

# P THE oppy







Founded by John Giles. Inaugurated 11th November 1980  
Registered Charity No 298365

## Patron

Professor Sir Hew Strachan FRSE FRHistS

## Honorary President

Professor Peter Simkins MBE FRHistS

## Honorary Vice-Presidents

Dr John Bourne BA PhD FRHistS

André Coilliot

General (Rtd) The Lord Dannatt GCB CBE MC DL

Dr Roger V Lee BA Litt.D MMDS PhD

Lt.Col.(Rtd) Graham W Parker OBE

Lt Col (Rtd) Christopher Pugsley ONZM DPhil FRHistS

Professor Gary Sheffield BA MA PhD FRHistS FRSA

Maj Gen (Rtd) Mungo Melvin CB OBE

The Burgomaster of Ypres

The Mayor of Albert

## Chairman

Colin Wagstaff BA MA

# CONTENTS

[click the page number to go to the page]

- 3 From the Chairman
- 3 Victoria Cross Brothers
- 4 Dedications
- 7 Monash: An Appraisal
- 10 Harold Bridger's Last Fight
- 11 Branch Photographic Competition 2017
- 12 Our Speakers until February 2019
- 14 Battlefield Tour 2019



The grave of 2nd.Lt. Alexander Buller Turner VC in Chocques CWGC cemetery

## Contacts

Should you require any information relating to branch matters and activities, then please contact one of the committee members listed below:

**Barbara Taylor:** *Tel.* 01276 32097  
or *email* sandhurst37@tiscali.co.uk

**Don Farr:** *Tel.* 01189 794518  
or *email* don.farr@ntlworld.com

**Mike Lawson:** *Tel.* 01692 535184  
or *email* lawsonm100@aol.com

**Nigel Parker:** *Tel.* 01235 768648  
or *email* leginrekrp@hotmail.com

**Liz Tait:** *Tel.* 0118 9662885  
or *email* liztait@virginmedia.com

**Niall Ferguson:** *Tel.* 01276 506299  
or *email* niall.ferguson@ntlworld.com

**Brian Sowerby:** *Tel.* 07739 802594  
or *email* sowerbyb@gmail.com

The photograph on the front cover is of the Australian Memorial at Le Hamel seen from the site of Pear Tree Trench.  
The photograph was taken by the editor during the 2018 Branch Battlefield Tour.

## From the Chairman

It seems hard to believe that we are very nearly at the end of the Centenary period of commemorations. I can't believe how quickly it seems to have passed and I bet the war itself didn't seem to pass by so swiftly!

I hope that members feel that we have had a broad mix of subjects at the meetings, with a general 1918 theme and at least one talk that had a 'local' theme. The last meeting of the year proved to be very popular in part because the speaker was totally immersed in his subject and his enthusiasm rubbed off on us all! Once more I was obliged to call on one of my 'short notice' standby speakers to step in. I am very grateful to all of you are on my *lastminute.com* list.

This next season has a very varied subject list; from schools to courts martial. Our first meeting of the 2018-19 season will be Dr Jonathan Boff talking about the subject of his new book; Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria. I believe that I am correct in saying that this is the first in depth study of him in English. As ever, we have our own Gary Sheffield giving us his annual talk in February. A full list of talks for the first half of the season appears later in this issue. In the same way as in 2017, for the 2018 branch battlefield tour we used the Beatus Hotel in Cambrai as our base in order to study aspects of Operation MICHAEL and the 100 Days. The Beatus belongs to Philippe Gorczyński, the owner of tank D51 *Deborah* and we were lucky enough to go to see *Deborah* in her new, purpose-built home. I hope that all those on tour got something out of it.

We again had two new attendees, who tell me that they very much enjoyed it and I hope will join us again. As ever, I wish to sincerely thank all of those people who worked hard to make this a success. This was Brian Sowerby's first year as the admin organiser and it was a great success. We all got rooms at any rate.....!

As this year Armistice Day falls on the Sunday, the WFA will not be able to have the Cenotaph for our own wreath laying and service. However, this is probably most appropriate and many may wish to attend anyway as this is the Centenary year. I understand that during the afternoon there will be a service in Westminster Abbey in the presence of HM The Queen.

Nigel Parker has sent out an email to estimate interest in organising some branch visits. Several have responded favourably to his venue suggestions and to that end arrangements will be made.

As ever, the support of many members who regularly attend the meetings is much appreciated and I hope that there will be something to interest most of you in the upcoming programme. We as a branch do have pretty good attendance figures, but they can fluctuate quite a lot from meeting to meeting. The committee realises that for some family and work commitments simply preclude members from coming along, but I would very much like to encourage as many as possible to attend. In the meantime, I hope that you all get something of interest from *The Poppy* and the round robin emails that I try to send out on a regular basis.

Lastly, as you will be aware the wider WFA has had a bad year with the loss of several original or members of very long standing. This trend has been replicated in our own branch with the loss of three veteran members. RIP.

Barbara Taylor August 2018

## Victoria Cross Brothers

Two of the talks being given this year - *Twisting the Dragon's Tail* in October, and *VC Memorials in the RMA Chapel* in December (see page 11 *et seq*) made me think of brothers who have both won the Victoria Cross.

There were two pairs of brothers awarded the VC during the 19th Century: Major C.J.S. Gough, and his brother, Lieutenant H.H. Gough of the 1st Bengal European Light Cavalry were the first pair of brothers to win the award. Both brothers received their awards for acts of gallantry during the Indian mutiny. Next were the Sartorius brothers, who were both awarded the VC in 1874. Major R.W. Sartorius of the 6th Bengal Cavalry won his award at Abogu during the Ashanti war and his brother, Captain E.H. Sartorius, 59th Foot, won his in Afghanistan later that year.

Probably best known to members of the WFA are Lieut. R.B. Bradford of the Durham Light Infantry, who earned his VC at Eaucourt l'Abbaye, France, on October 1st 1916 and who was killed at Cambrai, and his brother, Lieutenant-Commander G.N. Bradford of the Royal Navy won his award on board HMS Iris during an operation in Zeebrugge, Belgium on April 23rd, 1918.

However, during our 2018 Battlefield Tour we visited the grave of one of another pair of VC brothers in Chocques CWGC Cemetery.

2nd. Lieut. A.B. Turner, of the 1st Battn. Berkshire Regt, was awarded the VC for gallantry at the Battle of Loos in 1915, dying of his wounds. His younger brother Major V.B. Turner, of the Rifle Brigade, had served in the Great War in 1918, but won his award during fighting in the Second Battle of Alamein in the Western Desert in 1942. He survived the war, not dying until 1972.





## 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.

### 22nd February 2018

**Jacob Gotz, Private G/93489**

**30th Battalion Middlesex Regiment**

Jacob Gotz was not local to Reading. He was the husband of Emma Gotz, of 9, Humbolt Mansions, Lillie Road, Fulham Cross, London. Jacob was accidentally killed on 13th February 1918, aged 30. The *Reading Standard* gave both an account of the accident and also the inquest.

The *Reading Standard* for 16th February 1918 included the following item:

**Fatal Bus Accident: Soldier killed whilst hanging on to van.**

"A shocking accident occurred on Wednesday afternoon just outside Reading, when Jacob Gotz, 30, of the Middlesex Regt, was crushed between a motorvan and a bus, with fatal results. The accident occurred on what is known as Shepherd's Hill, the hill which runs up out of Reading from the London Rd train terminus. The deceased was riding a bicycle behind a motor van on the near side going downhill. He was hanging on with the right hand and changing over to the right side of the van, he tried to catch it with his left hand. As he was passing over to the offside of the van for this purpose, he ran into a motor bus which was going up the hill, with the consequence that he became

pinned between the two vehicles; his head was smashed and his neck broken.

Gotz, who was born in Germany, was a well-known boxer and wrestler, and carried on the business of a bakery before the war. Papers were found in his possession addressed to 9, Humbolt Mansions, Lillie Rd. Fulham". This was the address of his wife.

*Reading Standard* February 23rd 1918:

#### **Account of inquest on Jacob Gotz**

Joseph Gotz was aged 30 and a Private with 30th Isle of Wight, Middlesex Regiment and stationed at Reading. Gotz was born in Germany, but he had no nationality as he had been denationalised. His home was Fulham where he had seen his brother Philip Gotz and told him he was cycling back to Reading on February 13th.

The driver of the bus involved was on Shepherds Hill and saw a lorry coming towards him. Just as the vehicles were level a soldier on a bike came out from behind the lorry and collided with the dashboard of the bus. Gotz ended up under the bus with extensive injuries, tools had to be fetched to "extricate" the body. Death was instantaneous. Verdict "Accidental death" both drivers are exonerated of all blame.

The paper tells us that there was an impressive military funeral starting from Sutton Seeds Trial ground with a large contingent from his regiment and the band of the Pioneer School of Instruction. Comrades were pall bearers and the regiment sent a beautiful wreath. Joseph Gotz's name is commemorated on the screen wall in the war

### 29th March 2018

**Charles Edward Weeks Private 200817**

**1st Batt. Royal Berkshire Regt.**

**Charles Edward Weeks**, was the son of Charles William and Agnes Esther Weeks, of 180 Kings Rd. Reading. The 1911 census indicates that at the age of 17 Charles was working as a grocer's assistant. His father had his own business as a

book keeper, and his younger brother, Cyril aged 9, was in school. Charles had attended Wokingham Road School, now known as Alfred Sutton Primary School, and it is assumed that this was the school Cyril attended. Agnes had given birth to four children but only Charles and Cyril had survived.

Charles joined the army in Sept. 1914. The *Reading Standard* of August 19th 1916 gives an account of the

wounding, in both legs, one arm and his head, which Charles Weeks received on July 30th 1916. He had been left for dead when a 9.2 inch (250lb.) shell fell in front of him, but was brought out by the Warwicks. After the usual field dressings had been administered and treatment at a casualty clearing station he was transferred to Etaples and later evacuated to England, where he spent some time in a war hospital in Norfolk.



Pte. CHARLES E. WEEKS, 180 King's Road, Reading.—Wounded in 23 places.



Writing from hospital, he commented that the food and treatment was 'A1'. The swelling in his face had gone down and he was now able to see out of both eyes. His left thigh and right knee were still painful. In total he had twenty three injuries but only considered eleven to be bad. Charles Weeks survived these injuries and returned to France where he was killed on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1918, four days after the commencement of the German Spring Offensive; his body was never found. A headstone in Division 32, of the Reading Cemetery, describes him as "Missing in France", he is officially commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Bay 7, he was 24 years old.

**26th April 2018**

**Reginald Charles Earle Gatehouse: Royal Marine Light Infantry**

Reginald Gatehouse was born the 27 August 1897 the eldest son of Earle and Alice Gatehouse of 6, Clarendon Road, Reading. In 1911 the family were living at 42, Clarendon Road. Earle Gatehouse's occupation was given as a stableman jobmaster. Reginald was then aged 12 and noted as being at school; he had two younger brothers and a baby sister. His maternal grandmother was also living with the family.

The Reading Standard of the 5 May 1918 outlined his service career. Reginald enlisted in the Royal Marine Light Infantry in October 1914, at the age of 16 years. After a period of training at Deal and Chatham he was placed on a monitor, the H.M.S. Roberts:

'He spent 12 months in the Dardanelles, where he had many thrilling experiences and several miraculous escapes. On one occasion twelve of his comrades, who were on his ship at the time,

were blown up by a shell, he being the only one uninjured. Later he was sent to Russia for special service and subsequently took part in the shelling of the Belgian coast by monitors'.

We are also told that he had been to France with his officer, who was engaged in a series of experiments and that Reginald had assisted him. We can only speculate on the nature of these experiments.

Five weeks before he was killed Reginald had been home on leave. On his return, preparations were in hand for the forthcoming strike at the German U-boat bases of Zeebrugge and Ostend. German U-boats presented a considerable threat to shipping in the English Channel and in 1918 Vice Admiral Sir Roger Keyes was determined to strike a blow at the German U-boat bases. Unfortunately the raid on Zeebrugge did not go quite according to plan.

During the attack Reginald Gatehouse was believed to have been on board HMS Iris, which, with HMS Daffodil, was one of two Mersey ferries being used in the attack. The HMS Iris came to the aid of the Vindictive and ensured the cruiser reached its objective by ramming it into the Mole at Zeebrugge. However, in the process HMS Iris drew heavy fire and of the platoon of forty-five men on board only twelve men were able to land.

An official Admiralty report described the raid: *"with the exception of covering ships the force employed consisted of auxiliary vessels and six obsolete cruisers. Five of these filled with concrete,*



The late Pte. R. C. E. GATEHOUSE  
R.M.L.I., 6, Clarendon Road, Reading.—

*were used as blockships...and, in accordance with orders, were blown up and abandoned by their crews. Two blockships were sunk in the entrance to the Bruges Canal at Zeebrugge and a third ship grounded on the way in: storming parties landed on the Mole, which was much damaged by the blowing up of a submarine loaded with explosives. A German destroyer was torpedoed and other craft damaged. One British destroyer and two motorboats were lost. At Ostend two blockships were blown up. Storming parties were landed from 'Vindictive'."*

Everyone concerned wanted to believe that there had been a great victory but in the event the attack was less decisive than was reported to the public. The blockships had sunk but not quite in the correct position and the gallantry of those who lost their lives or were wounded had achieved little. It was not too long before the U-boats were back in operation harassing the channel. However, the depressing events of the German spring offensive on the Western Front meant morale at home and at the front was low,

so it was important to put a positive gloss on the Zeebrugge attack and much was made of the ability of the navy to strike decisively at the enemy.

The total casualties for the attack amounted to 16 officers, 86 men killed; 5 officers and 121 men wounded. Young Reginald Gatehouse was amongst the dead. He was 19 years old when killed in action 23 April 1918.

Reginald was brought home for burial, which took place at St. Peter's Church, Earley. The funeral was a significant occasion and well attended by those who knew him. A picture of the scene at his funeral was published in the local paper.



31st May 2018

**Charles George Alfred Piper**  
Pioneer 137844 98<sup>th</sup> Field Company Royal Engineers

**Charles George Alfred Piper** was the son of Alfred and Emma or Emily Piper, of 9 Anstey Road, Reading. He was the eldest of the four children recorded as living at home in the 1901 census. His father was a grocer's assistant and Charles, then 18, was recorded as a painter's apprentice. In 1911 he was 27 and still living at home in 9 Anstey Road, his occupation was that of a housepainter.

Charles Piper died on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 1918 and is named on a special memorial in the Hermonville Military Cemetery, Marne. Location III. AA. 1/5. Pioneer Piper, then aged 35, was buried in the German part of this cemetery, but his grave and that of four other Sappers could not be found after the Armistice.

Pioneer Piper was serving in the British IX Corps which served under French Command as part of the French 6<sup>th</sup> Army. The following information may explain how he met his death.

The Divisions which made up the Corps had been sent to this 'quiet' sector of Champagne, where No Man's Land was often as wide as 800 yards, in order to recover from previous ordeals. The ground had been fought over before but nature had taken its course and the land was green and full of flowers, birds and insects. However, as soon as the British arrived the area saw

more action and increased shelling. Later it was known that the Germans were registering new guns. During the afternoon 26<sup>th</sup> May, with the capture of a German prisoner, the British got the first indication that an all-out attack was imminent.

The men were called to "stand to" amid rumours that the whole thing was just "wind up". However, at



The late Pnr. C. G. A. PIPER, of Anstey Road, Reading.—Killed in action.

1a.m. the German barrage began, with guns and trench mortars using gas ammunition for 10mins. This was followed by high explosives and the systematic destruction of the Allied line. The name given to the bombardment was "Trummelfeuer" or "drum fire" such was the noise which was made. The German infantry was set to go over at 3.40a.m. and thus the German attack on the "Chemin Des Dames" in what was officially recorded as the

3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of the Aisne, began. Virtually the whole of the front line in the sector broke, with hardly a British gun intact to return fire. The trenches were overrun and the survivors of the shelling were killed with rifle fire and bayonet, many more were taken prisoner. The German advance got nearer to Paris than at any other time in the war.

28th June 2018

**Frank Washbourne Earley**  
Private 200566 'D' Company  
1st/4th Royal Berkshire Regiment

Frank Earley was the son of Harry and Margaret Earley, of 12 Manchester Road, Reading. Harry worked at Huntley and Palmer's biscuit factory. Before the war Frank worked as a clerk in the Borough Accountant's Office and his brother Jack who enlisted in the same regiment worked, for the County Council. It is not known exactly when Frank and his brother joined up but they enlisted in Reading.

The 1st/4th Royal Berkshire battalion was the local territorial force. They arrived in France in March 1915. Several of Frank's letters were published in the Reading Chronicle. In his first letter published in April 1915 Frank writes: *'We are sleeping in barns, and have moved several times since we have been over here.'*

Frank's experiences at Ploegsteert (known by the British soldiers as Plugstreet ) illustrate what life was like in this largely 'quiet sector' where the 'Saxons', in the trenches opposite, had a mild reputation and sniping and firing on working parties was their main preoccupation:

*"We have been in action and are having a rest at the present time. We were in the trenches 24 hours and I was on outpost with two other of our chaps. It was a bit of an experience, as we were only about 100 yards from the Germans. They send up flares at night and light up the surroundings just like daylight, and if you move your foot or any part of your body you get a shower of bullets round you. The worst part of trench fighting, I think, is getting in and out of the trenches, as once you are in it is fairly safe except, of course, if they shell the trenches accurately.*



*Then it must be hell upon earth. They tried to shell us with lyddite, but they did not find out our trench, although they found out one of the others."*

Frank served throughout the Somme campaign and during the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917. No information has been found to indicate that Frank was wounded during any of these campaigns and it must be assumed that he got away unscathed. Having spent a bloody time at Ypres

during the summer and autumn, the men were preparing for their next action which they thought would be at Cambrai. They were all surprised when the 48th Division was directed to Italy. Various actions took place during their time in Italy which cannot be gone into in the

space available here however, generally the time was fairly quiet. In June 1918 the Germans stirred up the sleepy Austrians opposite the 48th Division to launch an attack which in the event turned out to be the last serious attack for the division.

However, whilst the fighting raged, Frank Earley, veteran of so many famous battles, died, not on the battlefield but in a hospital bed of the deadly influenza virus that was sweeping through the ranks.



PRIVATE FRANK EARLEY, Royal Berks, 12, Manchester Road, Reading, died in Italy from epidemic influenza.

Frank had been ill about four days before his death. Frank had been home on leave at Easter just a few weeks before his death. Frank was aged 21 or 22, depending on the source of the information, when he died on 13 June 1918. He is buried in the Montecchio Precalcino Communal Cemetery Extension, Italy, location Plot 2, Row C, Grave 3.

Frank had three older brothers and it is believed that they all survived the war because only Frank's name is recorded on local war memorials.



LANCE-CORPORAL JACK A. EARLEY, Royal Berks, 12, Manchester Road, Reading, mentioned in dispatches for services in Italy.

Jack (real name John) reached the rank of Lance Corporal and was mentioned in despatches by General Plumer. His brother Albert, who

was 12 years older than Frank, served in the Royal Engineers and Alfred, 10 years older, served in the Royal Naval Air Service.

Frank was a popular young man and an active member of St. Bartholomew's Church, Reading. He sang in the choir and was a member of the Church Lads' Brigade; he is remembered on the church war memorial and also on the Alfred Sutton School (Wokingham Road School) war memorial.

# Monash: An Appraisal

## George Bailey

A century has passed since General Sir John Monash took command of the Australian Corps in France. He has been considered by military historians to have had a then unique ability, that of being able to apply the skills of business management to the fighting of battles in the Great War. He became thought of as the first 'military manager', being one of the few 'Big Business' type of brains among the Allied commanders. His management skills are even more relevant today, a century later.

### His professional and military life

John Monash was born in Melbourne, New South Wales, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1865, of recent Jewish migrants from the Prussian-Polish region of Europe. When they settled in Australia, his father dropped the 'c' in the Monasch name to give the surname by which his son is now known. After a chequered undergraduate life, during which he read widely, and played both chess and the piano, Monash graduated from the University of Melbourne and qualified as an engineer. He practised in construction projects, pioneering the use of ferro-concrete in Australia. He became an advocate and expert witness in legal cases relating to engineering.

Amongst his many interests was military training, and he became a part-time militia officer, gradually gaining promotion whilst in charge of coastal artillery batteries. He attended Colonel Hubert Foster's school in military science at the University of Sydney where he wrote the pamphlet '100 Hints for Company Commanders'. Foster, trained as an officer cadet at the Staff College, Sandhurst.



Later, as an expert in military administration and the scalar chain of command, he became Monash's mentor.

Once War was declared in August 1914, Monash became the Chief Censor for a month. He was then charged in command of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December he took ship with the Australian forces being transported to Egypt. The day after the 25<sup>th</sup> of April he landed on the Gallipoli peninsula, as part of the British and French forces. Unfortunately the Turkish defenders proved to be tough fighters prepared to take enormous casualties. The landings bogged down within a short distance from all the beaches.

As a Brigadier-General, Monash lead a unit penned round under Pope's Hill and Quinns Post, these hilltop sites being above Anzac Cove. His performance in its attack on Sari Bar on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August left questions as to his personal response to physically being in an attack. He was reported as saying over and over again "I thought I knew how to command men".

Fortunately he was not removed to 'safer' duties. Questions also remain about his contribution to the eventual embarkation of the Australian troops leaving the peninsula – he was considered to have misled about the time when he did embark. He returned to Egypt and then, in July 1916, he joined the Australians, taking



General Sir John Monash

command of their new 3<sup>rd</sup> Division in Salisbury, England. After four months of training his Division was moved to northern France, manning the trenches in the Armentieres sector of the Western Front. However they were not involved in the disastrous Bullecourt action, so Monash did not become prejudiced against the tank. In June 1917, the Division participated in the highly successful battle of the Messines ridge, and later in 1917 he commanded the Broodseinde attack on the Passchendaele ridge that cemented the reputation of the Australian Corps.

During the Kaiser's Offensive in the Spring of 1918, the Division plugged the gap at Villers-Bretonneux in front of Amiens, a gap left in the line by other retreating BEF units. Then, following Birdwood's transfer, he came into his own as the commander of the entire Australian Corps. He oversaw the exquisite Hamel operation, a very successful but limited attack on 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1918, the whole battle being concluded within some 93 minutes. This was said to be a "perfect battle" and "the first modern battle" with its use of infantry, tanks and aircraft.

In assessing the contribution made to the success of the Australian Corps, there is ample evidence that Monash was a superb military organiser, using a daily checklist (with each task meticulously crossed off once completed) to ensure no task was overlooked. His engineering expertise came into play in rebuilding Australian confidence in the tank which brought success on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. He used four carrier tanks to supplement the carrying capacity of the sixty fighting tanks Mark V tanks at Le Hamel and Vaire Wood. This saved over 1,250 soldiers having to carry 50,000lbs of supplies (wire, pickets, sheet iron, bombs, ammunition and water) up to the advancing troops. Additionally, aircraft were used to parachute 100,000 rounds of ammunition for the machine-guns. Hamel rightly deserves its title, 'the first modern battle'.

There followed two important successes, at Mont St. Quentin on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September and on the 29<sup>th</sup> in breaking the Hindernburg Line at Bellicourt. Shortly afterwards, the Corps showed it was in need of rest and recuperation by taking substantial casualties in the action at Montbrehain. It left action for the last time, returning on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, but did not have to go 'over the top' before the Armistice.

In cementing the global reputation of the Australians as being superb fighters, their commander benefited by acquiring his long-lasting reputation even though by now the stresses of command created his agitated state and indecision before the storming of the Hindenburg Line. However two days later, two of his divisional commanders seized the opportunity to switch from a west-east line of advance to a north-south line which allowed the Seigfreid Position to be rolled up.





After the end of hostilities, Monash remained a further year in Europe to ensure the smooth return of his troops to Australia. His own return was soon blighted by the death of his wife from uterine cancer. He then returned to his professional life, becoming the General Manager of the Victoria State Electricity Commission which built one of the world's greatest engineering schemes. Showing his good sense, he employed German engineers who were the only ones with the expertise to exploit the reserves of brown coal needed to fuel the power stations.

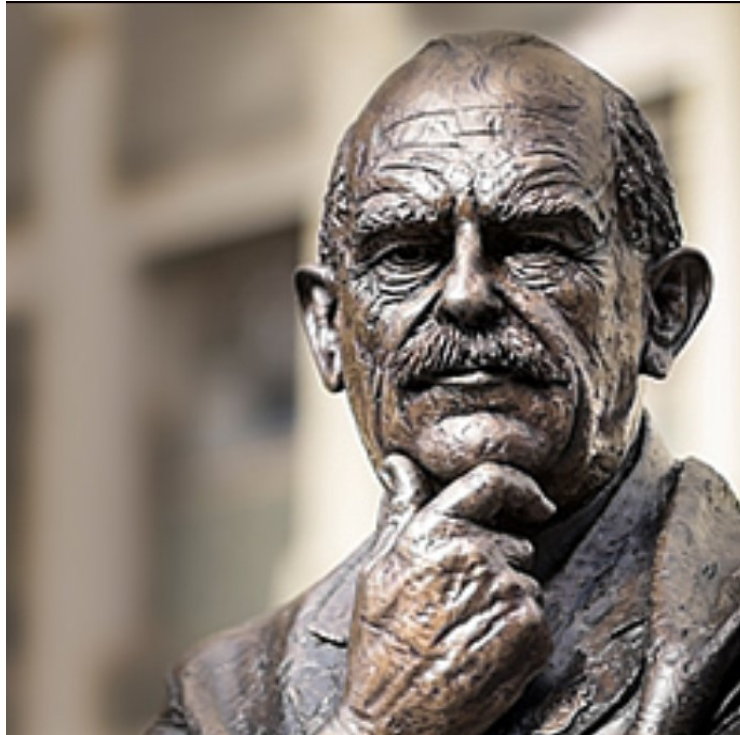
With his reputation, Monash was asked to serve in many activities involving his engineering skills, ethnic heritage and academic knowledge. Gradually his health deteriorated and he died on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 1931. Some 250,000 people attended his funeral.

Monash University, the second university established in the State of Victoria, was named in his memory.

### **Assessing Monash's command skills**

In assessing the contribution made to the success of the Australian Corps, there is ample evidence that Monash was a superb military organiser, using a daily checklist (with each task meticulously crossed off once completed) to ensure no task was overlooked. His engineering expertise came into play in rebuilding Australian

confidence in the tank which brought success on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. He used four carrier tanks to supplement the carrying capacity of the sixty fighting Mark V tanks at Le Hamel and Vaire Woods, saving over 1,250 soldiers having to carry 50,000lbs of supplies (wire, pickets, sheet iron,



**Statue of Monash at Monash University**

bombs, ammunition and water) up to the advancing troops. In addition, aircraft were used to parachute in 100,000 rounds of ammunition to feed the machine-guns. Hamel rightly deserves its title, 'the first modern battle'. Monash demonstrated the ability

to achieve brilliant success with economy of lives and labour. Coupled with his organizing skills was the ability to understand and get the best use from the technology then available, being innovative regardless of where the ideas came from. It was his repeated attempts to gain maximum success with the maximum economy in Australian lives which established his renown. Monash's unconventional 'citizen' route to supreme command of his national army meant that he was not limited by the traditional military

culture and training common to most European commanders. His professional engineering expertise inevitably meant that he was able to bring a commercial perspective to analysing military situations and problems. The likelihood is that he instinctively thought in a business rather than in a military way. Thus he was more receptive to innovative ideas simply because competitive advantage in the business world comes from exploiting new technologies and new methods of management. His legal advocacy skills meant he was well able to articulate his plans at staff briefings.

Did Monash bring to command business ideas not known or understood by others? The answer is 'yes' if comparing his performance with that of most regular officers. He did bring such ideas; which were partly based on practical experience gained in his pre-War professional life and partly on reading books about strategy and organisation. Based on his understanding of both theory and practice, he seems to have arrived at common sense conclusions on how best to run a business, and later applied such thinking to managing an army corps. This was aided by his soldiers being willing to follow him into battle, having confidence in his organisational prowess.

### **Leadership and management; a century on**

In the century which has passed since Monash took leadership of the AIF, the psychological understanding of 'leadership' has evolved. As with most other spheres of human knowledge, this has come from scientific research. Thus leadership has evolved far beyond simple 'command and control'. However, by using modern techniques such as situational analysis, it is possible to appreciate the instinctive awareness of what 'leadership' meant to Monash and his mentor Foster.



Summarizing modern thinking: the effective-performance skill identified in modern leadership is having trust in delegating, by good communication, accountability and responsibility, so that the leader allows followers to complete some of the identified tasks, resulting in all, besides the leader, having ownership of the implementation.

It is reasonable to suggest that, by his style of leadership and management as he revealed in his writings, General Sir John Monash would have been able to empathise with such concepts, even though unable to articulate them in 1918.

#### Further Reading:

Fayol, H. (1916) *Administration Industrielle et Generale, Bulletin de la Societe de l'Industrie minerale*.

Monash, Lieut.-General Sir J. (1920) *The Australian Victories in France in 1918*, London, Hutchinson & Co.;

Pedersen, P. (1985) *Monash as Military Commander*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Serle, D. (1982) *John Monash: A Biography*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Smithers, A.H (1973) *Sir John Monash*. London: Leo Cooper.

FitzSimons, P (2018) *Monash's Masterpiece The battle of Le Hamel and the 93 minutes that changed the world*. Hachette, Australia

#### Acknowledgements:

John Pearce, Librarian, Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, England.

Joy Pitts, Chief Executive Officer and Organisational Psychologist, Peoplemax, Sydney.

and especially Dr. Alex Kalloniatis, Senior Operations Analyst/CDS Fellow, Decision Sciences Branch, Joint & Operations Analysis Division, Department of Defence, Canberra, for encouraging this fresh appraisal of Monash and his unique

military skills from within the thinking of the Twenty- first Century.

## Harold Bridger 's Last Fight: An Illustration

Branch members will remember Chris Nash's talk last year on his friend's grandfather, Lt. Harold Bridger RFC. On 23rd October 1918 Lt Bridger was the observer in a DH9 of 104 Squadron Royal Air Force, flown by 2nd Lt. Bernard Sydney Case. At just after 13.00 they encountered the Fokker D.7 flown by German air-ace Lieutenant Kurt Monnington (or Monnington) of Jasta 18 . Monnington was victorious, and Case and Bridger were shot down over Metz and crashed in Fourasse Wood. Case (aged 19 yrs) died from his injuries on 10th November and is buried in Ars-sur-Moselle Churchyard, where his is the only CWGC grave. His headstone is inscribed, " Un bon soldat de Jesus Christ!" Harold Bridger (1882-1955) was made a Prisoner of War and was repatriated in February 1919.

Monnington survived the war with a total of eight victories, including five DH 9s of 104 Squadron of the Independent Air Force. The top illustration seen here is by Barry Weekley and can be found on the cover of a book called: **'Independent Force' The War Diary of the Day-light Squadrons of the IAF . June-November 1918'** edited by Keith Rennie (Grub Street, London,2002).

Chris Nash was thrilled to note that the DH9 shown is registration **D2932** - the aircraft flown by Case and Bridger!!

Kurt Adolf Monnington was born on 29 September 1891 in Hamburg. His original service during World War I was with the German ground forces and he won an Iron Cross Second Class on 14 June 1915.



Monnington began his aviation career with a two-seater reconnaissance unit, *Flieger-Abteilung* (Flier Detachment) 62. After that he was reassigned as a fighter pilot with *Jasta 15* in 1917. His First Class Iron Cross came on 12 December 1917. He switched to *Jasta 18* in March 1918. *Jasta 18*

centred on Metz as its basis of operations. On 11th May 1918, Monnington scored his first aerial victory, when he shot down an SE.5a over Bailleul, and, on 5th June, he shot down a Bristol



*Kurt Monnington*

Fighter north of Violanes. His combat career following that concentrated on interception of bombers intruding into Germany. He shot down Airco DH.4 No. D7223 of 99 Squadron RAF on 31st July 1918. On 12 August, DH.9 number D2931 from No. 104 Squadron RAF fell under Monnington's guns, and the following day, two DH.9s

from the same squadron collided while avoiding his fire; Monnington was credited with both victories.. On 10th October 1918, he downed yet another DH.9 from 104 Squadron, and on 23 October, scored his fifth victory against 104 Squadron, with Case and Bridger, his last victory. He died in Hamburg in February 1939



# Branch Photographic Competition 2017

Following repeated delays for a variety of reasons, the annual Thames Valley Branch WFA photographic competition took place at our January 2018 meeting.

There was, once again, a good entry and, following close voting by the members present (and a recount), the three winning photographs were as below.

## First Place



Niall Ferguson  
*The Great War Display Team*  
*IWM Duxford 2017*

## Second Place



Mike Lawson  
*Le Belfroi, l'Hôtel de Ville d'Arras*

## Third Place



Ray Edwards  
*'Bullecourt Digger'*  
*Australian Memorial Park*



# Programme for the coming months

Details of the speakers for the first half of our 2018-19 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](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/thames-valley). For a description of the talk just double click on the talk title.

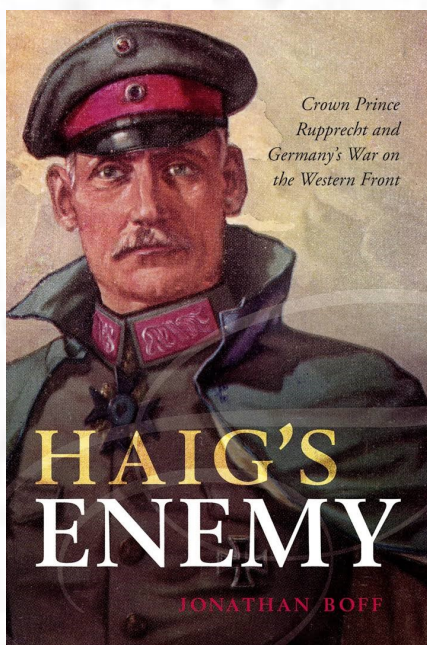
All meetings are held at the Berkshire Sports and Social Club, Sonning Lane, Reading on the last Thursday of each month (except December) commencing at 8.00 p.m.

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 Defeat 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 Historical 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!

25th October 2018

Alan Wakefield

Twisting the Dragon's Tail: The Zeebrugge Raid 23 April 1918

Alan Wakefield graduated from the University of Reading in 1990 with a degree in History and followed this with an MA in War Studies from King's College London. Having worked as a curator at the National Maritime Museum and the

RAF Museum, Alan qualified with an MA in Museum Studies from UCL. Alan is at present Head of First World War & Early 20th Century Conflict at the IWM.

Among his publications are *Under the Devil's Eye: Britain's Forgotten Army at Salonika 1915-1918* and *Christmas in the Trenches 1914-1918*. Alan has also edited for publication *Plough and Scatter: the Diary-journal of a First World War Gunner*. He is at present working on a book about the First World War campaign in Mesopotamia. Alan currently holds the position of Chairman of the Salonika Campaign Society and is a member of the British Commission for Military History.



Zeebrugge Mole on St George's Day 1918

He will describe the planning, course and outcome of one of the most

daring operations of the First World War. The action at Zeebrugge and associated operation at Ostend appear to have more in common with some of the special operations of the Second World War, such as the St Nazaire Raid of 1942, than those of 1914-18. The brainchild of Roger Keyes, commander of the Dover Patrol. It planned to bottle up the German Flanders Flotilla and show the British nation that the fighting spirit of the Royal Navy remained undimmed.





29th November 2018 – Rob Thompson

Ambrosia and Ulcers: Douglas Haig and BEF Logistical Development during the Great War

Rob Thompson is an 'accidental' military historian specialising in Great War operational development, artillery, logistics, administration and engineering. He began his working life as a labourer before becoming, variously, a tax clerk, motorcycle despatch rider and "Yoof &



Community Arts Worker" in Salford. Facing his first mid-life crisis he took a degree in Politics & Contemporary history graduating with a First. It was here that he blindly stumbled into the world of military history and the Great War which he ended up teaching at the Universities of Salford and Birmingham, later becoming an independent military historian. He now writes about the role of logistics and engineering in the development of the BEF's operational method on the Western Front and is a member of the Anglo-French 'GHQ Project' Comité Scientifique as a historical advisor.

Amongst his publications are: 'Mud, Blood and Wood: BEF Operational and Combat Logistic-Engineering during the Battle of Third Ypres, 1917', in P. Doyle & M.R. Bennett (eds), *Fields of Battle* (Kluwer, 2002) and 'Delivering the Goods. Operation Llandovery Castle: A Logistical and Administrative Analysis of Canadian Corps Preparations for the Battle of Amiens 8 - 11 August, 1918' in GD Sheffield & P Gray (eds), *Changing*

*War. The British Army, the Hundred Days Campaign and the Birth of the Royal Air Force, 1918* (Bloomsbury, 2013).

Rob's talk will attempt to establish the primacy of logistics during the Great War and chart the BEF's logistical development in order to analyse its effectiveness and assess its influence on BEF operational thought, practice and execution. It rejects the narrow terms imposed by the stale 'Lions & Donkeys' debate arguing instead that industrialisation radically changed the nature of warfare and the role of BEF Commander-in-Chief and that Haig's command qualities can only be evaluated in this context

**20th December 2018 – NOTE DATE**

Peter Franklin: Memorials to Victoria Cross holders of the Great War in the Royal Memorial Chapel in the RMA, Camberley

Peter retired from the TRRL in Crowthorne in 2009 after 38 years, starting out as a mechanical engineer, moving into the Computing Division in the 80s, and ending his career managing the company's IT security and Data Protection.

Although retired, he now works part time as a Verger at the Royal Memorial Chapel, The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Peter has a long association with the Chapel. He has been a member of the Chapel Choir for over 30 years. He has spent many years researching the 'Victorian Wars' and the many Chapel memorials in the



There are recorded memorials in the Chapel from The First Afghan Wars to the present day, and around 25,000 names in Rolls of Honour. Peter has written two guides for the Chapel; the guide to the stained-glass windows, and the Victoria Cross holders memorialised in the Chapel from the First World War.

This will be an illustrated talk which will cover some of the holders of the Victoria Cross who died in the Great War and who have memorials in the Royal Memorial Chapel in the Royal Military Academy, descriptions of the actions for which the medals were awarded, and who the recipients were. The memorials include the only three pairs of fathers and sons who have both been awarded the Victoria Cross.

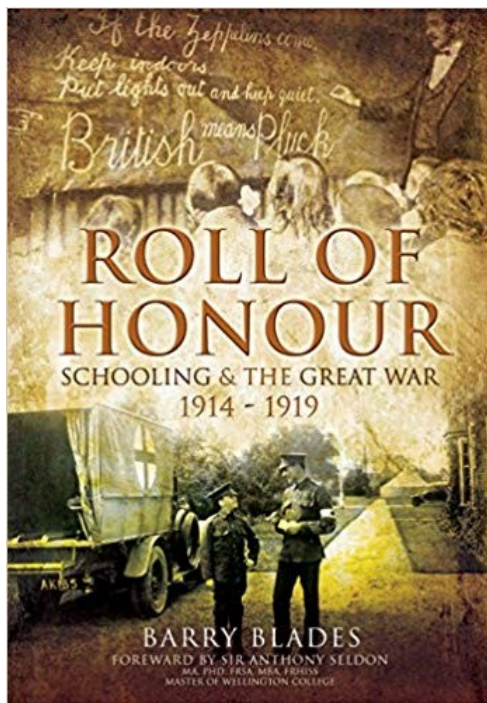


31st January 2019 – Dr Barry Blades

Roll of Honour: Schooling and the Great War 1914-19.

After a career in teaching, senior leadership and consultancy in secondary schools, Dr Barry Blades is now concentrating upon research into the impact of the First World War on British education. He has been commissioned by Pen & Sword books to write a trilogy of books under the heading 'Schooling & the Great War 1914 to 1919'. The first title, 'Roll of Honour', was published in October 2015. The second book in the series, 'Temporary Gentlemen & Other Ranks', is due to be published in October 2019. 'Little Soldiers' (c. 2022) will complete the series.

'Roll of Honour' explores the impact of the Great War on British schools, teachers and the communities they served. It focuses on the myriad faces of a war in which pupils served on the Home Front: a reserve army of citizens supporting Tommy in the trenches, contributing to the manufacture of war materiel, and facing



the devastating technologies of total war. The careers of teachers - and the impact of the decisions they made in wartime - are also considered.

The talk is illustrated throughout by a series of thought-provoking images.

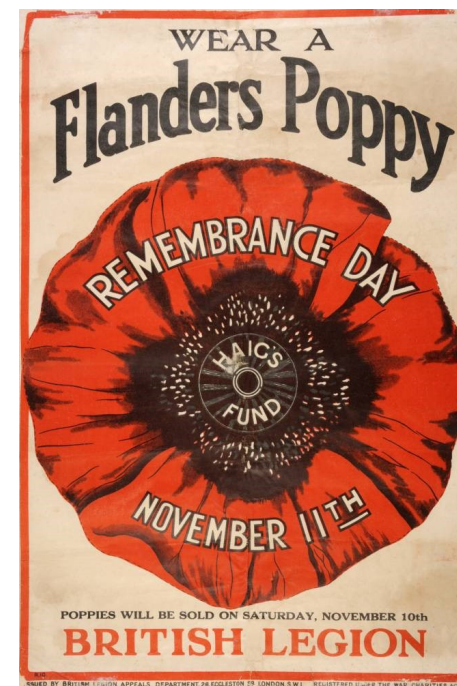
28th February 2019 – Prof. Gary Sheffield

Subject: To be Advised

Branch member, Academic, and prolific author, Gary Sheffield is sure to give a fascinating talk, usually encompassing his last research. An annual event that is not to be missed.

## Battlefield Tour 2019

Planning has already commenced for the Branch Battlefield Tour of 2019. Next year we propose to be based in the general area of Reims. Unfortunately it proving harder than expected to make reservations for the preferred hotels, partly because our usual dates coincide with the 2019 Football Women's World Cup. One of the venues will be the Stade Auguste-Delaune in Reims, which will be hosting matches on 8th, 11th, 14th, and 20th of June, neatly coinciding with our preferred week of 9th-14th June. In addition, some hotels seem to expect a large deposit now, which seems both difficult to arrange and excessive. At the moment we are investigating either a different base in the same area, or an earlier week.



The 11th November 2018 will mark the centenary of the end of fighting in the Great War, but not of course, the end of the war itself. That did not occur until the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28th June 1919. The United States Senate did not ratify that treaty despite public support for it and did not formally end its involvement in the war until the Knox-Porter Resolution was signed on 2 July 1921. For the U. K. the state of war ceased under the provisions of the *Termination of the Present War (Definition) Act 1918* with respect to various belligerents:

Germany on 10 January 1920

Austria on 16 July 1920

Bulgaria on 9 August 1920

Hungary on 26 July 1921

And, finally, Turkey on 6 August 1924