



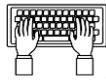
Lancashire North Branch

Despatch -October 2020

Second Email edition.



Keeping communications open



Editor's Notes



Welcome to our second on-line edition of Despatch. Now that the 'lockdown' summer has passed and we have all expended our energies on gardening, DIY, decorating and other time occupying activities we can now look forward to the reading we have all been looking to catch up on.

The effects Covid-19 have lasted much longer than first anticipated and now that Lancashire has gone into a second lockdown it will probably be the New Year before meetings can possibly resume. Meanwhile, the Western Front Association has put on an excellent series of regular on-line talks for members.

Travel restrictions have resulted in few people visiting the battlefield this year but hopefully members will have time to delve into their interests and research projects and maybe write up an article for inclusion in forthcoming editions of Despatch.

This second email version of Despatch is being published a little earlier in an attempt to keep the lines of communication open and for those who would like to read a 'printed' version, Terry Dean describes in this edition a means of printing it out as a booklet.

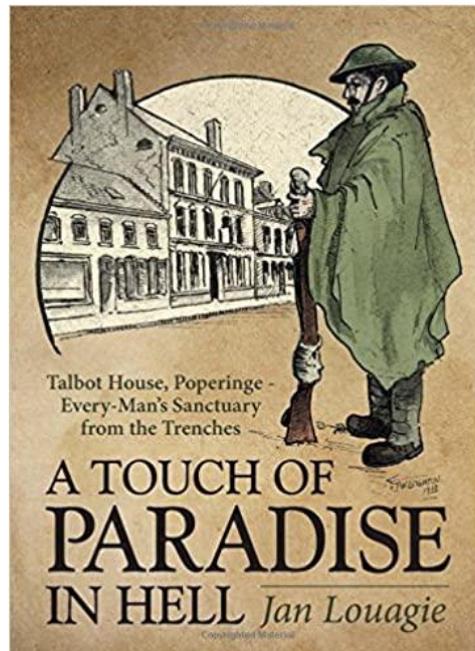
Tom Williams

Editor

(Unless otherwise indicated, articles are by the editor.)

Talbot House

An update and short history



The Talbot House Appeal.

Around 20 March 2020 the WFA along with other interested parties, was notified of the closure of Talbot House in Poperinge due to the coronavirus lockdown. The Talbot House Association, the charity that runs the 250 year old house, said that despite attracting a stream of battlefield pilgrims the property was at risk of permanent closure due to the loss of most of its projected annual income. It has had to close its doors for the first time since the German occupation of the Second World War. This came after a “lousy” previous year with visitor numbers down following the end of the Great War centenaries of 2018. On top of which, the association borrowed and invested savings to create a new permanent exhibition to display 500 artefacts from its collection.

An appeal was launched on 29 March 2020 to raise €100,000 that would allow Talbot House to survive during the closure. Within hours they had received €6,000 and by 22 April donations from WFA branches and individuals had brought this up to €54,000. Incredibly, on 22 May 2020 Talbot house was able to reopen its doors after their appeal raised €120,507.

A brief history of Talbot House.



In 1915 an army chaplain, the Reverend Phillip Byard (Tubby) Clayton was posted to France and then on to Poperinge in Belgium. Situated about seven miles west of Ypres, Poperinge was then an important rail centre, not far from the front line and important for the distribution of supplies and munitions. The town was a busy transfer station where troops on their way to and from the battlefields of Flanders were billeted. It was a rest area away from the forward trenches and the location of a number of casualty clearing stations. Many thousands of troops passed through this small town whilst serving in the Ypres sector.

Tubby Clayton was instructed by his senior chaplain Neville Talbot to set up a form of rest house for troops passing through the town.



Rev 'Tubby' Clayton

A large house was found on the Rue de l'Hopital owned by a wealthy brewer, Monsieur Coevoet Camerlynck which had been damaged at the rear by German shells during the summer of 1915. A rent of 150 Francs per month was agreed with the proviso that the army assisted in removing Monsieur Camerlynck's furnishings including a large safe and the property was made weatherproof. Reverend "Tubby" Clayton envisaged the house as a soldier's club, a place where soldiers could meet and relax regardless of rank, an 'Every-Man's' Club. To emphasise this aspect he hung a sign over the front door "All rank abandon, ye who enter here." Tubby decided to steer away from the traditional church club and set up an 'Everyman's House.'

According to a fellow chaplain, Reverend Neville Talbot, the house was originally to be called 'Church House' but sensing that Divisional staff "saw a scarecrow in the name and smelt tracts", it was decided to name the house in memory of his late brother Lieutenant Gilbert W L Talbot of the 7th Rifle Brigade when he was killed at Hooze in the Ypres Salient on 30 July 1915. Talbot House was opened on 11 December 1915 and made as comfortable as possible with furnishings including a piano 'acquired' by visiting soldiers. Soft

furnishings and books were sent out from donors at home as well as the books left by soldiers. The house soon became known by the then phonetic code of ‘Toc H’, army signal code for T H.

At Talbot House there was always a ‘wet’ of tea for visitors along with comfortable surroundings, easy chairs, and books. Soldiers of the Queen’s Westminster Rifles set up a simple chapel in the loft where over the war years thousands of officers and men received the holy sacrament. The house only a few miles behind the front became a haven of peace allowing men the opportunity to relax, read and write home until it closed in December 1918.

After the war Monsieur Camerlynck, returned to reclaim his home but he was apparently inundated over the years by ex-soldiers returning to see the old house again and put it up for sale. Lord Wakefield of Hythe, who founded Castrol Oil, bought the house for £9,200 in 1929 and donated it to the Talbot House Association who have been successfully running the house since it re-opened in 1931.



Every Man Remembered



G/13020 Private Richard Thomas Birch

A casualty on the last day of the Battle of the Somme

18 November 1916

My daughter presented me with a commemorative pin on the centenary of the Battle of the Somme; it was dedicated to Private Richard Thomas Birch, one of the many casualties of the battle. This of course led to an investigation of his background, military service and the action in which he was killed. The commemorative pin is made from brass shell fuses recovered from the Somme battlefields.

Richard Birch was born in February 1893. He was the only son in a farming family of five children living at Chislet near Canterbury, Kent. He enlisted as a Territorial soldier into the 3/1st Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles (REKMR) in May 1915, aged 22 years and 91 days. He was transferred the following month to 2/1st REKMR who were converted into a cyclist unit in July 1916.

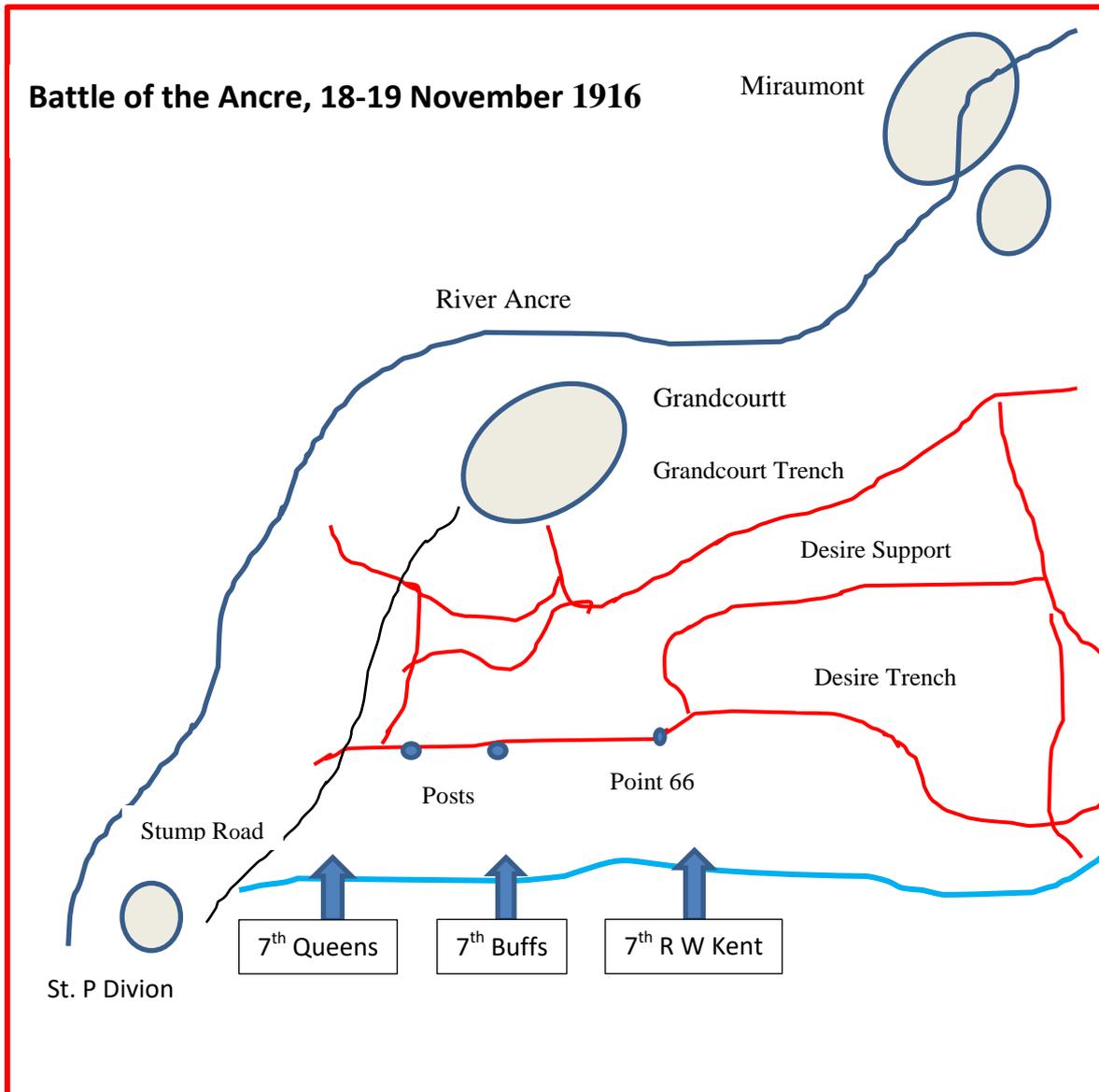
As 2486 Private Richard Thomas Birch embarked for France on 21 September 1916. On arrival at the 38 Infantry Base Depot, Etaples, he was transferred from the Yeomanry to the Territorial infantry with the 4th (Bufs) East Kent Regiment (Territorial Force). While at Etaples he would have received further infantry

training before he was posted to 7th (Buffs) East Kent Regiment on 11 October 1916 and assigned a new service number G/13020.

The Military Service Act of 1916 along with the Army Order & Army Council Instructions 1499 of 1916, now allowed for a Territorial soldier to be transferred without his consent to a unit of the Regular Forces, included in the Corps to which he belongs. Whereas previously a Territorial could only be sent to another Territorial unit, Private Birch was now sent to a Regular 'Service' battalion of Kitchener's Second Army, the 7th Buffs of 55th Infantry Brigade, 18th (Eastern) Division. He joined the battalion according to the War Diary as 'part of a draft of 100 Royal East Kent Yeomanry' on 13 October 1916 at Candas, a village south west of Doullens in the north of the Somme battlefield. The high casualty rate incurred during the first three months of the Battle of the Somme resulted in reserves and units of the Yeomanry being sent to the front in drafts as infantry replacements.

The 18th Division had been in France since 24 July 1915 and had been heavily involved at the Battle of the Somme since 1 July 1916, taking part in the Battles of Albert, Bazentin Ridge, Delville Wood and Thiepval Ridge.

Private Birch joined the 7th Buffs battalion in the field on 13 October 1916. He was to spend only twelve of the next thirty-three days in the front line trenches before being sent into action in the final assault of the Battle of the Somme at the Battle of Ancre Heights on 18 November 1916. The 7th Buffs, as part of the 55th Infantry Brigade, 18th Division were assigned with the task of capturing the German front line at Desire Trench. It was during this assault that Private Birch was reported as missing, presumed killed.



7th Buffs action at the Battle of the Ancre 18/19 November 1916.

The Objective: 55th Infantry Brigade on the morning of 18 November 1916 was to attack and capture that portion of Desire Trench to their immediate front.

During the night of 17/18 November the 7th Buffs were disposed as follows:

‘A’ Company in Regina Trench (British front line).

‘B’ Company in Hessian Trench (British support trench).

‘C’ & ‘D’ Companies moving up from huts at Ovillers

Battalion HQ in Hessian Trench.

By 5.30 am 18 November, the 7th Buffs had taken up their battle positions;

Regina Trench - ‘A’ Company on the right, ‘B’ Company on the left from Sixteen Street.

Hessian Trench – ‘D’ Company.

Zollern Trench – ‘C’ Company.

To the right of the battalion was ‘D’ Company of 7th Royal West Kent Regiment (RWK) and on the left was a company of 7th Queens Regiment. Each company was to attack in two waves each of two platoons.

6.10 am It was very dark and snowing when the British artillery barrage opened on the enemy positions as the infantry began to advance in waves. Some of the shells fell short causing casualties in ‘A’ Company on the right of the 7th Buffs, including both the platoon commander and sergeant.

At 6.10 the enemy artillery retaliated with accurate shelling on Regina Trench where the next wave of troops was waiting to advance. It was particularly heavy around the junction with Sixteen Street Trench, intensifying around 6.45 am. The German artillery was attempting to disrupt or prevent troops following up the initial assault. Enemy rifle fire was particularly effective.

No information was coming back to battalion HQ and the position and progress of the assaulting troops was unknown. At 7.20 am two runners were sent

forward to ascertain what progress had been made, both men were killed by snipers.

By 7.15 am the enemy artillery fire on Regina Trench had slackened but there was increased machine gun and rifle fire from the direction of Point '66', Sixteen Street and Stump road. Nothing could be seen of the assaulting troops from Regina Trench. Wounded men making their way back could provide no useful information. Two more runners were sent forward with instructions to keep to the left of the advance, avoiding Sixteen Street and Point '66'. One man was wounded, the other was killed. Three further men were sent out, only one returned and he could provide no useful information, the other two were never seen again.

In response to instructions from 55th Brigade HQ to establish what progress, if any, had been made a subaltern volunteered to try and get forward. He was shot almost as soon as he had left Regina Trench.

It appeared that enemy snipers had established themselves in shell holes 20 – 30 yards in front of Desire Trench, linked in places by narrow slits and provided with supplies of grenades. In the darkness when the attack started these positions had been missed by the advancing troops. Enemy machine gun and rifle fire was increasing as the light improved. Wounded men who had reached the first objective reported that large numbers of Germans were occupying their front line trench and that firing was heavy.

Two platoons from 7th Queens and 7th Buffs were instructed to move forward and clear the ground between Regina Trench and Desire Trench and to then make contact with the assaulting companies. Meanwhile a company of 7th Royal West Kent were to work their way left (west) along Desire Trench from the positions they had captured earlier that morning.

About 4.15 pm as it was growing dark and misty, two platoons of 'D' Company began to move forward and although they did not draw a great deal of fire, six men were shot by snipers. As the platoons approached Desire Trench they were met by heavy rifle fire and grenades. Attempts were made to establish the identity of the occupants of the trench by shouting that they were looking for companies of the Buffs. Receiving no reply the platoons retired back to Regina Trench. The two platoons suffered thirty percent casualties mainly from rifle fire.

An officer's patrol then attempted to make contact with the left flank of the Buffs and the right of the Queens but were similarly met by heavy fire and forced to withdraw. They were unable to find their way back to Regina Trench until early morning on 19 November. The remainder of the night of 18/19 November passed fairly quietly.

The original objectives of the 7th Buffs were finally achieved at 6.30 pm on 19 November when 'D' Company, who had set off from Hessian Trench at 3.40 pm, eventually reached the left company of 7th Royal West Kent who had worked left (west) along Desire Trench to a position 500 yards west of Point '66'. Patrols were then sent out west along Desire Trench as far as Stump Road and another sent down Grandcourt road but met with no enemy. Two platoons of 'C' Company were hurried forward from Hessian Trench to help garrison Regina Trench.

At 7.0 pm 19 November 55th Infantry Brigade sent instructions that Desire Trench should not be held west of Point '66' by day. However, 7th Buffs were to hold Desire Trench for 200 yards west of Point '66' to cover the flank of that position. The line was adjusted as directed.

Private Richard Thomas Birch was reported missing on 18 November 1916. Without knowing which company he belonged to it is difficult to establish if he was killed during the advance, as a result of enemy shelling or in one of the later operations that day. His body was never recovered. His name is recorded on the Thiepval Memorial as one of the 72,246 missing of the British Army on the Somme who have no known grave.



Thiepval Memorial © Andrew Bailey 2014



Orders of the Day

Peter Denby



Frank Pogson Bethune

Special Orders to No 1 Section, 13th March 1918

- 1. The position will be held, and the Section will remain here until relieved.**
- 2. The enemy cannot be allowed to interfere with the programme.**
- 3. If the Section cannot remain here alive, it will remain here dead, but in any case it will remain here.**
- 4. Should any man, through shell-shock or other cause, attempt to surrender, he will remain here dead.**
- 5. Should all guns be blown out, the Section will use Mills grenades and other novelties.**
- 6. Finally, the position as stated will be held.**

F.P. Bethune, Lt. O/c No 1 Section.

“It is a good thing”, Sir Winston Churchill wrote in his book *My Early Life* (1930), “for an uneducated man to read books of quotations”. With Sir Winston’s advice in mind, a few years ago at Christmas my wife bought me the *Collins Dictionary of Quotations*, and soon into the book I came across the above Special Orders.

Frank Pogson Bethune (1877-1942), soldier, clergyman and farmer was born near Hamilton, Tasmania on the family estate to Walter Ross Munro Bethune, a stock holder, and his wife Louisa (nee Pogson). Educated at a school in Hobart, after spending time farming he came to England to read theology at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He was a keen boxer, and was rusticated for a term for burning college fences on ‘Mafeking night’ (no, I didn’t know what ‘rusticated’ meant either – it means suspension of a student from university). Nevertheless he graduated with a first class honours (BA 1905, MA 1908).

Frank married in 1907, was ordained a minister of the Church of England in 1908, and was curate at St John the Baptist Anglican Church in Hobart.

In World War 1 he became a fighting padre, enlisting as a private in the AIF 1915 and was commissioned as second lieutenant of the 12th Battalion in December.

Although not an official army padre, on 2nd April 1916 he conducted a memorable service, widely reported in the Australian press, on the troopship *Transylvania* whilst on the way to France:

“... We know we are not heroes and we do not want to be called heroes... we are on that great enterprise and with no thought of gain or conquest, but to help to right a great wrong... With our dear ones behind

and God above, and our friends on each side and only the enemy in front
- what more do we wish than that?"

By the war's end he had risen to captain; had won the MC for bravery in 1917 and had been wounded twice and gassed.

In March 1918, as lieutenant commanding No 1 Section, 3rd Machine Gun Company of the 12th Battalion, he was ordered to defend an exposed position on the Ypres Salient which he considered untenable - "a useless deathtrap". Bethune complained to his superior officer and asked to be allowed to choose a better position, but his request was denied, so instead he demanded that he should be allowed to justify his opinion by holding the post himself. After telling his men what he thought of the place and the circumstances, he asked for volunteers and the whole of his section stepped forward; he selected six of them to accompany him.

In the event he was redirected to a more favourable defensive position but Bethune and his men were still dangerously exposed, prompting him to issue the above Special Orders, which were later described by *The Times* as "inspiring and famous". (Given that his men had all volunteered to accompany him, I do wonder if he issued the orders more to make a point, than for the encouragement his men.)

The Section did survive until relieved after 18 days, and his orders passed into military history. They were circulated throughout the allied armies in France and embodied in British Army Orders until 1940. After Dunkirk they were reproduced as posters and displayed throughout England under the caption 'The spirit which won the last war'.

Frank returned to Tasmania in 1919 and farmed until 1936, also assisting in the Hamilton parish. He died in Hobart in December 1942. His elder son Walter Angus became a Tasmanian premier.

Sources: Peter Chapman, Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 7 (1979)
C E W Bean, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume 3, Australian War Memorial (1936)
Obituaries in The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW), 5th December 1942; Examiner (Launceston), 7th December 1942



The 11th Tale



BRIGADIER GENERAL REGINALD JOHN KENTISH

(RJK)

“JUST A PIECE OF PORK”

Terry Dean

In November 2013's Despatch I first told of my visit to the Imperial War

Museum to view the papers of RJK and my discovery of stories (tales) he had drafted around 1940. They described amusing incidents he experienced in WW1 and this is his 11th Tale, Tales 1 to 10 having being included in earlier editions of Despatch.

SCENE: TIME: PLACE: Twelve noon on a June morning in 1915; the back areas of the ‘Ypres Salient’: the 11th Infantry Brigade 4th Division drawn up in three sides of a square waiting for the Commander-in-Chief’s inspection.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE: The Commander-in-Chief, General Sir John (afterwards Field Marshal, the Earl of Ypres) French; Lieut. Colonel the Hon. Charles Palk (pronounced Pork) Commanding the 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment but in the absence on leave of the Brigadier, temporarily in command of the Brigade, myself temporarily commanding the 1st Battalion The East Lancashire Regiment ---- and one of my Orderly Room clerks.

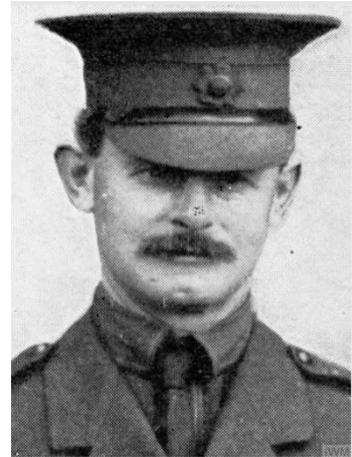
In June 1915 I was commanding the 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment, having been sent across from my own Battalion a week or two previously to take command during the second Battle of Ypres, after they had lost nearly all their Officers.

At the time of the incident I am about to relate, the second Battle of Ypres had been fought to a finish, and in spite of the terrific – and no other word can describe it – effort the Germans had made to batter their way through to the town, and on to the Channel Ports, at the end of the battle, The Union Jack still flew triumphant over its ramparts, and it was to pay tribute to the gallantry of the regiments of the old British Regular Army which had borne the entire brunt of the German attacks that Sir John French, then Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in France and Flanders, was paying a visit to each Brigade in

order to convey to both Officers and men the personal thanks of His Majesty the King.

We had been informed that the C. in C. would arrive at 12 noon and the 11th Infantry Brigade, consisting of the 1st Somerset Light Infantry, the 1st Hampshire Regiment, the 2nd East Lancashire Regiment and the 2nd Rifle Brigade was drawn up in three sides of a square awaiting Sir John French's arrival.

It happened that on this occasion the Brigade Commander General C. B. Prowse, had gone on a week's leave to England and the Brigade was temporarily under the command of **Lieut. Colonel the Hon. Charles Palk** of the Hampshire Regiment.



Now the Hon. Charles Palk or plain "Charles Palk" as he was known throughout the Army, was a very gallant officer, but he was also a very eccentric individual, and one of his eccentricities showed itself in the violent dislikes he took for certain people, and for some reason or another, which I was never able to find out, he had formed a very violent dislike for the East Lancashire Regiment and so great was his dislike of the Regiment that no matter what their officers and men did, either collectively or individually, it was all the same to Charles Palk, for with him they just never did or could do the right thing.

To make matters worse, he would persist in always referring to them, whether on or off parade either as "The Lancs" or the East Lancs", and more often than not the "b----y East Lancs", knowing, as he did, that they disliked being called the "East Lancs" just as much as Charles Palk disliked his regiment being called "the Hants"!

And so it came about that on this auspicious occasion, Lieut. Colonel the Hon. Charles Palk found himself in command of the 11th Infantry Brigade, and there he was seated on his white charger, and looking very pompous waiting for the

C. in C.

Soon after Sir John arrived, and after receiving the salute, he apparently told Colonel Palk to close the men in a bit, so that they could hear what he was going to say to them, for Palk turning and facing the Brigade, gave the following command:-

“First Battalion, the Hampshire Regiment and First ‘East Lancs’ ----Six Paces - ---Inward Close ---- March!”, on which the two Battalions closed in, and the two flank Battalions having been closed in, Sir John addressed the Brigade, congratulating both Officers and men in the King’s name for their great gallantry and giving them His Majesty’s personal thanks and also his own, after which he shook hands with each officer, said a word or two to each Commanding Officer, and then the Battalions marched off independently to their billets.

Later in the day, I had occasion to send a note to Charles Palk and having written it, I told my Orderly Room clerk to put it into an envelope, address it to Colonel Palk and send it across to Brigade Headquarters, which were in the same village. Half an hour or so later, a Brigade orderly brought me a sealed envelope, which was marked “Personal and confidential”. I opened it, and inside I found a letter from Palk, which to the best of my recollection read as follows:-

Headquarters,
11th Inf. Bde
5.6.15.

“Dear Kentish,

Don’t you think it is about time that your ----- ‘Lancs’ knew how to spell my name. I might be just a ‘piece of pork’ for all the man who addressed the envelope cares! Also will you please tell him there is no such Regiment in the British Army as the 1st Hants, but there is a 1st Battalion, The Hampshire

Regiment.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) Charles Palk

With the letter was enclosed the envelope, which I had told my clerk to address and send to him and this is how he had addressed it:-

‘Lieutenant Colonel the Honble. Charles Pork’ (!!!)

Comdg. The ‘1st Hants’ (!!)

The notes of exclamation are mine!

To this I replied:-

‘Headquarters,
1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment
5.6.15.

Dear Palk,

I’m awfully sorry that my clerk to whom I gave the envelope to address, has made such a gross mistake in the spelling of your name, and I am taking steps to see that neither he nor any man of my Battalion makes the same mistake again.

I’m also taking steps to see that your Regiment is addressed correctly in the future.

But, Charles Palk, my friend, I rather think there’s more in this than meets the eye! You see, my officers and N.C.O’s and men all dislike being called ‘The East Lancs’ and more often than not ‘The b----y East Lancs just as much as you dislike being called ----- and quite rightly too - ---- the ‘Hants’, and this being the case I can’t help thinking that one or two of them have been putting their heads together and that the misspelling of your name and the incorrect addressing of your Regiment,

is their own naive way of getting their own back!!

I may be wrong, but I honestly think that this is at the bottom of it and therefore the remedy really lies in your own hands.

Yours ever,

(Sd.) Reggie Kentish'

This is the gist of the letter I wrote him in reply, but I am afraid it had little effect, and he continued to show his dislike for the Regiment as long as I was in Command, which I thought was a great pity, for a finer Battalion, then the 1st Battalion, which I had the great honour and privilege in commanding for all too short a time, or a more gallant lot of officers and men, I never wish to meet. A year later, after I had left the Brigade, Charles Palk was killed very gallantly leading his Regiment on the first day of the Battle of the Somme along with two other Commanding Officers of the Brigade, and also the Brigadier (Brigadier General C. F. Prowse) than whom no more gallant officer ever lived.



Brigadier General C. F. Prowse



Barnard Castle War Memorial: Margaret Smith

Peter Denby

In one of his books Bill Bryson makes the point that most people in England have access to more museums and galleries within a day-trip radius of their home than are available in the whole of some countries, Australia included. Taking this as inspiration, as far as I'm concerned if I can comfortably arrive at a museum before its café stops serving breakfast; it counts as 'do-able' in a day. Looking at my road map I decided that the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, County Durham, met this requirement.

I had heard that this museum was worth a visit, and browsing its website one day in October 2018 I saw that a temporary exhibition about Barnard Castle in WW1 - 'To Serve King and Country' - was running, and so it was that I decided on a visit (this of course was well before Barnard Castle made the news on account of the 'Cummings and goings' of the prime minister's special advisor during the recent lock-down).

Barnard Castle is not a big town: with a population of less than 6,000 it is just a bit bigger than, say, Garstang. So I was expecting the Bowes Museum to be housed in a building perhaps like the Judges' Lodgings Museum in Lancaster, and I was surprised, when my satnav took me in through its main gates, to be confronted with a magnificent French chateau (see picture).



How this small town came to have such a splendid museum is another story;

suffice to say it needs more than one visit to do it justice. Perhaps its most treasured exhibit is the Silver Swan, a working automaton made in 1773 which is set in motion once a day to an assembled crowd. Its curator takes great delight in pointing out to any Americans in the audience that the swan is older than their country!

I enjoyed looking round the WW1 exhibition, which prompted me to take a



walk in the museum's grounds in which two war memorials are located. One is to the Durham Light Infantry, and the other is the town's main war memorial (see picture). It is the latter which, even by the standards of the Great War, tells a particularly tragic story: that of Margaret Smith who lost five of her

six sons in the war, and who are named on this memorial (I wonder, is this the unenviable record for one mother's loss in the War?).

Mill worker Margaret's eldest son, John Stout, had been born out of wedlock. Margaret subsequently married John Smith, a chimney sweep, and had ten more children – five more boys (George, Robert, Alfred, Frederick, and Wilfred) and four girls.

All six of her boys fought on the Western Front. Robert was the first to be killed, in September 1916; George was next, killed in November 1916; then Frederick was killed on the opening day of Third Ypres, 31st July 1917; John was killed in October 1917; and lastly Alfred, who died of wounds in July 1918.

After Alfred's death in a military hospital at Wimereux, Margaret was fearful of losing her youngest and last son Wilfred. Margaret was by now well known to Mary Bircham, the wife of the local vicar, and it was Mrs Bircham who took it upon herself to write to Queen Mary at Buckingham Palace to tell her of the plight of the "heavily bereaved" family and asking for help. Her Majesty quickly gave orders to the War Office that Private Smith should be found and returned home. Wilfred was duly returned home to Barnard Castle, where he became a chimney sweep like his father.

After the war Wilfred went on to have five children with his wife Hannah and, soon after my Barnard Castle visit, I was interested to read an article in *The Sun* newspaper on November 5th 2018, which said that 35 of his descendants - four generations ranging in age from 74 (Wilfred's daughter, Dianne) to two - were planning to meet at the Barnard Castle war memorial for the forthcoming 2018 centenary Remembrance Sunday service. What a poignant occasion that must have been.

Another of the town's war memorials (there are nine in total), with accompanying Roll of Honour board, can be seen in St Mary's Parish Church, which is also well worth visiting; the historic colours of the 4th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry, whose barracks were beside the Bowes Museum until its disbandment in 1919, hang in the church. A commemorative booklet is available in the church which gives short biographies of all the men, including the five brothers, who are named on the Roll of Honour.



Geddes' Detachment at the Second Battle of Ypres

Geddes' Detachment was a composite brigade made up initially of four battalions from 28th Division; 2nd Buffs, 1st York & Lancaster, 1/5th King's Own Royal Lancaster and 3rd Middlesex. The detachment was quickly organised to move forward in an attempt to fill the gap in the Allied line caused by the French withdrawal following the German's first attack using poison gas on 22 April 1915.

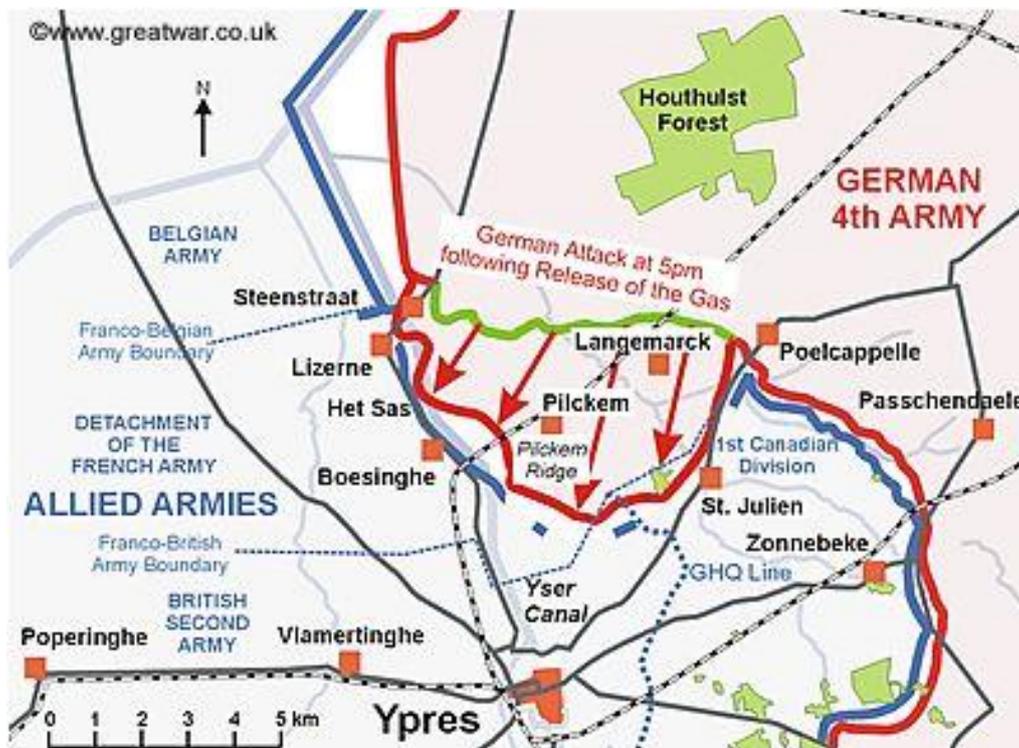


Colonel Augustus David Geddes

Colonel Geddes was the Commanding Officer of 2nd East Kent Regiment (The Buffs). Born at Dover in June 1866, he attended Cheltenham College and Sandhurst before being gazetted to the 2nd Buffs in February 1887. He was promoted to Lieutenant in November 1889, Captain in October 1895 and served as Adjutant from February 1898 to April 1900. Geddes served in the South African War and was seriously wounded at Klip Drift in February 1900. This was followed by appointment as Staff Officer to the Base Commandant from April 1900 to January 1902 and promoted to Major in April 1903. Returning to England he was assigned as Staff Captain in the War Office Intelligence

Department between January 1904 and January 1908. During this time he qualified as a Russian interpreter. Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in February 1911 he arrived in France with the 2nd Buffs on 17 January 1915 and made full Colonel on 7 February 1915.

The Second Battle of Ypres.



During the night of 20 April 1915, all troops of the 28th Division billeted in the town of Ypres were ordered out to previously arranged bivouac positions around St. Jean, 2 Kilometres northeast of Ypres in order to escape the increased shelling of the town.

The 22 April had been rather quiet in the trenches although the Frezenberg ridge and the area around Zonnebeke had been continually shelled. There an

attempted attack on the trenches north east of Zonnebeke had been easily stopped. The weather conditions had been good and the ground was hard and dry. The wind was blowing straight from the north.

During the morning the town and roads leading into Ypres were heavily shelled, this eventually ceased during the afternoon but recommenced around 5.00 pm. The villages in front of Ypres, which until now had remained untouched, were also heavily shelled. Sustained artillery fire was heard coming from the French positions to the north. This was the opening of the German gas attack on the French lines near Langemarck, north of Ypres. The gas moved downwind from the north accompanied by heavy and prolonged rifle fire. In the British lines it was soon apparent that something was wrong as small arms fire could be heard within 1,000 yards of St. Jean and bullets were hitting the village.

The German gas attack on the French lines extending from Poelcappelle to the north east of Ypres to Steenstraat in the north west produced a gap in the allied line approximately four miles wide. For many hours there were no substantial forces between the advancing Germans and the town of Ypres. The 1st Canadian Division holding the left flank of the British line was able to form a defensive flank, denying the Germans the opportunity of rolling up the whole of the British left flank. It was now imperative to establish a line between the Canadian left and the French right flank.

Local reserves from the 27th and 28th Divisions were immediately put on alert and all trench reliefs cancelled. The 3rd Middlesex located at St. Jean were due to relieve the 2nd East Surrey in trenches at the point of the Salient but under the initiative of their commanding officer, Colonel Stephenson, they had moved forward around 6.45 pm to dig a line of trenches facing north and northeast about three hundred yards north of St. Jean. At the same time Colonel Geddes

of 2nd Buffs moved his battalion to the right of the 3rd Middlesex, astride the Ypres-Poelcappelle road. The 1/5th King's Own Royal Lancaster remained in reserve south of St. Jean.

The Canadians by this time had extended to their left in an attempt to make contact with the few remaining French forces east of the Yser canal. Patrols were sent out from St. Jean to establish the extent of the gap in the French front. At 8.30 pm contact was made with the 2nd Canadian Brigade on the right of the gap,

By 9.30 pm it was confirmed that a gap existed from the left of the Canadian division to the bridge over the Yser canal at Brielen, a straight line distance of four and a half miles. On the right of the Poelcappelle road a short flank had been formed by 3rd Canadian Brigade with remnants of the French 1/1st Tirailleurs. The Canadians and elements of the remaining French troops also occupied trenches covering St. Julien and Mouse Trap farm. Three large gaps now existed of 2,000, 1,000 and 3,000 yards, with only a single French machine gun post at Fusilier Farm just west of the Pilckem road, roughly level with Turco Farm below Mauser ridge. With no trenches or barbed wire this gap exposed the backs of the troops of the 27th and 28th Divisions holding the apex of the Ypres Salient only four miles away.

The 3rd Middlesex then received orders to send two companies to guard the pontoon bridges on the Yser canal. The remaining two companies extended their line left until they were in touch with the canal bank. A distance of approximately two kilometres. Around this time the 3rd Canadian Brigade at St. Julien made a request for assistance, Colonel Geddes ordered a company of the 2nd Buffs to support the Canadians at St. Julien.

At 12.30 am on the 23 April all troops in the St. Jean area were put at the disposal of General Alderson of the 1st Canadian Division, who then placed them under the command of the most senior officer present, Colonel Geddes of the 2nd Buffs. The four battalions in the immediate area; 2nd Buffs, 1st York & Lancaster, 1/5th King's Own Royal Lancaster and 3rd Middlesex now formed 'Geddes' Detachment'. Colonel Geddes was ordered to deploy his troops in positions north of the Ypres-Poelcappelle road. By 1.00 am it was reported to be 'all quiet' along the exposed front and Officer's patrols to the north of St. Jean reported no sign of the enemy.

Colonel Geddes had been assigned a single Staff officer, Captain H M M Crichton, who had just reported to 28th Divisional HQ as Brigade Major to 84th Infantry Brigade. He arrived at Colonel Geddes' HQ at 1.30 am, followed by a platoon of the Divisional Cyclist Company and a signals section. This was to be Colonel Geddes' entire staff for a force the size of a brigade.

General Alderson instructed Colonel Geddes at 1.50 am to close the gap in the line by linking up on the right with the Canadians while extending his left to make contact with the French on the left and then to drive back any enemy that may have penetrated through the gaps. If this was not possible he was to dig-in and hold the line.

At 3.30 am Colonel Geddes ordered the remaining companies of 2nd Buffs to move through Wieltje and advance in a northerly direction and gain touch with the left flank of the 3rd Canadian Brigade. It was after 4.00 am and in broad daylight when the battalion was collected and moved off. About 800 yards north of Wieltje they came across trenches occupied by Canadians and a few French Colonial troops. Beyond the trenches was open country and as 2nd Buffs deployed to advance it immediately came under machine gun and rifle fire from

the enemy entrenched in two parallel lines on a rising slope 900 and 1,200 yards to the north. Platoons moved forward at the double but in the open many casualties occurred before they eventually reached a farm four hundred yards ahead of them. From here they could see an area of open ground to the east on which there were three parallel lines of trenches facing north with their right resting on the British General Headquarters Line (GHQ line). The 2nd Buffs now advanced half right and occupied the forward of these trenches. In crossing the open ground the battalion lost heavily but managed to get two companies into the front trench and another company in a trench facing east along the GHQ line. For the rest of the day the 2nd Buffs were subjected to heavy shelling and rifle fire. By 7.0 pm the few remaining French colonial troops in these trenches had withdrawn and the battalion now filled the gaps between the Canadian companies.

Two companies of the 1/5th King's Own Royal Lancaster were ordered forward from St. Jean to advance up the centre along the line of the Pilckem road to connect up between the 3rd Middlesex and the 2nd Buffs. They were joined by the remaining two companies about a mile north of St. Jean and dug-in near the cross roads between La Belle Alliance Farm and Hill Top Farm.

At the same time the 3rd Middlesex, less the two companies sent to secure the pontoon bridges moved about 1000 yards north west of St. Jean and extended left to established a line to the bank of the Yser canal with orders to make contact with the right flank of the French. Once completed they were then to deploy to their right and gain touch with 2nd Buffs. As the light improved the advancing 3rd Middlesex came across troops of 4th Battalion, 1st Canadian Brigade on the east of the Pilckem road. An advance guard was then detailed to establish if the enemy were holding Mauser ridge in front of them. They came under fire as soon as they moved forward. The 3rd Middlesex now extended to

the right of the troops of the Canadian troops and made contact with the 1/5th King's Own Royal Lancaster but they could make no contact with the French positions to the left or the 2nd Buffs who were to the right of the newly formed line.

Owing to a mistake by a signaller the 1/5th King's Own Royal Lancaster received and acted on a message intended for 1st York & Lancs to move across to near Wieltje, thus leaving a gap in the middle of the line with the right flank of the 3rd Middlesex in the air. The enemy however, made no attempt to take advantage of this. The error being realised, 1/5th King's Own Royal Lancaster were ordered to return to their correct position at the centre and regardless of heavy shellfire, they moved back again with such skill that their casualties were only light. Orders were issued to all units to dig themselves in and maintain the line they had gained.

General Smith-Dorrien, Commander of Second Army and General Plumer, General Officer Commanding V Corps, agreed that if an attack was to be made to recover the lost ground, it should take place as soon as possible as the French appeared to be doing little and the Germans were making use of the inactivity to strengthen their positions.

The 4th Battalion, 1st Canadian Brigade and the 3rd Middlesex were ordered to attack in conjunction with a French counterattack from the Yser canal towards Pilckem at 5.25 am 23 April. With no artillery available to the French attackers, they were unable to proceed with the attack. The Canadians and 3rd Middlesex were not advised of the cancellation and advanced at 5.25 am towards Mauser ridge reaching Turco farm, three hundred yards in front of the German lines, before being forced to withdraw under heavy rifle fire, finally digging in six hundred yards from the enemy positions at 9.0 am. The Canadians and 3rd

Middlesex remained in this position being shelled and exposed to tear gas all day. Colonel Geddes took the opportunity to move his HQ to Wieltje whilst these movements were in progress.

At 2.40 pm 23 April, St. George's day, Orders were issued by Second Army for an attack at 3.0 pm along a line extending from Kitchener's Wood to the Yser canal, directed towards Pilckem. The French 45th and 87th Divisions were to advance on the left of the Ypres-Pilckem road with the British forces to the right of the road. However, in order to allow the 13th Brigade, from Army Reserve II Corps, who had been travelling on foot all night from Vlamertinghe, to reach its start position between the Yser canal and the Pilckem road, the attack was later postponed until 4.15 pm.

Unfortunately the artillery was not informed of the postponement and commenced the preliminary bombardment at 2.45 pm. With ammunition in short supply there was to be no further preliminary fire, but some artillery support did resume when the advance began about 4.15 pm. The objective of the attack was Pilckem, 3,000 yards north of the line. The 1/5th King's Own Royal Lancaster followed the two regular battalions; 2nd East Yorkshire and the 1st York and Lancaster. There was about a mile of open ground sloping down from Hill Top farm then gently rising up to the enemy positions on Mauser ridge. It was a brilliantly clear afternoon making every man distinctly visible to the hidden Germans. German artillery soon brought effective fire down on the advancing troops causing casualties from the outset. As the 1/5th King's Own Royal Lancaster came into line with the leading troops a gap developed in ahead between the 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and the 2nd East Yorks, drawing the 1/5th King's Own Royal Lancaster into the front line. The leading elements of the attack began to lose direction and enfilading fire was causing problems. A few elements of the attacking troops reached farm

buildings in front of the main enemy positions. The Germans had excellent fields of fire which ensured that most British troops were stopped two to three hundred yards away. The lack of artillery support compounded the problems and eventually there were too few men left to rush the enemy line. A halt was finally called and men sought whatever cover they could find. The main attacking force had by now been reduced to a jumble of men with few officers and as it was uncertain which part of the line was to be attacked, it was decided to remain where they were until dusk.

As darkness fell battalions were instructed to hold their present positions which were to be strengthened to form a support line along Hill Top Ridge. The surviving troops of Geddes' Detachment remained there under constant shellfire for the next two days. The men sustaining themselves with food and ammunition from the dead Canadian and British troops

The advance of Colonel Geddes' Detachment and the 1st Canadian Brigade had produced a practically continuous line from south of Kitchener's Wood to Hampshire Farm and then west along the forward edge of the depression in front of Mauser Ridge (to be known later as Colne Valley) via Turco Farm to within 1,200 yards of the Yser canal.

The night of 23-24 April passed fairly quietly. During the afternoon of 24 April Geddes' Detachment was advised it would be relieved by 10th Infantry Brigade but this order was later cancelled and all units along the front warned to maintain their positions at all costs. The shelling continued throughout the evening and into the night but casualties were light and no real attack developed against the line held by Geddes' Detachment.

On Sunday 25 April about 2.30 am a message was received that 10th Brigade was to attack St. Julien and Kitchener's Wood at 4.30 am and Geddes'

Detachment were to be ready to support and cooperate in exploiting any success. More heavy guns had been brought up and the attack was preceded by a heavy artillery bombardment. However, the attack proved unsuccessful and Geddes' Detachment was not called upon for assistance.

The remainder of the day was quiet although there was heavy shelling of St. Jean. Orders were received at 7.30 pm that 13th Brigade was to relieve Geddes' Detachment in the trenches. On Monday 26 April, The 1/5th King's Own Royal Lancaster, 1st York & Lancs, 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and 9th Royal Scots proceeded to 27th Division Headquarters at Potijze. Now released from Geddes' Detachment they were to act as a reserve to a new brigade formed under Colonel Newcombe of the 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. Within six hours of arrival they received orders to stand-to, where they remained ready to move at a moment's notice throughout the day.

Reconnaissance on 26 April showed that the Germans had consolidated their new positions; and while British reinforcements on the ground were adequate to hold the enemy against any further advance, the time for immediate local counter-attacks had passed. Only a carefully planned attack involving days of preparation, would now have any chance of success. Colonel Geddes and his Staff officer reported to General Hull of 10th Infantry Brigade under whose orders the detachment had now been placed.

On 27 April Colonel Geddes to move his HQ to 10th Infantry Brigade Headquarters as Colonel Geddes was acting for General Hull during his absence. About 7.0 pm orders were received transferring Colonel Geddes' Detachment from 10th Infantry Brigade to 27th Division, as Corps reserve. Colonel Geddes and his Staff officer duly reported to the HQ of 27th Division. At 10.0 pm fresh orders were received that the remaining units of Colonel

Geddes' Detachment on receipt of further orders were to return to their own formations. The orders arrived between 4.0 – 5.0am following morning of 28 April and it was while these orders were being confirmed that a shell landed on Colonel Geddes HQ killing Colonel Geddes and wounded his Staff officer.

For five days Colonel Geddes and his staff officer Captain Crichton organised a brigade sized force of infantry battalions with limited artillery and with only a platoon of cyclists and a signal section to communicate orders, they managed to close the gap in the Allied line and although counterattacks failed, they forced the enemy to hold their advance. Colonel Geddes was mentioned in Field Marshal Sir John French's dispatches of 31 May 1915.

The hasty and inevitably ill-organised counter-attacks resulted in high numbers of casualties in the battalions of Geddes' Detachment. The British attempts to carry out their obligations by means of offensive action were in the words of the *Official History*, neither true counter-attacks nor deliberately planned attacks backed by sound preparations. The immediate actions of the Canadians and Geddes' Detachment did however, cause the enemy to pause and place more reliance on his artillery. The Germans made a number of errors in exploiting their attack on 22 April using gas. They attacked late in the afternoon with insufficient troops in reserve to exploit the successful use of gas. They also lacked flexibility, having reached their objective to capture Langemark and Pilckem ridge they dug in. The opportunity to advance on Ypres and ultimately the channel ports had by then passed.



AGNES MARY (MOLLY) FLETCHER

Terry Dean

In his WW1 Medal Article for the November 2013 Despatch Bill Myers wrote about the 1914-15 Star, one recipient being the above who was a volunteer nurse from Grange-over-Sands. Her trio of medals, plus an oak leaf clasp for being mentioned in despatches had sold on an internet auction that summer for £620.

What Bill did not know was that Molly and I were brought up in same colliery village of Howe Bridge near Atherton in old south Lancashire. At our December 2013 meeting I told Molly's story and how the Fletcher family had founded the village, church, school and other local facilities as the Fletcher's pits prospered. Molly was born in 1885 and after education at Cheltenham Ladies College she lived at Ambleside then Grange-over-Sands before enrolling in the Westmorland Voluntary Aid Detachment in 1912.

I then outlined her postings in France at Le Treport from June 1915 to November 1916 followed by 12 months at Wimereux. She then went to No 11 General Hospital at Genoa, Italy and after 2 months worked for a year at the Isolation Hospital a few miles out in the country. In February 1919 she was at a military hospital at Weymouth and was demobilized in May 1919.

From 1922, after the death of her sister-in-law, she lived with her brother in Atherton and held numerous positions with local organisations. She died in February 1971.

I mentioned to the meeting in December 2013 and subsequently to descendants of the Fletcher family that I was disappointed in not being able to locate a photograph of Molly in her VAD uniform. Consequently last April, during the lockdown period, I was delighted



to receive an email from Edward Green, a Fletcher descendant, drawing my attention to page 84 in the Charterhouse Wartime Scrapbook, a record of cuttings and photographs kept by Frank Fletcher, the wartime headmaster of Charterhouse and Molly's brother.

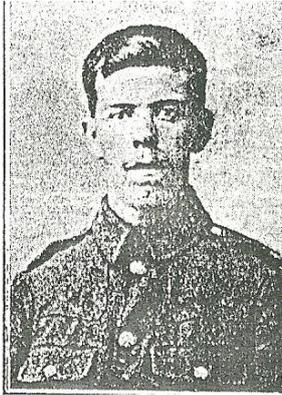
Page 84 contains three unlabelled photographs which Edward believes was used for family photos that Frank received from his siblings abroad. The uniformed ambulance driver in the bottom photo is Bernard Fletcher. Whilst the face of the officer in the top photo is obscured it is labelled 'Elderly Warrior in Egypt', which is consistent with it being either Ernest Fletcher or Clement Fletcher, two other brothers who served in Egypt (and were older than the average soldier). With regard to the photo in the middle of a young woman in VAD uniform he believes this to be Molly. I told him that whilst Branch members would be pleased to see Molly's photo they would probably be more interested in the scrapbook.



Mates in War

Continuing with the stories of soldiers and their mates during the Great War, it was not unusual for men of close knit communities, workmates or sportsmen to join the local Territorial unit at the Drill Hall. These were the men who formed the backbone of the Territorial Force. They knew each other, their NCO's and officers which helped engender an *esprit de corps* long before they were mobilised.

Two such young men, Joseph Dalton and John ‘Jack’ Johnson, belonged to ‘D’ Company (Fleetwood and Thornton) of the 5th King’s Own Royal Lancaster regiment (5th KORL). Prior to mobilisation they were both employed at the United Alkali Works at Thornton, later to become part of the ICI group.



Private Joseph Dalton



Private Jack Johnson

Following mobilisation the 5th KORL assembled at Lancaster and following a period of guard duties at the shipyards and railways at Barrow they were sent on 14 August 1914 to Didcot in Oxfordshire where, instead of commencing their six months of continuous war training as set out for the role of the Territorial units, they were assigned to guarding the railway between Swindon and Reading. Finally on 14 November 1914 after losing three valuable months, the battalion moved to join the West Lancashire Division concentrated at Sevenoaks, Kent to begin their war training.

Under a large article in the Fleetwood Chronicle & Fylde Advertiser 30 October 1914, entitled “Incidents of the war illustrated” there are two photographs; the first; ‘Happy Fleetwood boys at Swindon’ shows a group of nine men from ‘H’ Company 5th King’s Own Royal Lancaster who have been guarding a railway bridge outside Swindon. They include Privates J Crahan and J Dalton. The second photograph titled ‘Fleetwood boys boxing competition’ shows a posed

group of shirt-sleeved boxers and their seconds including “the boxing promoter, Job Dalton”.

In spite of the shortage of time and facilities the 5th KORL worked hard and achieved a level of military efficiency that allowed them to be the first battalion in the West Lancashire Division to be sent to France on 14 February 1915. The first six weeks in France were spent receiving instruction from regular battalions in trench warfare and continuing their training. By April 1915 they were on front line trench duties in front of Messines ridge at Wulverghem, south of Ypres.. Joe and Jack were among two hundred of the original battalion, who survived the Second Battle of Ypres during April and May 1915.

The 5th KORL returned to the trenches on the night of 22 May 1915 at Sanctuary Wood. They had barely established themselves when the Germans attacked the positions on the left of the line with gas. The whole battalion front was heavily shelled from 2.30 am until 3.00 pm on 24 May. The battalion was relieved on 25 May and moved back into the support area of the General Headquarters Line, a string of fortified positions. It was here under constant shelling that they were employed in repairing trenches and defences. Casualties were generally light, but on 2 June the line was heavily shelled, one shell landing directly on a dugout killing four men and wounding four others. Among those killed by this one shell were Joseph Dalton and his comrade from Thornton, Jack Johnson.

Jack Johnson’s brother Richard, also serving in the same company, was told of his brother’s death and it fell to him to pass on the sad news to their mother back in Thornton.

“Dear Mother, - I now write to break to you the sad news of my dear brother Jack’s death. He was killed in action on Wednesday, June 2nd. It happened about four o’clock in the afternoon. We were being relieved after having been in the trenches for eleven days. We were in dug-outs in support trenches, and they were shelling us very

heavily all afternoon when a shell fell and buried about 20 men. There were three killed- my brother, Joe Dalton and another lad from Fleetwood – but you must not worry, mother, because, he died without suffering any pain. They asked me if I would like to see him but I could not. I was too full. I was proper done up, but this blow has finished me. I went up with him to the trenches, but there was a vacant place coming out. Jack Rdyead gave me his letters out of his pockets and said “Dick, your Jack has been killed”. He was buried very nice, with a cross on his grave. I want you to do me a favour. Ask the ‘Chronicle’ to put our photos side by side, and let them know that “D” Company has lost a good little lad, and that all the chaps from his Company express their deepest sympathy with you at home.”

Fleetwood Chronicle & Fylde Advertiser 8th June 1915

The photographs of Richard and Jack Johnson duly appeared in the next issue of the ‘Chronicle’ on 15th June 1915. The death of Joseph Dalton was reported somewhat differently.

Mrs Dalton who resides at 1 Ash Street Fleetwood has received information that her husband Pte. Joe Dalton of the 5th King’s Own was killed in France on 2nd June; it is stated, by the bursting of a shell, which he was assisting to lift. Pte. Dalton was an old Territorial and joined the Battalion when forces were mobilised. He was formerly a Labourer at the Chemical Works; he leaves a widow but no family.

Fleetwood Chronicle & Fylde Advertiser 8th June 1915 p8

To correct the published erroneous account of how Private Dalton was killed.

Company Sergeant Major Jack Rydeard wrote to clarify the sad event.

Company –Sergt Major J Rydeard, “D” Company 1/5 Kings Own Royal Lancaster Regt. (T.F), writing to a Burn Naze friend, from France, says; “many thanks for your very welcome letter and parcel, which I received today (11th inst). I have just issued the contents out to the boys of the village. We are still out of the trenches, but we are expecting to move either to the trenches or further back before long. I have just read an account of J Johnson’s death in the Fleetwood Chronicle, and I see that it says I have written to say that Jack was killed by a shell which he was lifting. This is a mistake in the printing. I wrote and said he was killed by a shell hitting the dug-out in which he; along with his comrades were living. We are all in the pink out here, and are hoping to be back before so very long. Let us hope that it will be so. I will close now with our sincere thanks to all at home who are so thoughtful for us. You can put your trust in the boys out here to give the Huns a good stiff dose whenever they are in need of it. P.S. – Give my best respects to J Dempsey, L Hamilton and J Mitchell, and tell them we hope to see them again, but not out here.”

Fleetwood Chronicle & Fylde Advertiser 18th June 1915

The two Territorial soldiers, Joseph Dalton and Jack Johnson trained, fought and died together. They are still together, buried in adjoining graves in Perth Cemetery (China Wall), Ypres, Belgium.



Printing Despatch as a Booklet.

Terry Dean

Following receipt of last May's issue of Despatch as an online PDF I mentioned to Tom, our "new" editor that I also printed a copy as a booklet (as per the Despatch that I produced) which I could then more conveniently carry and read/browse. Subsequently Tom asked me to put together a brief note on how members who prefer to read the printed page can also print Despatch in booklet form.

What follows is my explanation on how to convert Tom's online PDF with A4 size pages into a printed booklet which shrinks the pages to A5 size. I found the reduced size of the typed text to still be readable but not the text on the reduced images.

Print Instructions for online PDF:

1. Download Despatch to your computer.
2. Open with Adobe Acrobat.
3. Click "File" then "Print".
4. Click Page Scaling "None" and select "Booklet Printing".
5. Click Booklet Subset and select "Both sides" ensuring your printer is loaded with enough sheets (Number of pages to be printed divided by 4)
6. Click OK
7. Check printed sheets are in correct order, mark fold line, insert staples ("long reach" stapler desirable, but not essential) then fold to produce booklet.

The alternative to producing a booklet (if you prefer to read the printed page) is to simply download and print Despatch at A4 size, back to back.

Secretary's Report

The feedback from members in early August indicated that the time was not right to attempt to restart meetings. Since then, if anything the situation appears to have worsened.

There are some positives in that several local speakers are willing to give their talks when we get going again. This means that we could see what sort of attendances we get without incurring large costs.

I have identified two suitable venues where we could hold meetings and socially distance. These are Ellel Hall at Galgate and Kirkland & Catterall Memorial Hall. The first is behind the Plough in Galgate and the latter is at the junction of the A6 and Blackpool Road. Both venues have large car parks.

Paul Conlon

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