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1st Border Regt. Cap Badge
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The photograph on the front cover is of the North-American Rockwell OV-10 'Bronco' light attack aircraft operated by US Forces during the Vietnam War. The example seen is now operated by the Belgian Bronco Demo Team from Kortrijk –Wevelgem Aerodrome and is in the special commemorative livery applied at the start of 2017. The photograph was taken by the editor at the Duxford Air Festival in May 2017.

From the Editor

With 2018 now here, we are commemorating the centenary of the final year of the Great War. For the last four years ceremonies, and other commemorative events, seem mainly to have concentrated on battles that have been considered, with the benefit of hindsight, as Allied failures (if not outright defeats). Even for battles that might have been considered a success, such as the Battle of Jutland, commemorations seemed to concentrate on the loss of life, rather than the positive aspects.

At Jutland the German High Seas Fleet was, if not beaten, at least taught that another attempt at a major fleet action in the North Sea was likely to be an extremely costly exercise. The result was that it spent the rest of the war in harbour, only emerging for brief raids. One of those was the Second Battle of Heligoland Bight, on 17th November 1917, when a force of containing the light battle cruisers (*HMS Courageous*, *HMS Glorious*, and *HMS Repulse*), eight light cruisers (including *HMS Caledon*, with my paternal grandfather on board), and their attached destroyers attempted to ambush a group of German minesweepers, which were then in turn supported by cruisers and then two German battleships. The action was indecisive, but *HMS Caledon* (with my grandfather) received one hit from a major German shell, resulting in the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross to Able Seaman John Henry Carless, who remained at his gun despite sustaining a fatal abdominal wound.

However, to get back to the Hundred Days (actually 95 days from the Battle

of Amiens, on 8th August 1918, until the Armistice) the Germans, and in particular the Nazi Party, later promoted the reason for the German collapse on the Western Front being a 'stab in the back' from Communists and other back in Germany. Actually, the German army gradually disintegrated from late 1917, with huge numbers 'straggling' or frankly deserting.

This is known amongst German historians as 'The Hidden Strike' and reached such a level that, by summer 1918, the German authorities estimated that 20,000 deserters were living in Berlin, and no less than 30,000 in Cologne! It is hard to believe that the B.E.F. would ever have had troops that disillusioned, and equally hard to imagine what the effective disappearance of the equivalent of five or more Divisions must have had on the fighting ability of the German Army.

As far as the British were concerned, and accepting that the First Day on the Somme resulted in the single largest number of casualties for the British Army in a single day, ever, the Somme battle actually lasted 141 days and the *average* casualty rate was 2,943 per day, whereas that for the Hundred Days was 3,645 per day. However, during the former battle our progress in capturing German-held territory was poor, whereas during the Hundred Days the BEF advanced farther, faster, than at any time in their history until the First Gulf War, and it ended with total victory! However, as 'everyone' knows, and as still seems to be taught in schools, the Great War was an absolute disaster, it should never have happened, and the only 'good thing' to come out of it was the War Poets.

Hopefully, the centenary of the Hundred Days will provide the opportunity to correct some of those fallacies.

Niall Ferguson

31st Battlefield Tour

Our visit to Cambrai and the battles of 1918 in June 2018 will be the 30th year of Battlefield Tours organised by the Thames Valley Branch, and the 31st Tour (there were two in 1995). A list of previous tours can be seen below and on the following page.

| Year | Topic | Base |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1989 | The Somme | Peronne |
| 1990 | Artois | Arras |
| 1991 | Ypres Salient | Ieper |
| 1992 | The Aisne | Compiègne |
| 1993 | Mons/Cambrai | Valenciennes |
| 1994 | The Somme 1916 | Peronne |
| 1995 | Ypres Salient (June) | Ieper |
| 1995 | Verdun (September) | Verdun |
| 1996 | Arras 1917 | Arras |
| 1997 | 1918 | St Quentin |
| 1998 | The Lys | Bethune |
| 1999 | The Somme | Peronne |
| 2000 | The Marne | Chateau-Thierry |
| 2001 | 1st & 2nd Ypres | Ieper |
| 2002 | Artois 1915 | Bethune |
| 2003 | Verdun | Verdun |
| 2004 | Mons 1914 & 1918 | Valenciennes |
| 2005 | The Somme | Arras |
| 2006 | Cambrai | Cambrai |



| Year | Topic | Base |
|------|--|----------------|
| 2007 | Belgian Forts and Coast | Namur & Bruges |
| 2008 | Aisne & Champagne | Rheims |
| 2009 | Arras | Arras |
| 2010 | St Quentin | St Quentin |
| 2011 | The Marne | Meaux |
| 2012 | 3rd Ypres, Messines, & Courtrai | Ieper |
| 2013 | Verdun | Verdun |
| 2014 | 4th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment | Ieper & Arras |
| 2015 | 1915 in Flanders & Artois | Arras |
| 2016 | The Somme 1916 | Arras |
| 2017 | Arras & Cambrai 1917 | Cambrai |
| 2018 | 1918 Centenary | Cambrai |
| 2019 | Where shall we go? | |

During that time we have stayed in a number of hotels. Les Trois Luppens in Arras, and Beatus in Cambrai have been our favourites, but we have used no less than five hotels in Ieper (Albion, Novotel, Continental, Regina, and t'Zweerde) and a variety of others when we have travelled further afield.

So, where should we go in 2019? We could try somewhere more exotic—Italy and Gallipoli have been suggested in the past—or just go back to the Western Front, there's lots more to see!

Dedications

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

28th September 2017

Herbert Arthur Dormer

Private 33718 1st Battalion Border Regiment

Herbert Arthur Dormer was born in London in 1885, the eldest of three sons of William and Eliza Dormer. On December 26th 1908 he married Olive Day, and they had one son, Herbert, born in 1910. In 1911 they lived at 26 Nelson Road, Stoke Newington, and Herbert worked as a compositor in the printing trade.

The Battalion War Diary shows that on 24th August 1917 the battalion was

moved into position opposite Cannes Farm in the evening. A special patrol was taken out that night to check out the crossing of the Broembek and establishing posts on the far side. Another Lieutenant looked to the setting up of an advanced post near Ney Wood but was unsuccessful due to an enemy post of about 40 Boche being established close by. A German prisoner who had lost his way was taken by 'D' company.



The Cooper family grave in Reading

25th August: Considerable shelling of the front line and battalion HQ at Cannes Farm but

casualties were light. The weather was appallingly wet.

26th August: Considerable shelling by day and miserable weather. Posts were successfully established across the Broembek. 25+ enemy prisoners taken.

28th August: The unit was withdrawn from the front into support trenches

26th October 2017

Thomas Henry Cooper and Harold Walter Cooper

Brothers Thomas Henry Cooper and Harold Walter Cooper died within twelve days of each other in the autumn of 1917.

They were the sons of Thomas Henry Cooper and his wife Jane (nee Little) and they lived at 26 Milman Road, Reading which is not very far from the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

The 1901 and 1911 census details tell us more about the family. The couple had married young, when Thomas was 20 and Jane 17 years. During their marriage of 34 years Jane had given birth to ten children of whom nine survived; six girls and three boys. In 1911 seven of the couple's offspring were living at home including their three sons. The eldest of the boys was Arthur aged 28. Thomas Henry and Harold Walter were aged 23 and 12 years respectively.

The girls had jobs in the dressmaking and millinery trades whilst older brother Arthur was a draper's assistant. Thomas Henry junior ran a Green Grocery business from the family home. The couple's youngest children were 12 year old Harold and daughter Jane who was 15 years old. It is assumed that they were both still at school although this was not stated in the census record. Thomas Henry senior, was a metal worker at the Tin Factory, probably - Huntley, Bourne and Stevens.

Thomas Henry Cooper died on 23 September 1917 and his younger brother Harold Walter was killed in action on 4th October 1917. They are commemorated on their parents' grave in Division 29 of the Reading Cemetery.

Thomas Henry Cooper
Private 55509 Devonshire Regiment
Labour Corps.

Thomas Henry Cooper died aged 28 and is buried at Rocquigny - Equancourt Road, British Cemetery, Manancourt, Somme. Location Plot I. Row B. 23.

The area was occupied in April, 1917, as the Germans withdrew to the Hindenburg Line. The cemetery was begun in 1917, and used mainly by the 21st and 48th Casualty Clearing Stations, posted at Ytres. The location of the grave would indicate that Thomas Cooper was one of the earliest casualties to be buried

there. The cemetery was lost at the beginning of the German Spring offensive in March 1918 but regained in September 1918.

Harold Walter Cooper
Private 28160
1st Battalion Somerset Light Infantry

Harold Walter Cooper is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, location Panel 41 -42 and 163A. He died on 4th October 1917, aged 19. On this day the British surprised the Germans who had also planned an attack.



Pt. HAROLD W. COOPER, Somerset L.I., 26, Milman Rd., Reading.—Missing.

An advance was made along an eight mile front. The Germans lost many men to the British artillery and many prisoners were taken.

However, in spite of the allied gains many men were lost, some in the mud that became increasingly deeper as the rains came down. Harold Cooper was reported missing during this action. His body was lost. The rain continued to fall for days and days. Haig was reluctant to withdraw and lose the precious gains, so he urged his men to push ever onwards as Passchendaele was in sight.

30th November 2017

November's dedication was to the brothers

Charles Henry Lukeman
Sergeant 200861 1/4th Battalion Royal
Berkshire Regiment

(Killed in Action 16th August 1917)

Thomas Alfred Lukeman Private 41247
5th Royal Berkshire Regiment

(Killed in Action 30th November 1917)

Charles Henry Lukeman and his brother Private Tom Lukeman are commemorated on a large family headstone in the Reading Cemetery.

Both men are also commemorated on the St. Bartholomew's Church war memorial. They lived near to the church at 152, Chomley Road, Reading.



Charles Lukeman

Charles Lukeman enlisted in 1914 and had been in France 29 months. Charles survived being wounded in the head in September 1916 during the last phase of the Somme battle only to be killed by a sniper on August 16th 1917, aged 30. His body was never found.

On that day the allied forces attacked along a nine mile front north of the Ypres - Menin Road crossing the Steenbeek River. The ground was torn by the barrage and the low water table made No-Man's Land a morass. All the objectives were captured and the British reached Langemarck and half a mile beyond however, the Germans pressed the British back from the high ground won earlier in the day.

Charles was born in Reading and educated at Newtown School. Before the war he

worked in the Continental Dept. Reading Biscuit Factory.

Charles Lukeman has no known grave and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial- Panels 105,106 and 162.

Tom Lukeman joined the Army in June 1917 and went to France in October 1917. He was reported missing last seen November 30th 1917. He was 32 years old.

Whilst the Third Battle of Ypres was still raging an offensive further south was being planned, which was later to be known as the Battle of Cambrai. Taking place on ground so far undisturbed by fighting it would involve the use of tanks in

unprecedented numbers the object being the main and support trenches of the Hindenburg line.

5th Battalion reached the battle zone in the early hours of 20 November and formed up behind the tanks in a position east of Gonnellieu.

The attack began at 6.10am on and such was the success that by 8.00am the main Hindenburg line had been taken along a six mile stretch. By the end of the day an advance of three to four miles had been made. There were 4000 casualties and 179 tanks lost.

During the following days consolidation of the line took place and it came as something of a shock when the Germans counter attacked on the 30 November with an opening barrage at 7.00am this and a heavy barrage of trench mortars inflicted heavy casualties as bombs began to run short and the front line was breached a withdrawal took place. 120 men were missing, amongst them Tom Lukeman, 120 wounded and 55 killed.

Tom Lukeman is commemorated on the Cambrai memorial to the missing panel 8.

Like his brother Tom was educated at Newtown school and prior to enlisting was employed by Huntley and Palmers in the Sugar Wafer Department. His name appears on that memorial held by Reading museum.



PTE. T. LUKEMAN, Royal Berks, 152, Cholmeley Road, Reading, missing since November 30th.

14th December 2017

2nd Lieutenant William Henry Achurch

2nd/5th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment

William Henry Achurch was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs Achurch, of 90 Cardigan Road, Reading. He had attended the Wokingham Road School and his name is commemorated upon that Memorial. William died on the 6th December 1917, aged 25.

William was a member of Wycliffe Chapel, a Sunday school teacher and Scout Master. His is one of only two memorials in the chapel to men who lost their lives in the Great War.

Before the war William worked for Messrs. Sutton and Sons as a clerk. He was held in high esteem for both his work and his ability at tennis.

William Achurch joined the 2nd /1st Berkshire Yeomanry in September 1914 and after volunteering for active service was assigned to the 3rd Battalion Royal Worcester Regiment. A smart and able young man, William was quickly promoted to Corporal and later, whilst on the Somme, he was promoted again, to the rank of Sergeant. He also qualified as a musketry instructor. William was recommended for a commission and, in April 1917, returned to England for training in Oxford. He was gazetted a Second Lieutenant and returned to the front in August 1917 to serve with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.



2nd Lt William Henry Achurch

He had been back at the front for only a short time when he was injured and later died of his wounds.

The British launched a surprise attack at Cambrai on the 20 November 1917. Ten days later the Germans attacked the salient and penetrated the

British lines. This was followed a few days later by

a withdrawal from the area around Bourlon Wood and the eventual checking of the enemy.

It was during this action that William Achurch was shot in the chest by a sniper and died the following day. The Battle of Cambrai officially ended on the 7 December 1917.

The Reading Chronicle of the 14 December 1917 and the Reading Standard of 22 December 1917 carried obituaries from which the details in this dedication have been obtained. Extracts from letters to his

mother and fiancée were published. The Chaplain writes:

"The battalion was in very heavy fighting – your son did magnificently. Time after time he led successful attacks against the Germans and he stood unflinchingly during a German attack. He received a bullet in the lung and died of wounds in the Casualty Clearing Station the next day. Captain May, his Company Commander, told me he had done remarkably well. Although with us only a short time he was a splendid officer."

William Achurch is buried at Rocquigny-Equancourt Road British Cemetery, Manancourt, Somme, France. Location VI. D. 14. The Cemetery was begun in 1917, and used mainly by the 21st and 48th Casualty Clearing Stations until March, 1918.

25th January 2018

2nd Lieutenant William Spencer Smallwood
22nd Squadron Royal Flying Corps & General List

William Spencer Smallwood was the son of William and Ellen Rebecca Smallwood, of Knaresborough Lodge, Alexandra Road, Reading. A pilot in 22 Squadron RFC, he was killed in action whilst flying Bristol F2B Fighter Serial A7246, his observer, Sergeant T Kavanagh also being killed.



He is
The late Second Lieut. W. SPENCER SMALLWOOD, R.F.C., 59, Alexandra Road, Reading.—Killed in action.

commemorated on the family grave in Reading Cemetery: Number 16384. Div. 79 and his body is interred at Lapugnoy Military Cemetery: grave location VIII. A. 13

The site of Lapugnoy Military Cemetery was chosen in 1915 in preparation for the British offensive which took place in September around Loos. Further burials, in great number, took place in 1917 during the Battles of Arras.

The dead were brought mainly from casualty clearing stations but in May and August 1918, fighting units used the cemetery.

No. 22 Squadron was based at Auchel Aerodrome, not far from Bethune, from 22nd January 1918 until 1st February 1918. The squadron had been formed at Fort Grange, Gosport, on

1 September 1915 and departed for France seven months later with twelve FE2B two-seat pusher biplanes. These outdated aircraft were used for a year on reconnaissance tasks before Bristol Fighters arrived to take over these tasks. The

Squadron moved to Germany after the War as part of the Army of Occupation and returned to the UK in August 1919 prior to disbanding at the end of the year.

General List officers

General List officers are commissioned officers of the British Army who spent all or most of their military careers on the General List and not badged to any regiment or corps except the General Service Corps.



The Bristol F2B Fighter belonging to the Shuttleworth Trust. The F2B was, arguably, the best two-seater aircraft produced during the Great War and, in the summer of 1918, equipped seventeen RAF Squadrons. Usually used as a reconnaissance/bomber aircraft, some squadrons, such as 22 Squadron RFC, used it purely as a fighter, so good was its performance in the air.

The General Service Corps was formed in 1914 for specialists and those not allocated to other regiments or corps. It was used for similar purposes in World War II, including for male operatives of the Special Operations Executive (female operatives joined the FANY). Historically, and today, it also serves a role holding some recruits pending allocation to their units.

From 1914, the cap badge has been the Royal Arms, with variously a king's or a queen's crown, depending on the reigning monarch. It bears the motto of the monarch 'Dieu et mon droit' and the Order of the Garter's motto 'Honi soit qui mal y pense'.

Other officers on the General List were Lawrence of Arabia, Arnold Ridley (of 'Dad's Army'), Ernest Brooks (who filmed the Great War), and Cyril falls (the author of several volumes of the Official History of The Great War.)

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Reflections on the Battle of Messines

By Jerry Rendell

Most of this article is based on the letters of Brigadier-General T. S. Lambert, (the GOC of the 69th Brigade), to his wife Geraldine, written during the battle of Messines. His granddaughter, Miss Juliet Lambert, very kindly made the letters available and edited them to remove material of a purely personal nature. There is also some material from the author's great-uncle, Captain H. L. Oakley, who was Assistant Adjutant in the 8th Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment.

Oakley made a distinctive contribution at the planning stage of the battle. This is the reference in the official history of the 23rd Division by Lieutenant-Colonel H. R. Sandilands:

Lieutenant H. L. Oakley of the 8th Yorkshire Regiment, celebrated as an artist for his exquisite silhouettes, constructed a model of the Caterpillar and Hill 60 from maps and air photographs, showing the hostile trenches, railway, and the general detail of the ground. Study of this proved of immense value to officers and NCOs, who before the attack felt they knew the German trench system as well as their own.

There are no descriptions or photographs of the model among Oakley's papers but I had originally envisaged it as a terrain model of the sort recently excavated on Cannock Chase. However, after studying the video of that and discussing it with Richard Pursehouse I think it is more likely that

Oakley's was a smaller-scale model possibly made from modelling clay on the floor of a hut.

Brigadier Lambert did not write home on the first day of the battle but the entry in his private diary reads:

7th June 1917

Zero Hour 3.10am

Mines go up and Brigade goes over the top. Capture Hill 60.

Then in his next letter:

8th June 1917

We had another big success all along the line of which you will see in the papers a full account in due course. The sight of our mines was wonderful. The brigade as usual was splendid, particularly the 8th (Yorkshires) 10th (Duke of Wellington's) and the 11th (West Yorkshires) who

formed the first line and went over the top like lions.

We have taken some hundreds of prisoners, a number of machine guns, trench mortars, etc., and the famous salient is no longer. We are living in a damp, dark, moist tunnel. One lives in perspiration and slush but the place is an excellent one.

Of course we have had casualties; Victor Hobday, Lambert [Captain F. Lambert of the 8th Yorkshires, no relation] and Onchterlong, [Captain J. P. H. Onchterlong Commanding Officer of the 102nd Field Company Royal Engineers] a most valuable RE officer who had done splendidly and had got the DSO only the day or so before. Lambert was a splendid fellow and had just got the Military Cross. Many others too are gone, but happily the wounded are more numerous than the killed and there is no doubt we did a grand number of Huns.

Western [Lieutenant-Colonel B C M Western, C.O. of the 8th Yorkshires] was again invaluable to me, as was

Barker [Lieutenant-Colonel M.G. H. Barker, Commanding Officer of the 11th West Yorkshires] but everybody of my own brigade did splendidly. I had other battalions given me too (the 11th Northumberland Fusiliers and the 12th Durham Light Infantry) so that I had nearly half of the Division to dispose of!

Everyone is in very good spirits over it and I suppose we shall get the usual congratulations again though this is about the sixth time without any other result!

Of course it was a big show on a wide front where practically all were successful, but our job was not by any means the least memorable. I nearly ended my career two or three times, once when a big shell burst within a few yards of me and never touched me but of course I had none of the real danger that many others had.

Brigadier Lambert had taken over command of the 69th Brigade in March 1916 while it was in training for the Battle of the Somme. The brigade's most notable achievement then was to capture and hold the village of Contalmaison but there were successes in several other actions before and after that.

Whilst still a Brigadier-General, Lambert was appointed CB and CMG which would have been in recognition of his leadership of the 69th Brigade in those battles and its later action on the Menin Road. He also led the brigade for its first six months in Italy.

There were no major battles during that period but nonetheless the brigade played an important part in helping Italy at a critical time. Almost as if the events on the first day were too much to



Brig. T S Lambert



Captain H. L. Oakley

get across in one telling, he went over much of the same ground in his next letter.

It also brings home the continuing danger from shelling. The Hill had been captured but the Germans kept up a heavy artillery bombardment for several days, forcing the Staff to spend most of the day underground.

10th June 1917

We have been living in a sort of Turkish bath atmosphere underground in a deep wet mine. I can hardly breathe the noxious air, every thing is wet through and I have not had my clothes off for days (nor has anyone else!).

We had a glorious victory all along the line; killed any number of Huns; captured quite a lot and have got lots of interesting captures in the way of trophies. The brigade as always never fails.

Now when everyone else is relieved, we stay on without relief, having done about six times as much as most others and feeling that we are worth half the British Army!! And more than the whole of the Bosche!!!

Yet the German communiqué says the 'attack was defeated' north of Armentières, while we are sitting well in his lines, and the British papers don't mention a word of us because Asquith and Co., declared a year ago that our famous hill 'had been blown off the face of existence'!!

When he referred to Hill 60 as being 'about the sixth' occasion for congratulations he may have been thinking also of Horseshoe Trench, Munster Alley, Pozières Ridge and Le Sars.

Lambert then had a dig at 'higher authorities' for not having given credit to the 69th Brigade for the capture of Contalmaison because of earlier mistaken reports that the village had been taken by another unit. He continued:

Now I suppose we shall find that the hill Asquith said had been wiped off the map a year ago could not be still in existence and so we could not have taken it! However I can assure you that we did and that square mile we are sitting on was pretty valuable to the British Empire. My men were simply splendid, especially Western and the 8th, though the 11th and the 10th have been splendid too and so have the 9th and all my other men. Others not of the brigade which I had did their best but are not in the same class as my own except perhaps one battalion which came up to me the next day and is still sticking it out well.

If Lambert had known then that the new Prime Minister, Lloyd George, had heard the explosion of the mines in London he may have smiled at the thought that there could be no denial of what had been achieved this time.

Of course everyone has his tail well in the air. After twenty-four hours' rest I believe my men will be fit for anything again but of course they have not in most cases had sleep or rest for about four days.

However I have arranged things all right for them now, though when everyone else is being relieved we stay on perhaps for several days. Of course we have suffered severely and I have lost some splendid officers.

Happily, Western and Barker are untouched. The latter I have kept mostly with me as he takes over if I get hit and he has been invaluable. Half these fellows ought to have the VC but I don't suppose anyone will get anything more than others.

The mines were truly awful to watch when one thought of what they meant to the Hun. We had killed an awful lot and the rest were pretty well demoralised for a bit.

The mess made by our guns and mines was stupendous but most interesting. Still the Hun is a wonderful beast in his way.

11th June 1917

Everything is damp and soggy and we live in the atmosphere of a Turkish bath except when outside and then it is a matter of dodging HE [high explosive] shells of all sorts as well as 'whiz bangs' till we get back again! The Hun has had a bad hammering all along the line. I don't think he has enjoyed it.



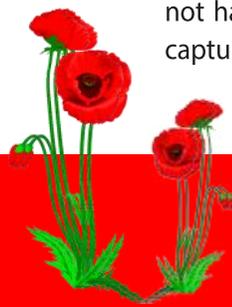
Photograph taken from prisoner

One Hun prisoner claims to have been on Hill 60 'observing' where the mine went up but I don't believe it. The flames and heat looked like old pictures of Hades. I don't think even the most objectionable Hun could survive them.

The following extract is from a letter from Lieutenant Oakley to his mother. He explained that as Assistant Adjutant he had been left out of the stunt in charge of 100 odd men for reinforcements, then went on:

12th June 1917

It was a grand sight at 3.10am to see the mines blow up; and the barrage of our guns was the most awful yet. Our troops were so splendid that they got on too fast for the barrage and many were wounded and killed this way.



The poor Bosches would do nothing but 'Kamerad' and by 9.00am prisoners were passing through the camp in the back area. We got a lot of loot out of the dug-outs etc., but no one knows how many poor devils of theirs were buried by the mines.

Miller was in charge of a Company but the day before he was taken ill with mumps of all things. He positively cried poor beggar as he was the keenest officer we have, and would certainly have won honours.

I am Adjutant again now as Bush has gone on leave. I have been working very hard recently and have made a model of the country including the Hill and railway cutting.

The CO is very pleased and also the General but we have not got the best material to make the show a success. I can't tell you much but there was no hitch as far as we were concerned and the casualties were mostly wounded and light compared with other attacks.

The extracts from the following two letters are again from Brigadier Lambert to his wife. By now the German bombardment had stopped and the 69th Brigade had been relieved:

15th and 16th June 1917

The Army Commander [Plumer of the 2nd Army] came round to congratulate us directly we got out.

Morland [Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Morland Commander of II Corps] has been round twice. He is always nice and I am glad we are still under him.



69th Brigade winners of the Divisional Football Competition 1917.

Back row L to R: Sergeant Hall 10th WRR*, Private Timms 9th YR, Sergeant Bee 9th YR, Corporal Raffell 9th YR, Private O'Shea 11th WYR, Corporal Sturdy 10th WRR, Private Hood 8th YR, Private Shepperd 11th WYR. Front row L to R: Private Wild 11th WYR, Corporal Gibson 8th YR, Private Anderson 10th WRR, Corporal Simpson 9th YR, Private Leyburn 11th WYR, Sergeant Miller 8th YR, Second-Lieutenant Pontefract 10th WRR, Sergeant Sams 11th WYR, Private Dobson 9th YR.

*Sergeant Hall of 10th WRR was killed by a shell a week before the start of the battle of Messines.

General B. [Major-General Sir J. M. Babington GOC of the 23rd Division] came round to see everyone today and to talk to the men.

Of course everyone is very pleased with the whole show which has been one of the most complete successes the British Army has had.

We had a great victory all down the line. We fairly smothered the Bosches. Though Hill 60 may not figure in the papers as much as some parts, it was a strenuous and very successful affair.

No one could have done better than Western and in fact all my Yorkshire lads. Today we were photographed with some of our trophies.

The badminton racquets have turned up and we shall have a chance of using them. I have a Horse Show coming off on Tuesday which ought to be amusing. I am riding in one event, jumping in pairs, but I don't suppose I shall win.

There would also have been football. Brigadier Lambert kept a photograph of the 69th Brigade team which won the Divisional Competition in early May just before they moved into the line in the Hill 60 section. They had beaten the 70th Brigade in the final, winning 2-1, with the second goal coming a minute before time.

"HIGH-TIDE"
CONSOLIDATING
THE CRATER



Programme for the coming months

Details of the speakers for the first half of our 2017-18 season, up until April 2018 are set out below and offer a variety of different subjects to meet most interests. Should you have any comments on the programme or suggestions for future topics and speakers please let us know. This programme is also available for viewing on:

www.westernfrontassociation.com/thames-valley. For a description of the talk just double click on the talk title.

All meetings are held at the Berkshire Sports and Social Club, Sonning Lane, Reading on the last Thursday of each month (except December) commencing at 8.00 p.m.

22nd February 2018 – Prof Gary Sheffield

‘All Pretty Well Fed Up and Worn Out? Morale and Military Effectiveness in VIII Corps at Gallipoli’.

Gary will look at various theories of combat motivation, and how they match up to what really happened at Cape Helles.



Cape Helles Memorial

29th March 2018 – Ian Castle

Gothas Over England - Germany's First World War Bomber Offensive Against London

Ian Castle is a historian of the German First World War air raids on Britain. He has written books on the London raids and is currently working on a three-volume history of the raids across the whole of Britain under the working title 'The Forgotten Blitz'. Ian has advised on and appeared in three television



A Gotha Bomber in Flight

documentaries, shown on BBC, Channel 4 and Sky and he also maintains his own air raid website at www.IanCastleZeppelin.co.uk

On 13th June 1917, the German Army launched their first successful squadron raid on London using Gotha bomber aircraft, inflicting the most casualties of any single raid on Britain in the First World War. As these raids continued into 1918, London required a complete overhaul of its air defences, including the introduction of public air raid warnings, air raid shelters and barrage balloons - defences more commonly associated with the Blitz of the Second World War. Our speaker, Ian Castle, will discuss the impact of these first bomber raids.

26th April 2018 – Paul Cobb

Sir John Monash & the Battle of Le Hamel 1918

Paul Cobb's grandfathers served in Egypt, Italy, France and Flanders during the Great War, hence his long-standing interest in the period. He has been a member of the WFA since 1984 and was Membership Secretary and then Vice Chairman some years ago; currently he is Chairman of the Wiltshire branch. He first visited the battlefields in 1969 at a young but impressionable age, and this was a strong influence on his interest. He is the author of three books on the Great War and has written many articles for *Stand To!*



The capture of Hamel

Most officers in the AIF had not seen wartime action before landing in Egypt, Gallipoli, or the Western Front - although a few had served in South Africa; John Monash was one such officer who only knew military service in Australia. However, he had a distinguished civilian career before the war and was determined to have an equally distinguished career in the Militia, and then in the newly formed AIF. This talk summarises many facets of his life and then focuses upon the short but decisive action at Le Hamel on 4th July 1918 by the Australian Corps under his command.

31st May 2018 – Frances Hurd

Lives Interrupted— Ten Young Officers in the Great War

Frances Hurd has a PhD in history from the University of London. She has published academic articles and contributed to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. She regularly gives talks on a wide range of historical topics (from medieval churches to Abu Dhabi) to local societies and organisations.

An impulse bid online bought Frances a damp and dirty box of Edwardian photographs. Amongst them was one of a hockey team at Sandhurst, dated 1915. Hers is not a 'sports team' project, however, but an exploration of ten families before, during and after the Great War.



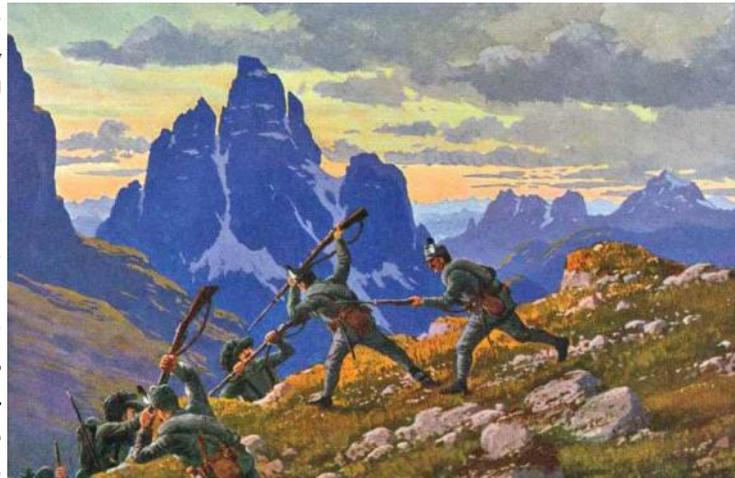
An army hockey team of the Great War - could this be the one?

Five of the men lived and five died: but the survivors as well as all the families were profoundly affected. Between them these men served at Loos, Gallipoli, the Somme, Arras and Cambrai, and in English, Welsh and Scottish regiments.

28th June 2018 – Dale Hjort

The battle of the Asiago— 15th June 1918

Dale's paternal grandfather came to this country from his native Denmark in search of markets for his business purifying water for industrial purposes. The Admiralty proved ready purchasers during the Great War, so he stayed to raise a family. As a result, Dale has an unpronounceable surname and can claim to be the only WFA member descended from a war profiteer. He became interested in the Italian theatre after reading Norman Glad-



Warfare on the Asiago

den's autobiographical "Across the Piave" and gave one of his earliest talk on the subject to the Thames Valley Branch in October 1992. It is good to have him back!

After our Italian allies were overwhelmed at Caporetto in late 1917, an Anglo-French force was sent urgently to their aid This talk concentrates on the successful defensive action fought by two under-strength British divisions on the vulnerable Asiago section of the coalition front when, in twenty four hours, two VC's were won, Vera Brittain's brother was killed, the Royal Berkshire were the only supports under the burning pine trees, and a brewery salesman directed the defence of Happy Valley.

27th September 2018 – Dr Jonathan Boff

Haig's Enemy: Crown Prince Rupprecht and Germany's War on the Western Front

Dr Jonathan Boff is a Senior Lecturer in War Studies at the University of Birmingham. He is the author of 'Winning and losing on the Western Front: The British Third Army and the De-

feat of Germany in 1918' (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and 'Haig's Enemy: Crown Prince Rupprecht and Germany's War on the Western Front' (Oxford University Press, 2017). The maps in both books are world-beating. Dr Boff has acted as a historical consultant for organizations including the modern British army and the BBC. He is a Fellow of the Royal Histori-

cal Society, a member of the British Commission for Military History, and a trustee of both the Army Records Society and the National Army Museum.

No German general spent longer fighting the BEF on the Western Front than Rupprecht of Bavaria. Exploring the war through his eyes enables us not only to study the German army in detail but also to see the British army in a new and unfamiliar light. This talk will explore both aspects.

Jonathan will be bringing books to sell, so be prepared to increase the size of your libraries!

