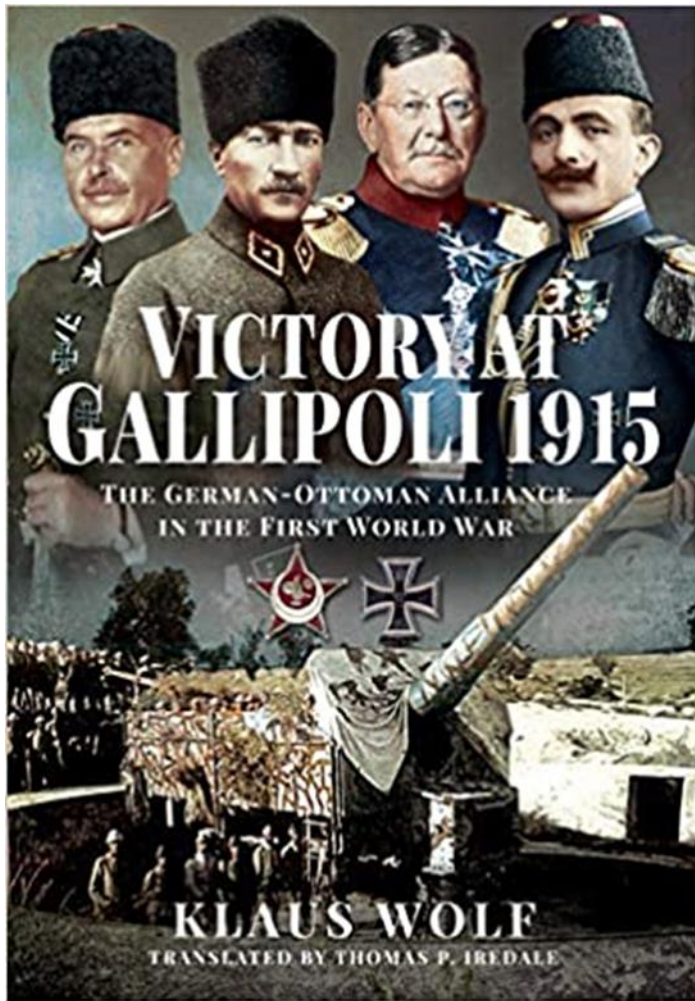
Can you name the creator of the Territorial Army and the British Expeditionary Force? The man who laid the foundation stones of MI5, MI6, the RAF, the LSE, Imperial College, the 'redbrick' universities and the Medical Research Council? This book reveals that great figure: Richard Burdon Haldane. As a philosopher-statesman, his groundbreaking proposals on defence, education and government structure were astonishingly ahead of his time—the very building blocks of modern Britain. His networks ranged from Wilde to Einstein, Churchill to Carnegie, King to Kaiser; he pioneered cross-party, cross-sector cooperation. Yet in 1915 Haldane was ejected from the Liberal government, unjustly vilified as a German sympathiser. John Campbell charts these ups and downs, reveals Haldane's intensely personal side through previously unpublished private correspondence, and shows his enormous relevance in our search for just societies today

Not an easy book to read as Haldane was a philosopher / politician/ statesman.

There are several chapters on his philosophy particularly that which he picked up and maintained a lifelong interest in after his pre-war education in Germany. He was badly treated by some (jealous?) colleagues and by the press barons. Post war he held office in the first Labour government.

As I say, not an easy book, but one which I found a worthwhile read. From about £20 via Amazon.

As many of you may know, one theatre of conflict that I have a great interest in is Gallipoli.



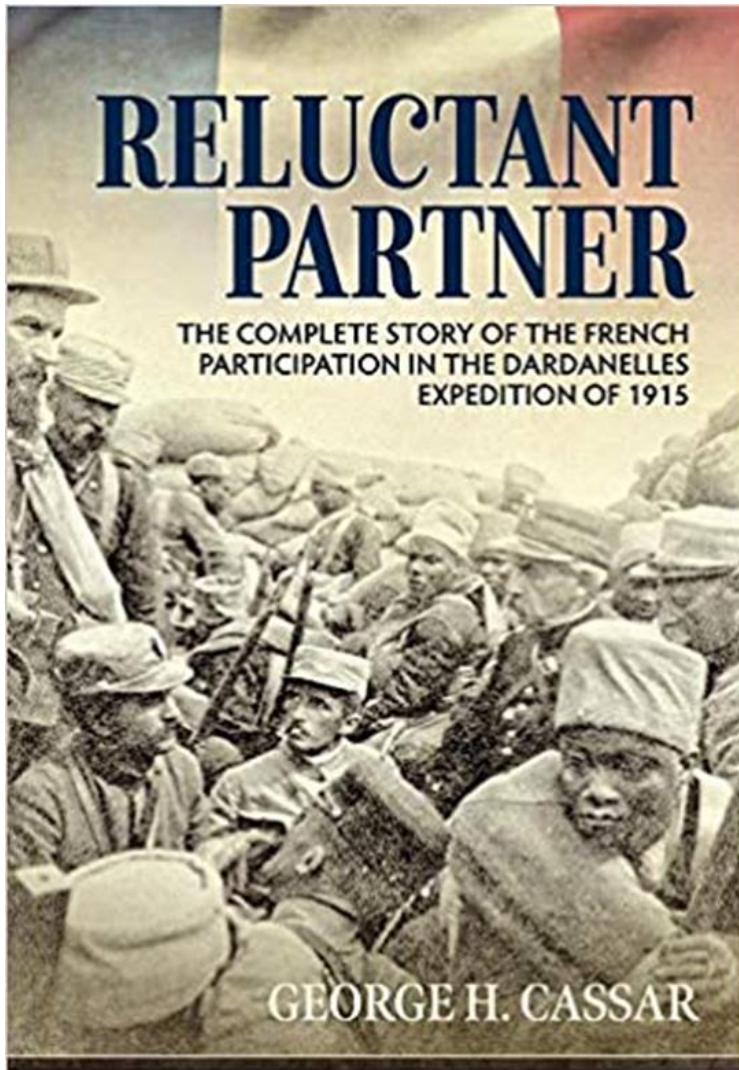
The German contribution in a famous Turkish victory at Gallipoli has been overshadowed by the Mustafa Kemal legend. The commanding presence of German General Liman von Sanders in the operations is well known. But relatively little is known about the background of German military intervention in Ottoman affairs. Klaus Wolf fills this gap as a result of extensive research in the German records and the published literature. He examines the military assistance offered by the German Empire in the years preceding 1914 and the German involvement in ensuring that the Ottomans fought on the side of the Central Powers and that they made best use of the German military and naval missions. He highlights the fundamental reforms that were required after the battering the

Turks received in various Balkan wars, particularly in the Turkish Army, and the challenges that faced the members of the German missions. When the allied invasion of Gallipoli was launched, German officers became a vital part of a robust Turkish defence - be it at sea or on land, at senior command level or commanding units of infantry and artillery. In due course German aviators were to be, in effect, founding fathers of the Turkish air arm;

whilst junior ranks played an important part as, for example, machine gunners. This book is not only their missing memorial but a missing link in understanding the tragedy that was Gallipoli.

Recommended if you have an interest in the Gallipoli campaign

Hardback...£22 from amazon



My final book of this review is also about the Gallipoli campaign.

No campaign in the Great War has been the subject of such intense and prolonged attention and controversy as the one in the Dardanelles. The general perception is that it was an operation involving troops from Britain and the Empire. The role of the French is barely mentioned if at all. As junior partners the French contribution does not compare to that of the British, but it was nevertheless significant. Over the course of the ten-month operation, the French government sent to the Dardanelles six pre-dreadnought battleships, four cruisers, and a host of auxiliary vessels that included minesweepers and submarines. Additionally, it supplied a total of 79,000 troops, supported by artillery and high explosive shells. The purpose of this study is to concentrate on the activity of the French so as to give a more rounded picture of the story. The main factor influencing the French decision to join the British-led expedition to the Dardanelles was to protect their interest in the Near East. France's economic and cultural ties in the Ottoman Empire were deep and of long standing, and it wanted to ensure that the British did not establish themselves in an area it

coveted. Assuming that victory was a forgone conclusion, the Allies focused their early attention on the future dismemberment of Turkey rather than on attending to the needs of the campaign itself. It was a lesson for which they would pay dearly. The French were involved in the major naval attack on 18 March 1915 during which they engaged the Turkish forts at close range and, in the process, the battleship Bouvet ran into an undetected minefield and sank with the loss of over 600 of its crew. The failure of the Allied ships to force a passage through the straits prompted the British to send in the army to seize control of the Gallipoli Peninsula. In the first landing on 25 April, British and Australian forces managed to secure the beaches but were unable to advance far inland. By contrast the French contingent's feint at Kum Kale achieved its purpose, as it was intended to delay Turkish Asiatic troops from crossing the waterway to reinforce their comrades on the peninsula during the early clash of battle. Thereafter French forces were transferred to Cape Helles and placed at the eastern end of the British line, where their efforts in the three battles of Krithia were thwarted by the terrible configuration of the ground, compounded by flanking fire from the enemy batteries in Asia. In all the military action, the number of French killed, wounded or missing in action was placed at 27,000, disproportionately higher than the British (70,000). The French were content to play second fiddle until August when, frustrated at the lack of progress on the western front, they decided to augment their forces in the Dardanelles where they would play a commanding role and spearhead the next offensive. The government's objective touched off a sharp struggle with General Joffre who objected to the withdrawal of major forces from his front. At length the government found the courage to overrule Joffre, but just as the troops were ready to leave for the Dardanelles, the Central Powers attacked Serbia. Almost overnight, the French cabinet reversed its decision and instead proposed to transfer its troops to the Balkans to assist Serbia, without consulting London. The French did not have

enough troops to complete the mission and consequently tried to browbeat the British to follow suit. The British already had their hands full with commitments elsewhere and were adamantly opposed to becoming involved in another operation, especially one which they judged was doomed to fail. They held out for weeks but ultimately gave way to avoid straining, or even possibly fracturing, the Alliance. Lacking the resources to sustain two fronts in the east, the British were compelled to evacuate the Gallipoli Peninsula which remarkably was carried out without the loss of a single man.

For me, a fascinating read. I got mine earlier in the year for £25 and you can still get it via amazon sellers for several pounds more.

If Kindle editions are what interests you, then all of the above are available in that format - significantly cheaper than the hardback or paperback issues discussed above.

I would be pleased to receive book reviews and comments from any recipients of this Newsletter.

The Illusory Threat

Enemy Aliens in Britain during the Great War

Part 5 Study of MI5, enemy aliens and the changing domestic security priorities 1916 to 1918 (continued)

To combat the threat and gain valuable long-term intelligence Branch D.1 was created in September 1917. Led by a Captain F. Jackson with two staff at his disposal the sub-branch was made responsible for Irish-American affairs. These duties included the 'examination of censored letters or intercepted correspondence dealing therewith, Irish Intelligence Reports and Co-operation with G.H.Q., H.F. thereon, and questions affecting Ireland. Two more sub-branches were also added in September 1917; D.2 Colonial Affairs and D.3 Oriental Affairs. Branch D.2 under Captain C.W.J. Orr and his two staff dealt with general correspondence and questions affecting the British Dominions and Colonies. Branch D.3 dealt with investigations, correspondence and questions affecting India, the Middle East and Egypt under Captain C.G. Stephen, S. Newby and their three staff. Its work included co-operation with the India Office and assessing the threat from individuals wanting home rule in India. Shortly before the end of the war in October 1918, two more sub-branches were added to MI5D. Branch D.4 co-ordinated communications with the Special Intelligence Missions in Allied Countries such as those in Washington and Rome and Branch D.5 was responsible for Ciphers and codes. By the end of the war, what had started from humble beginnings to deal with Colonial Correspondence and cases of espionage from Ireland, D Branch had become responsible for all work in which MI5 was

concerned outside Great Britain in her colonies and overseas dominions.

MI5A dealt with work (originally performed by the SIB's preventive branch MO5G(b), and then for a time - taken over by the Ministry of Munitions) connected with the registration and control of Aliens on war work in the United Kingdom. With the influx of Belgian refugees in September 1914 to the British Isles, MO5G had been responsible for the examination of refugees' credentials and enforcing policy that excluded them from prohibited military areas and limited their work so it would 'neither interfere with available British Labour nor place the alien in a position to do mischief if evilly inclined. In March 1916, the Belgian work and the staff were transferred to the Ministry of Munitions Labour Intelligence (M.M.L.I.), later renamed Parliamentary Military Secretary (P.M.S.2.). The reason for its transfer came down to the connection of the output of munitions with industrial disturbances and 'general labour unrest and troubles, in which alien labour was regarded as an important factor. However, a squabble between the Ministry of Munitions and the Home Office over an accusation that the police had been unwilling to give assistance in the prosecutions and with administering the provisions of Article 22a of the Alien Restriction Act led to the work being transferred back to MI5. With this transfer the administration of the Alien War Service and orders regarding the control of munitions work that could be undertaken by aliens became a branch in its own right on 23 April 1917 - MI5A. The staff of MI5A at the point of transfer consisted of 3 British officers, 2 Belgian officers, 4 male clerks, and 38 women clerks. At the time of the transfer, Captain F.H.L. Stevenson was placed in charge of the branch, followed by Major Spencer in July 1917, Major Sealy Clarke in August 1917 and finally by Major Welchman from April 1918 to the end of the war. The general duties of MI5 were: to examine the credentials of all aliens employed in munitions manufacture and grant permits to work; to keep a register of all aliens employed in munitions and track their movements between factories; and to approve all applications for permits to leave the United Kingdom by alien munitions workers. These duties were then split in four sub branches.

Table 12. The work of Branch A's five sub-sections.

Sub-section	Duty	Staff member in charge
A.1	Review of alien munitions workers who wished to leave the United Kingdom and cancellation permit cases	Major P.F.N. Toulmin
A.2	Review of applications submitted by the Labour Exchanges of alien for employment on munitions work	Captain G.M. Cookson and Captain E.B. Powell

A.3	Interviews of aliens working on munitions and those wishing to leave the United Kingdom	Baron A. Sadoine
A.4	General correspondence for the branch and compiled statistics for aliens employed in munitions work.	Mrs Fillett

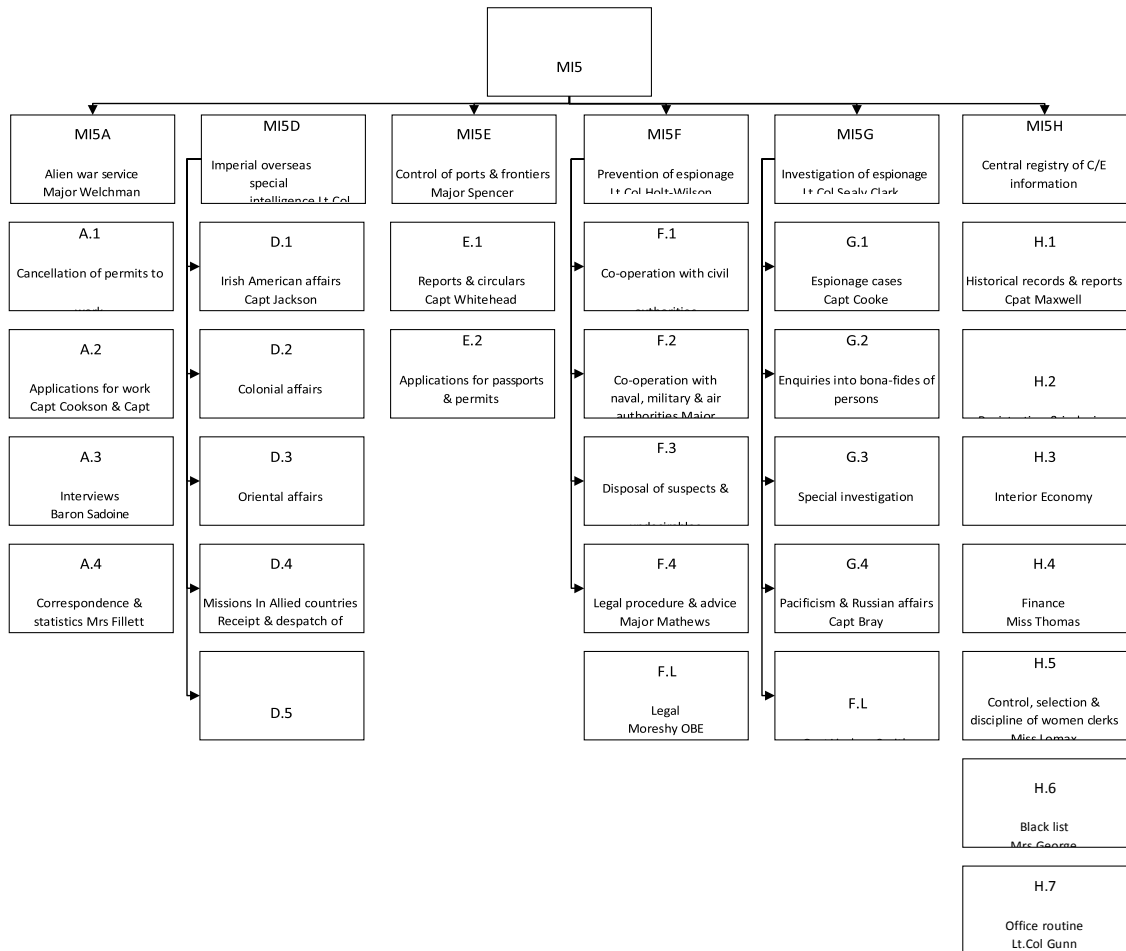
The branch produced a complete list of enemy aliens engaged on munitions work compiled in September 1918 which included 900 names. The list, which gave names, ages, nationalities, and the munitions firms in which aliens were employed, had been asked for by Lord Cheylesmore and the Aliens Advisory Committee.

It was also in September 1918 that the branch took on the work of vetting all Government Office employees. Every government employee was compelled to provide MI5A with their own nationality and that of their parents. From then onwards the branch examined the credentials of all proposed persons for employment in government departments. By the Armistice MI5A employed 5 officers, 2 male clerks, and 47 women clerks. However peace brought more work to the branch as aliens sought permission to leave the country.

As a result of the repatriation of aliens about 18,393 Identity Books of those who had been working on munitions or on Auxiliary War Service were received by M.I.5.A. Of this number 6,949 names were looked up on the records of this branch by the end of March 1919.⁷⁵

The staff of the Bureau on Armistice Day consisted of 133 officers, 300 clerks (the large majority women) and 274 ports police.

Figure 9. Distribution of MI5 duties in November 1918



At the Armistice the successful record of MI5 must be judged on that fact that no single act of sabotage took place within the United Kingdom during the Great War. Over the four years of the war, thirty-one German agents were brought to trial through the work and information supplied by the branches of MI5. Of those, eleven were charged under the 1914 Defence of the Realm Act, sentenced to the death penalty and executed in the Tower of London. Their nationalities included: one American, two naturalised German- Americans, two Dutch, one Russian, one Swede, one Uruguayan, one German-Brazilian, one Peruvian-Scandinavian and one disputed Danish-German. The arrest of Carl Hans Lody back in 1914, Bulloch puts forward, demonstrates the success of the policy adopted by the British Government on enemy aliens.

Although it was fairly confidently believed that all the German agents in Britain had been rounded up, the Government quite deliberately fostered fear of spies. In this way every citizen became an auxiliary of the counter-espionage service. The British public's illusory fears continued through the period 1916 to 1918 based on the idea that the German enemy alien was the main threat to security with the British Isles. However, the changing nature of MI5's work and its changing organisational structure in this period shows that, rather than foster an illusory fear of spies, it was at the forefront of alerting governmental circles to new possible internal security threats to the British Isles and throughout the Empire. MI5, through its reports commissioned shortly after the war, was keen to make the link that the small numbers of spy trials and convictions were down to

successful legislation and good old detective work to make the British Isles impenetrable to German-backed plots.

Up till the end of 1914, the Detective Branch had arrested only one spy during the war, apart from those two-and-twenty known agents who were bagged in a single batch during the Precautionary Period. But during the spring and summer of 1915, no less than 16 spies were arrested, and eventually brought to trial and sentenced to death or penal servitude. With the winter months of 1915, there came a lull, due very possibly to the success of the frontier control and of other preventive measures.

What is also demonstrated by the development of MI5 between 1916 and 1918 is its influence and reach across government departments and even other Allied Governments on the subject of domestic security and its legislation. At the centre of this was Captain Vernon Kell.

In little more than five years Kell entirely changed his own status and that of the department he formed. In 1910 his request for a clerk was used as an excuse for a lecture on the need for economy, but by the middle of the first war Kell was in a position to go direct to any Minister from the Prime Minister downwards for what he wanted. It is typical of the man, but also revealing of the regard in which he was held, that when Asquith summoned him to a meeting one Sunday morning at 11 o'clock, Kell courteously replied that he would attend after church - and got away with it.

To be continued

BRANDED GOODS NEWS

WFA 2021 Calendars

The Western Front Association's 2021 calendar is still available.

Once again it features images of the First World War battlefields taken by a number of photographers who have kindly donated their work. The scenes depict points of interest in France and Belgium (and, incidentally, Italy) some of which are well known but others 'off the beaten track'. This year's calendar has a 'Somme' theme.

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 excellent feedback. The sales of the calendar also assist the WFA to continue its work.

The Western Front Association's 2021 calendar is available via the WFA e-shop >>> <https://bit.ly/35w53RW>

Below: April, May and June's images being: Le cimetière allemand de Mongoutte (Alsace); The view from the Hawthorn Crater towards Beaumont Hamel British Cemetery (Somme) and Etaples Military Cemetery. (Photos shown here by Gwyneth Roberts, Andrew Holmes and Lucy Betteridge-Dyson - we are grateful to these and the others who have kindly donated their work).



WFA 40th Anniversary Coaster

To celebrate the WFA's 40th anniversary, The WFA have produced a 'special edition' coaster. The coasters are 4" in diameter and made of handcrafted slate. They are individually polished, screen printed by hand and backed by a baize to avoid damage to surfaces. These are selling so well that Mark Macartney (The Branded Goods Trustee) has said that he has had to re-order numerous times so. If you would like a new 'WFA' Anniversary Coaster, please order through Website or ring Sarah at Head Office,

<http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/shop/wfa-branded-items/special-edition-wfa-coaster/>

Mark also tells us that once they are gone, they are gone, so don't hesitate in ordering now, as with them being specific for the 40th Anniversary 11th November 2020, the Anniversary year is actually 11th November 2020 - 11th November 2021.



WFA Mousemats

The mousemat which is currently selling so well that Mark tells us that he has just ordered the 4th batch of 100,. If you would like a 'WFA' mousemat, please order through Website or ring Sarah at Head Office,

<http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/shop/wfa-branded-items/wfa-mousemat/>



Info on all Branded goods (Including those mentioned above)

Regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and notified members of the situation the Branded Goods Department are doing their absolute utmost to supply the service that they can while staying withing the Governments quidelines

(see info under)

Bookmarks (New Production-slightly larger than original (now 55x177mm

Baseball Caps (New Lightweight version)

WFA Classic Ties

Lapel Badges

WFA Coasters (Special Edition)

Mousemats

DVD's (Individual -not sets)

WFA Mugs

Messenger Bags

Shoulder Bags,



WFA Mug



WFA Shoulder Bag



WFA Bookmark



WFA Cap



WFA Messenger Bag



WFA Classic Tie



WFA Lapel Badge



Special Edition WFA Coaster



WFA Mousemat

Unknown Warrior Stand To! Special

Extra Copies of this Stand To Special is available (while stocks last) at £10 (incl postage) The Unknown Warrior Special magazine 1920–2020 contains some high quality images and articles and tells the story of the Unknown Warrior (BURIED AMONG KINGS)



BRANDED CLOTHING

Branded Clothing is supplied direct from the Manufacturer, information on how to order can be found on the Website

<http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/shop/branded-clothing/>



Oxford Shirt



Breathable Jacket



Rugby Shirt



Fleece



T-Shirt



Sweatshirt



Polo Shirt