

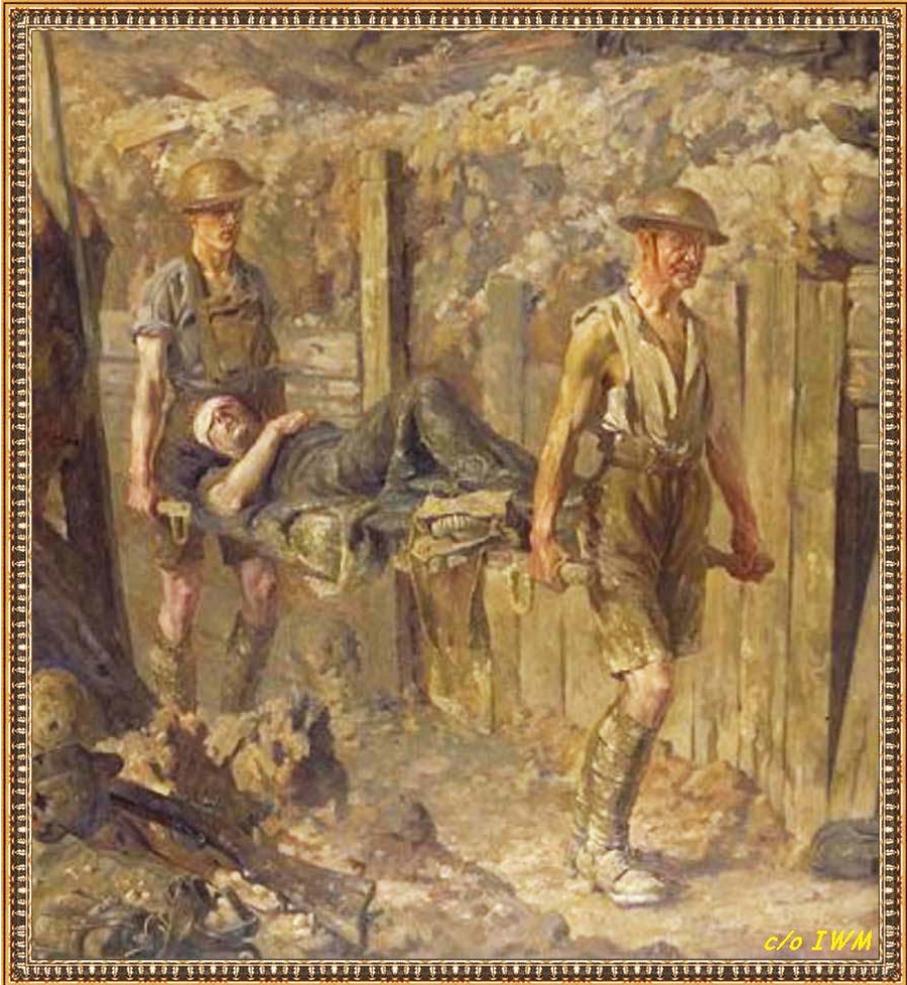


THE WESTERN FRONT
ASSOCIATION

Lancashire North Branch

Despatch

Issue 19: May 2017



The RAMC at Messines during the 1917 Offensive by Lancashire born artist Gilbert Rogers is the basis for this month's frontispiece and Gilbert's story is on the back page. Also read inside about the German naval raid on a North Sea convoy in October 1917; the death of Lieutenant Punchard of the 1/5 King's Own Royal Lancaster's; Messines and Passchendaele; the finest, the most graphic and the most vividly interesting talk given to the Senior Officers School; philanthropy and voluntary action in WW1; local soldiers identified on iconic WW1 photographs; some good news, for a change, about Lancashire's museums and more.

Editor's Musing

When considering key subjects to include in this Despatch it did not take much musing to decide that Third Ypres should be one of them. The approach to take on the Battle of Messines, being a victory, was easy i.e. summarise how the victory was won. However my literary search, analysis of CWGC records etc soon revealed there was no simple approach for me to take on subsequent phases of Third Ypres.

I decided to report the views from other sources and look with keen interest to see if any consensus view emerges from Third Ypres being revisited 100 years on. However I could not fail to be impressed by the cogent arguments put forward in John Terraine's 1992 Presidential Address on the 75th anniversary of the Third Ypres battles entitled "Passchendaele" which I found thanks to my conversion of all Stand To's into searchable PDFs. As reported at page 8 a copy is available on our website.

Furthermore, what a coincidence that John Terraine's 1977 *The Road to Passchendaele* was amongst the prizes in last month's Branch raffle and I had an early winning ticket. I duly "bagged it" since it contains much detail which informed his 1992 Address and has been a delight to browse whilst watching cricket.

After my comments in previous Issues I have also mused about the two museums in Preston. I wonder what the "reprovided" Lancashire Infantry Museum entails and whether the aspirations of the various parties interested in the Museum of Lancashire will be met, see page 15.

(+P) or (+S) after article title indicates more photos in Photo Gallery or Supplementary Report on our website www.wfanlancs.co.uk

Articles are by Editor unless stated otherwise.

TO SEE DESPATCH WITH LARGER TYPE AND PHOTOS IN COLOUR VIEW ON OUR WEBSITE

GERMAN NAVAL RAID.

2 DESTROYERS AND 9
SHIPS SUNK.

BUTCHERY OF CREWS.

DESTROYER'S FIGHT AGAINST
ODDS.

The above headline captions appeared in *The Times* of 22 October 1917 reporting the attack by German cruisers on a North Sea convoy 5 days earlier. When compiling the Events Timeline on page 14. I felt my lack of knowledge regarding this action required rectification and on determining Lancashire sailors perished decided they should be remembered.

According to Arthur Marder's "*From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*" reports from U-boats had strengthened the German's impression that heavy convoy traffic had developed between Norway and the Shetlands and Admiral Scheer decided to make a surprise raid with surface craft against this traffic. The strategic aim was to help the U-boat campaign by causing the British to divert forces to protect the Scandinavian traffic.



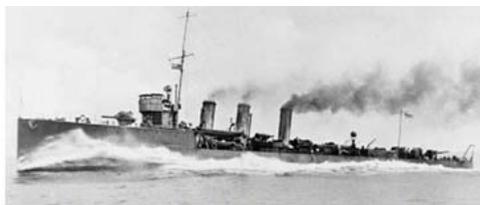
SMS Brummer

Displacement: 4385 tonnes. Speed: 28 knots
Complement: 309. Main Armament: 4x150mm

He chose for this task the light mine-laying cruisers *Brummer* and *Bremse* in view of their high speed, radius of action, and resemblance to British cruisers. However, whilst the Admiralty learned from wireless intercepts that two German cruisers were at sea and sent out cruiser squadrons on 16

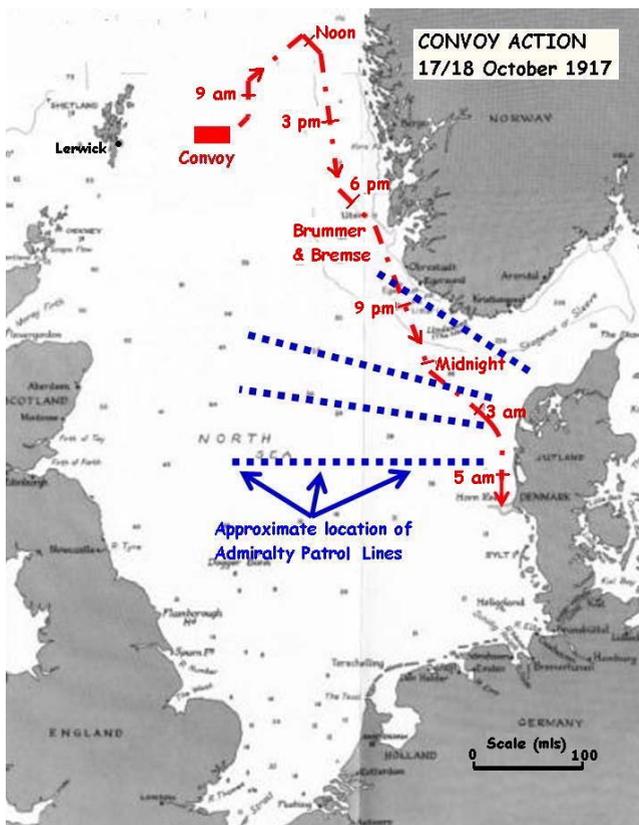
October to patrol lines in the central part of the North Sea and off the south-west coast of Norway i.e. well south of the Scandinavian convoy route, no message warning of the German cruisers was sent to hold Scandinavian convoy traffic in harbours.

Shortly after 6.00 am on 17 October 1917 a west-bound Scandinavian convoy of 12 ships protected by 2 destroyers HMS *Mary Rose* (in command) and HMS *Strongbow* (both "M" Class destroyers), and 2 armed trawlers (*Elise* (ex Fleetwood) and *P Fannon*) were attacked by the *Brummer* and *Bremse* when about 65 miles east of Lerwick. *Strongbow* was behind the convoy and *Mary Rose* six to eight miles ahead of it when *Strongbow* sighted the German cruisers and apparently took them for British light cruisers which they had been rigged to resemble. She challenged them three times and after the third sounded the alarm gongs but before men could reach action stations the *Brummer* opened fire (6.15) and *Strongbow* was struck by



HMS Marmion ('M' Class destroyer similar to HMS *Mary Rose* and HMS *Strongbow*)

devastating fire which caused her to stop and prevented the sending out of an S.O.S. Before this the German cruisers jammed all efforts by the Allied ships to transmit warning signals.



The Germans then turned on the convoy itself and quickly sank nine of the merchantmen for which they were severely criticized for sinking without giving their crews time to escape. At 7.15, the *Mary Rose*, which had turned back after hearing firing astern, closed to between 2,000 and 3,000 yards of the German cruisers and put up a gallant fight. *The War Illustrated* of 30 March 1918 describes how **Lieutenant-Commander Fox**, the captain, came down from the bridge and cheered his men working the only gun left in action, with repeated cries of "We're not done yet!" At last, unable to fire another shot, he destroyed his papers, ordered his crew to abandon ship and was last seen swimming in the icy water just before the *Mary Rose* went down. Two officers and

eight men were the only survivors from the *Mary Rose*.

The Germans then turned their guns on the *Strongbow* and she eventually sank at about 9.30 with four officers and 41 men being saved. The two trawlers were undamaged and one of them rescued most of the survivors from the *Strongbow*.

According to Commonwealth War Graves Commission records three Lancashire sailors (all from *Mary Rose*) lost their lives:



Lieutenant-Commander
Charles Leonard Fox

Engine Room Artificer
Thomas Brown

Leading Seaman
James Albert Caseman

Able Seaman
Thomas Houston

Engine-room Artificer Tom Brown, age 35, husband of Edith Brown, 13 Blackstock Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester.

Leading Seaman A J Caseman, age 32, husband of Bertha Caseman, 11 Nut Street, West Gorton, Manchester.

Able Seaman Thomas Houston, age 33, husband of Jessie Houston, 12 Balfour Street, Anfield, Liverpool.

The first intimation that an action had taken place did not reach the Admiral Commanding Orkneys and Shetlands until 3.50 p.m. on the 17th, when a signal was intercepted from the destroyer HMS *Marmion* (one of the destroyers with an eastbound convoy from Lerwick) *Marmion* had come upon the escaped armed trawler *Elise*. After further delays, the news of the destruction of the convoy finally reached Beatty between 4 and 5 p.m. By then the raiders were well on their way home; all chance had gone of cutting

them off during the long dark night of 17/18 October. The C.-in-C., nevertheless, attempted during the night to dispose his light-cruiser and cruiser squadrons to cut off the Germans but the raiders got away.

Marder reports there was bitter criticism of the Admiralty in the press following the action. His account points out that the charts in the Admiralty's Room 40 did not have the position of any British ships and if the Scandinavian convoys had been shown,

warnings might have been sent out to them about the *Brummer* and *Bremse*. He also reports that the subsequent Courts of Inquiry and Court Martial whilst praising the gallantry of *Mary Rose* and *Strongbow* criticised their actions since this had precluded them from carrying out their essential task which was report the attack and thereby facilitate effective and adequate counter-measures.

Importantly Marder reports the incident was of little strategic importance. It did not relieve Germany from the increasing pressure the Royal Navy was applying and hardly caused any disturbance in the timetable of Scandinavian trade.

HERE LIES A FATHER'S HOPE A
MOTHER'S PRIDE AND A WIFE'S
DEPENDANCE
- Pte John Prentice The Cameronians

**QUEEN ELIZABETH GRAMMAR SCHOOL,
KIRKBY LONSDALE, ROLL OF HONOUR:
c/o Oliver Wilkinson**

**James Septimus
PUNCHARD,
Lieutenant, 1/5th
Battalion The King's
Own Royal Lancaster
Regiment**



James Septimus Punchard's experience is quite unusual in comparison with the other 'old boys' of the school. The circumstances of his death cannot be attributed to a single action of the conflict, and in fact the date of his death was 2nd April 1919, almost 5 months after the First World War ended.

On first impressions Punchard seemed to have gained a reprieve during the First World War, narrowly escaping involvement in the notorious Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). At the beginning of July 1917 his unit, 1/5th Battalion The King's Own

movements with infantry, aerial and armoured activity. The role of 5KORL was pivotal as they were to form the centre of General Gough's Fifth Army, which was to begin the Third Battle of Ypres on the 31st July 1917.

On the night of the 28th July the men moved into the front line in preparation for the attack. Punchard would have been with his men, somewhere near St Jean (see map at Page 8), ready for 'the big push'. However while the final preparations for the assault was taking place Punchard was shot in the right thigh. It is unknown whether this gunshot wound was the result of a sniper, enemy rifle fire or a negligent discharge in the trenches. What is certain is that the wound was serious enough to result in Punchard being returned to England, where he arrived on the 7th August.

Consequently when the Third Battle of Ypres opened on the 31st July, Punchard was not with the advancing 5KORL. It could be said that Punchard was lucky. The



British wounded at RAMC dressing station, 31 July 1917. IWM Q5730

involvement of the Battalion in the operation was to result in 255 casualties, and in total, of the 9 British Divisions (approx 100, 000 men) that advanced on the opening day of the Battle, 27,000 were casualties.

Unfortunately, in Punchard's case the damage of the war had already taken its toll. He recovered well from the wound in his thigh, spending time in Reading Hospital and then the Military Convalescent Hospital in Ashton-in-

Royal Lancaster Regiment (5KORL), was involved in intensive training behind the lines. In mock-up trenches the Battalion practiced a large-scale assault, combining their

Makerfield. During this period, however, he began to complain of a cough, which was attributed to the fact that he had "lived in a gas environment for nearly two months

previous to being wounded.” This condition became steadily worse and in July 1918 Punchard was forced to relinquish his commission of grounds of ill health.

He was subsequently admitted to a Red Cross Hospital, known as Whites Lodge, at Bournemouth, where it was hoped the climate might improve his condition. This was not to be. Punchard grew weaker and weaker and died at Bournemouth on 2nd April 1919. In a cruel twist of fate, Punchard had been relieved from the carnage of Passchendaele, only to succumb to Tuberculosis, due to gas exposure, and die in a hospital in England. His death illustrates that the legacy of the war could create victims long after the Armistice was signed on the 11th November 1918.

Punchard was an extremely well known and esteemed member of the Kirkby-Lonsdale community. He was educated at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School and also spent a period of time at Sedbergh Grammar School. Upon leaving school he embarked on a legal career successfully serving his articles with Messrs Buck, Dickson and Crockshott, of Preston, and qualifying as a solicitor in November 1898.

As a practicing solicitor he worked in Leicester at Sir Thomas Wright & Sons, and subsequently spent a brief period working at Blackpool and Lancaster. Punchard reached the pinnacle of his legal career when he was made a partner in Messrs Talbot & Rheam, of Milnthorpe, which subsequently became Talbot, Rheam & Punchard.

In addition to his prominent professional career Punchard was also an ardent sportsman. He played cricket for Lancaster Cricket Club, where he became vice-captain in 1907. Here he was described as a “consistent run-getter” often leading the batting average of the club. Moreover, he brought his cricketing skills to Kirkby Lonsdale Cricket Team, where in the summer of 1908 he played alongside a 14 year old

Arthur Armer. This young man was also a QES scholar, and would go on to serve and die for his country in the First World War (see May 2009 Despatch). Punchard was also a keen rugby player at both the Kirkby-Lonsdale and the Vale of Lune clubs. Additionally he was said to be passionate in football, golf, fishing and shooting.

Sporting ability was a desirable attribute for military service, and although over military age, Punchard nevertheless felt it his duty to serve and joined-up on the 15th August 1915. Unlike all the other ‘old boys’ on the memorial, Punchard joined up as an officer, and he was gazetted with the rank of Second Lieutenant in the 5KORL on the 23rd August 1915. He proceeded to Weeton Camp for training, and spent several months in England before being sent to the Western Front around January 1916.

Once at the front, he served predominantly in the Ypres area. He was rotated into the front-line many times and certainly saw plenty of action. Perhaps one of the biggest ‘shows’ he would have witnessed was the explosion of the 19 mines which opened the Battle of Messines on 7th June 1917. The noise of this detonation could be heard in London, and Punchard, located near Ypres, would have not only heard it, but would have seen it and felt the force.

He was a very competent officer, taking command of ‘D’ company in the absence of



Crater left by biggest mine at Messines

its usual commander, Captain Harris, in October 1916. It is thus unsurprising that Punchard gained promotion to Lieutenant on 1st July 1917. It was thus as a Lieutenant that he was wounded and sent back to England. It was also as an honorary Lieutenant that he died in the hospital at Bournemouth.

Following his death, Punchard's remains were brought back to Kirkby-Lonsdale, where he was buried in St Mary's Churchyard after a funeral with full military honours. The Union Jack draped coffin was preceded by a force of Volunteers under Lieutenant A. Pearson, a firing party under Sergeant Briggs and, very fittingly, the cadet corps from Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. After the service, three volleys were fired over the grave and the 'Last Post' was sounded.



Punchard actually has two headstones in the churchyard, both of which can be viewed to this day. It is fitting that the last of the QES 'old boys' to be killed in the war should be buried in Kirkby-Lonsdale. His grave provides not just a site of personal remembrance, but acts as a focal point for remembering all the 'old boys' that gave their lives in the First World War.

MAY HIS REWARD BE AS GREAT AS
THE SACRIFICE -
Pte G F Wilson E Yorks Regt

MESSINES AND THIRD YPRES (+S)

As reported across, at 3.10 am on 7 June 1917 the biggest man-made explosion to that time took place at Messines on detonation of 19 British mines. The explosion was the beginning of General Plumer's meticulously planned offensive to capture Messines Ridge which dominated the southern flank of the Ypres Salient. This was the first phase of Haig's plans for an offensive in Flanders in 1917 which would take pressure off the French whose army were in a state of open mutiny after Nivelle's failed attacks in Champagne.

Each unit of Plumer's Second Army had practised every movement that it was to undertake on the day of the attack on a large scale model of the ridge constructed behind British lines. The preparatory bombardment was equally methodical. Following the mine explosions Plumer's 80,000 infantrymen and 72 tanks advanced and took their first objectives within 35 minutes and by 7 am had gained the crest of the ridge overthrowing the German second line of defence. The advance then halted under cover of a protective barrage to bring up reserve formations and await a German counterattack which did not happen.

In the early afternoon the British advance continued towards the German defences on the Oostaverne Line. The first trench of the Oostaverne Line was captured but then stiffening German resistance caused Plumer to halt the offensive. It was a notable victory with the Germans evicted from their strong defensive positions on the

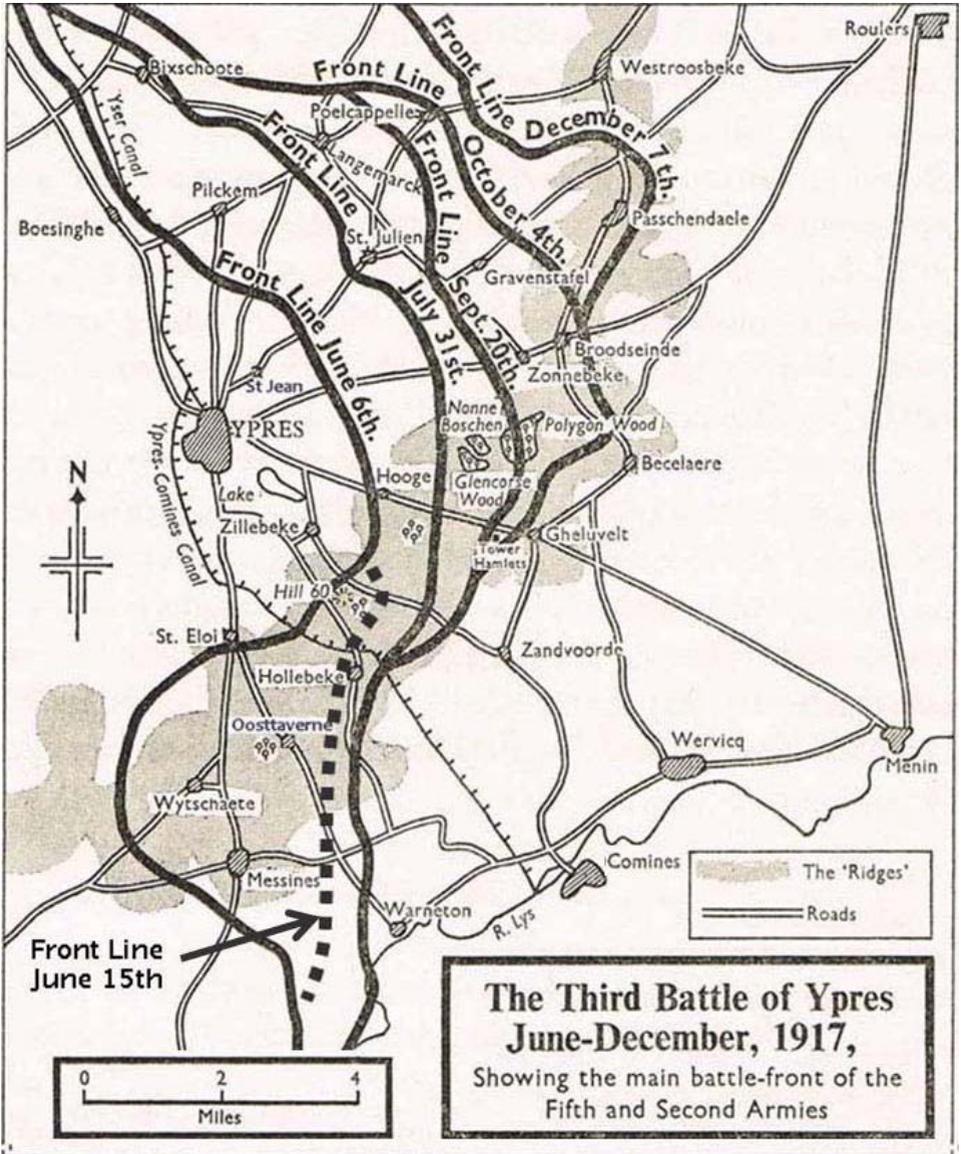


Gen. Plumer explains his attack to King George V

Messines Ridge at a cost of 24,562 casualties against the German casualties of 25,000 including 10,000 missing.

Plumer wished to continue his attack to seize the Gheluvelt Plateau but Haig wanted a longer period of preparation for the assault and then had great difficulty in securing British Government agreement to a wider Flanders offensive.

John Terraine's 1992 Presidential Address on the seventy fifth anniversary of the Third Battle of Ypres was entitled "PASSCHENDAELE" which he thought to be the most evocative word in our whole military vocabulary. A copy of his address is on our website. With regard to the Messines attack he reported that by 14 June "every objective had been taken and the Germans had been



severely shaken....but then followed an anti-climax which was to have very sad results. It was over six weeks before the offensive resumed - six weeks during which the British Government debated whether to go on at all."

When Haig secured the Government's agreement to proceed he made the critical mistake of giving Gen. Gough overall command of the offensive. After a lengthy preliminary bombardment the French in the north and 1 Corps of Plumer's Second Army in the south registered major gains but Gough's Fifth Army in the centre could not make a decisive breakthrough. Furthermore

the bombardment and onset of heavy rains were to turn the battlefield into a swamp. Further assaults by Gough on Gheluvelt Plateau then in the Battle of Langemarck failed to achieve objectives.

On 26 August Haig put Plumer in command of the offensive. He recognised that achieving a decisive breakthrough in the awful conditions was impractical and launched limited offensives with modest objectives. Effectively he turned the offensive into a battle of attrition. Starting with the Battle of the Menin Road in the south-east on 20 September and culminating in First and Second Battles of Passchendaele (12 October to 10 November) in the north-east.

The BEF then held the greater part of the long ridge around Ypres that had been mostly in German hands since 1914-15 and in so doing had extended the salient by about 5 miles. For Third Ypres firstworldwar.com indicates the BEF "incurred some 310,000 casualties, with a similar, lower, number of German casualties: 260,000." In his 2007 book *The German Army at Passchendaele*,

Jack Sheldon indicates "there has always been sharp controversy about the number of casualties each side suffered during the Passchendaele campaign, much of it stoked



Wounded of 66th (East Lancashire) Division being moved by light railway between Langemarck and Pilkem during the Battle of Poelcappelle, 10 October 1917 IWM Q6044

up by attempts to inflate one or other set of figures and to extrapolate from these shaky foundations, who 'won' or 'lost'."

Jack Sheldon goes on to point out the views of General Herman von Kuhl, the German Chief of Staff who indicated "there can be absolutely no doubt that through its tenacity, the British army bridged the crisis in France. The French army gained time to recover its strength; the German reserves were drawn towards Flanders. The sacrifices that the British made for the Entente were fully justified."

In 1992 John Terraine also expressed the view that "if the German sword had not been blunted in 1917, it is hard to see how the Allies could have avoided total defeat in 1918." It will be interesting to see if a consensus view about Passchendaele emerges from conferences and centenary reports in the coming months.

IN HONOUR CHIVALROUS IN DUTY
VALOROUS IN ALL THINGS NOBLE

Capt G A McGiffin 24th Bn Canadian Inf

BRIGADIER GENERAL REGINALD JOHN KENTISH (RJK) & HIS 6th TALE - "HUMOUR IN HIGH PLACES"



In November 2013's Despatch I 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 the sixth tale.

HUMOUR IN HIGH PLACES

In July 1917 the late **Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson** came to Aldershot to give a lecture on the European Situation to my Officers at the Senior Officers' School, of which I was, at the time, the Commandant.



The lecture was delivered in the Prince Consort's Library, and was universally adjudged the finest, the most graphic and the most vividly interesting, which the audience of some three hundred Senior Officers, gathered together from every theatre of war had ever listened to, and I shall never forget the applause - indeed it was an ovation - which was given the General, as he was then, by his audience when he had finished. His striking figure, his remarkable personality, his inimitable way of putting his points and getting his audience with him left a deep impression on us all, and his lecture was talked about for days afterwards.

Driving back with him to my Headquarters after it was over, I said to Sir Henry, who was actually unemployed at the time:

"But, sir, why don't you go all over the country and give this lecture not only to the

Forces, but to the civilian population too? It's the very thing," I said, "that's wanted - someone like you to give them that wonderful picture of the war, which you have just given us and to tell them what they - and not only the soldiers, sailors and airmen - have still got to do to win it! The whole of the civilian population is just screaming for news, and for information as to how things are going, and it would be the best thing that ever happened if you just went round and talked to them!"

"My dear boy," Sir Henry replied, "I went to Neville Macready (**Lieut. General Sir Neville Macready**, then Adjutant General to the Forces and a Member of the Army Council) only the other day and I made that very suggestion to him and all he said was:



'Impossible, Henry - quite impossible, for you know as well as I do that, if we let you loose on a lecture tour in the country, after each one of your talks the Secretary of State would have a dozen, or even more, questions to answer in the House, each one from an irate Member, asking whether the Government approved or not your views and statements, and I should have to waste hours of my time preparing the answers for him! No Henry, that would never do,' "said Neville, and so I am still unemployed," said Sir Henry with a laugh — and then with another little chuckle he added:

"But perhaps the War Office and the 'Frocks' (The name the late Field Marshall gave to the Politicians for whom he had a profound distrust, dislike and disregard, although, later in his career, he became a 'Frock' himself!!) between them will find me a job of some kind before the war's over!!"

And Indeed they did – or rather the ‘Frocks’ did, because, shortly afterwards, he was appointed British representative to the newly-formed Supreme Council at Versailles



by the then leading ‘Frock’ (**Lloyd George**) and subsequently he became Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the most Important post in the Army that any soldier could aspire to,

and there is little doubt that no man, soldier or civilian, played a greater part in the final victory of the Allies than the late Field Marshal - for they afterwards raised him to the rank of Field Marshal - Sir Henry Wilson did (see report on Conference at page 23).

And now for the two stories, which Sir Henry told us during his lecture, and I give them almost word for word as he told them:-

TWO COCKNEY SOLDIERS AND THEIR SERVICE PAY.

During **Lord Haldane***s tenure of office, as Secretary of State for War in 1909-10 he introduced ‘Service’ Pay, which gave every soldier sixpence extra a day, provided he fulfilled certain conditions, one of which was that he had to be a first class shot.



One day two soldiers, both proper cockneys, belonging to the Middlesex Regiment, were firing the last stage of their Annual Course, the distance being 500 yards, and each of them had one more round to fire, and, in order to get their ‘Service’ pay, all they both had to do was to score an ‘outer’ or in other words, they just had to hit the target and nothing else!

Pte. White - ‘Clinker’ White they called him in the Battalion - was the first to fire and after taking a long and careful aim he pulled the

trigger and got an ‘inner’, which made him a first class shot and gave him his ‘Service’ pay.

Jumping up and with a smile of triumph all over his face, he said: "That's got you beat Mister ‘Aldane!!!" and saying that he returned to his pals behind the firing point.

In the meantime the other man, Pte. Richards, a fat chubby little man and known throughout the Regiment as ‘Tubby’ Richards, was getting ready for his final round and perspiring freely and taking a very long aim - much longer than ‘Clinker’ White had taken - he finally pulled the trigger only to see the bullet strike the ground just about thirty yards in front of him, and then go ‘ricochetting’ all the way up the range, finally plastering the target all over with everything it had picked up on the way, and, of course, counting the same as a ‘miss’!!

The moment ‘Tubby’ saw what had happened, he came out with an unmentionable oath, and turning to his pals and with his thumb over his shoulder, pointing up the range, he said: "There goes me _____pie (pay)! ‘Op! ‘Op!! ‘Oppin’ to _____!!!"

THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

A soldier with three wound stripes on his sleeve was listening one day during the Great War to a Conscientious Objector holding forth in the vicinity of Marble Arch. After a bit the soldier demanded of the orator why he wasn’t in khaki.

"I am not one of the militarists," rejoined the Conscientious Objector, "I am a soldier of Heaven, and God is my Colonel!"

"That so?" ejaculated the soldier! "Then all I can say is you’re a _____ long way from your barracks!!!"

(Loud cheers from the crowd and collapse of the Conscientious Objector, and certainly very loud cheers from the 300 Officers of the Senior Officers’ School, when Sir Henry told them these two stories at Aldershot, because I was present and heard them!!)

GOD BLESS THEE WHERE SO'ER IN HIS
GREAT UNIVERSE THOU ART TODAY -

Lieut John Clarke Morris, Duke of
Wellington's Regt Att'd Royal Air Force

His medals (bottom of preceding column) - including the Distinguished Service Cross from the extraordinary events of April 21 to 22 in 1916 - were sold this year by London auctioneers Dix Noonan Webb at almost double the top pre-sale estimate.

GREAT WAR MEDALS - THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS: Bill Myers

The Distinguished Service Cross was renamed in October 1914 from the Conspicuous Service Cross - which had been introduced in June 1901. It was for officers and could be awarded posthumously. The ribbon is of equal stripes of dark blue, white and dark blue.



It was awarded 1,983 times during the First World War for "gallantry during active operations against the enemy at sea".

It was not named to the recipient and an unattributed example costs around £900 but one in a medal group to a Furness sailor who stopped the IRA getting 20,000 rifles and a million bullets has sold at auction for £6,000.

When Barrow pensioner William Bee died in 1940 few knew about his role in preventing Ireland being flooded with German guns and ammunition during the First World War. Mr Bee was 79 at the time of his death on March 9 and was from 188 Salthouse Road. The Liverpool-born sailor had chosen Barrow for his retirement after 36 years at sea.



In 1916 Lt William Henry Askew Bee was in the Royal Naval Reserve and in command of the converted steam trawler **Lord Heneage** (above). The trawler played a vital part in the capture of the German auxiliary cruiser Aud, off the south-west coast of Ireland.



The **Aud** (above) started life as the captured Norwegian steamer **Castro** and was due to meet with Irish republican **Sir Roger Casement** to deliver 20,000 rifles, 10 machine guns and a million rounds of ammunition to aid the imminent Easter Rising. The arms cache never reached shore and Casement was later executed for treason.



The Admiralty had been tipped-off about the gun-running intended for Sinn Fein

fighters and that Casement might be on his way to meet with the arms ship as a passenger on the German submarine U22. The intended rendezvous was one mile north-west of Inishtooskert, an uninhabited island at the end of Tralee Bay, County Kerry.

The Aud, commanded by **Lt Karl Spindler**, arrived in the late afternoon of 20 April and waited in vain as U22, commanded by Lieut-Commander Weisbach, mistook it for a British destroyer and withdrew.



Casement left the submarine and was landed with two companions on the beach by a small collapsible boat. Within hours he had been captured.

Lt Bee, then aged 56, on his armed trawler gave a signal to the Aud to 'Stop at once'. The Aud fled with its boilers pushed beyond their safety limits to keep ahead of the Lord Heneage.

The trawler opened fire at long range and kept the Aud in sight until HMS Bluebell arrived and forced the German ship to head for Queenstown.

Before the harbour was reached, the German crew abandoned ship - leaving the Aud to explode and sink.

Lt Bee was born on April 26 in 1860 and first went to sea as a deck hand in 1884. From 1890 he served as master on more than a dozen ships. Following the Aud incident, Lt Bee served with Galway Trawlers in mine-sweeping and patrol and rescue operations.

Norman Eye Morley, who served in the Royal Naval Reserve in both world wars, won the DSC four times - one cross and three bars for the ribbon.

A FAVOURITE POSTCARD: Andrew Brooks

In WW1, the Kingdom of Montenegro was allied with the Triple Alliance in line with King Nicholas' pro-Serbian policy. From January 1916 to October 1918 the country was occupied by Austro-Hungary



A-H). The occupying A-H forces established 18 base post offices, the first in Cetinje in May 1916. This postcard was issued for the occasion of the birthday of His Imperial and Royal Majesty. The Emperor's Fete was held in the Royal Gardens in Cetinje and money was raised for the K.u.K (*Kaiserlich und Koniglich* or Imperial & Royal) Military Widows and Orphans Fund. The postmark is for Cetinje and dated 15/9/17. The two-line cachet (handstamp of a military unit) is for 'K.u.K Militar-Generalgouvernement in Montenegro.'



The capital city, Cetinje only had a population of about 3,000 and in most other towns the population was less than 1,000. The people were largely illiterate and ignored the postal facilities on offer during the occupation.

WESTERN FRONT AND OTHER STRATEGIC EVENTS TIMELINE - 1st JUNE 1917 TO 30th NOVEMBER 1917 (largely based on www.greatwar.co.uk)

Some of the centenary events to the next Despatch are as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|---|---------------|--|
| Jun -17 | | 25 | Battle of Hill 70 (Lens) ends |
| 7 | Battle of Messines (1917) begins | Sep-17 | |
| 8 | Major-General Pershing arrives England | 2 | 1 st German night air raid on UK |
| 13 | Great German daylight air raid on London | 3 | Riga captured by German forces |
| 14 | Battle of Messines ends | 4 | German first in force air raid on London by night |
| 14 | British Admiralty approve scheme for convoying merchant ships | | German submarine bombards Scarborough |
| 21 | Mutiny in Russian Black Sea Fleet | 8 | Gen Kornilov heads revolt against Russian Provisional Government |
| 27 | Provisional Greek Govt declare war on Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey | 10 | Kerenski assumes Dictatorship of Russia declaring Kornilov a traitor |
| 29 | Russia begins Summer Offensive | 12 | 11 th Battle of Isonzo ends |
| Jul-17 | | 14 | Kornilov surrenders to Provisional Government |
| 6 | Aqaba taken by Arab forces | 15 | Russia proclaimed a Republic by Provisional Government |
| 7 | Severe air raid on England | | Battle of Menin Road Ridge begins |
| 9 | HMS Vanguard sunk by internal explosion at Scapa Flow | 20 | Battle of Menin Road Ridge ends |
| 11 | British attack on Ramadi | 26 | Battle of Polygon Wood begins |
| 14 | Bethmann-Holweg, German Chancellor resigns | 29 | British forces take Ramadi (Mesopotamia) |
| 17 | George V changes British royal family name to Windsor | Oct-17 | |
| 18 | German counter-offensive on Eastern Front begins | 3 | Battle of Polygon Wood ends |
| 19 | Reichstag pass peace resolution | 4 | Battle of Broodseinde. Objective gained by ANZAC Corps on day 1 |
| 24 | Stanislau & Tarnopol, Galicia retaken by Austro-German forces | 9 | Battle of Poelcapelle |
| 25 | Allied Conference in Paris discuss probable collapse of Russia | 11 | German operations against Baltic islands begin |
| 31 | Battles of Ypres 1917 begin | 12 | First Battle of Passchendaele |
| Aug-17 | | 15 | Mata Hari shot at dawn nr Paris |
| 1 | Gen. Kornilov succeeds Brusilov as Russian Commander-in-Chief | 17 | German cruisers attack North Sea convoy (see report) |
| 2 | Battle of Pilkem Ridge ends | 19 | Squadron of 11 German airships attack England (see report) |
| 9 | Count Esterhazy, Hungarian Premier resigns | 20 | Germans complete conquest of Baltic islands |
| 14 | China declares war on Germany | 23 | Battle of La Malmaison begins |
| 15 | Battle of Hill 70 (Lens) | 24 | 12 th Battle of Isonzo begins (Austro-German offensive) |
| 16 | Battle of Langemarck 1917 begins | | Second Battle of Passchendaele begins |
| 17 | Italy begins 11 th Battle of Isonzo | 26 | Third Battle of Gaza begins |
| 18 | Battle of Langemarck 1917 ends | 27 | Austro-German forces capture Gorizia & Udine |
| 20 | French commence "Second Offensive Battle" of Verdun | 28 | |
| 22 | Last German day air raid on UK | | |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 31 | Battle of Beersheba begins (part of 3 rd Battle of Gaza see 27 th) |
| Nov-17 | |
| 1 | Battle of La Malmaison ends |
| 2 | Raid by British light naval forces on Kattegat |
| 3 | French troops arrive in Italy |
| 4 | British troops arrive in Italy |
| 6 | Passchendaele captured by British (Canadian) forces |
| | Tikrit (Mesopotamia) occupies by British forces |
| 7 | 3 rd Battle of Gaza ends |
| | Inception of Supreme War Council |
| 8 | Bolshevik coup d'etat, Lenin & Trotski assume power |
| 10 | 2 nd Battle of Passchendaele ends |

| | |
|----|---|
| 11 | Austro-German forces reach River Piave |
| 16 | Jaffa (Palestine) taken by British forces |
| | General Maude C-in-C Mesopotamia dies at Baghdad |
| 20 | Battle of Cambrai begins |
| 21 | Armistice talks begun by Bolshevik Govt with Central Powers |
| 27 | Members of Supreme War Council appointed (inc Gen Sir H H Wilson) |
| 30 | German counter-attacks at Cambrai begin |

THIS IS MY BELOVED SON -
Private A Simm, Manchester Regiment

MUSEUM REPORTS

Firstly short reports are appropriate regarding the future of 2 museums.

Lancashire Infantry Museum, Preston: The Ministry of Defence (MoD) have confirmed that, despite public outcry, the 169-year-old garrison barracks will close by 2022. But thankfully the MoD have promised to find a new home for the Lancashire infantry Museum when the Barracks close.

In his letter to Preston City Council, Mark Lancaster the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence says *"the MoD recognises the historical significance of Fulwood Barracks and the long-standing connection the local community has with the military and the Lancashire Infantry Museum. I am pleased to confirm the Lancashire Infantry Museum will be reprovided for when the barracks close in 2022."*

Museum of Lancashire, Preston: It is the aspiration of various parties to reopen the museum and discussions are in progress to achieve that end.

Liverpool Scottish Regimental Museum Trust: Ian Riley

We continue to receive a larger number of queries than has been usual and hope that by the end of 2018 this may start to ease off. However time-consuming these may be, they are almost invariably interesting and bring us into contact with a wide range of people, not all with family contacts with the Liverpool Scottish.

Firstly, our website www.liverpoolscottish.org.uk has been redrafted and revamped through the indefatigable efforts of our Honorary Webmaster, Mike Parsons, and we are very grateful to him for his efforts in completing this extensive and challenging task and in continuing to update it.

In the last six months we have met with the grandson of a past commanding officer from WW1, **Lt-Col DCD Munro**, who had joined the



Gordon Highlanders from the Royal Marine Light Infantry in 1903 as a private soldier. He won the Distinguished Conduct Medal at Neuve Chapelle in 1915; was commissioned and awarded the Military Cross for action in the Somme campaign and later seconded to command the 1st Bn of the Liverpool Scottish (ie 1/10th King's Liverpool Regiment) in 1918, being awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his part in the Battle of Festubert in April 1918.

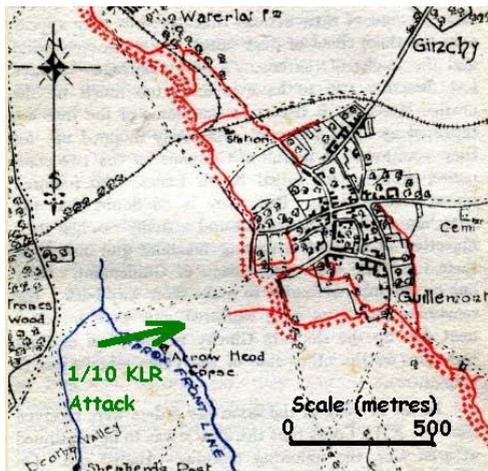


In recent weeks we have been visited by Mr Ken Moore, the son of **Pte George Moore** who served from January 1915 to 1919 in France and Flanders with the Liverpool Scottish.

Mr Moore made light of his 96 years (he still drives) in coming up the stairs to our office, bearing his father's brief but interesting diary from 1917. We hazarded a guess that his father might have led such a charmed life over four years of active service on the Western Front by possibly being in the Transport Section and immediately he produced a photo of his father wearing a leather bandolier. It should be remembered that the drivers of the transport section frequently brought op rations and supplies to the front over open roads (or no roads or tracks at all).

We have continued to contribute articles to the Reserve Forces and Cadet Association (RFCA) quarterly magazine, *Volunteer*. The general theme is coverage of the Territorial units of the NW of England in WW1 and the last couple of editions have looked at the 55th (West Lancashire) Division in September 1916 east of Guillemont and at their entry into the Ypres Salient in October 1916 and into the spring of 1917 when they were preparing for the Passchendaele Campaign.

The following extract from a letter the Assistant Adjutant of 1/10th KLR (2Lt GD Morton MC) wrote on 22 September 1916 to his CO (Lieutenant-Colonel JR Davidson CMG, wounded at Guillemont and by then in the UK) describes what must have been a harrowing aspect of their activities. Morton had ended up temporarily commanding the battalion at Guillemont in August after 19 officers became casualties and had since walked over the ground of that battle:



"I'm training and putting the wind up a draft of 70 of our own men and 14 officers so I have my hands full ... took a stroll over to Guillemont, quite interesting to see the ground we charged over, it has all changed. ... We searched the ground for any clue [of missing officers and others] but found none. It is an awful mess, and for yourself alone, Colonel, some of our men have not even been buried yet, and are nothing else but bones. I'm glad to say we got 2 definite marks of identification relating to two soldiers.

We presently have the centenary of the Battle of Pilckem Ridge in focus (31st July 2017), the opening attack of the Passchendaele campaign (Third Battle of Ypres) and the centenary of the posthumous

THE SPLENDOUR OF YOUR YOUTH YOU
GAVE
- 2nd Lieut W Varley RGA

award of a second Victoria Cross to Captain Noel Chavasse RAMC, the Medical Officer of the 1st Bn, The Liverpool Scottish. A small party will be joining RAMC representatives and members of the Belgian Medical Services in Yper/leper on 4th August for a commemorative event in Brandhoek and a graveside act of commemoration at Brandhoek New Military Cemetery, together with family members.

The commemoration in Liverpool is scheduled for Tuesday 29th August and will involve the dedication of the Chavasse VC paving stone, a commemorative service and a Last Light Vigil near the Liverpool VC Statue that shows **Noel Chavasse with**



casualty and stretcher bearer. This is on the campus of the University of Liverpool.

These events are provisional as yet and timings subject to confirmation; we will maintain an information page at www.liverpoolscottish.org.uk

The articles from *Volunteer* magazine covering the period from the summer of 1914 (some in expanded form) can be found at <http://www.liverpoolscottish.org.uk/index.php?page=magazine-articles>

The complete current issue of *Volunteer* magazine can be found through the RFCA website at <http://www.nwrfca.org.uk/news-events/volunteer-magazine/>

Lancashire Infantry Museum - Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Hindle DSO 1/4th Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment: Jane Davies, Curator

Located in the Lancashire Infantry Museum is the memorial plaque given to the relatives of **Lieutenant**

Colonel Ralph Hindle DSO, who was killed in action on the 30th November 1917. Hindle was the Commanding Officer of the 1/4th Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire



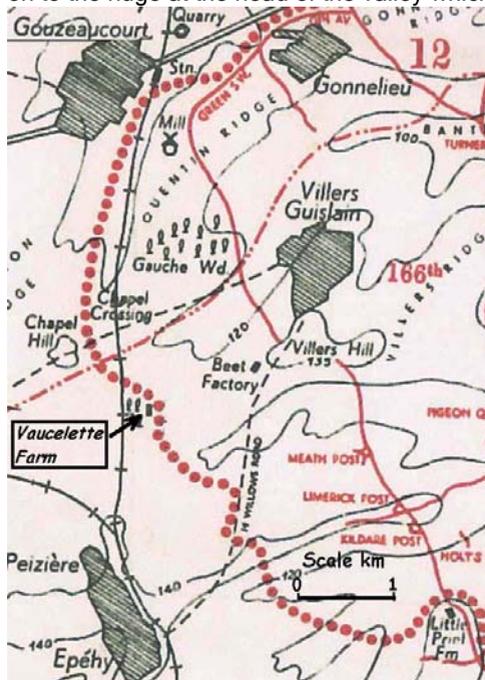
Regiment from the beginning of 1915 until his death during the Battle of Cambrai.

The Battle of Cambrai started on the 20th November 1917. With the use of massed tanks and new artillery techniques, all began well. Large tracts of land were taken by the British. The 55th Division's task, of which the 1/4th Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment were part of, was to 'contain the Germans in its front and prevent them from moving troops to the assistance of their forces further north'. The operation was a success and the Germans were prevented from diverting troops from elsewhere.

On the 29th November the 1/4th Battalion marched to Vaucellette Camp (see map overleaf), just behind the ruins of a farm bearing the same name. At this point the 55th Division were holding a front of 13,000 yards, supported by only two brigades of Field

Artillery. The History of the 55th Division states 'This wide frontage could not of course be continually held; it consisted of Platoon posts, connected by communication trenches, and distributed in depth so far as circumstances allowed. But with such a wide front an effective distribution in depth was impossible with the troops available.'

At 7.00am on the 30th November a heavy German bombardment broke out across the whole of the 55th Division's front. Through the thick fog the German's began their advance. After receiving news of the advance from the Battalion's Intelligence Officer, Lieutenant Fazackerley, Lieutenant Colonel Hindle instructed his Company Commanders on which positions to take. The 1/4th Battalion's intentions were to hold on to the ridge at the head of the valley which



ran along the edge of Villers Guislain which would prevent the Germans from taking the strategically important Chapel Hill.

At 11.00am the battalion was ordered to advance in extended order to clear the enemy from Villers Hill. Hindle led his men

from the front. Firing from the hip, the 1/4th Battalion advanced. Just 200 yards short of the top of the hill they ran short of ammunition and were confronted by more German soldiers. Lieutenant Colonel Hindle was killed. The Adjutant ordered the Battalion to withdraw to Vaucelle Farm where defensive positions were taken. At 1.00am on the 1st December the Battalion was finally relieved.

A letter received by the G.O.C. 164th Infantry Brigade from the G.O.C. 55th Division said 'I saw the Corps Commander today, and he said that they (the 1/4th Battalion) had saved the situation. He had seen the Commander-in-Chief and he had agreed.' The Battalion had checked the German advance and prevented them from taking a position that would have endangered many British lives. Over the course of that day, 3 Officers were killed, 6 were injured, 11 Other Ranks were killed, 84 were wounded and 15 were reported missing.

Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Hindle DSO is buried in Unicorn Cemetery, Vendhuile. In later years, the 4th Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment found many ways to remember the men who had died serving their country during World War One. The men are commemorated by a set of silver drums currently held by the 4th Battalion of the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment at Kimberley Barracks, Preston. One of the Side Drum's is specifically dedicated to the memory of Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Hindle DSO.

Editor's Note: A good report on the Cambrai operations, 1917 (Battle of Cambrai), drawing attention to short-comings in the British planning can be found at: <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/battles/battles-of-the-western-front-in-france-and-flanders/the-cambrai-operations-1917-battle-of-cambrai/>

LOCAL SOLDIERS ON ICONIC WW1 IMAGES

Since the last Despatch my attention has been attracted to 3 individuals on iconic photographs.

Boesinghe Stretcher Bearers



A particularly popular image is that of a team of stretcher bearers struggling through deep mud to carry a wounded man to safety near Boesinghe on 1 August 1917 during the Third Battle of Ypres (Imperial War Museum (IWM) ref Q5935). When processing Ian Riley's article I looked at the RFCA website he mentions at the bottom of page 17 and the news page revealed that the soldier in the centre of the photograph, facing the camera is William Barker from Chorley. He was the manager of the grocery department at Chorley Co-operative Society and enlisted in the town on the 28th August 1915 at Lancaster House, Devonshire Road - still an Army Reserve centre today, and home to 64 Medical Squadron 3 Medical Regiment.

According to Steve Williams, who set up the *Chorley in the Great War Group* and provided the information to the RFCA, he is in contact with William Barker's descendants. William Barker was aged 34 when he enlisted and was married with three young children. He was initially posted to the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) Training Centre in

Sheffield as Private 67160 before being attached to 5 Company, travelling to France on the 9 November 1915 with the 96th (County Palatine) Field Ambulance. His unit was with the 30th Division on the Somme on 1 July 1916, supporting the Manchester and Liverpool Pals as they attacked the village of Montauban. At the end of September 1917 he was admitted to No. 14 General Hospital at Wimereux on the Channel Coast having sustained a fracture to the left forearm, resulting in him being treated at Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley before returning to the Front a few months later. William was discharged from the Army on 24 May 1919 with his last unit being recorded as 19 Company RAMC.

According to the IWM, two other men of the seven carrying the stretcher through the mud have now been identified - Private Cecil Hawkins (106th Field Ambulance) is third from the left and George Tite (46th Field Ambulance) extreme right with gas mask on his chest. The photograph was taken by official photographer Lt J.W. Brooke.

Walking Wounded, Bernafay Wood



Steve Williams has also drawn to my attention to the above WW1 image (IWM ref. Q800) which contains a Chorley man. The British soldier with the bandaged knee (2nd from right) is Pte. 20691 Richard George Wood of the 8th Bn. East Lancashire

Regiment (8EL) - he was born in Chorley in 1897 and died in the town in 1974.

The photographer is Lt. Ernest Brooks and the IWM caption is "Battle of Bazentin Ridge 14 -17 July: Five British and German walking wounded, injured in their arms and legs, on the way to a dressing station near Bernafay Wood". Also, IWM state that it was "made by Lt. Brooks on the 19th July 1916" (it may not have been taken on that date but the 'plate' / photograph may have been processed then).

The 8EL war diary states they attacked the village of Pozieres on the 15th July on the Contalmaison Road and met with heavy machine gun fire around Contalmaison Wood and dug in at the Chalk Pit, just north of the wood and road (and 300 yards from Pozieres); they then withdrew to support trenches at 2.30 a.m. on the 16th July and then to Behencourt, well behind the lines.

Entrance into Lille



On 2 March Judith Beastall of the Merseyside WFA sent me a copy of their January and March 2017 newsletters entitled *Cheerio*. In the March copy was the famous photo of Private Arthur John O'Hare 307465 of the 8th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment carrying his Lewis machine gun when entering Lille on 18 October 1918. The photo was taken by 2nd Lieut David McLellan and a black/white image is held by the Imperial War

Museum Ref Q9579. At some stage a copy of the image has been tinted

Arthur was born on the 26th May 1896 in Birkenhead and was the son of James and Agnes O'HARE. He had three sisters Rose, Katie and Agnes. Arthur O'HARE survived the war and died peacefully in 1986, aged 90 years.

AT REST HOW CALM HE SLUMBERS
THERE AND FREE FROM EVERY CARE

Gunner Fredrick Charles Munday, Royal
Field Artillery

PHILANTHROPY AND VOLUNTARY ACTION IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Shortly after appearance of my article in last January's *Stand To!* about General Sir John Steven Cowans, who was Quartermaster-General (QMG) to the British army throughout WW1, I received an email from Dr Peter Grant (PG) of the Cass Business School commenting favourably on it. He went on to say: "*I entirely agree with your estimation of his qualities. You might be interested in the part Cowans played in the 'comforts crisis' (as I termed it) of 1915 which I covered in my book 'Philanthropy and Voluntary Action in the First World War'. Cowans comes out of the 'scandal' very well unlike Lt-Gen Ronald Maxwell the QMG in France.*"



The price of PG's book is an "eye-watering" £75.55 on Amazon but thoughtfully he posted some of his book's key themes on the internet and kindly let me have a copy of Chapter 5 concerning the "Comfort's Crisis". Subsequently I also obtained a copy of the book on inter-library loan.

In addition to the massive numbers of men who volunteered to fight, PG reports there was a massive increase in charitable voluntary action to support soldiers at the front with comforts and medical supplies. However this brought problems of coordination, issues about whether the items collected or sent matched the needs of troops and with quality control since not all charities produced their goods to high standards.

In summary, by 1915 Maxwell as QMG in France took the view that the requirements of the troops at the front had been met, but Sir Jack took a more measured approach, since there were some shortages in some units. Sir Jack considered what the War Office could do to solve the problem and remove public criticism. This led to **Sir Edward Willis Duncan Ward** taking the post of Director General of Voluntary



Organizations (DGVO). His task was “co-ordinating the work of the various committees and individuals now engaged in supplying comforts and luxuries for the troops and of directing into the most useful channels their kindly energies”.

According to PG, the appointment of Ward was a masterstroke. He was probably the only person who combined an intimate knowledge of the armed forces, with a commitment to efficient management and a compassionate understanding of voluntary effort. Ward had been in charge of supplies during the siege of Ladysmith, afterwards was Director of Supplies to the army in South Africa and from 1901 to 1914 was Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War. One task he undertook was compilation of the original ‘War Book’ which laid the basis for mobilization in 1914.

After discussions with Sir Jack and **Lieut-Gen Frederick Clayton** (c/o RLC Museum), the Inspector-General of Communications in France, Ward set up a ‘Comforts Pool’ in each theatre of war in charge of the Military Forwarding Officer (MFO). The method of operation was:



1. The MFO advised the DGVO of the troops needs in each theatre obtaining their information from Commanding Officers of individual units.
2. The DGVO assembled these needs through the network of voluntary organizations under his auspices requesting supplies from each according to its capacity.
3. The organizations made fortnightly returns to the DGVO notifying him of any problems thus ensuring the DGVO was kept up to date with the capacity of the individual bodies.
4. The DGVO organized transport to the required destinations ensuring supplies were earmarked for the units the local volunteers wished them to go to.
5. MFOs made weekly returns to the DGVO of supplies received and what they had sent to units.

The MFOs also informed all units about the ‘Comforts Pool’ and its operation thus obviating direct requests to the home front and achieving control at senior army level where none had previously existed.

From these reports Ward was able to inform local voluntary organizations that their items had reached the right destination thus maintaining the bonds of mutual aid and community existing between individual organizations and ‘their’ troops. The comforts pool was especially successful in speeding deliveries to units, reducing shortages and elimination of complaints to Sir Jack. Ward’s department also coordinated a

similar scheme to provide supplies to the sick and wounded in hospitals.

As well as the Cowans connection some of the case studies in PG's book were of particular interest. These included a letter from Private Astell of 1st East Lancs about his dog at home and saving dogs during his retreat from Mons. Also, the fund raising by Amy Foster and Jenny Jackson, two young girls who lived in Burnley.

Dr Grant goes on to say that his main conclusions about philanthropy and voluntary action in the war are all in complete opposition to the received opinions about wartime charity:

First, the war provided a new impetus to voluntarism based upon the principle of mutual aid. There was a profusion of small, local organizations providing support for the troops of their town, village or workplace.

Second, the First World War contributed towards an increased professionalization of the charity sector. Only after the war were social workers regularly paid and turned from amateurs into professionals and many modern fund-raising techniques were invented or expanded.

Thirdly, there was then a greater movement towards democratisation in the post-war voluntary sector as well as moves into new areas and greater use of business principles. These changes were clearly influenced by what had happened during the war, not least Edward Ward's DGVO.

Finally, and most importantly, charitable and philanthropic activities played a major role in helping Britain win the war. It provided Britain with a distinct advantage over her main adversary, Germany, in the reservoir of social capital on which it was able to draw.

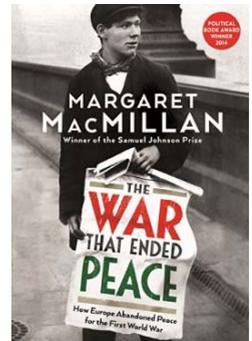


Voluntary action in Britain during the war acted as an integrating mechanism between social classes that helped initiate changes in the relationship between 'top-down' philanthropy and 'bottom-up' mutual aid and this trend continued into the post-war period. Voluntary action contributed significantly both to maintaining morale at home (a visible sign of 'pulling ones weight') and with troops and prisoners of war.

Dr Grant's article on the internet can be seen here:

<http://www.vahs.org.uk/2014/04/philanthropy-and-voluntary-action-in-the-first-world-war/>

THE WAR THAT ENDED PEACE - HOW EUROPE ABANDONED PEACE FOR THE FIRST WORLD WAR by Margaret MacMillan (Political Book Award Winner 2014): Paul Conlon



I am full of admiration for the huge effort and painstaking work that it must have taken to produce this impressive and fascinating treatment of the long path taken to the First World War.

The author deals with one topic in each chapter and so this is not a chronological account of the events. The author also assumes no prior knowledge of the political history of Europe which was the right start point for me. I appreciated the book format as each chapter can be read and digested before moving on to the next. It did however need a fair bit of effort as I worked through the book to tie all the people and events by regularly going back to refresh the memory on earlier chapters.

I usually focus my attention on events on the Western Front, however the question of

how Europe ended up in a major war fascinated me. Other things I have seen and read tended to present events after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. At times it felt rather like reading a novel when you know the ending however that is a personal observation not a criticism of this highly acclaimed work.

Would I recommend this book?

The answer is yes but with a reader understanding the significant task that they are undertaking.

'NEW PLANS AND NEW ALLIES: 1917' - FIRST WORLD WAR RESEARCH GROUP

On the last Saturday in February I headed south to Wolverhampton University with Paul Conlon and Ian Riley to attend the above conference and report some of the key points

The first speaker was Professor Stephen Badsey who spoke for over an hour to the title 'British Remobilisation in 1917: a Revolution in Grand Strategy. In 1917 Hindenburg concluded his army could not win the war and retreated to the Hindenburg line on the Western Front and turned to the German navy to bring him victory through unrestricted submarine warfare. Simultaneously Great Britain, who for centuries had relied on its navy to bring it victory, concluded it was losing the war at sea and looked to its army to win the war. This led to the Battle of 3rd Ypres and Passchendaele.

Dr Paul Latawski spoke about the effect of the war on Poland and their aspiration to gain independent statehood after being partitioned by Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia in the 19th Century. When WW1 commenced Poles were conscripted to serve with the three partitioning powers which led to Poles fighting Poles. Much of the fighting took place in Poland having a bad effect on industry, infrastructure and agriculture. The internationalization of the Polish question

from 1917, the revolution in Russia and defeat of Germany and Austria-Hungary set the conditions for the creation of an independent Poland.

John Spencer from the University of Wolverhampton spoke about the creation of the Supreme War Council in 1917. He commenced by outlining the positions held by Henry Wilson (HW) during WW1 to mid 1917 and the progress of the war under Haig as commander of the BEF and Robertson as Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS). HW produced a report to the War Cabinet in October 1917 setting out his thoughts on how the war could be won including the need for a strategy making body. This led to the establishment of the Supreme War Council with HW as Great Britain's permanent military representative until February 1918 when Robertson was forced out and HW became CIGS.

The informative day ended with a panel discussion involving the day's speakers with Prof Badsey remarking that those thinking the shooting ended on 11 November 1918 should check out the Battle of Warsaw in 1920 which stopped the spread of communism to Europe.

BRANCH AFFAIRS



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Eric Finlayson

In mid February I received a telephone call from relatives of Eric Finlayson, a longstanding and regular attendee of



our meetings until shortly before his death on 3rd July 2016. They requested I look at various WW1 related items that had

belonged to Eric which they wished to dispose of.

Shortly after, Paul Conlon and I visited them and viewed Eric's collection which consisted of books, medals, helmets, paintings (prints), photos, postcards. They very kindly offered to donate the items to support our Branch. Paul has undertaken the major role by selling via Ebay and at the time of writing this report the remaining 15 prints are with auctioneers for disposal.

It is estimated the total that will be raised for Branch will be about £1600. I have spoken several times with Eric's family to report on disposal of his collection and a copy of this Despatch has been sent to them with a letter of thanks.

MEETING REPORTS

The War at Home : November 2016 (16 attended)

The subject was tackled with almost machine-gun efficiency as **Tim Lynch** rattled off story after story and fact after fact on this important aspect of the Great War. Although I cannot claim any statistical proof it does seem that for every book that has been written on the Home Front in this war there have been a hundred written on other aspects of the conflict.

Tim held our interest with his excellent presentation and although some of the topics he touched on were well known to members eg. North East coast raids, Zeppelin attacks and the handing out of 'White Feathers' the majority of his talk included many incidents which were certainly new to me and which would probably have gone unreported at the time for fear of weakening the nations morale.

The role of women formed a considerable part of Tim's talk and although the suffragette movement was very active and militant in 1914 it became more important as the war

progressed for women to take over men's jobs in many areas such as driving buses, flying aeroplanes and becoming postal workers. One of the more hazardous jobs was working in the munitions factories but it was here that, with the money they earned, they were able to afford lipstick!

In the period leading up to the war there had been over 300 novels published on the subject of invasion by a foreign power. One book by William McHugh had the invasion force landing at Goole. The Zeppelin scare was real and people were told to put out their lights and stay indoors. It was also illegal to turn someone away from using your cellar in an air raid. There were even rumours about a Zeppelin hiding in the Lake District. Still on the subject, Eric Bentley Bauman flying a Farman F 40 was told that he was London's Air Defence and if he had the chance he was to ram a Zeppelin. Blind people were provided with ear trumpets to listen for aeroplanes and in an unfortunate incident two boys were drowned on a ferry when people rushed to one side to see bomb holes from a Zeppelin raid.

Boy Scouts were sent out to guard bridges, railway lines and tunnels and on occasions given guns. One scoutmaster covered 70 miles a day visiting his scouts who were guarding reservoirs.

Tim entertained us with many more stories but closed with a sobering thought about the Home Front. It was that more people died in one week in Sheffield ('Spanish' Flu) than the Sheffield Pals lost in the entire period of the war. (Andrew Brooks)

HIS MEMORY IS ONE OF LIFE'S
SWEETEST TREASURES
- Pte H L Johnson Duke of Wellington's
Regt

AGM: December 2016 (12 attended)

Stan Wilkinson agreed to continue as Chairman for the coming year but gave notice he would not continue thereafter. Graham Kemp (Secretary) and Fiona Bishop (Treasurer) retained their posts for the next 12 months.

On closure of the AGM Stan Wilkinson paraded his rifle with practice bayonet and Paul Conlon acted as the dummy in Stan's demonstration. Following Stan's exploits Graham Kemp gave an entertaining presentation about Geoffrey Spencer-Simson, the oldest Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy, who took two small gunboats which he named *Toutou* and *Mimi* on a naval expedition to retake Lake Tanganika from the Germans. (TD)

The British Dead - Their Story: January 2017 (14 attended)

David Wright volunteered to do this talk at short notice and based it on a book that he was reading at the time. It is a grim topic but not one that can be ignored.

Rudyard Kipling showed the public attitude to the common soldier pre-war. They were considered scum however this attitude had changed by the end of the war. The loss of his son changed Kipling's attitude.

The first and last soldiers to fall were shown with the last British soldier falling at 9.30 on 11 November 1918. British, French and Germans honoured their fallen differently. David showed the German method namely the black crosses of the dead - seen as fortresses' of the dead.

Constructing the cemeteries and memorials was the biggest project since the Pharaohs' time. German memorials are not standardised which is unexpected in contrast to the British approach.

David gave a detailed account of the role played by Sir Fabian Ware who was an

immensely talented, ambitious individual. He was a true patriot and whilst his motivations were unclear his strong religious background may have driven his work. He was fluent in French and worked closely with the French throughout his work. The 1915 Grave Registration Commission focused on recording graves prior to the Imperial War Graves Commission being established on 21 May 1917.

Ware was given the rank of major and basically brought the Red Cross and Royal Automobile Club into the army. He persuaded the French to donate the land. Post war the antagonists Lutyens and Blomfield vied to play the lead role in the designs of cemeteries and memorials.

The Kenyon report brought agreement on 4 principles: uniform headstones; no distinction on rank, race or creed; all names recorded; and permanent memorials. (Paul Conlon)

General Sir John Steven Cowans : A Winning War Genius: February 2017 (20 attended)

Terry Dean delivered a very informative talk about General Sir John Stevens Cowans whom he described as an outstanding Quartermaster General who was greatly approved of by Lloyd George.

Born near Carlisle, he lived close to Lancaster for part of his childhood at Hall Garth, Over Kellett where he resided with his aunt. In early 1877 he attended Dr. Burney's Royal Academy at Gosport and then attended Sandhurst where he graduated with Distinction in 1880.

From March 1881 he was stationed in India but had to return home in 1883 as he was suffering from the climate. In 1884 he married Eva May Coulson and was posted to Burma in 1886. He returned to England in 1887 to postings at Woolwich and Fort Burgoyne, Dover.

From 1892 he was involved in War Office Mobilisation schemes and in September 1894 became Brigade Major to 2nd Infantry Brigade at Aldershot for nearly 3 years. In 1898 he was promoted to Major and shortly after had a key role at the War Office supporting Kitchener's Nile Expedition then the Boer War. Promoted Lieutenant Colonel in 1900, then Colonel in 1903 at Aldershot he was once again in India from 1906 working under Lord Kitchener.

He returned to England on leave in March 1910 as a Major General and accepted Lord Haldane's offer to become Director General of the Territorial Force. In June 1912 he became Quartermaster-General and the third Military Member of the Army Council at the early age of 50 and in 1913 he became 'Sir Jack' when he was knighted.

Terry then told how Sir Jack oversaw the mobilisation plan which delivered the BEF to France in 1914 and went on to describe the gigantic task he undertook over the next 4 or so years. To give an idea of the logistics involved in this role - pre WW1 the strength of the forces being fed was 164,000 and by November 1918 this had multiplied almost 33 times to 5,363,352.

In August 1918 Sir Jack was hospitalised but soon returned to his desk to ensure his Department's contribution to the Advance to Victory. He was promoted to General in the 1919 New Year's Honours and retired several months later. In Sept 1919 he was awarded the Freedom of the City of Carlisle.

He was again hospitalised in November 1920 for an operation and sadly died on 16th April 1921 at the young age of 59. He was buried nine days later on 25th April in Kensal Green Cemetery with full military honours. (Fiona Bishop)

(Note: Details about Sir Jack and his work can be found in Despatch Issues 15 and 16; and Stand To!, Number 108.)

Battlefield Medicine in the First World War: March 2017 (22 attended)

Dr Leslie Wright opened her talk by contrasting the rate of fire achieved by a muzzle loaded musket at Waterloo in 1805 of four shots a minute compared to the 600 bullets per minute achieved by a machine gun in the Battle of the Somme and the consequent havoc wreaked on the human body which prompted the development of new equipment and techniques. She reported that of the nearly 2.3 million wounded soldiers 64% returned to duty, 18% recovered to undertake "light" duties, 8% were discharged and 7% died of wounds. Leg wounds were the most common and whilst just 12% of wounds were to the torso many hit never made it off the battlefield.

She described the evacuation chain for wounded from the battlefield via aid posts near the front line to dressing stations thence to Casualty Clearing Stations (CCS) located several miles to the rear. From a CCS the more seriously wounded would be transported by rail, barge or motor ambulance to Base hospitals near the coast or direct to hospital ships for evacuation to England.

She then went on to describe the nature of wounds and sicknesses; the treatments developed including blood transfusions and surgical procedures and ended by showing examples of serious facial injuries and how they were ameliorated. (TD)

Sailors Take to the Air: April 2017 (18 attended)

During a historic evening at the North Lancashire Branch which featured the retirement of our enthusiastic and long-standing Chairman, Stan Wilkinson, his successor in that position, Dr Graham Kemp, gave his "inaugural lecture" on the foundation of naval aviation in the early 20th Century.

Although a 1907 naval report had concluded that planes would be of no practical use to the Royal Navy, advances in aviation by 1910 had persuaded Admiral Jellicoe and other significant 'players' (including Winston Churchill) that there would be merit in exploring options and a Naval Flying School was established at Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey, where planes were made available for the use of naval officers. Later in the development of the Service, Cranwell also became an important pilot-training base.

The development of naval aviation was not for the faint-hearted. Amongst the original models of planes used were 'Hydroplanes' which had the capacity to take off from *terra firma* and could land in water, but in the early years could not always take off again. Improvements in design led to a resolution of that problem, but further challenges emerged. These included the need to redesign naval vessels to accommodate planes, and to permit their take-off. In 1912 the Beardmore Proposal set out plans for a parent ship for naval aeroplanes, or 'Seaplanes' as they were encouraged to be called after Winston Churchill's intervention. The first successful flight from a moving ship took place from HMS Hibernia.

The Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) was founded in 1914 shortly before the onset of the First World War, under the leadership of Commander Charles Sampson, and based at Eastchurch. The most important targets for the Service were Zeppelins and their manufacturing and storage sheds. On 25 December 1914, 9 RNAS planes were due to take part in an observation raid to Cuxhaven, location of a German submarine base and much of the High Seas Fleet. Seven planes managed to get airborne, and 2 returned to land. The remainder ditched in the North Sea where English Submarines were positioned to rescue the pilots. Rescue by the Royal Navy was not always achievable. On those

occasions where pilots survived their watery-landing, they could find themselves in the hands of the enemy or, if they were more fortunate were rescued by boats whose home port was in neutral territory. From this position some pilots were promptly returned to the UK on declaring themselves as 'distressed mariners'.

Sqdr. Cmdr E. H. Dunning attempting to land his



Sopwith Pup on HMS Furious, 7 August 1917.
He was killed when his aircraft veered off the flight deck and into the sea

The first successful landing of an RNAS plane on a ship did not occur until 1918 by which time significant advances had occurred in the technical development of the military planes used (particularly those manufactured by Sopwith and Short Bros) and in the naval vessels that were adapted for aviation use. In addition some success was achieved later in the war in bombing Zeppelin sheds (e.g. in the Tondern Raid). The implementation of aircraft-carried torpedoes as weapons against enemy sea-going vessels, however, occurred too late to be available before hostilities ceased in November 1918.

Graham's thoroughly-researched talk, liberally scattered as usual with relevant anecdotes, was well received by the audience. (Chris Payne)

GOD HIS HOLY ANGELS HAVE
GAINED WHAT WE HAVE LOST -
Private George William Hughes
Machine Gun Corps (Inf)



GILBERT ROGERS (c/o Sally Enzer, who provided his story to the Imperial War Museum's Lives of the First World War) was born in Freshfields, Formby in 1881 and studied at the City of Liverpool School of Art. He was a successful portrait painter in Liverpool prior to the Great War. He enlisted as a Private in the Royal Army Medical Corps on 5th November 1915 aged 34 and was immediately sent to the RAMC Training Camp in Eastbourne. He then completed pre-deployment training in Codford, Wiltshire and

joined 'N' Company, 35 Coy RAMC.

In 1918 he was tasked with managing a group of RAMC private soldiers, all professional artists and sculptors prior to hostilities, to document the medical history of the war and the war work of the RAMC. In July 1918 he returned to France in this capacity, to brief artists, choose locations and to make preparatory drawings for his own work. On their return from the front, the artists worked from studios in Fulham in London and produced approximately six hundred paintings,



The RAMC at Messines during the 1917 Offensive

sculptures and models featuring war work both at home and overseas. Many of the works were exhibited at the Great War Exhibition, Crystal Palace, Sydenham Hill, in June 1920 as part of the newly formed Imperial War Museum. Gilbert Rogers was awarded a Military MBE in the Peace Gazette of June 1919 for his work on this art project. After producing his most memorable work during this war period, he ceased to paint for the rest of his life.

PROGRAMME OF FUTURE MEETINGS (FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7.30 PM)

June 5th: *The British Army in Mesopotamia* - Paul Knight

July 3rd: *India's Great War* - Adam Prime

Aug 7th: To be announced

Sept 4th: *They Shoot Spies - the untold story of the first female agents* - Dr Viv. Newman

Oct 2nd: *Organisation of Defeat - British Army 1918* - Simon Justice

Nov 6th: *Forgotten Germans of the Great War - the story of the German Spies executed in the Tower of London: their activities, their capture, their imprisonment and their execution* - Barry Kitchener

Dec 4th: *A.G.M. and Christmas Social* - An invitation to members to speak for 10 minutes on any WW1 topic

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