



The Spire Sentinel



**The Newsletter & Magazine of The
Chesterfield Branch of The Western Front
Association**



ISSUE 76 - June 2022

Our aims are 'Remembrance and Sharing the History of the
Great War'.



Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2022

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

January	4th	.Branch AGM and Members Evening - 3 short presentations by Jon-Paul Harding, Andy Rawson and Grant Cullen
February	1st	`Steaming to The Front` - Britain`s Railways in The Great War by Grant Cullen
March	1st	`They Think It`s all Over` ... By Andy Rawson . Plenty has been said about the breaking of the Hindenburg Line. This presentation looks at the pursuit of the Germans which occurred during the final weeks of the war.
April	5th	Soldiers and Their Horses - Horses and Their Soldiers by Dr Jane Flynn - a sympathetic consideration of the soldier - horse relationship 1914-18
May	3rd	`Finding Deborah` by Mike Tipping. How the team that discovered tank Deborah D-51 went on to find me, and my journey to Deborah
June	7th	The Cost of the War' By Roy Larkin. Hansard tells us that the Great War of 1914-18 increased the National Debt to £7,435,000,000 or £377,144,063,927 at today's value which took 100 years to pay off.
July	5th	The Italian Front 1915-1918 by John Chester. Covers the fighting in Italy from beginning to end. Includes the contribution of the British and their part in ending the war.
August	2nd	TBA
September	6th	The Inventions Department by Richard Godber. A little known part of the Ministry of Munitions. Based upon Richard`s dissertation for his Wolverhampton MA, previously a very under researched area about which little was known.
October	4th	`British League of Help` by Dudley Giles. Nearly 90 towns, cities, and organisations in the UK, Australia, Canada and Mauritius signed up in the period 1920-1922 to 'adopt' a village, town or city in the Devastated Zone of France. Some of these adoptions lasted only a few years, some (like Sheffield's adoption of Bapaume, Serre and Puisieux) survived until after WW2
November	1st	`Shell Shock and the History of Psychiatry` by Jill Brunt. Based upon sessions on this subject presented to students at Northern College, Barnsley
December	1st	TBA

Issue 76 - list of contents + WFA Webinars

- 2 Branch Meetings Calendar**
- 3 `Contents Page + WFA Webinars**
- 4 Secretary`s Scribbles**
- 5 Committee Proposals**
- 6 Branded Goods**
- 7 -19 May Meeting**
- 20 New Book**
- 21 - 24 Memories of the Falklands by Rob Nash**
- 24 - 27 WW1 soldier's belongings 'brought home' to Suffolk museum**
- 27 - 40 Great Britain, Italy, the “oppressed nationalities,” and the dissolution of Austria-Hungary in the First World War**

June 2022 WFA Webinar (Planned Presentations)

There are two webinars scheduled for June, but these will be the last until the Autumn, as it has been decided to take a break. It is aimed to resume possibly in October - and you'll be given notice of them in the usual way.

The June Webinars are listed under:

06 JUN 2022 A Fine Feat of Arms': The Zeppelin Base Raids, Autumn 1914 <https://www.westernfrontassociation.com/events/online-a-fine-feat-of-arms-the-zeppelin-base-raids-autumn-1914/>

20 JUN 2022 The foreign fields that are forever England - the CWGC around the world <https://www.westernfrontassociation.com/events/online-the-foreign-fields-that-are-forever-england-the-cwgc-around-the-world/>

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



Secretary's Scribbles

Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to the June 2022 edition of our Branch Newsletter.

Been a pretty wet start to the month, I go walking with my two dogs early every morning on Forestry Commission land south of Worksop, these leads me on to heathland in Clumber Park. These past few mornings it has been quite wet, hence drying out time when we get home - me and two smelly dogs!!

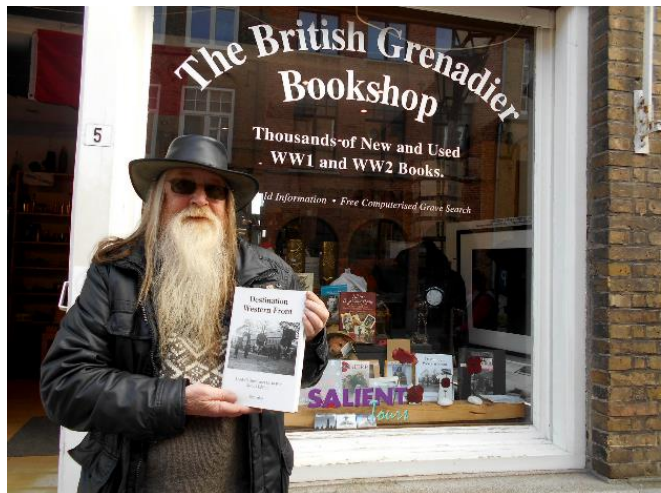
This year is the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands Campaign in the South Atlantic. One of our members, Rob Nash took part and Rob has contributed the second of his two articles, this one focussing on his post conflict `adventures` with the Royal Engineers where he talks about the dangerous job of clearing land mines. Thank, Rob for contributing these, very interesting - I know there not WW1 topics, but it is history most of us lived through, better than reading from dusty text books in years to come.

Wearing my `other` hat - Secretary of Worksop Royal British Legion - I was part of the committee which organised the Falklands Commemoration Event at Barnby Moor Memorial Park near Retford on May 21. Branch colleague Tim Lewis and I laid 255 poppy crosses in the gardens - each with the name of a fallen soldier written on it.

The event can be viewed via this <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUbSSOt7dkQ>

In addition to our normal raffle at the end of the meeting, I will be having a book sale table again. No fixed prices...take your pick...all we ask is a modest donation to Branch fundsthe income raised from book sales and raffles means the Branch is in a strong position financially. Most of these books came from the late Malcolm Ackroyd`s collection and we are grateful to Pam for passing the books on to us to support the Branch.

Tuesday evening`s meeting sees Roy Larkin coming up from Hampshire to give us a talk - more of a discussion, says Roy - on the cost of The Great War. For many of you who follow Great War pages on Facebook, Roy`s name and writings will be familiar. I have had a couple of long chats with him - he`s a fascinating character -who I am sure will provide us with an educational - and entertaining (his words) evening.



Grant Cullen Branch Secretary 07824628638

Committee Meeting - Proposals for 2022

Your Committee met after February`s Branch Meeting and decided to canvas members to gauge support for organising the undernoted branch activities , outings etc.

Please let me know if you are interested in participating in any of the undernoted. Funds are available to support these if there is sufficient interest from members.

grantcullen@hotmail.com or 078824628638

- Book Club. Committee decided we should seek to restart this..
- Cannock Chase visit. This was postponed from 2020. Look to be rearranged for this year
- November 11th 2022 - trip to London Cenotaph. Detailed planning required. Members asked to register interest in either Branch running a bus or a group train booking.
- Andy Rawson to plan walk / visit around remains of Redmires Camp , Sheffield where the Sheffield City Battalion trained prior to going on active service in WW1. Again, members asked to register interest.

Please let me know A.S.A.P. if you are interested in any of these events and we will plan accordingly....I am aware that some members have already expressed interest but not really enough to lay firm plans.

Please get in touch and we can make these into reality

grantcullen@hotmail.com

07824628638



BRANDED GOODS AVAILABILITY

New items are always being considered, so please check the Branded goods part of the shop for all items available.

Prices are inclusive of postage within UK (Branded Items Nos 1-11)

www.westernfrontassociation.com/shop/wfa-branded-items/?p=2

or call Head Office (Sarah Gunn or Maya Shapland) on 020 7118 1914

And the (Branded Clothing, Nos 12- 18) note new prices (under) effective from 1st July.

Order direct from supplier (West Coast Workwear) www.westernfrontassociation.com/shop/branded-clothing/ or ring (0800 169 2228 or 01704 873301)



1	Fridge Magnet	(£5)	59mm dia, front metal plate, high strength neodymium magnetic backplate, and plastic mylar front cover
2	Anniv' Coaster	(£8.50)	4" in diameter hand crafted slate. Individually polished, screen printed by hand and backed by a baize
3	Mousemats	(£6)	196 x 235mm fabric surface and are of high quality. They have a rubberised base layer
4	Bookmarks	(£2)	(dims 55 x 175mm) rich UV High Gloss Coating provides protection against stains and damage
5	Baseball Caps	(£8)	Lightweight 5 Panel cotton cap, adjustable with velcro rip-strip, one size fits all
6	Ties	(£11)	Length 142cm, width 9cm (at widest part), 100% Polyester
7	Lapel Badges	(£2.50)	25mm Dia. Die struck + imitation hard enamel, Silver Nickel Plating, Butterfly clutch pin
8	Mug	(£10)	11oz ceramic mug (95mm high x 85mm diameter) features the bold official WFA logo design (two sides)
9	Messenger Bag	(£27)	37 x 29 x 11cm, 100% Cotton. Full cotton lining. Zippered organiser section, Capacity:13 litres
10	Despatch Bag	(£30)	40 x 30 x 12 cm, (10) Washed Canvas, dual rear pouch pockets. Multiple zippered pockets. Capacity: 14 litres
11	Shoulder Bag	(£25)	40 x 28 x 18 cm, (10) (11) Polyester. Internal valuables pocket. Zippered front pocket. Capacity: 14 litres
12	Oxford Shirt	(£27)	Kustom Kit Short Sleeve Corporate Oxford Shirt. Easy iron button down collar, 85% cotton, 15% polyester
13	Breathable Jacket	(£71)	Russell Hydro Plus 2000 Jacket. Nylon taslon with PU Coating
14	Rugby Shirt	(£25)	Front Row Classic Rugby Shirt, 100% Cotton
15	Fleece	(£24)	Regatta Thor 111 Fleece Jacket, 100% polyester anti pill
16	T-shirt	(£17)	Russell Classic Cotton T-Shirt. 100% ringspun cotton
17	Sweat Shirt	(£22.50)	Gents Russell Jerzees Raglan / Ladies Fruit Of The Loom Raglan
18	Polo Shirt	(£20.50)	Russell Cotton Pique Polo Shirt. 100% cotton

Branch Meeting - May 3rd 2022

With Branch Chair Tony Bolton being off on a well deserved holiday, Secretary, Grant Cullen, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, another good attendance, back to pre-covid levels.

Rob Nash spoke the Exhortation before Grant made a few announcements.

In introducing our speaker for the evening, Mike Tipping, Grant said that last year when putting together the programme for 2022, he had appealed for potential speakers to come forward from our ranks - Mike was the first of a number to do so...a gesture from Mike and the others who will speak later in the year, Grant said he was ever so grateful for.



Mike explained his background, having followed his dad into the printing business after having gone to work with his dad during the six weeks school holidays, this helped him understand the trade from the early age of 14. He left school on the Friday and started a four year apprenticeship on the Monday - and has been in the printing trade ever since and has watched it change drastically over the years. He set up Chameleon Design and Print in 2006, having noticed a gap in the market. Most printers are only interested in ink on paper and

when it comes to the complicated finishing or sourcing something special, they normally decline the job. This is where his business makes its mark, doing the unusual and the complicated. He enjoys the challenging jobs, the jobs which are different and going that extra mile to achieve the impossible. He spent 4 years in the Territorial Army, Mercian Regiment, where he made the rank of Lance Corporal .

His introductions over Mike proceeded with his talk ... **Finding Deborah - How the team that discovered Deborah D-51 went on to find me, and my journey to Deborah.....**

So there I was the day after Boxing Day 2008, thinking it's all over for another year, then the phone rang.....

"Mike have you got a copy of the Evening Post", said an excited voice, it was Pasco his friend. No I replied, ok I am coming round, why I said ?, I have something you need to see he replied. Well the 15 minutes it took for him to get to my house was like a life time, what was it he wanted to show me. The Nottingham Evening Post had run a double page article entitled `Do you know this man Fredrick William Tipping, if you have any information get in touch with Rob Kirk from Sky news.....`



Mike got quite emotional as he realised that they were talking about his great-grandfather Frederick William Tipping. The family knew he had been killed in action in WW1 and had his medals and Death Plaque but knew little else. Little did he know that day in late December 2008 was to see the start of a journey into the past and discover a man who had died in battle in 1917.

Mike then went back to tell the story of tank Deborah D51, how his great-grandfather died, and how the tank lay undiscovered for 80 years.

Frederick Tipping was killed in a First World War battle - the Battle of Cambrai - the first battle where tanks were used *en masse*. Sneinton born Tipping died when German field guns fired shells at `Deborah` - a Mark IV `female` tank - killing four of the crew. The tank, commanded by 2nd Lt Frank Heap, had gone too far forward and had `lost` its accompanying infantry. Heap disembarked and went to find the soldiers, amid the smoke and confusion around them. Then disaster struck, the tank was disabled and Fred, along with three crew mates was killed. Heap returned and managed to pull another three men clear. Fred Tipping and his three comrades, Gunner J Cheverton, Gunner W Galway and Private W G Robinson were buried in Flesquieries Hill Cemetery.

And Deborah? She was dragged back to the British lines, buried and the hulk used as a shelter...and there she lay for 80 years.



Local farmer and part time historian Philippe Gorczynski (left) had learned when growing up in the district of rumours of a British tank lying buried somewhere on his land and he set about trying to locate `Deborah`
Then, after a painstaking six year search, the hulk of `Deborah` was found - one of the most significant and remarkable archaeological finds on the First World War battlefields of France and Belgium.
The next picture shows the tank once excavation was complete.

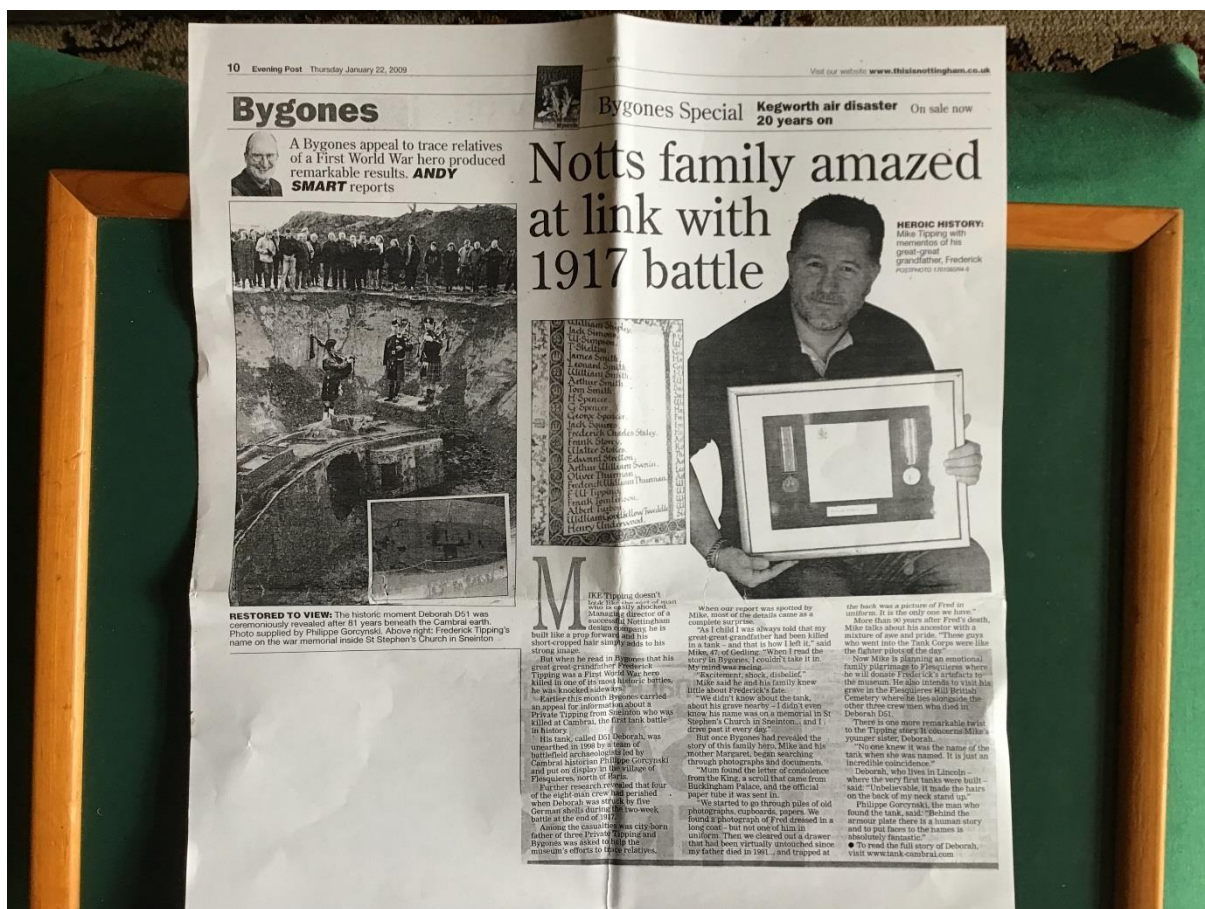


With the assistance of a specialist unit from REME, `Deborah` was carefully lifted out of the hole which had been her resting place for over 80 years and carefully moved by specialist transporter to a large barn on the Rue du Moulin, Flesquieres.

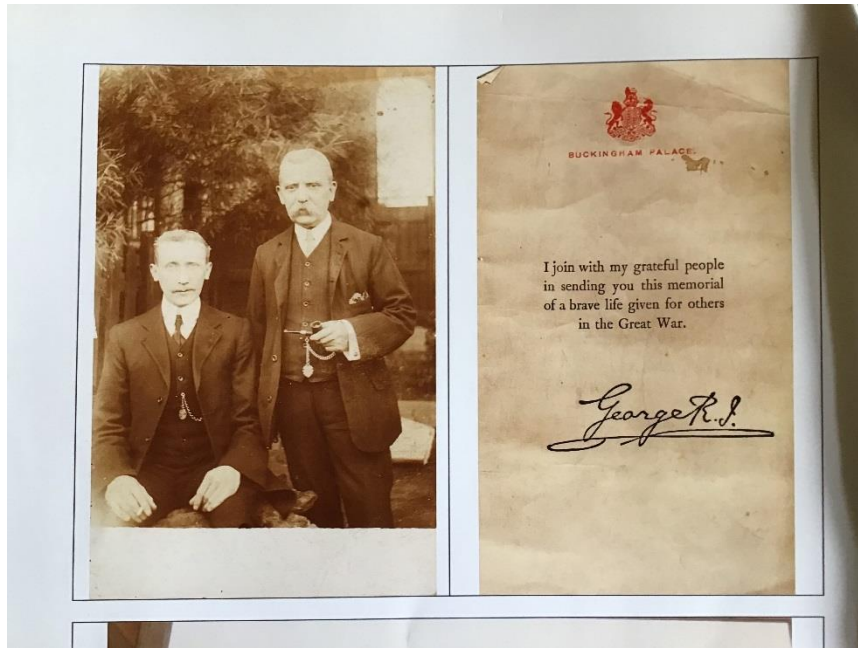
A group of researchers, including Rob Kirk, who was also working for Sky News. He, and the others knew that Fred had come from Nottingham and approached the city`s newspapers in an effort to find out more about him...and maybe even unearth a photograph....” It would be fantastic is someone recognises Fred`s story - even more so if they can provide a picture or other personal details”

And it was one of those newspaper articles that had Pasco racing round to Mike`s house on the 27th December 2008.

There was some information about Frederick in the Public Records. He was born in 1881 at 15 Kemp's Cottages, Lowdham Street, Sneinton, son of frameworkknitter William Tipping and Mary Ellen Tipping, formerly Smith. He had an elder brother, Harry. According to his marriage certificate, by the time he was wedded to Florence Millington at St. Alban`s Parish Church, Nottingham, on August 6th 1904, his parents had moved to 36 Sneinton Road. Florence was a local girl, same age as Frederick, her parents William and Lydia Millington, who according to the 1901 census were living at 68 Beverley Street, St. Ann`s, Nottingham. At the time of their marriage Frederick William Tipping was a warehouseman and he and Florence lived at 2A Bentinck Street. Birth records indicated that a Frederick Tipping was born in Nottingham in 1908, suggesting that the couple had, at least, one son.



Mike then described meeting Rob Kirk and the quest started to try and find a picture or photograph of Frederick. Mike`s grandmother had old shoeboxes full of old family papers and photographs and over several weekends he went painstakingly through these...all to no avail...then when on the point of giving up, he found...at the back of a drawer....what he had been looking for....



It was a picture of Fred (seated) and his father William. The letter on the right being that which was sent by King George V to all bereaved relatives and accompanied the Death Plaque.

From the army records it was ascertained that Frederick had been conscripted into the Royal Horse Artillery in 1916 , subsequently joining the fledgling Tank Corps



Following the discovery, the tank was first planned to be placed in a barn in the village. However, it soon appeared the proposed building was far too small. As an immediate measure, it was decided and agreed between the Mayor of Flesquieres

and Philippe Gorczynski to store the tank in the courtyard of the Mayor's farm. That situation lasted for nearly two years and was not satisfactory, the tank being covered by a tarpaulin and suffering from heavy condensation. Philippe then searched for a suitable location. And after several possibilities, he chose a large open sided barn. The tank was first preserved in that barn standing on a base made of granite cobbles given by the Town of Cambrai which came from some of its old streets. It was carefully moved there by a group of expert soldiers from 118 REME Company who spent two days on the project and used three large cranes and a heavy multi-wheeled trailer. It was there that Mike first `met` Deborah



Here we see Mike - back row, on the right, with other members of the original tank crew`s families. Philippe Gorczynski is in the front row, second from the right.



Frederick Tipping`s Grave



The graves of the crew of `Deborah` who were killed when the tank was hit by gunfire



Despite the best efforts of Philippe Gorczynski and others `Deborah` continued to deteriorate in the barn and eventually agreement was reached that she be moved to a purpose built museum overlooking the cemetery where her crew lie buried. `Deborah` by now very fragile was carefully extracted from the barn and moved to her new home



`Deborah` on a specialist low loader is transporter is carefully carried to her new home



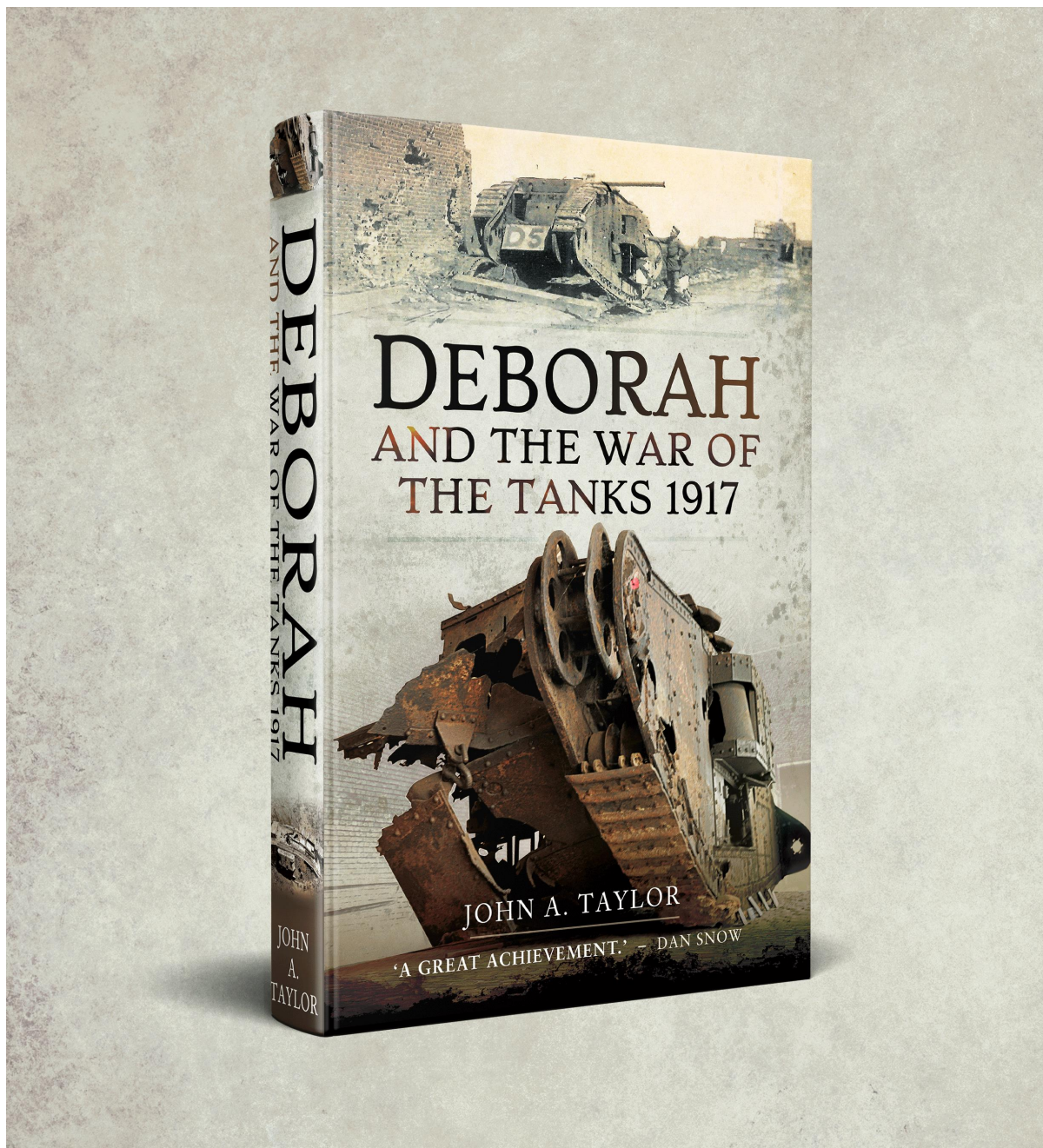
`Deborah` is carefully lowered in to new home only yards away from the graves of her crew.



`Deborah`s` new home - the museum of the Cambrai Tank 1917



`Deborah` in the museum, temperature and climate controlled to prevent any further deterioration



Mike, and his printing company were also involved in producing the cover artwork for John Taylor`s book on Tank `Deborah` D51.

Mike`s talk was well received by Branch members and most noted that Mike became a little emotional at times, understandable given the very personal nature of the story.

Acting Chair for the evening, Grant, gave a warm vote of thanks to Mike after a very interesting Q & A session with our members.

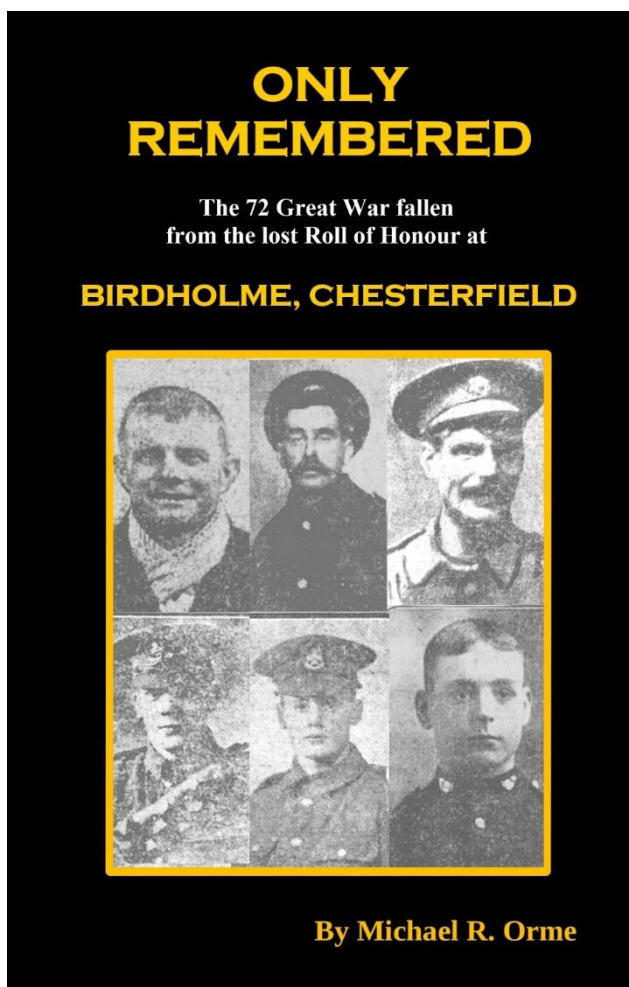
WILLIAM TIPPING.
WE HAVE FOUND
BE ALONE.
TO BE ON YOUR OWN
OR LOVE
WE TIPPING
In Remembrance



GUNNER FREDERICK TIPPING
BORN APRIL 10, 1881
SNEINTON, NOTTINGHAM

...to the Green Fields beyond

BOOK ABOUT BIRDHOLME IN THE GREAT WAR



During the 1920's a Roll of Honour that had once commemorated all the men of Birdholme that lost their lives in the war of 1914-19 vanished. Mike, the author of this book, has not only re-discovered the story of their roll, but has identified and researched each of the seventy-two fallen that were once named on it. Gathered together and published for the first time, this 438 page collection of their biographies now fully restores our ability to *"remember them"*.

After the launch the book will go on sale at:

The Arkwright Arms in Duckmanton, Gussies Super Kitchen (at the church) and at Langer Field Park Gala on Saturday the 6th of August.

MEMORIES OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS 5 YEARS AFTER THE WAR – 1987

Having been with the Task Forces that recovered the Falkland Islands from the Argentines in 1982, and remembering the mud, cold, wet, and at times fear and horror I was not too happy at the prospect of a return 6 month tour of duty in 1987. This time I was returning as the Warrant Officer Minefields (known as Q Mines). The Argentines had laid approximately 40,000 mines, mainly in their defence of Port Stanley, but there were mines and booby traps laid in Goose Green, Port Howard and Fox Bay. Some initial clearance was done immediately after the surrender, but with the majority of the mines laid being plastic the only means of detection was by hand and a number of casualties were taken. The Government decided that clearance had to stop until a safe method of detection and disposal was developed. Until then the minefields were to be fenced and monitored and only mines that were a risk to safety or could be removed without risk to safety were to be deposed.

The journey down there was very different from 1982, 18 hours on a RAF TriStar Jet with hot meals and in-flight movies! Landing at RAF Mount Pleasant, a brand new multi-service base. I was driven the 30 miles to Port Stanley and home for the next 6 months a portacabin at Lookout Camp. This time it was three hot meals a day, sheets on my bed, hot showers and a bar for a drink in the evening. The only thing missing was a TV, but I did develop an addiction to the Archers on BBC World Service, after the 7:00pm news every evening!

After a two weeks handover from the out-going Q Mines I got down to the job and soon really started to enjoy my days out on the beaches and hills of the islands. The closer the minefield were to habitation the more often the checks were required, which could be a couple of days to a couple of weeks. The Argentine Army precured their mines from an assortment of countries, including Spain, Israeli, Italy and the USA, plus some manufactured in Argentina. They were a mix of anti-tank (AT) and anti-personnel (AP), and all but one type of AT mine was made of plastic, making the metal mine detector obsolete.



Metal AT Mine, (USA WW2)

Many of the beach minefields were penguin colonies, but thankfully there was no evidence of any of them being injured by them. Often we would witness them kicking the small anti-personnel mines as they moved about, but no explosions.



Gentoo Penguin Colony Inside a Minefield

To aid us to safely clear mines we had a remote controlled vehicle, based on the bomb disposal wheelbarrow, called Remote Explosive Disposal Falkland Islands Royal Engineers (REDFIRE).



Rob Nash posing with REDFIRE complete with 3 Spanish AT Mines and 1 Italian AP Mine

There were two main devices that could be deployed on REDFIRE:

1. A shovel/scoop to pick the mine up and remove for rendering safe
2. A blow torch for setting fire to the plastic mines, back off and allow the mine to burn to destruction.



REDFIRE With a Spanish AT Mine in the Shovel

The problem operating the REDFIRE was we could only attempt to deal with the mines we could see and direct the vehicle to the mine using the on-board cameras. On two occasions whilst directing REDFIRE to exposed mines it tracked on to AP mines, the end results:



Damage to REDFIRE by AP Mines.

Once we collected a good quantity (100 plus) of mines we would take them up into the hills and render them safe with a big bang.



A Collection of Approx 60 AT Mines and 20 AP Mines



20 AT Mines (fuzes in the boxes) ready for demolition,

plastic explosive connected to a detonating cord ring-main



A Satisfying End Result (100kg of High Explosive)

During the six month tour I was able to get to many of the settlements and stay with the local people, and I can honestly say I have never met such a warm and friendly people. Always welcoming with the kettle on and out comes the cake tin. My driver even wrote a guide to cake stops of the Falkland Islands.

As of 2021 the Falkland Islands have been declared mine free.

Rob Nash, Q Mines, Falkland Islands Jan to Jun 87. Chesterfield WFA Branch Member.

WW1 soldier's belongings 'brought home' to Suffolk museum



Father-of-four L/Sgt Charles Stevens, died 105 years ago on 28 April 1917, aged 42

A pocket watch and other "remarkable" artefacts found with a soldier killed in World War One have been donated to a museum by his grandson.

L/Sgt Charles Stevens, from Cambridge, was in the 11th Suffolks when he died in the Battle of Arras in 1917.

When his remains were found, Colin Fakes was traced and given items which had survived underground for 75 years.

Mr Fakes, who has now given them to a museum in Suffolk, said: "I think it's a story that all should see."



Colin Fakes was given his grandfather's possessions by the French family who found them

He had known virtually nothing of his maternal grandfather's death - only that he had served in the war - when he received a phone call from a man in France in 2013.

"He said they had discovered a body where this chap had been digging a foundation for a wall, and they believed it was a British soldier, and that it was my grandfather," said Mr Fakes.

"I thought 'what the devil is all this, is it a prank?'

"I didn't believe that of all the millions killed that they'd managed to dig up my grandfather."

The French family had uncovered the unknown body while building an extension, in Roeux, near the city of Arras, some 20 years earlier.



Taff Gillingham (left) is a military historian L/Sgt Stevens was identified from his regiment number on a spoon, and given a burial by the War Graves Commission, but the family had wanted to inform any living relatives and pass on the possessions found with him.

After years of dogged research, the internet eventually helped them trace Mr Fakes - who visited Roeux and became a friend of the family.



A flask in its leather casing was also found

Military historian Taff Gillingham, who helped set up Great War Huts in Hawstead, near Bury St Edmunds, said it was not uncommon for soldier's bodies to be found near homes on former battlefields.

"What was quite remarkable is

to see how much of his kit was still with him," he said.

"It's not very common for people to find the stuff that their relative was wearing on the day when they were killed, and to be given it.

This contribution aims to analyse the process of dissolution of the Hapsburg Empire during WW1. In 1917, the Entente powers found themselves in a difficult military situation, due principally to two factors: a) the outbreak of the Russian revolution and the coming into power of the Bolsheviks, who immediately signed an armistice with the Central powers and exited the war; b) the catastrophic defeat of the Italian army in Caporetto by joint Austrian and German forces.

In this uncertain circumstance, a network of Italian politicians and journalists relaunched the slogan of “self-determination for the oppressed nationalities”, utilizing it as a non-conventional weapon adopted to overcome their country’s military weakness. The programme of self-determination was solemnly proclaimed in Rome in April 1918, in the presence of Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, delegates of the Entente powers, the United States, and, of course, self-declared representatives of the “oppressed nationalities”. This congress signed the death sentence of the Hapsburg Monarchy: from then on, the Entente powers and the USA progressively backed the formation of the new “national” states” of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Ironically enough, the principle of self-determination was not a decisive factor for the outcome of the war. The victory of the Entente was determined much more by the American intervention on the side of the French and British troops on the Western front. Consequently, we may consider the dissolution of the Hapsburg Monarchy a side effect of a failed propaganda campaign aimed at regaining the upper hand over the enemy.

Premise

In the recent wave of scholarship and publications that has accompanied the one hundredth anniversary of the First World War one can hardly find any studies that offer new insights into Italy’s role in the course of the war and its eventual end.¹ That is remarkable for the reason alone that after Russia and Romania exited the war, the Italian army was the only one that continued to fight Austria - a circumstance that significantly impaired the military potential of the Central Powers.² Austrian troops were tied down along the Italian-Austrian front at the Veneto and were not able to reinforce the German Western front during Erich Ludendorff’s crucial offensive in spring 1918. This may have tipped the scales in favour of the Entente powers in the “race against time” waged by the Germans, that is, their attempt to defeat the French and British troops, drive a wedge between the two armies, and occupy Paris before the American forces were fully ready for deployment.³

However, the account here is not concerned with the military role the Italian army played in the outcome of the First World War. Rather, it focuses on Italy’s advocacy of the breakup of the Habsburg Monarchy and the creation of two new, independent states - Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. These were not goals the Italian government and its diplomatic corps had pursued when that country entered the war in May of 1915. Instead, they arose out of the difficult military situation the Western

powers found themselves in after the Italian defeat at Caporetto and the nearly simultaneous exit of Russia from the war. In these troubling and dangerous circumstances, the appeal to the “right of self-determination” of the “oppressed nationalities” became an effective tactical weapon that played a crucial role in determining the subsequent course of the war and the post-war scenario. Within the Entente alliance, Italy was the first major actor which, in the person of Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, came out officially in favour of the right of the nationalities within the Habsburg Monarchy to withdraw from their shared polity - and it did so at a time when both Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George were still reckoning with the persistence of the multi-ethnic state (even in case of its defeat).⁴ In fact, as late as in 1918 supported the preservation of Austria Hungary, merely suggesting a federal transformation of the state’s structures. From a public speech by Lloyd George, held on 5th January 1918 in London in the presence of Trade Unions functionaries, one may even infer that the British Prime Minister was ready to shave down radically the territorial claims of Italy and Romania in exchange for a peace treaty with Austria⁵.

Admittedly, Italy was not fully alone in its attempt to undermine the existence of the Habsburg Empire. In fact, since the outbreak of the First World War a trans-national network of politicians, intellectuals, and journalists had come into being with the aim to destroy Austria-Hungary and put in its place so-called “national states”⁶. Yet, without the backing of at least one of the great powers, the influence of such pressure groups was condemned to remain pretty futile. The interplay between Italy and the groups devoted to Austria-Hungary’s destruction constitutes the core of this article.

Austria delenda est

Among those who advocated, from the very outset, the destruction of the Habsburg state and the application of national criteria in the creation of new states in East-Central and South - Eastern Europe belonged in Great Britain in particular the journalist Wickham Steed and the Scottish historian Robert Seton-Watson.⁷ Within the British Isles, both men were broadly acknowledged as experts of the Habsburg Monarchy. And not without good reason: they had spent a number of years in this multi-national empire, authored relevant books on its conditions,⁸ and had pushed for a stronger recognition of the rights of its national groups. Robert Seton-Watson had devoted himself chiefly to the problems of the Southern Slavs in

Hungary.⁹ He enjoyed tremendous popularity among the southern Slavic population, a popularity he relished in a somewhat childlike manner. For example, in a letter to his uncle George Seton he recounted a visit to Dubrovnik (Ragusa at the time) in February of 1912, following the publication of his book *The Southern Slav Question*: “Last night was the crowning event of our adventurous tour. The major of Ragusa... and 60 other Ragusans gave us a big banquet at the Hotel Imperial, at which the three town bands played alternately below the window. This is **the first time in history** that all the parties of Ragusa have met upon a common platform... Most wonderful of all, the three bands - Croats, Serbs and Pravasen (Members of the Party of Right) massed together at the end and played 1st the Croat, then the Serb hymn - a little as if an Orange band in Belfast were to play Nationalist airs! For the Party of Right’s programme does not recognize the existence of the Serbs!... Next day when we left Gravosa [the harbour of Ragusa] half the people of the town saw us off, and almost every lady and most of the students came with bunches of flowers to present to May... As we sailed off, they threw confetti rockets and sang Hej Slovani, the Slav hymn.”¹⁰ It would seem that Seton-Watson was fully swept away by the effective staging of the national closing of ranks. In this exuberant atmosphere, he saw himself as the initiator of Yugoslav unity. By contrast, Wickham Steed, the correspondent of *The Times* in Austria-Hungary, was a much more sober personality. In his 1913 bestseller *The Habsburg Monarchy*, he certainly accorded it the right to exist as a state, merely suggesting an internal reform. In ten years of constant observation and experience, he declared in the book’s preface, he had failed to discover a sufficient reason why the Habsburg Monarchy should not retain its rightful place within the European community of state. He saw her internal crises as crises of growth and not of decline.¹¹

It was circumstances that changed the minds of these two intellectuals and transformed them into staunch advocates for the liquidation of the Habsburg state. After the outbreak of the First World War, the possibility that the Danubian monarchy might be dissolved had moved closer - all the more so, once a Czech and a Yugoslav exile committee had been set up in London in 1915, which pushed for an independent Czech-Slovak and Yugoslav state, respectively.¹² In reality, the change in the position of these two British observers was less radical than might appear at first glance. A strengthening of the Southern Slav, Czech, and Slovak national groups - which is what they meant by “reform” - would invariably have amounted to a weakening of the so-called “master nations.”¹³ Needless to say, the same goal could

be achieved - with even greater certainty - by dissolving the Habsburg Monarchy and creating (ostensibly) national successor states on its territory. Wickham Steed, in particular, had always looked upon Austria-Hungary as Germany's satellite in East-Central Europe.¹⁴ Still, he remained largely isolated in this view. Nevertheless, he could count on the support of Viscount Northcliffe, whose publishing empire included *The Times*.¹⁵ During the July crisis of 1914, the latter was one of the few dailies in Great Britain which charted a consistent war path from the very beginning.¹⁶

Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia as a project

Wickham Steed¹⁷ and Robert Seton-Watson combined their phobia of Austria and Hungary with a vision of the creation of a Czechoslovakia and a Yugoslavia that was supposed to crystallize around the core state of Serbia. This view put them in a distinct minority until the second half of 1917. To be sure, as we have seen, a Czech and a Yugoslav committee had been created in London. However, each committee was made up of only a handful of men who represented just themselves and were not taken particularly seriously by either the British government or the Foreign Office.¹⁸ According to Leo Valiani, a historian of Hungarian-Jewish descent who was born in the Hungarian port city of Fiume, the Czech committee counted no more than a handful of supporters in the period following its founding.¹⁹ Still, Seton Watson was able to procure for the university professor Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, the committee's leading intellect, a professorship at the newly established School of Slavonic and East European Studies at King's College.²⁰ This institute would give rise later to the renowned London School for Slavonic Studies. Revealingly enough, Masaryk chose as the topic of his inaugural lecture in 1915 "The Problem of the Small Nations in the European Crisis."²¹

The situation was even more difficult for the Yugoslav committee.²² The Serbian government, beginning with its popular Prime Minister Nikola Pašić, could not be won over to the prospect of a Yugoslav state. Its territorial aims, which also drew prompt support from the Entente powers, concerned Bosnia, the Bačka, and western Banat, that is to say, regions with a substantial Slavic-Orthodox population. In addition, Pašić was interested in expanding the Serbian possessions in Macedonia at the expense of Bulgaria and in securing for Serbia the cosmopolitan port city of Thessaloniki.²³ Since a portion of the population in Dalmatia was also of the Orthodox

faith, the Serbian government had lodged a protest against the promise of the Entente to grant part of Dalmatia to Italy. Pašić was afraid, not without good reason, that the cohesiveness of the centralized Serbian kingdom could be endangered by the incorporation of millions of Catholic Croats and Slovenes, and that this could allow those parties to gain the upper hand who were calling for a federal reform and rights of self-government. Such a scenario had to be avoided at all costs.²⁴ Since the “right to self-determination” of the Southern Slav ethnicities was in no way part of its agenda when the British government decided to enter the war, opinions on this matter diverged among the ministries: Lord Cecil detested Balkan nationalism, Arthur Balfour advocated a Greater Serbia, and General Robertson as well as Lloyd George favoured the persistence of a reformed Austria-Hungary. As Kenneth Calder has rightly noted, the British government did not pursue a consistent and uniform policy when it came to the future of the Danubian monarchy, since that had no immediate bearing on the most important war aims of the British Empire.²⁵ Depending on the particular scenario of the war, both the perpetuation and the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire were acceptable options; the decision about that matter was to be most definitely subordinated to Great Britain’s standing after the war.²⁶

Italy’s position

Italy had entered the war in May of 1915 on the side of the Entente, despite having been a long-time ally of the Central Powers.²⁷ This decision was carried by a heterogeneous alliance of parliamentary and non-parliamentary forces, some of which pursued divergent interests. The nationalists and right-wing liberals were chiefly interested in guaranteeing Italy an unassailable status as a great power, which was to be attained by gaining hegemony in the Adriatic. The Treaty of London that was concluded in April 1915 between Italy and the Entente was supposed to ensure just that: it promised Italy the Brenner Pass as its northern border, the Austria littoral as its eastern border, and a part of Dalmatia. In addition, Italy would be given a protectorate over part of Albania, its claim to the Dodecanese islands would be affirmed, and it would be granted a sphere of influence in the Near East and a share of the distribution of the German colonies.²⁸ The democratic champions of the “Intervento,” on the other hand, men like the historian and politician Gaetano Salvemini or the patriotic socialist Leonida Bissolati, saw the war as the ultimate “war of the Risorgimento.” They were sympathetic to the idea of dismantling the

Habsburg Empire, creating a federal Yugoslavia, and limiting Italy's territorial claims exclusively to those areas where the majority of the population was Italian.²⁹ They were the ideal partners for the British Think Tank around Wickham Steed and the Yugoslav committee. The government of Prime Minister Antonio Salandra and Foreign Minister Sydney Sonnino pursued traditional power politics.³⁰ In their view of things, a weakened Austria should have continued to exist after the war. Similar positions were held at the time also by Luigi Albertini, owner and publisher of the influential Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* and a staunch interventionist.³¹ When it came to the popularity of Italy's participation in the war, the *Corriere della Sera* played a similarly important role in Italy as *The Times* did in Great Britain. Wickham Steed, the long-time foreign editor of *The Times*, had a personal relationship with both Luigi Albertini and the Italian Foreign Minister Sydney Sonnino.³²

From the beginning, then, the group that championed the liquidation of the Habsburg Monarchy was made up of non-state actors, in which the leading role was taken by the British Think Tank, which also included the renowned archaeologist Arthur Evans and the influential historians Lewis Namier and Arnold Toynbee.³³ The notion of the inescapable collapse of the Habsburg state was linked with the idea of allowing two new states to emerge on part of its territory: Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The British network was therefore expanded, in short order, by bringing in the Czech professor Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, the Croatian-Dalmatian politicians Ante Trumbić and Franjo Supilo, as well as other supporters.³⁴ This small cadre of men represented the beginning, so to speak, of the movement toward independence by the "oppressed nationalities" of the Habsburg Empire.

Among the allies, surely neither Russia nor Serbia would have shed a tear for the Habsburg Monarchy. Still, the liquidation of this state was not among their immediate war aims. Official Serb policy, seconded by Czarist Russia, was the desire to create a Greater Serbia. The war aims of Czarist Russia, in turn, were focused primarily on controlling the straits following the foreseeable collapse of the Ottoman Empire and conquering Constantinople.³⁵

The year 1917

It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance that the events of 1917 had for the outcome of the First World War. In February, Russia was shaken by revolution and Czar Nicholas II felt compelled to abdicate the throne.³⁶ The revolutionary

upheavals, whose outcome was still totally unclear in the spring, weakened the position of Serbia, which had lost an important protector in the Czar. From a military perspective, Serbia's position was desperate: following Bulgaria's entry into the war, the entire country was occupied by Bulgarian, German, and Austrian troops. The court, the government, the army, a majority of parliamentarians, politicians, university professors, and intellectuals, many students, but also a large number of ordinary civilians set out on an arduous trek through Albania and Montenegro and resettled in Corfu and Thessaloniki.³⁷ With Serbia no longer able to count on Russia's support, Pašić felt compelled to make overtures to the Yugoslav committee, and he therefore signalled Serbia's willingness to participate actively in the creation of a Yugoslav state.³⁸ The result was the Corfu Declaration of July 1917, signed by Nikola Pašić for the Serbian government and by Ante Trumbić for the Yugoslav Committee.³⁹ In it, the two rivals agreed that at the end of the war, the lands of the Habsburg Monarchy inhabited by Southern Slavs would constitute a Yugoslav state together with Serbia. The agreement envisaged a constitutional monarchy under the Karadjordjević dynasty. The rights promised to the Croats and Slovenes were reduced to a minimum: the Declaration merely stipulated that the Latin alphabet would continue to exist in the new state and that no restrictions would be imposed on the exercise of the Catholic faith. But there was no mention of rights of political autonomy or the federalization of the state.⁴⁰

Even though Serbia thus continued to act very guardedly when it came to the rights of Croats and Slovenes in the new state (which did not bode well for the future), the Corfu Declaration was a milestone on the path to the liquidation of the Habsburg Monarchy, for Serbia had now pledged itself to work toward separating the Southern Slav provinces from Austria and Hungary.

The Declaration made quite an impression on Luigi Albertini, who concluded that the creation of a Yugoslav state was now inevitable and that Italy had to redefine its war aims. From this point onward, the *Corriere della Sera* was uncompromising in promoting the view that the Habsburg Monarchy had to disappear and that Italy should support the establishment of a Yugoslav state.⁴¹

In November of 1917, two events weakened the military strength of the Entente substantially, if temporarily. First, in Russia the most radical faction of the social democrats under the leadership of Vladimir Ulyanov Lenin came to power. The Bolsheviks immediately implemented the two most important points of their

program: a redistribution of land among the peasants, and the immediate initiation of peace negotiations with the Central Powers (Decree of Peace of November 8, 1917). An armistice was signed on December 15.⁴² Revolutionary Russia entered into negotiations with Germany and its allies from an exceedingly weak position. Even *before* the Peace of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918), it was foreseeable that a German hegemony in Eastern Europe was looming.⁴³

Second, Italy, too, suffered a military disaster in November of 1917: in the Julian Alps near the small town of Caporetto (today Kobarid), Austrian and German troops were able to break through the Italian lines. Italy's Second Army proved unable to re-establish the front line. For a while the units were left without orders, since communication between the detachments and the intermediate command posts was cut. Panic spread among the Italian troops when they came under a large-scale attack with poison gas.⁴⁴ The Italian front collapsed on the third day of the battle; after a total of 72 hours, Italy's Second Army was facing annihilation. The soldiers laid down their arms and cheered for peace. An utterly demoralized army withdrew from the front. Reports speak of nearly 300,000 prisoners and 350,000 deserters and scattered forces. They were joined by about 400,000 civilians from the areas occupied by the Austro-German units. The new Italian front now ran 200 kilometres behind the original line,⁴⁵ and Italy was forced to ask Great Britain and France to send reinforcements.⁴⁶ Following the disaster of Caporetto, voices calling for a separate peace with Austria became loud again in the Italian parliament.⁴⁷ The Catholics received backing from an appeal by Pope Benedict XV, who had addressed the political leaders of the warring states on August 1, 1917, calling upon them to end "the useless massacre."⁴⁸ The leader of the Socialist Party, Filippo Turati, as well as other Socialist deputies, likewise argued that only immediate peace negotiations could still save the country. The former neutralist Giovanni Giolitti - Italy's most influential politician in the pre-war years - did not take an explicit position on this question and limited himself to insisting on the unity of the country, now that portions of Italy were occupied by the enemy.⁴⁹

Signs were pointing to a peace on the basis of the status quo, or on the basis of minimal corrections to the borders. In view of the evident strength of the Central Powers, similar thoughts were being mulled over also in the British government - primarily by Lloyd George, but also by Lord Curzon and Bonar Law.⁵⁰ A separate peace with Austria, the weakest link in the enemy alliance, seemed the most reasonable option. Within the Foreign Office there were also voices who argued in

favour of initiating peace negotiations with Germany too, on the basis of a return to the pre-war status quo in the West. There were even very serious considerations within the War Cabinet to allow Germany territorial acquisitions in the East.⁵¹ Lloyd George had said the following already at a cabinet meeting on September 17, 1917: “If we come to the conclusion that the Soviet was going to destroy our prospects of success, then Russia ought to pay the penalty.”⁵² The timing for a separate peace never seemed more favourable than it did in the late fall of 1917.⁵³ Lloyd George and the British Foreign Secretary, Balfour, took the initiative to begin an exchange with Vienna about a possible peace. As a result, talks were held in Geneva between the former Austrian ambassador to London, Alexander Count von Mensdorff, and the South African general Jan Smuts, an influential member of the British War Cabinet. However, the Austrian Foreign Minister, Ottokar Czerin, informed Berlin about the British initiative. In the end, the talks in Geneva came to nothing.⁵⁴ Austria, under the illusion that time was on its side, allowed this favourable moment to slip away. But the tide had turned again in the spring of 1918. The United States were now ready to deploy their forces on the Western Front. This shifted the balance of military power very clearly in favour of the Entente and its allies, something that was starkly revealed by the partial failure of the German spring offensive.⁵⁵ On August 8, Germany’s military catastrophe on the Western Front was so obvious⁵⁶ that Ludendorff and Hindenburg urged the Emperor and his government to enter into peace negotiations with the United States - and they did so in the expectation that Wilson’s Fourteen Points would still form the basis of negotiations and that Germany would continue to have a free hand in Eastern Europe. On October 3, the German Chancellor Max von Baden asked Wilson to initiate peace talks with all warring powers.

The precarious situation along the Italian front and Russia’s exit from the war seemed to shatter the dreams of the Czech and Yugoslav committees and the plans of the British Think Tank. Ante Trumbić toyed with the idea of moving to Buenos Aires and make a living there as a taxi driver.⁵⁷

However, neither Wickham Steed nor Luigi Albertini were willing to simply sit back and watch their dreams being destroyed. Steed’s residence in London became a meeting place for members of the Yugoslav Committee and for a group of Italian journalists, politicians, and deputies committed to the goal of reaching an agreement between the Italians and the Yugoslavs (*recte* Croats) when it came to

the division of Austrian territories along the Adriatic Sea.⁵⁸ Within this circle, Antonio Borgese⁵⁹, a journalist of the *Corriere della Sera*, floated the idea of summoning a congress of the “oppressed nationalities” in Rome.⁶⁰ Two important agreements were reached in the run-up to the congress: 1) Ante Trumbić and the Italian parliamentarian Andrea Torre agreed that Italy would let go of Dalmatia in return for the recognition, by the Yugoslav side, of its claims to Trieste and the northern coast of the Adriatic Sea;⁶¹ 2) the new Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando was also brought into the British-Italian- Yugoslav plans. On January 26, Orlando had a “very friendly” meeting with Ante Trumbić in London.⁶² Following that meeting, he promised the official support of the Italian government for a congress of the “oppressed nationalities.”⁶³ Alongside Serbia, a second allied of the Entente had thus been won for the destruction of the Habsburg Monarchy: the quasi-great power Italy.⁶⁴

The Congress of Oppressed Nationalities convened in Rome on April 8, 1918. The participants included representatives of the Croat, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Romanians, and Serbs. All Entente powers and the American ambassador to Rome also sent representatives.⁶⁵ Vittorio Emanuele Orlando received the Yugoslav delegation first, followed by all the others.⁶⁶ The Congress dealt the fatal blow to the Habsburg Monarchy. It ended with a declaration that granted the right of full political and economic independence to all nationalities that were wholly or partly subject to the Habsburg monarchy. The “oppressed nationalities” promised to support

one another in achieving these goals, and declared that political self-determination was the shared interest of all. In addition, all parties to the Congress pledged to respect the cultural rights of all minorities and to settle all potential disagreements peacefully and amicably.⁶⁷

Two developments now also convinced the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, and the American President, Woodrow Wilson, to support the efforts toward independence by the national groups at the expense of the Habsburg state: the stop of the German western offensive at the beginning of April;⁶⁸ and, almost simultaneously, the eruption of the so-called “Sixtus Affair,” in the wake of which some careless statements by Austria’s Foreign Minister Czernin revealed the existence of secret peace overtures by Emperor Charles to France in the previous year.⁶⁹ As a result of these revelations, Austria found itself *de facto* in a dependent relationship *vis-à-vis* Germany.⁷⁰ Now there was no longer any reason also for Lloyd

George to treat the Habsburg Monarchy any differently than the German Empire. A final attempt by the Austrian army to break through the Italian front along the Piave River failed not least because the supply situation of the Austrian troops was dismal.⁷¹

The following months down to November 1918 were then nothing more than an epilogue. The recognition of the “Czechoslovak Legion” as the national army of Czechoslovakia played a crucial role in the downfall of the Habsburg Monarchy.⁷² The Legion was made up of Czech and (a few) Slovak prisoners of war. They were placed under the command of the Czech National

Council, which had emerged from the former Czech Committee.⁷³ Hereby, the basic structures of the new state had already been created in embryonic form. The Czech Legion was recognized as the national army by France on June 29, by Great Britain on August 9 and finally by the United States on September 3.⁷⁴ On September 26, the Italian Foreign Minister, Sydney Sonnino, recognized the Czechoslovak government as the legitimate representative of an independent Czechoslovakia.⁷⁵ On October 18, the American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, conveyed to the Austrian Emperor his government’s response to Austria’s request that peace negotiations be initiated: Wilson’s fourteen Points from January 18 were no longer relevant, since the American government had by now recognized Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia as sovereign states.⁷⁶

Conclusion

Only in recent years has historiography begun to question the firm conviction that the Habsburg Monarchy had been doomed to fall because of the unresolved issue of the nationalities. Within this “framing,” the First World War merely took on the function of having accelerated a predetermined course.⁷⁷ By contrast, newer interpretations posit that it was the famine and increasingly dismal supply situation among the civilian population from the winter of 1917 onward that dealt the death blow to the Habsburg Monarchy.⁷⁸ This circumstance, so the argument goes, abrogated the pact between the citizens and a state that had proved incapable of guaranteeing the most elementary needs of its population, to the point of simple survival (in the sense of a revised Hobbesian contract).

In the present essay, I have tried to open up a new perspective on this

thematic complex by framing my argument more forcefully than has been done hitherto in situational rather than teleological terms. Compared to the precedent time of peace, the outbreak of the war greatly expanded the horizon of what seemed “attainable”. And the room to manoeuvre also increased for the actors and the historical “agencies”: in the face of the international polarization brought on by the war, self-proclaimed committees could present themselves as the legitimate representatives of the will of their own oppressed nations. Depending on the situation, this claim was taken more or less seriously by the political establishment of the warring powers. When the national committees were set up, their program was supported only by the British Think Tank around Wickham Steed and Robert Seton Watson. Afterwards, Serbia, Italy,⁷⁹ France, Great Britain, and the United States embraced the notion of national self-determination for the “oppressed nationalities” of the Habsburg Monarchy. It would be hard to overemphasize the role that Luigi Albertini, the journalists of the *Corriere dell Sera*, and the Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orland played in this development. The convening of the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities in Rome constituted a high point in the process of reorganizing Central Eastern Europe on the basis of newly defined national criteria. The military defeat of the Habsburg Monarchy between the end of October and the beginning of November 1918 led to its dissolution because the alternative(s) to its persistence had been prepared well in advance, and had been able to command majorities, beginning in the spring of 1918, in the war cabinets and among the responsible politicians and expert committees of the Western powers. This thesis does not in any way deny the state of crisis within the Danubian monarchy and the erosion of solidarity among the civilian population - developments which have been impressively described above all by Maureen Healy. The way in which the burdens of scarcity were distributed was felt to be (and was in fact) inequitable, and this led to a growing hostility between Austrians and Hungarians, the bourgeoisie and the farmers, city-dwellers and country people: the result was a fraying of the social bonds and a chaotic fragmentation of society into its social and ethnic components.⁸⁰ But these circumstances, by themselves, were not a sufficient reason why the Habsburg Monarchy should implode as a state in the wake of the defeat in the war, and why Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia - both with a significant amount of Hungarian territory - should arise from its ruins. From a contra factual perspective, the crisis of Austria-Hungary could also have given rise to a revolution and a radical transformation of the state structure as was the case in Germany. Rather, the

monarchy collapsed because the alternative to its perpetuation was already in place as a workable prefiguration. The crucial stages leading to this constellation were the Corfu Declaration, the gradual recognition of the Czech Legion as an independent army by the Entente, and, last but not least, the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities in Rome along with the decisions that were made there. These formed the building blocks of the state entities that eventually replaced the Habsburg Monarchy. But they proved themselves pretty ephemeral and, in turn, no longer exist today in their original form.