

BETWEEN THE LINES

Newsletter of the East Kent Branch of The Western Front Association

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Founded by John Giles
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Articles, etc for *Between the Lines* should be sent to me in M/S Word with accompanying images attached as JPGs. The deadline for contributions (articles, letters, queries, etc) for the next issue of *Between the Lines* is Saturday, 29th August 2026. Please ensure that articles are submitted using Times New Roman typeface at 12 point font.

Contributions should be e-mailed to me at: [REDACTED]

James Brazier, WFA East Kent Branch Newsletter Editor



Welcome to another issue of *Between the Lines* which contains Part Two of John Websper's interesting article on photographing some of the graves of Machine Gun Corps members in France and Belgium which took John and his wife to a good number of CWGC cemeteries which receive relatively few visitors. John's journeys and his photographs of the headstones contributed to the worthy project to photo all of the MGC graves.

This issue also contains Part 1 of another very fine article by John Drouot this time on Private William Pryor Jay, 1/5th Bn, The Buffs. Part 2 of John's very well researched article will appear in the following issue of *Between The Lines*.

Your Editor is extremely grateful to both of the 'two Johns' for these contributions.

Also in this issue is, from memory, the very first 'Letter to the Editor' received during my time as Editor. I hope that it will not be the last! Richard Young has written to clarify the French practice of showing on vehicle registration plates, the appropriate number of each of the *Départements* and showing how the number 75 for Paris had absolutely nothing to do with honouring the famous 75mm field gun as I had wrongly surmised. I am most grateful to Richard for his explanation of these numbers which I feel sure will be of much interest to our members.

I encourage all our members to submit contributions to our newsletter. Submissions don't need to be lengthy so long as they relate to the Great War.

To fill the remaining pages in this issue, I have put together some articles, firstly on First World War emergency coins and banknotes (and related matters) and, secondly, on the Machine Gun Corps, which I hope members will find interesting. My articles on the Machine Gun Corps include some of my mementoes of the MGC which I have collected over the last 60 years and some articles on the Machine Gun Corps Memorial at Hyde Park Corner and on the 'Boy David' Memorial in Cheyne Gardens, Chelsea which have attracted my interest over the last 30 years or so. Editing our Newsletter provides me with the opportunity to share some of my multifarious collection with like-minded individuals. I find that putting related items together shows a much fuller picture of the subject itself. □

James Brazier
Newsletter Editor



Valmai Holt proudly holding her MBE - this photo was taken at the WFA (East Kent Branch) meeting held on 5th May. Valmai had kindly taken her MBE along to the meeting to show it to members and for me to take this photo for publication in *Between the Lines*. Valmai's investiture was made at Windsor Castle on Wednesday 11th March by HRH the Prince of Wales. Although the background to the above photo contrasts markedly with the opulent background in the official photos taken of Valmai at Windsor Castle, Valmai's strong and charming personality shines through in this photo

Another memento of the Great War



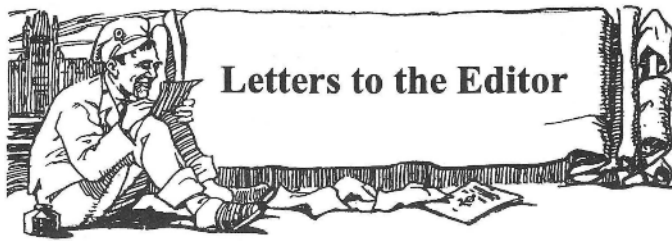
Diameter: 32mm

The above brass-rimmed pin-badge features an image of the 'Bradbury' pound note printed on paper behind a celluloid disc. This badge is believed to date from early in the war.

The gold standard was suspended at the outbreak of the war in 1914, with Bank of England and Treasury notes becoming legal tender as a substitute for scarce gold coins. The First World War placed great demands on Britain's gold supply: the Government needed gold to meet the costs of the war, and the public tended to hoard gold as private security in this time of uncertainty. This depleted the circulation of gold sovereigns and half sovereigns.

To supplement the scarce coinage, the British Treasury began to issue paper notes for these amounts. The first pound notes were issued on 7th August 1914, only three days after war was declared. Because they were produced in a such a hurry, the printing and design were very simple, and a more elegant note was issued in October 1914. The notes were signed by Sir John Bradbury, Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, and they were soon nicknamed 'Bradburys'.

Later issues carried more elaborate designs, printed in colour with larger, patriotic images of St George and the Dragon and Britannia. Treasury notes continued to be produced until 1928, when the Bank of England took over responsibility for issuing the one pound and ten shilling notes.



The lucky charm featuring the French 75mm field-gun that was highlighted in the last issue of *Between the Lines*



Dear Editor

Le Soixante-Quinze: the Seventy-Five

In Newsletter 87, our Editor wondered whether the famous French quick-firing 75mm field-gun, which was used so successfully by the French in WW1, was a lucky charm for the French for the number 75 appears on car registration number plates from Paris. This is just, however, coincidental. The French *Départements* (roughly equivalent to our counties) were numbered alphabetically from 01 to 90 plus the Overseas *Départements* which are numbered 971-976.

Purely by chance, the *Département* of Seine in which Paris is situated is number 75 in the alphabetical list. Therefore, cars registered in Paris have 75 on the bottom right of the number plate. If you are on the battlefields of Northern France, you will frequently see 69 for the *Département* of Nord (North) (main administrative centre Lille), 62 for Pas de Calais (Strait of Dover) (Arras) and 80 for Somme (Amiens). Most of the *Départements* are named after the river which runs through them e.g. Somme, Aisne et Oise.

The *Département* of Seine (with Paris at its centre) has been divided into five other smaller *Départements*: Essonne 91, Hauts-de-Seine 92, St Denis 93, Val-de-Marne 94, Val-d'Oise 95.

Yours

Richard Young

A selection of German iron emergency coins struck during the First World War and issued from various towns and cities

Note: The coins below are not shown to scale

Obverse

Reverse



A selection of First World War continental emergency paper money

During the First World War, nations pulled valuable metal coins from circulation to help fund the war effort and issued emergency paper money in place of the metal coins. Many British soldiers collected these currency notes and brought them home with them as souvenirs at the end of the war. Sometimes, they were stuck in scrapbooks, an example of which is shown on page 4 of *Between the Lines* No. 72. **JB**

Obverse



Belgian

*Société Général de
Belgique
Un Franc
Dated 6th October
1917*

Size: 50mm x 84mm

Reverse



French

*Ville de Lille
Bon Communal
5 Centimes
Dated 31st October
1917*

Size: 50mm x 80mm



French

*Villes de Roubaix et de
Tourcoing
25 Centimes
Dated 16th December
1916*

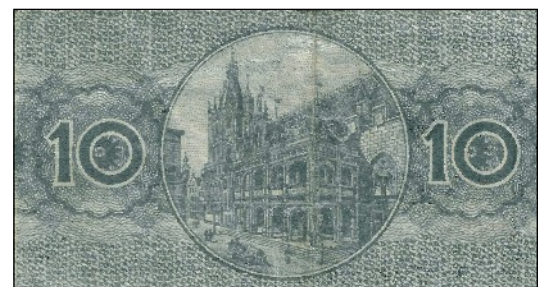
Size: 55mm x 80mm



German

*Stadt Cöln 1917
10 Pfennig
Dated 1st June 1918*

Size: 46mm x 85mm



German

*Stadt Cöln 1917
25 Pfennig
Dated 1st June 1918*

Size: 48mm x 86mm



German WW1 Patriotic “I gave Gold for Iron” items

In order to help finance the First World War, German citizens were encouraged to donate, or sell, their jewellery and precious metals to the authorities. Those who handed in their jewellery were given replacements made of iron. The wearing of iron jewellery became a patriotic act. Those who continued to wear gold risked the disapproval of their friends and neighbours. From 1916 onwards, anyone who exchanged their jewellery or gold for paper

money (which quickly lost value) were rewarded with an iron medallion by the German Reichsbank. The medallion was designed by Hermann Hosaeus (1875-1958) and features a kneeling woman surrendering a necklace. The inscription "GOLD GAB ICH ZUR WEHR EISEN NAHM ICH ZUR EHR" translates as "Gold I gave for the fight - Iron I took for honour". *Source: Imperial War Museum*



◀ The obverse shows a woman kneeling and proffering a chain with a pendant in her outstretched left hand and holding a jewellery-box in her right hand - dated 1916

Diameter: 4cm

Note: The medallion illustrated on this page might be a modern replica



Reverse:

GOLD GAB ICH ZUR WEHR EISEN NAHM ICH ZUR EHR
English translation: Gold I gave for the fight - Iron I took for Honour

Obverse

IN EISERNER ZEIT - 1916
English translation: In Iron Times - 1916

The following pair of cast-iron German patriotic plaques are believed to relate, in some way, to the cast-iron “I gave Gold for Iron” medallion illustrated above:

Diameter of each: 10cm



1914 ✠ 1915

ALS ICH ZUR FAHNE FORTGEMUSZT
English translation: When I had to serve in the military



Initials of sculptor/designer?



Showing the original wall-fitting on the back of these plaques



1914 ✠ 1915

VATER ICH RUFE DICH!
English translation: Father, I call Thee
(Prayer during the battle
- first published in 1813)

German WW1 Patriotic Mortars and Pestles

On this page are featured three mortars and one pestle. One of the mortars bears the dates 1914-1915 whilst the other two both bear the dates 1914-1916. One of the mortars is cast in brass whilst two are made of cast iron. All of the mortars are six inches tall.

Were these mortars and pestles part of Germany's 'Gold gab ich fur Eisen' ('I gave Gold for Iron') campaign during WW1?



Durch Krieg zum Sieg



PRO PATRIA

All of these objects are very heavy and one wonders how they found their way from Germany to England!

JB



▼ The cast-iron mortar shown below, bearing the dates 1914-1915 and Pro Patria, has had one of its handles broken off

▲ Brass mortar bearing the dates 1914-1916

▲ Cast-iron mortar (with broken handle) bearing the dates 1914-1915

▲ Cast-iron mortar bearing the dates 1914-1916



▲ *PRO PATRIA*
"For the Fatherland"



◀ 1914-1915



► The front and back of the brass mortar



▼ *Durch Krieg zum Sieg*
"Through War to Victory"



◀ 1914-1916

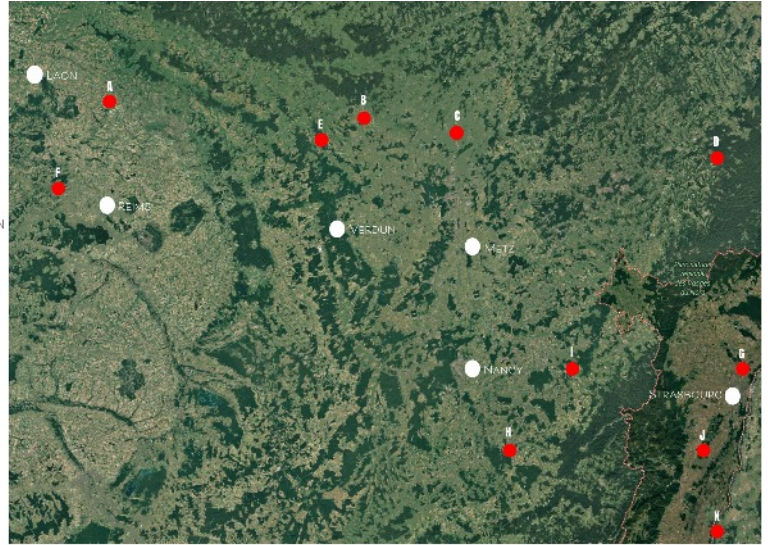


CEMETERIES THAT MAY HAVE PASSED YOU BY (PART TWO)

The Channel Coast & Eastern France

As I mentioned briefly in Part One, the Channel coast from Boulogne to Rouen became an almost unbroken chain of training camps, hospitals and major cemeteries. The Machine Gun Corps established its main training base between Boulogne and Le Touquet in the Commune of Camiers. The first of the large cemeteries is Terlincthun, now a northern suburb of Boulogne and overlooked by Napoleon from the top of the 53 metre-high column. Etaples with 11,000 burials (300 MGC) is the largest CWGC cemetery in France. Driving south - Mont Houn, near Le Tréport then Janval (Dieppe). A

- A. SOISSONS
- B. STAM EN
- C. YU Z
- D. HAGUENAU EN
- E. RETHIN EN
- F. HERMONVILLE
- G. CRONENBOURG
- H. CHAMLES
- I. PLAINE EN
- J. SELESTAD
- K. NEUF BRISACH



CEMETERIES IN EASTERN FRANCE WHERE MEMBERS OF THE M.G.C ARE BURIED
REIMS TO STRASBOURG 210 MILES

short walk from Janval brings you to the Canadian WW2 Cemetery where some 700 casualties of the disastrous WW2 raid of 1942 are buried. The small coastal town of Etretat, to the north of Le Havre, is famous as a venue for artists of the impressionist era such as Monet. It has a beautifully tended churchyard with 265 WW1 casualties including five from the MGC. Le Havre was a major point of entry for soldiers and the cemetery of Ste Marie contains 2,000 burials. The final cemetery of this coastal strip is just inland of Deauville and only a short distance from the Normandy beaches is Tourgeville Military, it holds just 210 WW1 burials including ten MGC members. Interestingly, it also contains some casualties from WW2 including nine German soldiers who died on 6th June 1944 - D-Day.

Turning inland towards Rouen, an area with many hospitals, mostly located south of the River Seine, is the cemetery of St Sever. To my mind, this is one of the most difficult cemeteries to navigate. It contains a total of 3,000 burials including more than 300 MGC. It is spread over a large area and divided into several separate sections. Furthermore, the layout of individual grave numbers is not simple to interpret. I was fortunate to have a friend living in Paris who visited both the City of Pantin cemetery and the more interesting Les Gonnards Communal at Versailles where CQMS John Lockley is the sole member of the MGC to be buried there but close by are a number of notable French writers, poets, inventors and perhaps the most interesting to us is the grave of Louis Blériot the first man to fly solo across the English Channel. Further east the hilltop medieval city of Laon makes an excellent base to explore the land north of the Aisne between Soissons and, close to the border, the French National Cemetery at Sedan-Torcy. To the

south of Laon is the area of Chemin des Dames where two major Anglo-French battles took place. This is an important area to visit for those interested in WW1 history. Beyond Reims, the land, apart from the larger conurbations, becomes sparsely populated, a situation enhanced following the French Government's decision not to rebuild a number of villages and hamlets that had been completely destroyed during the conflict. Around Verdun, "Zone Rouge" areas were established. Even today, more than a century on, trench lines and live ordnance are quite easily found especially in the large afforested parts. I have been fortunate to visit on a number of natural history surveys and, despite its bloody history, it is a wonderful area to explore. The CWGC booklet goes no further east than Reims so, in a pre-satnav era, navigation was a challenge even with the aid of the Michelin maps of the area. To visit the French National Cemeteries such as Cronenbourg and Plaine, diversions both north and south of the main A4 autoroute are both necessary and worthwhile as you climb up into the forests and valleys of the 'Parc des Vosges'. If your destination is Strasbourg, be sure to stop before descending from the heights and admire this view. France and Germany face each other across the Rhine and Switzerland easily visible to the south all meet in this area. Our journey ended a few miles to the north at the French National cemetery of Haguenau. This was a German garrison town prior to 1914 and was only returned to France following the Versailles Treaty of 1919. While not the actual spot of the first German incursion of 1914, it symbolises to me where it all began. It is but 200 miles from Reims to Strasbourg but you have travelled through countryside that witnessed some of the greatest loss

of life in those four years. There is a substantial section of Russian burials at Haguenau and the single representative of the British Army is Pte E. Lowe of the Machine Gun Corps who died just two days after the Armistice on 13th November 1918 (probably a PoW). Not far away are the remains of seven members of the RAF (626 Squadron) whose bomber was downed in April 1944.

While the MGC project has been completed in Europe, there remain areas such as Gaza, Iraq and other parts of the middle-east where it is too dangerous to venture and indeed further research in the UK is unearthing graves previously marked as 'Unknown' and now known to be of MGC members. I hope my articles will encourage those of you interested in the history of WW1 to travel to new areas when they next to France and Belgium. By the very nature of their work supporting infantry battalions, members of the 'Suicide Club' are buried widely across the WW1 battlefields.

Finally my heartfelt thanks to all those who played their part in helping me, some of whom I never met. From our own WFA East Kent Branch special thanks go to the late George Roberts and his wife Sheila who photographed MGC graves not only in Belgium and France but in widespread locations in the UK. George & Helen Antrichan, Peter Gausden (who obtained photographs from South Africa) and to Ed Holman who visited remote parts of the UK while adding to his collection of long-forgotten Victoria Cross holders. Particular thanks are due to WFA member Graham Adams who volunteered to administer the project nationwide and in doing so built a comprehensive data-base of who and where MGC soldiers were buried - a mammoth task. Thanks also to many colleagues who took the occasional photographs from places such as Berlin, Copenhagen, Hamburg and New York even though they had little knowledge or interest in matters military. A thank you also to Peugeot and Michelin. Over the decade, Peugeots 205s carried my wife and I over thousands of kilometres of continental roads ranging from autoroutes to farm tracks and, in the days before satellite-navigation, the various Michelin maps could be a lifeline. Finally, the help of the French people, particularly in the villages and small towns, was invaluable. My opening gambit of "*Je suis perdu chercher le cimetière?*" almost always brought a positive response ranging from being requested to follow them in their car, jumping into the rear seat of our vehicle and giving directions or scribbling details of *la route* in my notebook. □

John Websper



Étapes Military Cemetery: contains 11,435 graves including 259 MGC graves



Haguenau French National Cemetery; contains one MGC grave



Plaine French National Cemetery: contains some 6,000 graves including one MGC grave



Sélestat Communal Cemetery: contains 13 CWGC graves including three MGC graves

Machine Gun Corps - Margate connection (Lt G. M. Doughty MC)



Memorial on the wall inside St John's Church, Margate



The Doughty headstone in Margate Cemetery

The following text has been copied direct from my WWI Roll of Honour showing details of each of the names inscribed on Margate War Memorial. The Roll of Honour, which I created some 20 years ago, can be found on Margate Civic Society's website.

DOUGHTY G. M.

Lt George Marbrook Doughty MC, 22nd Bn Middlesex Regt att'd 17th Bn Machine Gun Corps

Killed in action at Bodmin Copse, Flanders on 21st August 1917, aged 21. He had joined the East Kent Mounted Rifles as a trooper shortly after the outbreak of war and was commissioned into the Middlesex Regt in December 1915. After instruction in machine-gunnery he went to the Front in April 1916 and attached to the Machine Gun Corps. Whilst serving with the MGC, his gallantry resulted in the posthumous award of the MC, the citation for which reads: "*For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when commanding a sub-section of machine guns. He held the position for three days and nights, under heavy machine-gun, rifle and shell fire, waist deep in water, but in spite of these terribly adverse conditions he silenced an enemy machine gun, and kept up a constant fire upon parties of the enemy who were massing for counter-attack, thereby protecting our left flank. Whilst firing his gun the pin broke at a critical moment, but he repaired the stoppage first with his tie-pin, and afterwards with a split pin from a grenade. Throughout the whole of the operation his courage and cheerfulness set a splendid example to his men, and contributed very largely to the success of the whole affair.*" His MC was presented to his father, Mr F. J. Doughty, a Margate builder. George's brother Robert also lost his life in the war (see below). There is a plaque in St John's Church in memory of the two brothers (UKNIWM 30095).

Interred at Bedford House Cemetery, Zillebeke, Belgium

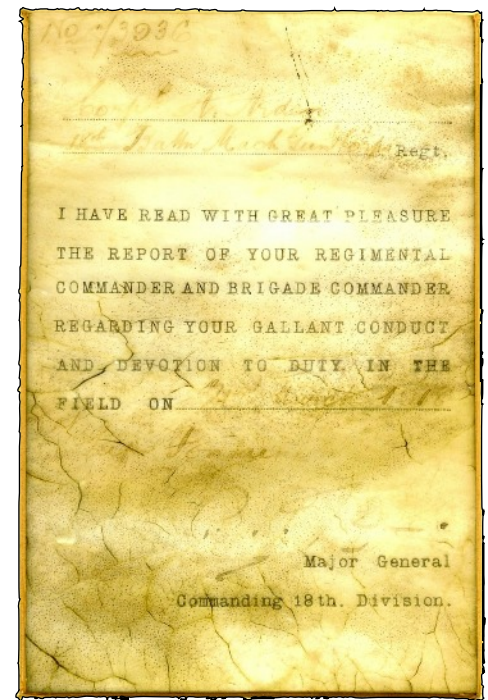
DOUGHTY R. C.

2/Lt Robert Cecil Doughty, 101st Squadron, Royal Flying Corps

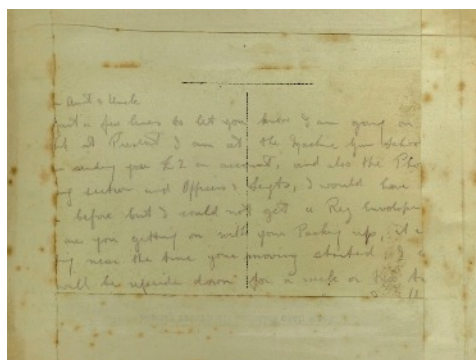
Killed at Noyon, France on 26th February 1918, aged 28. He was his squadron's Armament Officer and was testing a new gun when it exploded prematurely causing injuries from which he died soon afterwards. He joined the Army in May 1915 and for about a year he did valuable work as a despatch rider before obtaining his commission as a 2/Lt in the RFC. He was an Old Boy of Holy Trinity School and, after leaving school, spent three years engaged in his father's business before being employed in a builder's business at Bournemouth. His brother George also lost his life in the war (see above). There is a plaque in St John's Church in memory of the two brothers (UKNIWM 30095).

Interred at Noyon New British Cemetery, Oise, France

Military Medal - Citation to Sgt A. M. Arden, Machine Gun Corps



On 6th August 1918, Allied forces were finalising preparations for the Battle of Amiens when Sgt Arden won his Military Medal at Morlancourt



Written on the back of the above postcard is:

Dear Aunt & Uncle

Just a few lines to let you know I am going on A1 at present. I am at the Machine Gun School and sending you £2 on account, and also the Photo of my section and Officers and Sgts, I would have ... before but I could not get a Reg envelope. ... are you getting on with your Packing up, it ... near the time your moving started, I ... will be upside down for a week or two...

Unfortunately, the postcard is held in place by sticky tape which now obliterates some of the handwriting.



I found the above collection mounted in a picture-frame over 50 years ago - possibly in a junk-shop in Herne Bay. Note the ribbons (L-R): Military Medal, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Written on the back of the above postcard is:

73936
Sergt A Arden
??th Company
?Battalion Machine Gun Corps
GHQ Machine Gun School
BEF
France

Note: The GHQ Machine Gun School in France was located at St Omer where it is believed that the two photographs shown above were taken.

Unfortunately, the postcard is held in place by sticky tape which now obliterates some of the handwriting.

Alfred Morton Arden was born at Clerkenwell in December 1895. He enlisted in the 12th Bn Middlesex Regt on 9th August 1915 at age 19 years and eight months and transferred to the MGC on 13th March 1918. He married Ida Ellen Moody at Battersea on 22nd April 1922 and he is shown in the 1939 Register as a fish & chips dealer living in Herne Bay. He died on 8th June 1956. His grave is in Herne Bay Cemetery. In addition to the Military Medal, he was also awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. □

JB

Crested China Models: Machine Gun Corps



Crested China Machine-Guns



Model of British Machine Gun

Model of Tommy and his Machine-Gun



Showing M G (Machine Gun) on barrel



Machine Gun Corps crest on Goss China Jug

More Machine Gun Corps Memorabilia



Lt James Flockhart Thoms, Yeo and MGC - Awarded Military Cross - *London Gazette* 26 March 1918 page 3746

He is shown with the rank of Captain in *Soldiers Died in the Great War* and in the CWGC records

JAMES FLOCKHART THOM (in plaster frame with MGC cap badge, St George (?) on horseback, and the years 1914 and 1918)

Captain James Flockhart Thom MC
Machine Gun Corps (Cavalry - also shown as Territorial, Fife & Forfar Yeomanry and Household Cavalry in *Soldiers Died*) (Secondary Unit Text – 17th Sqn per CWGC)

Died of wounds 27th September 1918. Age 25. Only son of R. D. and Mary Leburn Thom of Pitlochrie, Gateside, Fife, Scotland

Buried at Damascus Commonwealth War Cemetery, Syria (Grave Ref: E. 49)

(Extracts from PRO file WO374/67787: 26/4/18 *London Gazette* – Awarded MC No. 30597 (6th Supp) No. 22 of 18 DoW 27/9/18 sustained 26/9/18. 17 Machine Gun Squad attd Dorset Yeomanry. Born 11/9/1893, seconded for duty with MGC 30/10/16. Died – Place or Hospital: 10th; Cavalry Bde; Combined Field Amb. Palestine, E.E.F.) – extracted June 2007



Maxim Machine Gun silver and enamel sweetheart brooch



Machine Gun Corps brass and enamel sweetheart brooch



Maxim Machine Gun brass and enamel sweetheart brooch (rare)

More Machine Gun Corps Memorabilia

Silver Teaspoons



The bowl of the above silver teaspoon is engraved:

RIFLE SHOOT
1st PRIZE
Q.M.S.I. DORE
28.7.17

The above teaspoon was awarded as a shooting prize on 28th July 1917. It is believed that the recipient of the prize was Warrant Officer Class II (Quarter Master Sergeant Instructor) John Dore MM. Unfortunately, his Army Service Record appears not to have survived the Second World War blitz.

It would seem that he enlisted in the Dorsetshire Regiment before being transferred to the Machine Gun Corps (see his Medal Index Card reproduced opposite).

It was whilst serving in the Machine Gun Corps that he was awarded his Military Medal. He was also awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The above teaspoon is hallmarked Birmingham 1917 - see below:



The above silver teaspoon bearing 2nd Bn immediately below the Machine Gun Corps badge design. The teaspoon is hallmarked Birmingham 1919 - see below:



Teaspoons were often awarded as shooting-competition prizes before, during and after the First World War. Most of those teaspoons were made of solid silver and a few were engraved with the name of the recipient, like the one illustrated on the left.

The silver teaspoon on the right above simply bears, in its design '2nd Bn' in addition to the Machine Gun Corps badge. Because the teaspoon bears a Birmingham 1919 hallmark, it is possible that the teaspoon was given to each of the men who had served in the 2nd Battalion of the Machine Gun Corps at the end of the war rather than have been awarded as a shooting prize. But who knows?

JB

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
DORE	M. G. C.	W.O. 6th II.	9282
	Dorset. R.		8454
	M. G. C.		9282
John			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
Victory	M.G.C. 36	531	
Barrack	do - do		
Star			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

More Machine Gun Corps Memorabilia



Diameter 32mm

The above bronze medal is believed to be a Machine-Gun proficiency medal. It features on the reverse, in high relief, a Vickers Machine Gun. On the obverse, the wording on the scroll, below 'Invicta' reads: '5th Bn The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt'

Unfortunately, the recipient's name is not shown on the medal. According to *Wikipedia*, the 1/5th Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) was a Territorial Force unit that served in India and Mesopotamia during WWI.

The Machine Gun Corps Memorial at Hyde Park Corner. I took this photograph in September 2009. I have always found this memorial difficult to photo due to the tree immediately behind the statue and also to the high volume of traffic passing by at any one time. Indeed, it is almost impossible to photograph the memorial without a London bus or some brightly coloured commercial vehicle passing behind the memorial at the precise moment the camera takes the photo. The delay between pressing the button on a digital camera and the taking of the photo - although only a split-second or two - makes the probability of such vehicles intruding into the shot almost certain. Even on this photo I had to edit out such intrusions, using PhotoShop



London's Two Machine Gun Corps 'Boy David' Memorials



The 'Boy David' Memorial which stands on a high pedestal in Cheyne Gardens, Chelsea - photographed in 2005

It was when I was attending attending a WFA Meeting at the National Army Museum some thirty years ago that I stumbled across the above memorial - known as the 'Boy David' memorial - in Cheyne Gardens - roughly midway between the NAM and the Albert Bridge. The memorial bore a resemblance to the MGC Memorial at Hyde Park Corner but there are a significant number of differences. The 'Boy David' is holding his sword in his right hand whereas the memorial at Hyde Park Corner shows him holding his sword in his left hand. But perhaps the major differences are that the 'Boy David' statue shows the head of Goliath at his feet and is some four feet tall whereas figure of David on the the memorial at Hyde Park Corner is some eight feet tall. I decided to research the 'Boy David' Memorial, and this is what I found:

The 'Boy David' Memorial is a replacement bronze-fibreglass replacement sculpture by the sculptor Edward Bainbridge Copnall. The sculptor of the Machine Gun Corps Memorial at Hyde Park Corner

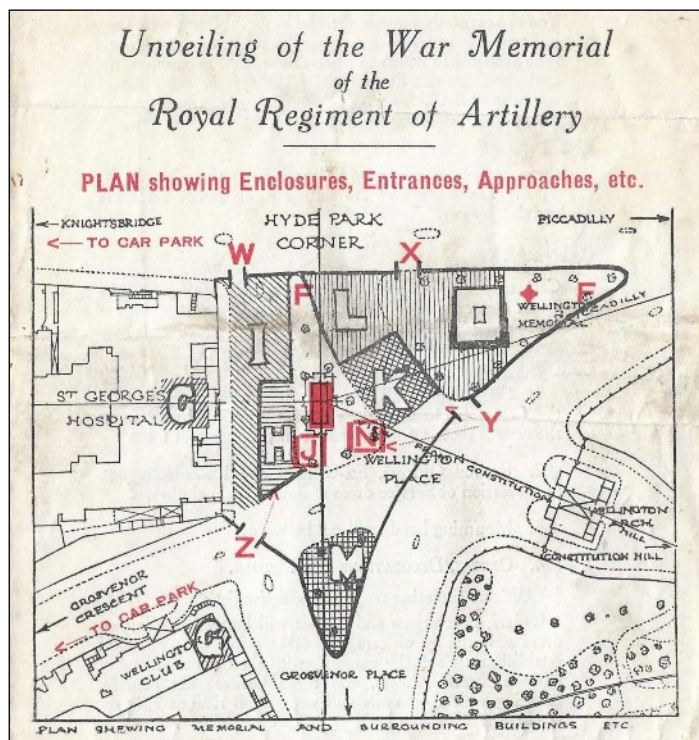


The figure of David on the Machine Gun Corps Memorial at Hyde Park Corner

was Francis Derwent Wood who had earlier sculpted a four-foot tall half-size prototype in bronze of the memorial. Derwent Wood died in 1926 and amongst his effects was found that prototype which his widow presented to the Borough of Chelsea and for many years was on display at Chelsea Town Hall before it was moved to Cheyne Gardens. Sadly, in December 1969, the bronze prototype was sawn off at the ankles and stolen. It has never been discovered and is believed to have been melted down for the bronze.

The replacement fibre-glass statue by Bainbridge Copnall was dedicated by the Mayor of the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in May 1971. There is also a report that Derwent Wood's bronze prototype was discovered in a builder's yard in Old Church Street, Chelsea before it was presented to Lord Cadogan, then Mayor of Chelsea, before it first went on display at Chelsea Town Hall. But try as I might, I have not been able to source a photograph of Derwent Wood's prototype to compare it with the later fibre-glass replacement. □ **JB**

The original location of the Machine Gun Corps Memorial at Hyde Park Corner



The above map - produced for the unveiling of the Royal Artillery Memorial on Sunday, 18th October 1925 - shows the traffic island (marked 'M') in Grosvenor Place that was located to the south of the Royal Artillery Memorial where it is believed the Machine Gun Corps Memorial was originally located. The Duke of Connaught unveiled the Machine Gun Corps Memorial at the end of May 1925; he unveiled the Royal Artillery Memorial in October that year.

The road layout at Hyde Park Corner was changed in 1945 when road-works were carried out and the MGC Memorial dismantled and put into storage. It wasn't until 1963 that the MGC Memorial was reassembled in its current position. When the MGC Memorial was originally unveiled, there was much controversy about it due to the juxtaposition of the naked figure of the Biblical character, David, and the two machine-guns - one on either side of the memorial. The two machine-guns are wrapped in laurels. The Machine Gun Corps Memorial is Grade 11* listed.

JB

Portsmouth War Memorial's machine-gunners



The two machine-gunners sculpted by Charles Sargeant Jagger guarding the entrance to Portsmouth War Memorial. One of the machine-gunners is wearing a helmet; the other is bare headed

The two postcards below showing the helmeted machine-gunner above were published shortly after the memorial was unveiled by the Duke of Connaught on 19th October 1921



The Machine Gun Corps was formed in 1915 and was disbanded in 1921. Derwent Wood was a sculptor who lived in Carlyle Square, Chelsea and was commissioned to produce a memorial to the Machine Gun Corps. The Machine Gun Corps War Memorial at Hyde Park Corner was funded by the Machine Gun Corps Old Comrades' Association and the cost of the fibreglass replacement of the 'Boy David' Memorial in Cheyne Gardens was met by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the Machine Gun Corps Old Comrades' Association.

Private William Pryor Jay - Part 1: The 1/5th Buffs and India in 1915

This article is based on some photographs and a serial letter written by Private William Pryor Jay (born in 1894 and killed in action in Mesopotamia on 15th February 1917).



*Pte William Pryor Jay
(National Army Museum)*

On 7th August 1914, William was one of 52 staff and students from Wye Agricultural College who joined The Buffs. William was from Staplehurst and enlisted in the local territorial unit, the 5th (Weald of Kent) Battalion. He was the son of a man who ran a huge emporium in London's Regent Street which specialised in satisfying the Victorian fetish for mourning wear: Queen Victoria was a long-time customer. William was not unacquainted with soldiering having been in the OTC of a school in Wimbledon - where the family had lived previously. As we will see, his choice of a territorial battalion was in part a social one. He wrote the serial letter to his family, between the end of October and early December 1914. It is not clear whether he ever sent the letter or whether it was part of his effects after he was killed. It is now in the Templer Library at the National Army Museum.

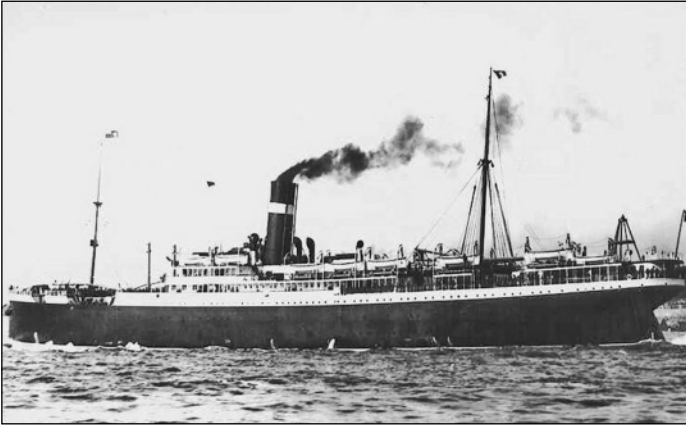
Territorial soldiers were unique in having the option of serving overseas or at home, the former being placed in the 1st Line battalion and the latter in the 2nd Line battalion. Both battalions contained some men who had been trained for one evening a week and had attended annual camps for a fortnight in the summer but, in August 1914, the territorials took any recruits who were fit and willing. The 1/5th was part of 43rd Division which, together with 44th, were to be sent to India: both divisions made up of territorial units from the south of England. This was part of a deal between Lord Kitchener (Minister of War) and Lord Hardinge (Governor General of India) to bring British and Indian Army regular battalions to the Western Front and replace them in India with British territorials.

After mobilisation, the 1/5th Buffs was first sent to Dover, then to Canterbury and finally to Sandwich, where it waited preparatory to embarkation for India. During this time, the battalion would have carried out basic training for its many new recruits and begun to build a sense of unit identity. It was at Sandwich that the battalion, and The Buffs, suffered their first casualty of the war: Private Tom Bryant, a farm labourer from Rolvenden, who drowned in the River Stour on 25th August 1914 and is buried in St Clement's churchyard. Like William, Tom was a fresh recruit.



The grave of Private Tom Bryant, St Clement's Churchyard, Sandwich (John Drouot)

On 29th October, the 1/5th left Sandwich for Southampton, where a convoy of troopships was forming to carry the two divisions to the Middle East and India. They travelled by train, crossing the Weald into Surrey and then down to Southampton. William describes how the trains were cheered as they passed through each station. On arrival at Southampton, 2,400 men from the Buffs, the West Kents and the Royal Field Artillery, were put aboard the RMS *Corsican*. The *Corsican* was a mixed passenger-cargo vessel with large holds where the other ranks slung their hammocks whilst the officers had the passenger accommodation.



RMS Corsican (clydeships.co.uk)

Thanks to an incompetent pilot, the *Corsican* ran aground twice before leaving the Solent but William noted with pride that her superior speed enabled her to catch up with the rest by the 31st October. During the passage down Channel, men spent a lot of time on deck, William spotting and noting the landmarks as they passed. Others entertained themselves with dancing and singing on deck, members of a church choir contributing a rendition of "Lead Kindly Light". Boxing matches took place.

William was at first delighted and intrigued with his new experiences. He seems to have enjoyed the ration food served by the ship's canteen and he purchased tinned salmon and chocolate from the same source. The daily menu was:

Breakfast: bread, marmalade, porridge (sometimes) and tea;

Dinner: meat and vegetable stew or a broth, all accompanied with rice or barley; there would sometimes be plum duff;

Tea: bread, butter and tea.

Crossing the Bay of Biscay, many men - including William - were seasick. He lay in his hammock in the battened-down, hot and reeking hold. Conditions improved as the convoy headed south round the Iberian Peninsula. On 3rd November, it passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, tropical kit was issued and men started sleeping on deck. The first of a series of inoculations was given, probably against typhoid; this left William unwell for a day.

The novelty of the voyage had now worn off and boredom, frustration, discomfort and perhaps disillusionment set in. William's upbringing, his public school, his life in bourgeois society had not prepared him for days aboard ship with a couple of thousand free-range working-class Englishmen. He wrote of his deep dislike of their attitudes and ignorance and of their refusal to accept his well-educated certainties. He claimed that he sometimes went hungry and thirsty as the canteen was too small to feed 2,400 men and he objected to having to fight in a scrum to get his food.

He feared that any extras he bought for himself were likely to be stolen.

On 9th November, the convoy arrived at Port Said where the ship was immediately surrounded by Egyptian bumboatmen selling cigarettes, Turkish delight, chocolate and fruit. On the 11th November, they reached Suez where the *Corsican* coaled, coating the ship and her passengers in black dust. It took six days for the convoy to reform. During this time guards were mounted around the ship. Guard duty followed the pattern of the ship's watches; in the case of the soldiers this meant four hours on, eight hours off. On one day, William confided to his letter that he was writing it at 3am whilst standing guard in the ship's stern. He complains that the Officer of the Guard visited his post six times in four hours and he had to be careful not to be caught writing.

There were further inoculations but also an actual outbreak of serious illness aboard the *Corsican*: William was in the fatigue party whose job it was to clean and disinfect the part of the ship that was to be the isolation area. On the 17th November, the convoy sailed. As the *Corsican* ran south, fresh water was rationed, being only issued during a 30-minute period every 24 hours: this suggests a problem with her distillation machinery as rationing had not occurred before. A canvas sea-water bath was rigged to allow men to attend to personal hygiene. On the 22nd November, they arrived at Aden where the convoy waited for three sweltering days. Whilst in Aden, William saw nine ships from the ANZAC convoy come into port, preceded by HMAS *Sydney* fresh from her victory over the German cruiser, SMS *Emden*.

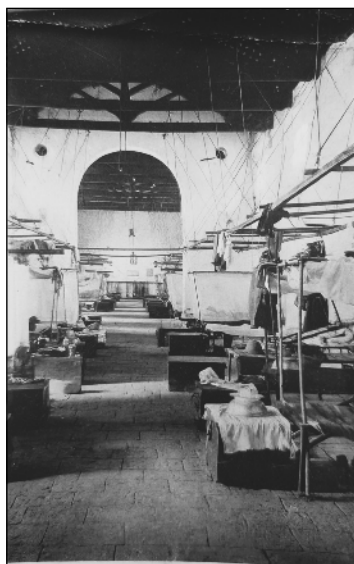
On 25th November, the *Corsican* sailed and William notes that military activities now increased. He wrote of the discomfort of parading in full kit under the equatorial sun and such fatigues as cleaning all accommodation preparatory for leaving the ship. On the 30th November they reached Bombay and the men disembarked. Once ashore, the 43rd Division was disbanded and the 5th Buffs became part of the 5th (Mhow) Division of the Indian Army. The battalion entrained for Kamptee, just over 500 miles away; the journey took 4 days. Disappointingly, for this article, William's account of it focuses on the arable and animal farming he observed on the journey, rather than his experience of a troop train in India. On arrival at Kamptee, the battalion paraded through the town led by the band of an Indian regiment playing "Tipperary".

William describes his barracks as a large, solid stone construction: one long side opening to a long balcony, the other an eating area. In the middle were the men's beds. William was pleased with the amount of room

he had. Barrack food is good, he says, but does not describe it further; additional meals could be bought in the evening after tea. In the town, he writes of the various fruits that are for sale. Perhaps bearing in mind his readers, he makes no mention of the other diversions available in a garrison town in India.



The balcony of William's barracks (National Army Museum)



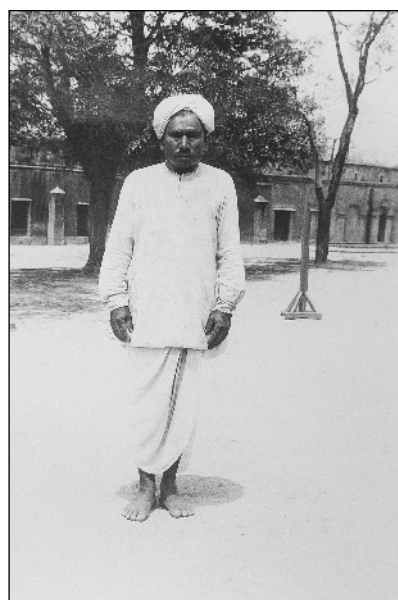
The interior of William's barracks (National Army Museum)

Training then started in earnest; the battalion paraded in full kit four times a day. William makes no mention of trips to the ranges and route marches, but presumably these happened. In February 1915, they went on manoeuvres but he gives no account of this or any other aspect of soldiering, until a brief addendum, dated August 1915, which describes how he had his annual musketry classification whilst running a fever of 102° F. This aside, the letter ends on 3rd December 1914 with lengthy notes on local agriculture and the people that William observed around Kamptee. In his description of these early months, I have the sense of him as a young man on a Grand Tour who just happens to be a serving soldier.

The next document of William Jay's writings, in the Templer Library collection, is an actual diary begun on 24th November 1915 as the battalion prepares to

leave Kamptee and head off to Mesopotamia and the war. I will write about this in the next edition of *Between the Lines*, partly on practical grounds but mainly because it is a story in its own right. Meanwhile, before leaving India, I want to look at some of William's photographs in the Army Museum and what they tell us about the ethos of his territorial battalion in 1914.

As with the letter, William's photograph-albums mainly reflect his interest in the sights of India but include some snaps of his life as a soldier. One picture shows Swia, "our native boy" who looked after William and five other men: in his letter he notes that the "natives" do most of the work for them. Today, I find his use of the word "boy" for this middle aged man, curious, but then I am not caught up in the norms of the supremacist culture of the British Empire.



Swia, William's servant (National Army Museum)

The photographs include a picture of William cleaning his rifle. This appears to be a Long Lee Enfield dating from the late 19th Century and which had been replaced in the regular army in 1905.



William with his Long Lee Enfield (National Army Museum)

William makes no mention of his officers in his accounts of the voyage or life in India but they are present in his photograph albums. Some of these show William socialising with them and, in one, he is posing with his hands in his pockets and smoking a cigar. Behind him is an officer, whom I believe to be his company commander, Captain John Body: Body is acting outrage at William's indiscipline. I do not think that such a pantomime could have taken place in a regular army battalion so what is going on?



Captain Body and William playacting (National Army Museum)

My thinking is that the picture shows a mix of the ethos of the old militia with that of middle- and upper-class county society. In 1908, the local militias were converted into army battalions. Before that, a man like William might have joined his local unit and found himself in a group of men with whom he and his family hunted, played cricket, danced and dined. He would have received a commission in relatively short order to be further absorbed into the group.

In 1914, regulars and territorials remained culturally separate. Reading copies of *The Dragon* published between 1908 and 1914, The Buffs barely acknowledged the existence of its territorial force and, when it did, tended to regard it as an irrelevant joke. I imagine that pre-war the new territorials had kept to their old ways, remaining as much a civil as a military organisation. William's family were resident in Staplehurst and it is likely that he knew at least some of his officers socially or commercially, and that some of the men in the ranks had worked for his family or delivered their supplies.

In his book *Tommy*, Richard Holmes notes similar dynamics in New Army battalions where whole communities enlisted and were kept together; the works foreman was made a sergeant and the men continued to relate to him in ways that would have

incurred punishment in a regular battalion. In *Red Coat, Green Machine*, the anthropologist and former soldier, Charles Kirke, notes that friendship "usually appears within narrow bands of rank. [...] no regulations proscribe friendships [...] between people of widely diverse rank [but they] are generally frowned upon because they [may be] compromising for discipline". It is likely that class, rather than a disregard for military discipline, that enabled Captain Body and Jay to appear in the photograph: I think it unlikely that Body would have engaged in such tomfoolery with a private from a labouring background. I think too that class loyalty would have prevented William from sharing the picture widely.

John Body went on to command the battalion in 1916. He continued to do so into the 1920s and remained a significant figure in The Buffs after that. I am not aware that his ways of doing things compromised either the battalion's discipline, cohesion, or fighting capabilities. There was a style in the unit that was both paternalistic and parochial. Body farmed in Wittersham just north of the Isle of Oxney. In 1915, Mrs Body came out to join him in Mesopotamia. A photo shows her and the Captain posing with the men of the battalion from the Isle of Oxney.



Captain & Mrs Body with the men from Oxney

By the end of the war, the 1/5th would have been part of the force that fought to raise the siege of Kut and later were part of the force that retook the town. The battalion is credited with being the first to enter Baghdad: the Union Flag that it raised there now hangs in the Warrior's Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral. As the war progressed, mounting casualties changed the regional and social demographic of the 1/5th Buffs such that the battalion would have been unrecognisable to the men who set out from Sandwich in 1914: William Jay himself was killed in 1917. His serial letter reveals an aspect of the rich mix of men that made up the battalion when it first formed. □

John Drouot

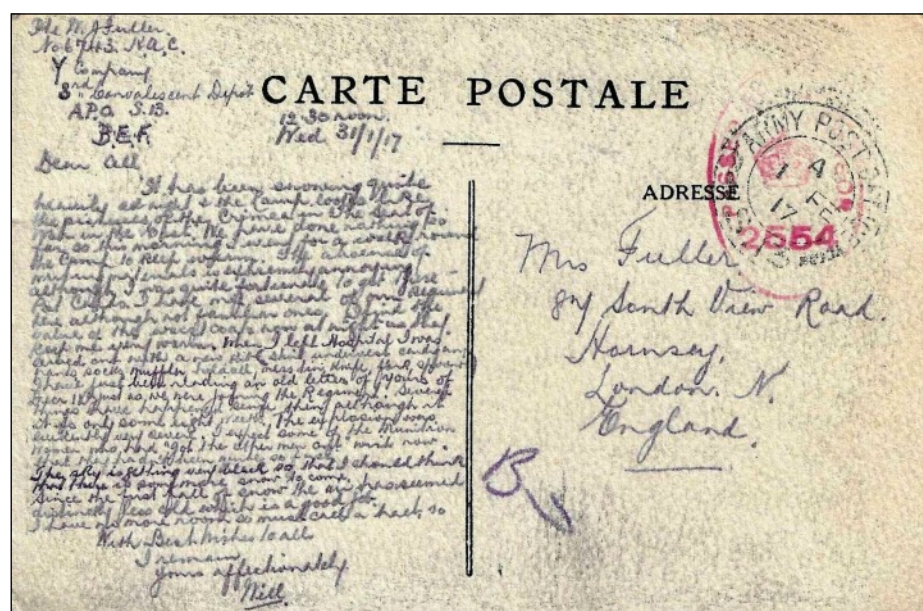
Three WWI postcards sent by a military convalescent to his mother

I have had these three postcards in my collection for at least 40 years. They appealed to me because they had not only been sent within three days of each other but because the handwriting on them intrigued me. They were all sent by Pte William James Fuller to his mother living in Hornsey. The postcards make for fascinating reading and were obviously sent by someone who not only had remarkable eyesight but who was meticulous in his handwriting using the ubiquitous indelible pencil. I had forgotten all about these three postcards until I accidentally came across them in one of my storage boxes.



Sadly, Pte Fuller's Army Service Record no longer exists.

The first of these postcards was written on 30th January 1917, the second on the following day and third on the next day. All three bear the same Army Post Office (APO) number S13 which was the designation used for mail sent from Le Tréport, (which is halfway between St Valery and Dieppe). All three were all passed by the same censor. Pte Fuller would have been 23 years old when he sent these postcards. He survived the war and is shown in the 1939 Register as employed as a civil servant. He married in 1923 and his father had been employed as an accountant - which, together, no doubt explains why his handwriting was so neat!



His Medal Index Card shows that he was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.

The message alone on the above postcard contains well over 200 words. The sender starts by writing: "It has been snowing quite heavily all night & the Camp looks like Crimea..." Towards the end of the message, he wrote: "Several things have happened... The explosion was undoubtedly very severe. I expect some of the Munitions Women who had "got the men out" wish now that they hadn't been quite so fast." I believe that the reference to the munitions explosion was to the explosion that took place at Silvertown, east London on 19th January 1917 when 73 lives were lost.

The fronts of these postcards are shown on the following page



The fronts of the three WWI postcards shown on the previous page

The fronts of these postcards are shown in the same order as the backs of the postcards are shown on the previous page.

It is thought that all three artist-drawn postcards were produced by the same publisher. The first postcard shows the scene in an officers' mess complete with what appears to be a well-stocked bar, one officer holding a glass of beer, one smoking a pipe in front of a log fire, another cutting a cake and another holding a cup of tea. The postcard is signed M. Crete and dated 1916.



◀ Although this postcard design is signed by the artist, the artist's name is indecipherable. The scene is a typical French/Flanders market place on market day. Animals are resisting attempts to control them and three officers are casually surveying the scene. Two other officers soldiers appear to be patrolling the market whilst civilians are going about their business round the market. The postcard is captioned 'Market No.1' suggesting that it is one of a series of postcard designs. □

JB

► This drawing of a Royal Horse Artillery gun-carriage team pulling a with a 13-pounder gun carriage at moonlight is by the same artist as the top postcard (M. Crete) and is also dated 1916. It is probable that all three postcards would have been purchased in the Convalescent Camp where Pte William Fuller was convalescing in 1917.

These are the kind of postcards that families at home would find more acceptable than those showing devastated towns and villages along the Western Front.



German Gotha bomber shot down over Margate - 22nd August 1917

256

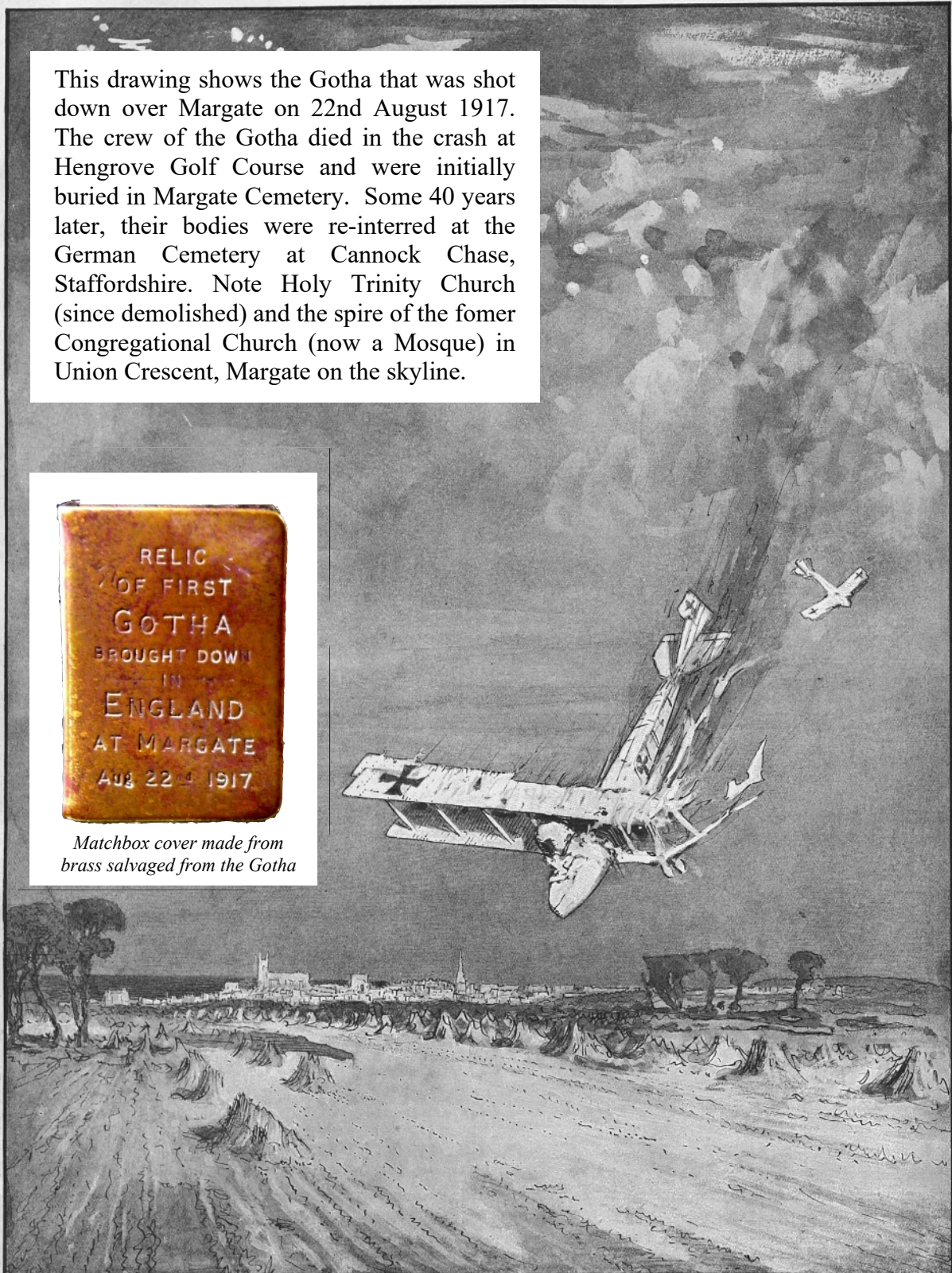
THE GRAPHIC, SEPTEMBER 1, 1917

THE AIR-BATTLE OF THE ISLE OF THANET BRINGING DOWN THE GOTHAS ON SEA AND SHORE

This drawing shows the Gotha that was shot down over Margate on 22nd August 1917. The crew of the Gotha died in the crash at Hengrove Golf Course and were initially buried in Margate Cemetery. Some 40 years later, their bodies were re-interred at the German Cemetery at Cannock Chase, Staffordshire. Note Holy Trinity Church (since demolished) and the spire of the former Congregational Church (now a Mosque) in Union Crescent, Margate on the skyline.



Matchbox cover made from brass salvaged from the Gotha



Copyrighted in the United States and Canada. Drawn by a Naval Officer. The most thrilling incident of the great air fight over Thanet was when two German aeroplanes were engaged and hit by our air squadron. The first victim came down slowly in erratic spirals, finally alighting in the sea. Meanwhile another had been hit and caught fire. This crashed down into a cornfield, and reached the ground while the first one was still descending. Three Gothas and five scouts were brought down in this aerial combat. Eleven persons were killed and 26 injured at Ramsgate and Dover.

Future meetings:

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at The Hall, St Andrews United Reformed Church, Watling Street, Canterbury CT1 2UA

7:30pm start (hall open from 7:00pm)

2026

7 July

Sofiya Anisimova: 'The Russian Expeditionary Force in France and Macedonia 1916-18'

August - No meeting

1 September

Juliette Pattinson: 'The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY)'

6 October

Peter Hodgkinson: 'A tale of two Quadrilaterals (6th Division's attacks in 1916 and 1918)'

3 November

Fraser Skirrow: 'Most of the credit, most of the blame, none of the credit - platoon commanders in the First World War'

1 December

Pip Gregory: 'Wartime cartooning - a legacy of laughter'

All are welcome

WFA branches are entirely self-supporting. A donation towards the expenses of the meeting is very much appreciated

For further details, please contact:

Hazel Basford



Historic postcard showing the Southern Railway Company's commemorative locomotive "REMEMBRANCE" in its original form as a 4-6-4 tank engine

Locomotive 333 "Remembrance" was built at Brighton in 1921 for the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway and served as a travelling war memorial honouring the 532 L.B.&S.C. railwaymen who died in the Great War. After nationalisation in 1923, it was re-numbered 32333. In 1934, it was rebuilt and fitted with a tender. It was eventually scrapped in 1956. The brass plaque (shown as an insert on the postcard illustrated) is now in the care of the Bluebell Railway Museum at Sheffield Park, East Sussex. According to the IWM War Memorials Register, the brass curved nameplate "Remembrance", on a red painted background, is in the National Railway Museum at York. I could find no reference to it on War Memorials Online. □

JB

