



The Spire Sentinel



**The Newsletter
of The
Branch of The
Front**



**& Magazine
Chesterfield
Western
Association**

ISSUE 124 - June 2026

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



Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2026

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

January	6th	. AGM + Tim Lynch - “Huns on the Run” Tim explores the often overlooked experiences of German POWs held in Britain during and immediately after the First World War
February	3rd	Ross Beadle - Sarajevo 1914 This talk examines the sequence of chance events of the preceding 36 years and, even, on the day of the killing.
March	3rd	Andy Rawson - Malta...Nurse of the Mediterranean against the Germans and Italians during WWII. However, over 125,000 casualties from the 1915 Gallipoli and 1916 Salonika campaigns were cared for on the island during WWI.
April	7th	Mick Byrne - Shot at Dawn Between 1914 and 1920, more than 3,000 British soldiers were sentenced to death by courts martial arms, However, only 346 were executed with 37 of these having committed capital crimes such as murder. The remainder become the centrepiece of our talk.
May	5th	Christina Holstein - - Verdun. What was the plan behind the German offensive of February <i>stein</i> 1916? A thundering opening bombardment brought early success but the German advance soon slowed and the French refused to give up.
June	2nd	Scott Lindgren The Admiralty dispatched two dreadnought battlecruisers to the South Atlantic to eliminate the threat of the German East Asia cruiser squadron. This talk explains the events and consequences of the Falklands battle, along with some of the strategic and tactical lessons.
July	7th	John Wilson The action at Sheikh Sa'id November 1914. The opposed landing that nobody has ever heard about! .
August	4th	Ian Castle - Gotha Raids. The talk traces the sequence of raids made by the deadly Gotha and massive 'Giant' bombers, and the development of the world's first in depth, integrated aerial defence system. Based on his book London 1917-18: The Bomber Blitz
September	1st	Roy Larkin - Where the Money Went. Following the success of the original 'Where the Money Went', the Sequel explores the financial costs of the Great War. Fully illustrated
October	6th	Peter Hart Welsh Warrior at Ypres, 1914: The thrilling memories of Captain Hubert Rees who ended up in command of the 2nd Welsh Regiment during the fighting at Gheluvelt.
November	3rd	John Horner 'In the care of St Dunstons : Private Richard Horners story'
December	1st	Neil Taylor....”Winston`s Little Army...Aspects of the Royal Naval Division”

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Chairman`s Ramblings



I hope this finds everyone well and have had a good few weeks since the last meeting. The last presentation by Christina was a great talk she presented it well and she has very extensive knowledge of the battle of Verdun it was well attended great Q&A at the end of the talk.

I have visited the Verdun battlefields and the Somme with two other members we had a very memorable time visiting lots of interesting places we ventured to fort Troyon which still stands as it is looked after by volunteers and was never taken by the Germans but took a lot of pounding by Germans. We then visited a few more forts that are no longer looked after and nature is taking over. We took a

trip up to Mort Homme and hill 305. The three of us went to see Colonel Driant's bunker and his final resting place. We then went on to look at the Glass pyramid to where Alain-Fournier was found. John Sutton and Craig Dudley wanted to make the pilgrimage to see this after reading the story about him. All of us had a fantastic time exploring the Verdun Battlefields we learnt a lot and gained more knowledge about the battle .On the return journey we spent two days exploring the Somme we went to the museum in Peronne which is a great museum to visit we took the tour of Thiepval woods which goes from the Ulster tower it was a great tour to take and its free.

I hope I will see a good turnout for the next talk, this is your Branch, so any member who wants to suggest a talk or Branch trip come and talk to one of the committee.

Jon-Paul Harding Branch Chair



Secretary`s Scribbles

Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to the June edition of the Branch Newsletter and magazine - number 124!

On May 22nd I travelled up to Gretna to the Devil`s Porridge Museum to deliver - on the 111th Anniversary - my talk on the Quintinshill Disaster, 22nd May 1915. The museum commemorates the huge (9 square miles) munitions factory built during WW1 to produce cordite. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle visited the factory and after watching the production of the cordite exclaimed that the operatives were making “Devil`s Porridge” hence the reason for the name of the museum. Getting there was a bit of an ordeal - five and a half hours driving to cover 170 miles....heavy traffic - roadworks - breakdowns - good job I left at 11am !

The museum - very modern building - is actually in Eastriggs just a few miles west of Gretna itself. When I arrived I was shown round by Tom Hughes the Community Officer. Very interesting display, if you are ever in that area , do pay them a visit - they even have one of the original `fireless` steam locomotives that was used to move materials around the huge site. In conversation before the talk, I said to Tom...” how many do you think we will get tonight...” 25 to 30” was his answer. By the time I started speaking there was 63 crammed into a room no bigger than the room we meet in at Chesterfield Branch. Sadly Tom had to turn away about a dozen potential attendees as more folks could be crammed in.



The presentation itself went very well and upon conclusion quite a number of attendees came up for a chat - including one chap who gave me a copy of a page from The Engineer magazine dated 28th May 1915....it contained information about the accident that I wasn't aware of. Another attendee thanked me for including mention of his great-uncle in the talk (he perished trying to save others) whilst his brother in the same train survived to later be seriously injured on the Western Front.

Just a word about an `unsung` member of our Branch - Marl Macartney...he does an amazing amount behind the scenes and has been a great help to me, particularly last year with all my wife`s health problems. Keep up the good work, Mark !

I have full details of Christina Holstein`s talk at the last meeting, but for reasons of space I`m splitting it into two parts - part 2 in July issue.

Jon Paul received the undernoted from Emrys, the WFA`s Branch Coordinator...

Dear Branch Chair

A new Great War film is being released in the UK next month.

"Landship" sets out to portray an account of F41 (Fray Bentos) a MkIV tank during 3rd Ypres. The film has been produced by Tin Hat Productions, a small UK company. They have previously produced some WW2 films, so this is a welcome move. The film is to be premiered at the Raindance Film Festival on the 22 June (all tickets have gone) and released on 26 June 2026 at the Kinema in the Woods, Woodhall Spa, Lincs. I have been in communication with the production team who are finalising further UK showings.

It is unlikely that "Landship" will attract the interest of large UK cinemas unfortunately but the smaller, perhaps independent cinemas might if they believe there is a market.

If I get a list of UK showings I will share them, but in the meantime branches might like to ask their local cinemas (and perhaps suggest their members do too).

Here is an exciting opportunity for branches to promote themselves and the WFA. When approaching your local cinemas, ask if you can have a small display promoting the WFA and/or provide WFA leaflets. You don't have any WFA promotional/recruitment leaflets? Then contact the office asap.

*For more information about the film please refer to: <https://www.facebook.com/LandshipMovie/>
<https://www.landshipfilm.com/>*

Good luck,

Emrys

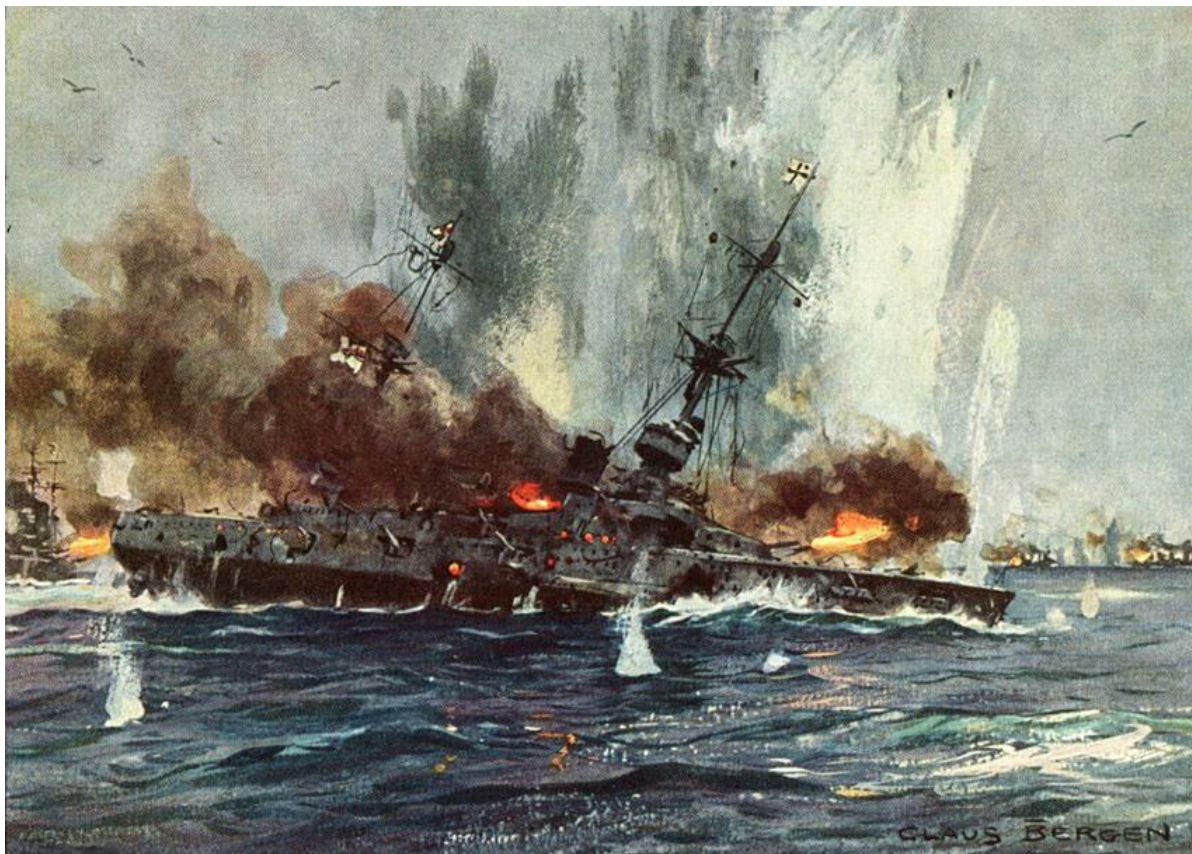
Although we are not yet at the half way point in 2026 my thoughts are already turning to speakers for next year - suggestions gratefully accepted - I need to know about what you - our loyal, supportive members, want to see, hear and experience at our monthly meetings. Please let me know your thoughts .

June Meeting.

On Tuesday (June 2nd) we have Dr Scott Lindgren return to present our naval topic for 2026...the Falklands naval battle of 1914.

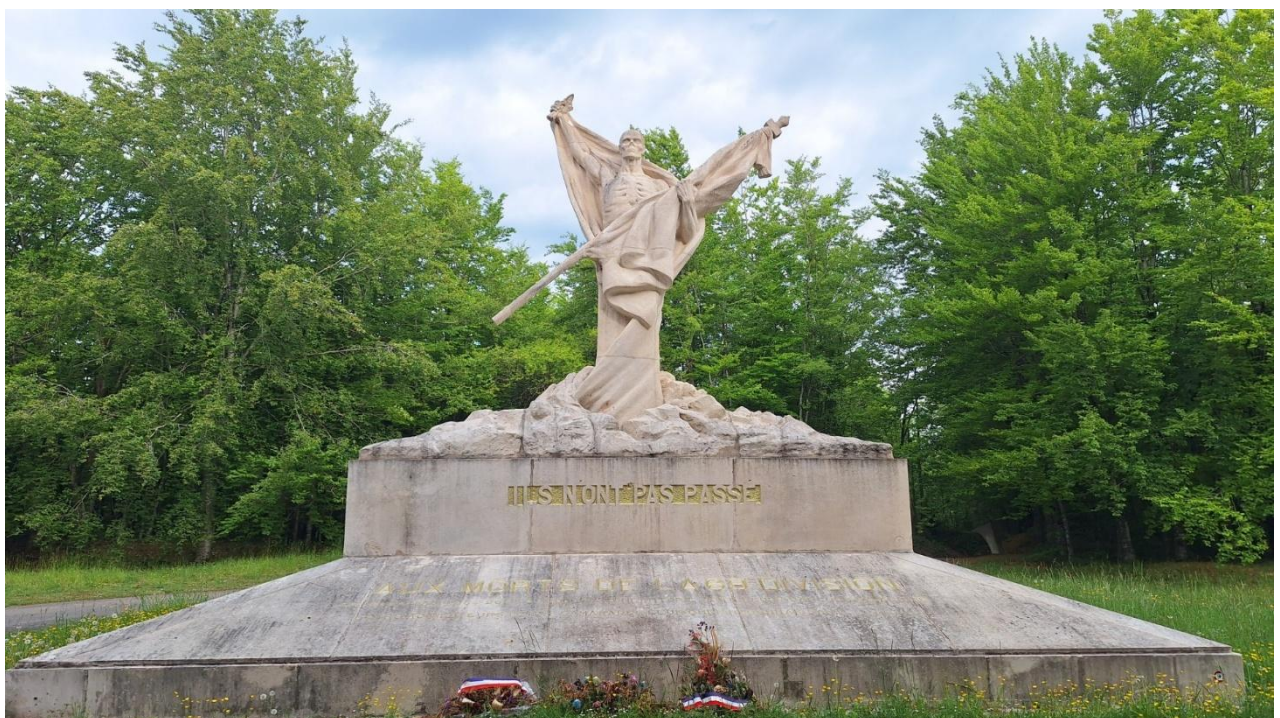
Dr Scott Lindgren is a naval and maritime historian specialising in the period 1825 - 1945. After completing his Masters in Maritime History he went on to research his doctorate at the University of Salford under his great friend, the late Professor Eric Grove, with a thesis entitled 'The Genesis of a Cruiser Navy: British First Class Cruiser Development 1884 - 1909'. He spent 15 years as a module tutor / lecturer and honorary research fellow in naval, maritime and local history, and was membership secretary, book and peer reviewer for the renowned International Journal of Maritime History. He currently freelances as a historian in the naval and maritime fields to a variety of commercial, professional, specialist and general interest groups.

Following the loss of Sir Christopher Craddock's two armoured cruisers at the Battle of Coronel, the Admiralty dispatched two dreadnought battlecruisers to the South Atlantic to eliminate the threat of the German East Asia cruiser squadron under Viz Admiral Maximilian von Spee. The two key vessels, the I-class Invincible and Inflexible were amongst the first batch of battlecruisers to be completed and that were specifically designed for the task of hunting and killing smaller commerce raiders at any point around the globe. Under the command of Vice Admiral Doveton Sturdee, who as Chief of Staff had been largely responsible for the faulty force dispositions, the Invincibles, with support from smaller armoured cruisers, would engage and comprehensively defeat almost all of von Spee's squadron off the Falkland Islands, he on the 8 December 1914. This talk explains the events and consequences of the battle, along with some of the strategic and tactical lessons.





Branch Chair, Jon-Paul Harding, together with Branch Member John Sutton and Craig Dudley spent a few days recently in France exploring - the Verdun area the Somme ...including a visit to the wonderful museum in Peronne - here`s some pictures from their trip.





When was the last time that you had a look at The WFA shop? There are some wonderful items to purchase and the profits help support the Association.

Go to the home page of the website and click on the 'About the WFA' menu and you will see the 'Branded Goods' option



Record Bag



Shoulder Bag



Messenger Bag



Cap



Coffee Mug



Mousemat



Classic Tie



Fridge Tile Magnet



WFA Fridge Magnet



WFA Bookmark



Lapel Badge



Despatch Bag



May Meeting



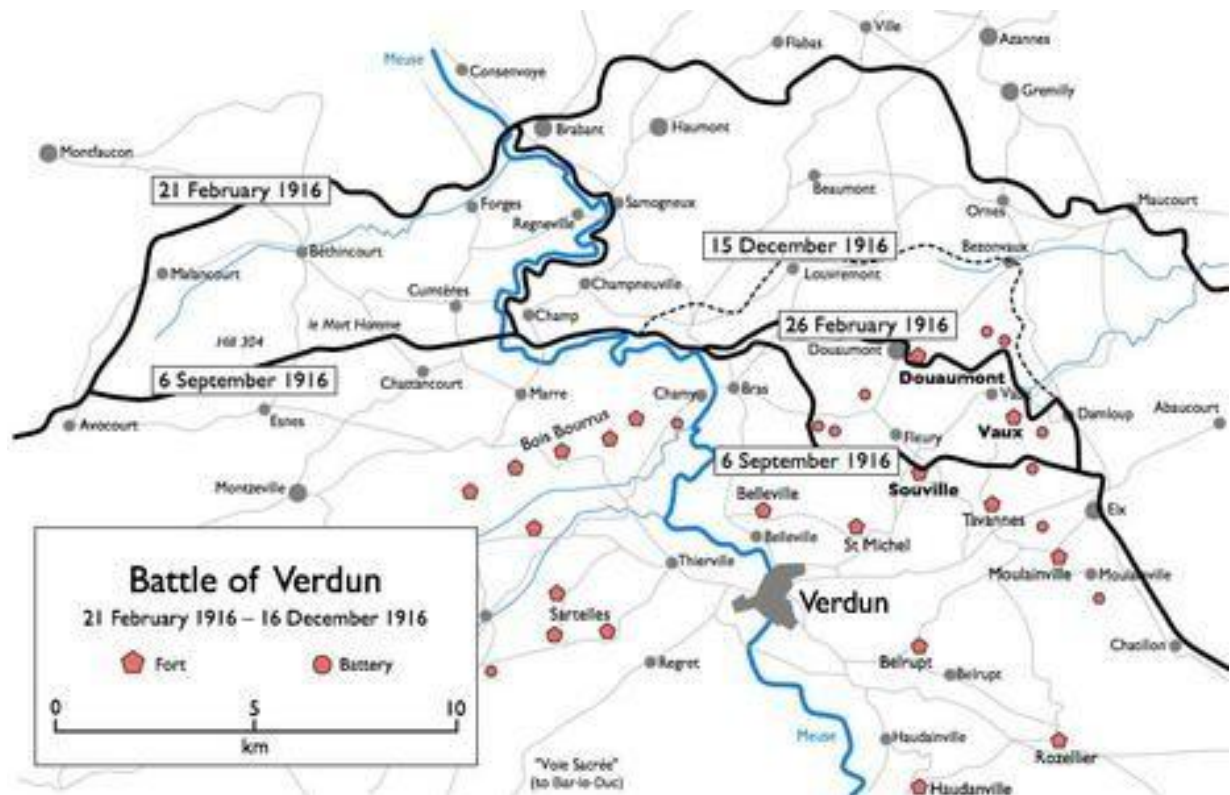
Christina Holstein - Verdun (part 1)

The battle of Verdun lasted for 300 days, started in February 1916 and ended when the Germans called it off in December of that year. It went completely wrong, it was meant to be short and sharp - not a long battle...but think back to when the Russians invaded Ukraine it was not meant to be a long battle, rather a "Special Military Operation". Verdun was meant to place the enemy in a situation where it was render the enemy unwilling to continue the war, rather than surrender. This was an unusual state of mind for a military commander. It was to be done by attacking France at a specific place on the Western Front where Germany had the advantage and where it was believed France would, for whatever

reason, France would fight and then by inflicting a huge number of casualties, using the greatest area of artillery ever seen on the Western Front, a huge number of casualties in an unstoppable manner, the French army would break down, discipline would fall apart, men would refuse to fight and the French would throw in the towel. To understand why that was the thinking of the Chief of the German General Staff, General Falkenhayn, why he thought that was necessary and what he brought about that tactic is the interesting point about Verdun. This argument has been discussed for 110 years for what he said was..."I am going to bleed the French Army white". Critics say - no..no..he couldn't do that given the size of the French army but clearly his intentional outcome was different...he intended to break through, he intended to roll up the front and advance on Paris 150 miles away. No he didn't ...he intended to do exactly what he said he intended to do he wanted to force the French into a situation whereby they sought surrender or sought terms, he thought he could do it at Verdun based upon the French losses since the start of the war but to understand his mindset you have to understand the situation that Falkenhayn was in and why he thought the way he did, what he intended to do, and what actually happened and why these plans went wrong.

Verdun was roughly in the middle of the Western Front between the Channel and the Swiss border, in the form of a salient which came about in September 1914. Verdun was in the way of the German advance in 1914, at that time it was immensely powerful, a fortified area of vast extent with an outer and inner ring of forts on hills surrounding the city and all communications by rail, road - and river - Verdun is on the River Meuse, all come through Verdun, so, if you attacking at any point, you are met by forts in a mutually supporting system. Between the forts there are batteries, underground machine gun posts, making it the most powerful entrenched camp, after Paris.

In the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 France lost Alsace and most of the province of Lorraine along with the natural borders like the Rhine. Subsequently in 1914 Germany captured most of the territory east of the Meuse River, including coal mines and iron and steel facilities. From September 1914 and most of 1915 not much happened in the Verdun salient, certainly nothing on the scale of what was to come.



Because most of the fighting was being done elsewhere, the vast resources of Verdun were stripped and so by the time you get to the end of 1915 there was no garrisons in the forts, no guns in the batteries and what had previously been manned by 66000 men had been run down to the minimum, basically anything that could be moved to another part of the front has gone, even the trenches at the end of 1915 looked like something only used for training exercises and this was a situation that German General Eric Von Falkenhayn was becoming aware of to start the process



that he believed would bring the war to an end by getting the French to seek terms. Germany was facing three belligerents, France, Russia and Britain. Germany's problem, before the start of the war was how to avoid a war on two fronts, hence the Schlieffen Plan was deliberately designed to avoid a war on two fronts. The Plan was to invade quickly, forcing France to surrender in six weeks as the Germans had done in the Franco-Prussian War, and before the British Expeditionary Force could have any impact on the invasion of France and Belgium and of course before Russia even had time to mobilise. That all failed because France called upon Russia to help which they did by opening an Eastern Front against Germany in August 1914 . By the end

of September 1914 the French have not collapsed and Germany has been beaten on the Marne. Falkenhayn realised by the end of 1914 that Germany could not win in the field on two fronts, that opportunity had passed so the only way Germany could win was by splitting the Allies and take them out individually. At the end of 1915 he wanted his Chancellor to offer terms to Russia but the Chancellor refused and fighting continued into 1915. This was repeated with France and Belgium but the

terms were so onerous that both said no. By the time you get to the end of 1915, Falkenhayn is under significant pressure - he has to find a way of bringing the war to an end. It is taking too long, it is costing too much. The maritime blockade is having an effect, rationing is brought in in Germany and this is extremely unpopular. At the end of 1915 Austria-Hungary tells him they only have the resources to carry on the fighting for another year and the war is not brought to a conclusion before the end of 1916 Austria-Hungary will collapse.

We have this perception that the German army is this great war machine and is virtually unstoppable, but what we forget that Germany is up against three belligerents, all of whom combined have many more men than they have - Russia has million, France has colonies - Britain has colonies and Britain is training its New Armies and Falkenhayn knows that sometime in 1916 these New Armies will be in the field. In the meantime every man Germany loses is a man Germany cannot replace.

So how are they to win ? How can they win?...but the thing which is causing the most trouble at home is the blockade resulting in rationing. The only way to raise the blockade is to return to unrestricted submarine warfare and that risks bringing the Americans in...and if the Americans come in you certainly cant win.

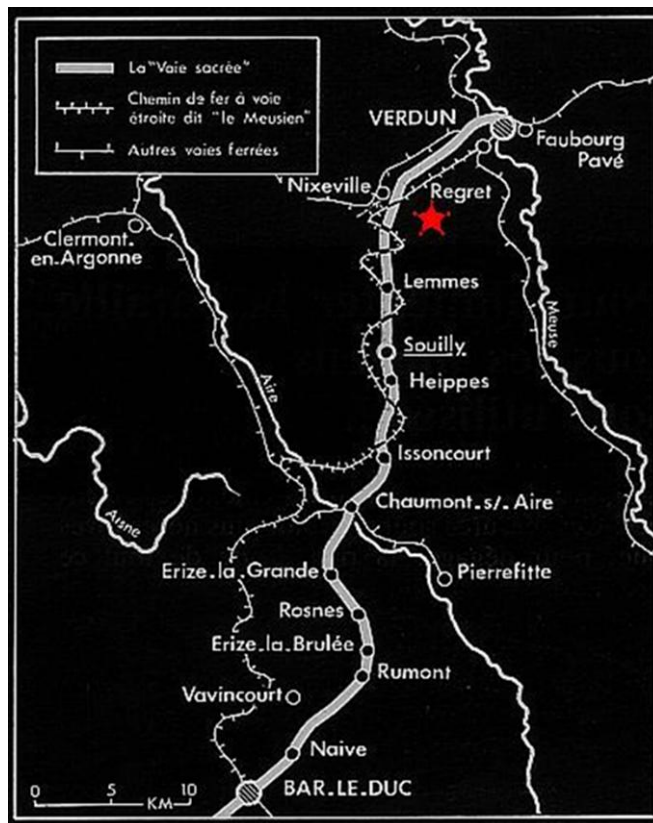
So what is Falkenhayn to do ?, he has to find a way of bringing the war to an end and he knows he cannot do it in the traditional way but inflicting a strategic defeat in the field and bringing them to the negotiating table on the point of surrender. Thus stalemate. So he comes back to the other idea of forcing on or other of the Allies into a negotiation. At the end of 1915 he thinks Russia can be set aside and he can concentrate on two belligerents, Britain which is getting stronger and France which he believes is weakening. Falkenhayn is getting information from military intelligence, the wounded, prisoners of war that men are fed up, they have had enough, that they don't to continue doing these massive operations where they have thousands of casualties and never seem to be getting anywhere ...attacking again and again over the bodies of their comrades , in short, they are not going to fight. There were instances in the Battle of champagne in 1915 - a battle we tend to forget about -where there was instances of French soldiers refusing to go forward and there was those who were simply shot as an example to others. One of those men was a teacher, and in France teachers were very highly regarded. The teaching union took up his case and fought the government.

So Falkenhayn is getting rumours and information about problems in the French army and the plan he comes up with in his mind - and there is an essence of desperation in this -is a way of breaking the stalemate. He comes up with the idea that, if Germany can attack somewhere, somewhere where Germany had the advantage and set out to inflict a very large number of casualties in a relatively short time and force France into a situation where it seeks terms, those terms suitable to Germany. This is the infamous "Bleeding white" strategy. He was determined to bring France to her knees by inflicting unimaginable losses. Bleeding white was a very quick operation...if you cut someone`s throat death happens in 4 or 5 minutes...an animal like an ox, 7 to 8 minutes. Bleeding white is fast, this is going to be fast - he has to get France out before Britain`s New Armies are in the field and before Russia recovers and becomes active again. There is a little window of time where he has to come up with a plan and the plan is simply to attack somewhere where Germany has an advantage and which is important enough to France to pour men in.

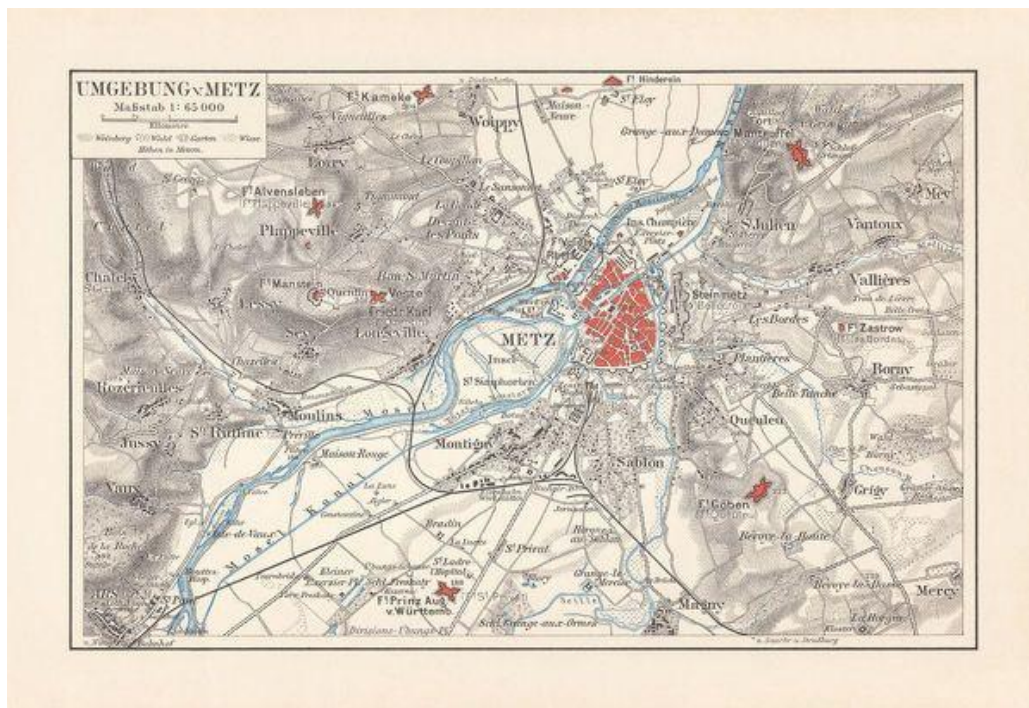
This is not of course a plan to draw in the full French army, rather pull in sufficient French soldiers for casualties to rise so fast that men start to refuse to fight and indiscipline breaks out until the army says we cant continue to do - we are not going to do it and the government loses its nerve.

Christina said she thought there was an air of desperation about these ideas and this was really the final throw of the dice.

So why Verdun ? There are several reasons for Verdun, firstly, it is a salient, the Germans have guns on three sides. It is a salient divided by the River Meuse. Rivers have crossing places - potential choke points where reinforcements present a target as they bunch up at the crossing points. Verdun has been weakened but the main reason for attacking Verdun is logistics



In 1914 the Lorraine basin produced between 62 and 64 per cent of France`s needs in iron and steel and it was not defended in 1914 - why - the French were attacking in a different direction and thought it would be unnecessary. The Germans walked in and took it over keeping the mines and mills working, producing iron and steel, munitions and other war products. They also took over the important railway system, particularly well developed around Metz



There was many lines radiating out of Metz, many heading in the direction of Verdun, with numerous spur lines designed to bring supplies to the front. There was no other area on the Western Front that Falkenhayn could supply as easily as he could to the areas around Verdun . Compared with the French whose supply lines to Verdun were restricted as Verdun was a salient. The French lost the standard gauge lines early in the war and these were in German hands for four years. So from 1914 on, all the French had to supply Verdun was a light railway (narrow gauge and one road from Bar le Duc. But you cannot meet the needs of a huge artillery battle with only a light railway. So, on paper, logistically, the Germans are going to walk this, hence Falkenhayn choosing Verdun as the focus of his attack.

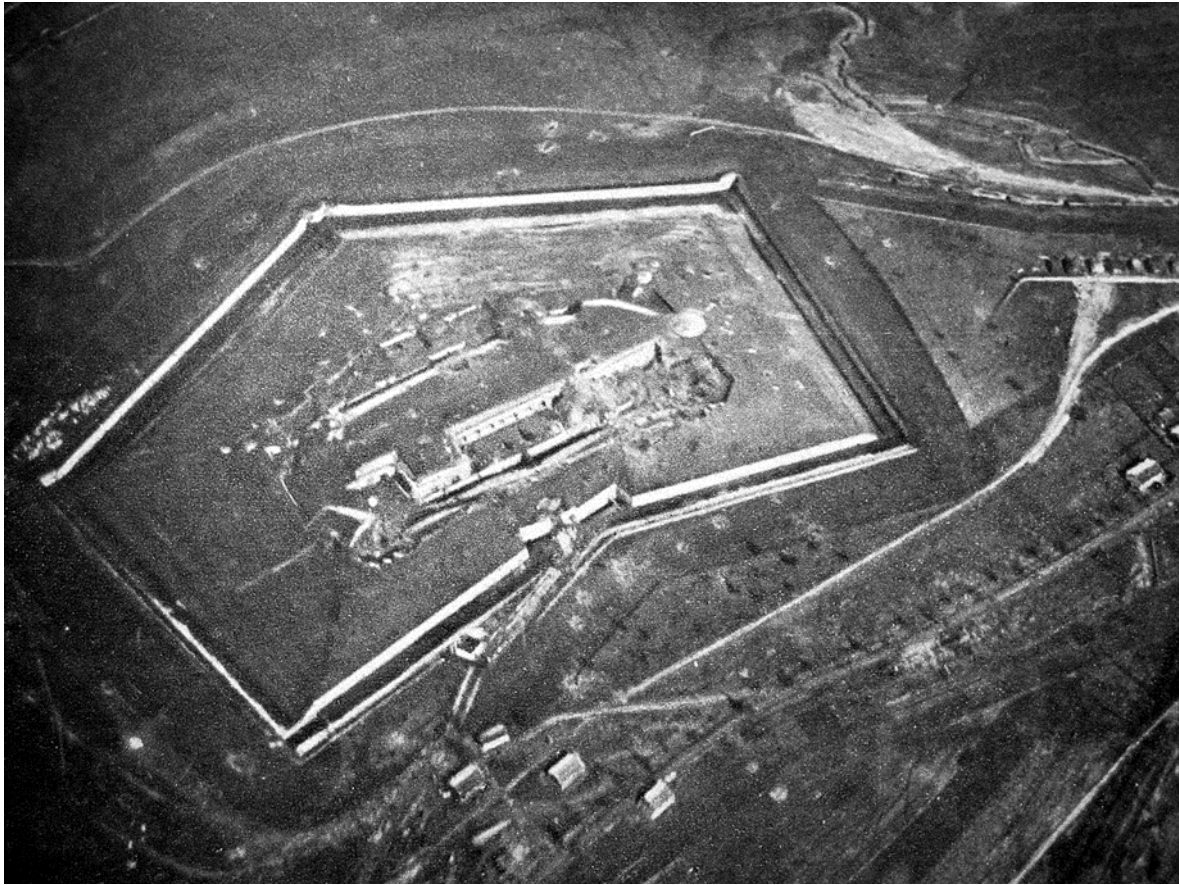
So what was the plan ? To attack on one side of the River Meuse on the north side of Verdun. The French refer to the right and left banks of the Meuse referring to the direction of flow of the river from the point of observation. The plan is to attack on the `right` bank on a very narrow front - an eight mile front. Behind that front there was about 1200 guns, with calibres up to 16 ins. The Germans also had some long range naval guns as well. The Germans also employed over 200 trench mortars, the biggest of which could lob a bomb weighing over 100kgs. It is only after the artillery has crushed the resistance that the infantry will move forward until they occupy strategic heights because once these are taken and occupied you control all the approaches to Verdun. Once the infantry have occupied the heights you can bring up the artillery and create this killing ground into which the French will throw troops in piecemeal in order to stop the German advance and this will be difficult to achieve in an organised manner because their supply lines are so bad.

About nine months previously the Germans had tried this tactic at Gorlitz-Tannow salient in Russia and it worked extremely well. The Gorlitz-Tannow salient was very weakly held by poorly trained Russian troops which the Germans attacked with a massive artillery bombardment followed by overwhelming infantry, achieving their objectives in a week. They inflicted an enormous amount of casualties on the Russians - 240,000, of which 130,000 were dead and it was a Russian commander

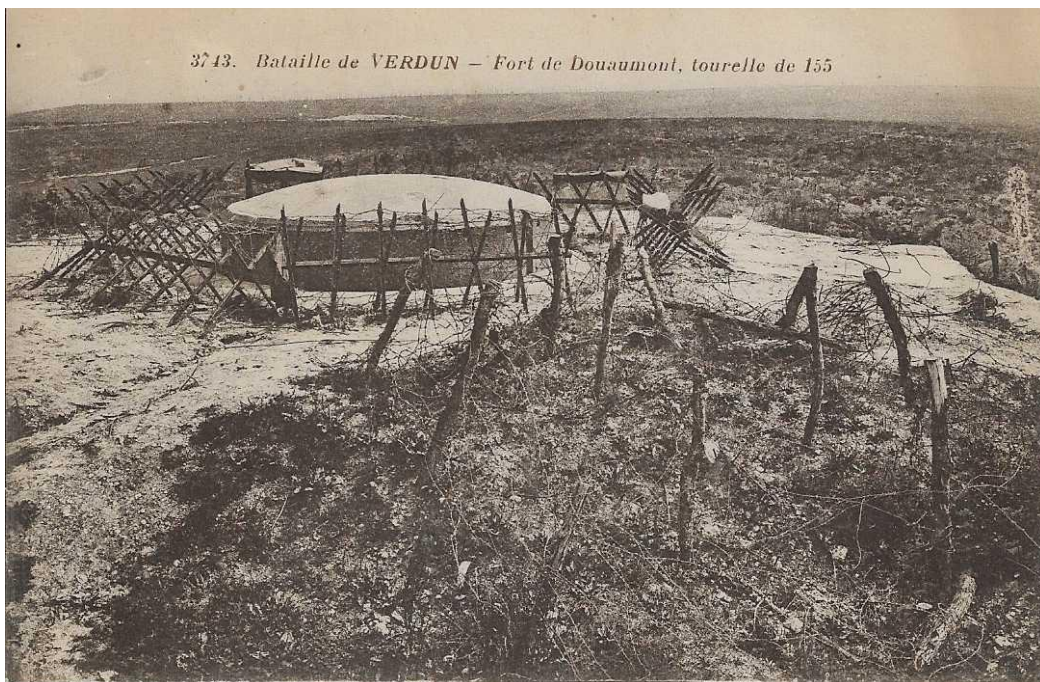
who said..."the Germans are bleeding us white".....he also said "the Germans expend materials....we expend men...". That was Flakenhayn`s plan for Verdun...to replicate the result at Gorlitz at Verdun. The aim was to force the French to surrender...basically in a week. This plan depends on two things,it depends on speed and on the French surrender. The right bank of the Meuse which is going to receive this massive artillery bombardment and follow up infantry attack was defended by two French infantry divisions , one of which was a reserve division and had only fought briefly in an entrenched camp in the Battle of the Marne and they had no experience of what warfare had become. There are 270 guns, most of which were old and had to be re-laid after every shot. They did have some modern *soixante quinze* - the 75mm guns.

Like logistics everything is in favour of the Germans. The plan is to start on February 12th but things go wrong from the start, the weather is against them, the guns cant fire resulting in delays which gives the French time to bring up more men and guns, indeed Joffre was not actually convinced that the Germans were going to attack Verdun, it took him a long time - he thought it was a feint, he couldn`t see why they would attack there as Verdun had no strategic value.

The bombardment opened on 21st February and was overwhelmingly appalling to the defenders as war had changed dramatically since the Marne in 1914, with infantry moving forward next day. Unlike at Gorlitz, there was resistance and the German advance was slow taking five days to reach Fort Douamont



Douaumont was not the biggest fort but among the strongest as most of it was underground covered with a special concrete the French had developed for suchlike fortifications, it had retractable gun turrets - what it didn't have was a garrison and the Germans quite literally walked in



So five days in the Germans have captured the most important fort in the system , the highest point in the defensive line...it was the keystone of the arch. For the French, the loss of this fort is a terrible blow but for the Germans it is wonderful - vindication of their new tactic. Falkenhayn then told his commanders - keep going -

keep going until you take the strategic heights, and this is the point when it goes wrong and for the Germans, from this high point , it all goes downhill.

A German general had Fort Vaux in his sights...told his men to take the fort..."this very day"....25th February...but it didn` t fall until June 7th !

Part 2 in next issue of newsletter

Ben Salmon: the man who chose the asylum over the gun.



The WWI conscientious objector stood before a military tribunal in 1918. They offered him the uniform, or a firing squad. He was unarmed. His hands were empty. The three officers sitting behind the wooden table possessed the full legal authority to end his life. They waited for him to break. The room was silent except for the scratch of the court stenographer's pen.

Ben Salmon was a clerk working in Denver, Colorado. The year was 1917. He was twenty-eight years old, married, and his wife was expecting their first child. He spent his days organizing for the railway unions and his evenings reading theology in the local library.

He believed two things absolutely: the teachings of his

Catholic faith, and the fundamental rights of the working man.

When the United States entered the war in Europe that April, the conscription notices went up on brick walls and post office boards across the city. The World War I military draft required millions of young American men to register. The system expected total compliance. The machinery of war required bodies, and it did not ask for permission.

Salmon did not register. Instead, he sat at his kitchen table and wrote a letter to President Woodrow Wilson. He stated plainly that his religion forbade him from participating in the slaughter of other human beings.

The draft board ignored the theological argument. To the system, he was simply Registration Number 125. They ordered him to report to Camp Dodge in Iowa for basic infantry training.

The government did not recognize Catholic pacifists. You could be a Quaker, or a Mennonite, and receive a formal exemption based on established church doctrine. A Catholic was expected to fight.

The military police arrived at his home in early 1918. They arrested him in front of his neighbors, put him on a train, and shipped him across state lines to Iowa.

Upon arrival at Camp Dodge, the guards ordered him into the barracks and told him to put on the olive-drab uniform. He refused. They ordered him to march in formation on the dirt parade grounds. He stood still.

They ordered him to clean the latrines, peel potatoes in the mess hall, and perform basic camp maintenance. He refused to do any work that supported the war apparatus.

He sat on his narrow cot, holding a rosary. He was terrified. His hands shook when the drill sergeants screamed in his face, threatening him with the stockade. But he would not move. He would not participate in the mechanism of death.

At the time, the Espionage Act of 1917 made it a federal crime to interfere with military operations or recruitment. The military courts operated with zero tolerance for personal religious interpretations outside their narrowly approved list. In American religious history, a man who defied the draft without official denominational backing wasn't just considered a dissenter. Under the law, and in the eyes of the public, he was a traitor to the nation.

The system demanded absolute obedience. The court-martial formally convened in the summer of 1918. The military logic was simple and cold: a nation at war cannot allow individuals to choose which orders to follow. If one man could simply say no, the entire chain of command would collapse.

The judge handed down the sentence. Death by firing squad.

The gavel fell. Salmon did not speak. He did not plead for his life. The guards clamped iron cuffs on his wrists and marched him back to the guardhouse.

The military, wanting to avoid creating a religious martyr that might agitate the labor unions, quietly commuted the sentence to twenty-five years of hard labor shortly after. They shipped him to the federal penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas. The prison system was designed to break resistance.

He was twenty-eight. A union man. A father. Now a federal inmate. Stripped of his clothes. Stripped of his rights. Property of the War Department.

He was thrown into solitary confinement. He spent nine months in a concrete cell the size of a small closet. The air was thick and foul. He received no sunlight. The guards beat him.

When he refused to work in the prison factories that produced military supplies, he was placed in the "hole."

In August, they chained him to the cell doors for eight hours a day. He did not fight back.

In September, they suspended his arms above his head until his shoulders tore. He did not fight back.

In October, they forced him onto a starvation diet. He did not fight back.

He received no support from his own community. The Catholic Church in America publicly supported the war effort, eager to prove their patriotism to a suspicious Protestant majority.

The local priests in Denver told his pregnant wife that her husband was a fool and a sinner. She was left entirely destitute. She was forced to beg for rent money while the church leadership locked their doors to her. They erased him from their parish records. He knew she was suffering. He stayed in his cell anyway.

In prison, Salmon initiated a hunger strike to protest the brutal conditions imposed on all political prisoners. He went 135 days without eating voluntarily.

The prison administration retaliated. The guards strapped him to a heavy wooden chair. They wedged a metal block between his teeth to hold his mouth open.

They forced a thick rubber tube down his throat, pushing it past his gag reflex, and pumped milk and raw eggs directly into his stomach. They did this every single day. The tube scraped his throat raw. He bled onto his uniform.

When the physical torture failed to change his mind, the military administration tried a different tactic. They could not execute him, and they could not break him.

They transferred him to St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington D.C.—a federal asylum for the criminally insane.

He refused to take a life. The state decided that made him insane.

The war ended in November 1918. The parades marched down the avenues of New York and Washington. The soldiers came home to ticker-tape and brass bands. The draft boards closed their doors.

Salmon remained locked in the asylum. He was held alongside the violently ill, spending his days writing smuggled letters about the legal right to conscience. He wrote on scraps of paper, hiding them in his shoes.

The letters eventually reached civil liberties organizations on the outside. The resulting public pressure slowly built until it became a bureaucratic embarrassment to the government.

The War Department finally released him in November 1920. They gave him a dishonorable discharge and sent him out the gates.

His physical health never recovered from the force-feeding and the damp cells. The union blacklisted him. He struggled to find steady work to support his family. He died of pneumonia twelve years later, at the age of forty-three.

The National Archives still hold his court-martial documents in their original manila folders. The Archdiocese of Denver opened a formal inquiry into his life in 2015. His gravesite sits in an Illinois cemetery. It remained completely unmarked for decades.

Gallipoli / Anzac Day 2026: commemorations from the peninsula and beyond

On **25 April 2026**, members and friends of the Gallipoli Association marked the **111th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings** at ceremonies across the United Kingdom, in Australia and Greece, and on the peninsula itself. From the dawn service at Gallipoli to wreath-layings in London, Melbourne and beyond, the Association was represented throughout the day.

A message from our Patron

The Association received a message from our Patron, **HRH The Duke of Edinburgh**. "Thank you for your kind message and I'm sorry I am unable to join you for your annual Gallipoli Day commemorations and remembrance, especially in this, the one hundred and eleventh anniversary of the landings. I send my very best wishes to all members of the Association and thank you for keeping the memory of all the units, ships and all those who served in them alive for the next generation."

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh KG, KT, GCVO

Patron

Gallipoli Peninsula

Stephen Chambers, the Association's historian and chairman-elect, represented the Gallipoli Association at the dawn service and at the Lone Pine commemoration on the peninsula.



Images from the Gallipoli dawn service at Anzac.

Stephen Chambers laying the Gallipoli Association wreath with Sergeant Ron Green BM ESM at the Lone Pine commemoration.

Stephen also paid his respects to several fallen men, including Lt-Col Richard Nelson Bendyshe, RMLI.

London

The Association's Chairman, **James Stopford CBE**, laid a wreath at the dawn service at Hyde Park Corner and represented the Association at the Gallipoli memorial service in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral before joining members at Westminster Abbey. The memorial at St Paul's was erected by the Association and unveiled on 28 November 1995 by the Association's past Patron, HRH Prince Philip, the late Duke of Edinburgh.

In exceptionally warm weather, 25 members marched at the Cenotaph, with a further six watching from outside the Foreign Office. The service was led by the **Reverend Dr Lyndon Drake** in the presence of **HRH The Princess of Wales**. The Association's President, **Captain Christopher Fagan**, laid the wreath. Afterwards, the majority headed to Westminster Abbey for the service of remembrance – 25 members received tickets through the Association's allocation, and several more obtained places through the ballot. The day ended with 30 members gathering for lunch at The Albert on Victoria Street.



St Paul's Cathedral and Cenotaph ceremonies. Photos courtesy of Lynda Ward, Andrew Taylor, Nigel Readman and Hester Huttenbach.



The Gallipoli Association wreath at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne. Photo (right) courtesy of Kate Kirton.

Lemnos, Greece

Ceremonies took place at **East Mudros Cemetery** and **West Mudros Cemetery** (Portianou), with wreath-laying, national anthems, and addresses from government and embassy representatives. The British Embassy was represented by the Military Attaché. Two Air Force aircraft performed low passes over East Mudros Cemetery in tribute.

Dimitris Boulotis, Deputy Mayor and GA member, laid the wreath on behalf of the Association. Students from the local school presented a project on the Gallipoli Campaign.



Photos courtesy of Dimitris Boulotis.

Mark Macartney will be Remembering in July, both locally and in Scotland. Hopefully I can accompany him to the Chilwell Memorial in st. Mary`s Churchyard, Attenborough.

1st July 2026—108th Anniversary of the Chilwell Explosion (7.10 pm 1st July 1918)



- (1) Larbert Station (the start of the Ill Fated Journey of 1/7th Battalion Royal Scots) **Proof of attendance or lay wreath**
- (2) The Crash Site **Possible new plaque to be affixed to Bridge railings (if original faded)**
- (3) Memorial at Blacksmiths Shop Car Park (Gretna) **(Wreath Laying)**
- (4) Rosebank Cemetery (Edinburgh) Where casualties were buried) **(Wreath Laying)**
- (5) Leith Community Health Centre, where a plaque exists that was dedicated to a bed at Leith Hospital. **Proof of attendance**