STAND TO!

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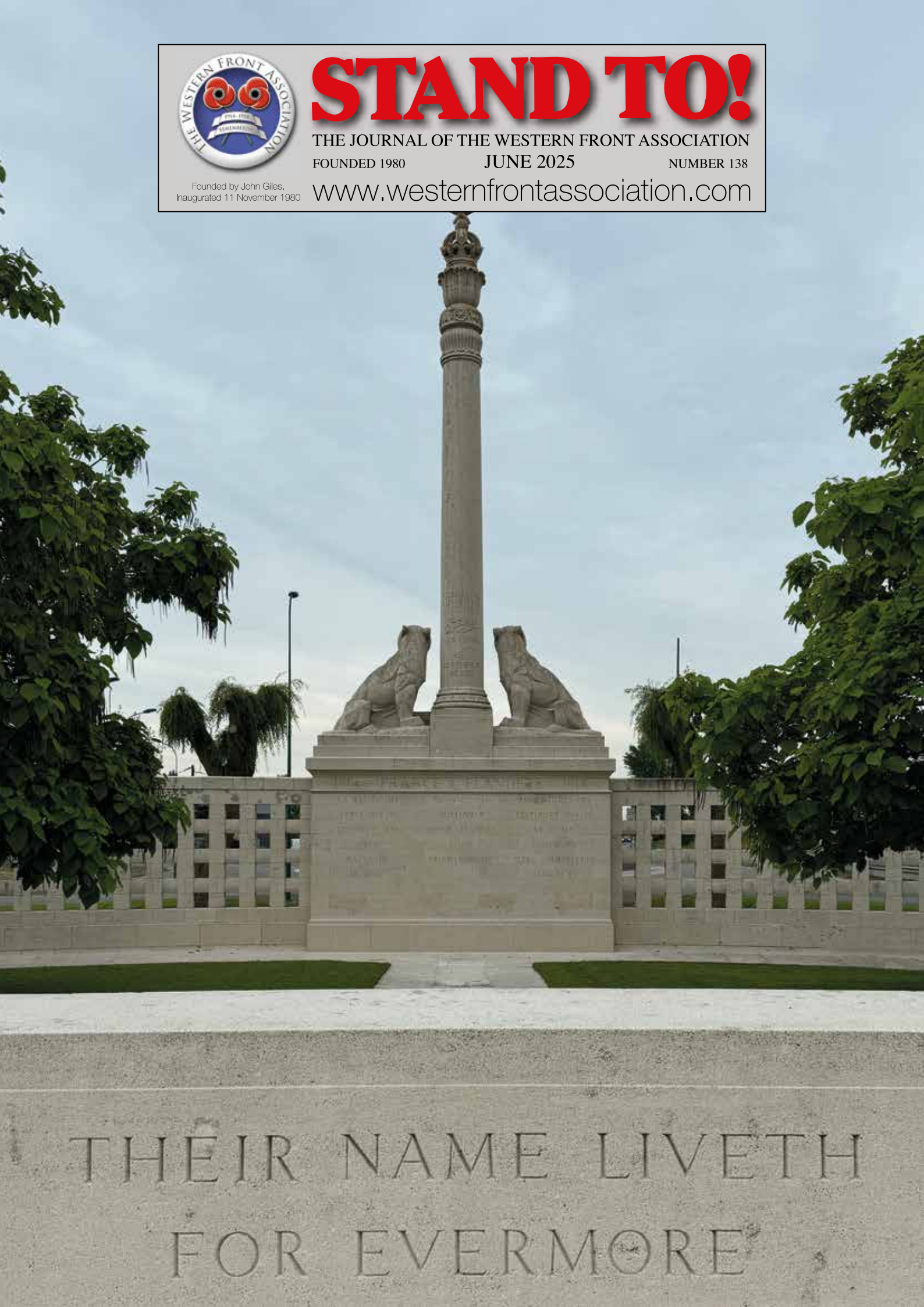

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The Western Front Association

Founded
by John Giles

Inaugurated
11th November 1980

www.westernfrontassociation.com

The Western Front Association was formed with the aim of furthering interest in the period 1914-1918, to perpetuate the memory, courage and comradeship of those of all sides who served their countries in France and Flanders and their own countries during the Great War. It does not seek to justify or glorify war. It is not a re-enactment Society, nor is it commercially motivated. It is entirely non-political. The object of the Association is to educate the public in the history of the Great War. Applications for membership are welcomed from anyone with like mind.

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Editor's Introduction

For the past two years I have been working at Vimy Ridge in northern France, specifically in a small area of the memorial site not accessible to the public and still designated as *zone rouge* (red zone). My research has focused on the 'more-than-human' aspects of industrialised warfare, how it impacts the world in which it is fought, and everything, human and non-human that inhabits it. The Western Front reconstructed the natural world blurring the distinction between people and animals, nature and the materiel of war. The natural world did not recover after 1918, rather it changed, becoming something different. An exhibition of the work is being displayed at the Vimy Ridge Education Centre and Museum until mid-September.

Just as nature could not truly recover from the war, the same can be said of people. Many were forever changed, both physically and mentally, often with unintended consequences for themselves and others. While leaders were born from the maelstrom, innocence was destroyed, as were the innocent. Faith was also tested to its ultimate limits, and animals died in their millions.

In this issue of *Stand To!* we include several articles that discuss the war's wider impact, on both people and animals. Dirk Danschutter brings us his latest research on the stories of Jackie, Bille and Dinks, simians conscripted into a human conflict and subjected to its horrors. Pets and mascots were commonplace at the front, loved by those who cared for them. Yet how these creatures processed the war is not so well understood. As Richard Hughes discusses in his article on the madness of war, combatants were left mentally and physically destroyed by the fighting, with many suffering terribly from shell shock, a condition that was slow to be recognised, and even slower to be understood once established. Many who suffered from psychological trauma went on to commit horrific crimes, in turn leading others to suffer, extending the violence of the war far beyond the front lines. Of course, many had no idea of what awaited them overseas, and Martin and Teresa Davies discuss the pre-war military experience of those in the 5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, a glimpse into how soldiers were prepared for the unpreparable. Building on this, Peter Lees brings us the story of Twelve Irish Guards, narrating the importance of leadership and camaraderie through and amongst the young officer class during battle.

For Some, the idea of killing, even in wartime, was intolerable, and many became conscientious objectors, refusing to fight. The fate of these men was often uncertain, with some imprisoned and others sent to the front anyway. Frances Hurd discusses the lot of the abolitionist conscientious objectors, men described by some as being 'absolutely contemptible' in their efforts to avoid conscription. Together, these articles explore how mental illness, religious beliefs and even animal rights were too often not considered important in deciding who should wage a global war. To cope with the enormous casualty figures, of both people and animals, many new hospitals were constructed in France, and Roy Larkin looks at the logistical efforts of building and supplying the Trouville Hospital on the French coast during the war's latter years.

Elsewhere, Greg offers us the next instalment of his series on BEF machine gun tactics, this time going back to the beginning, looking at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. David Zabecki writes of his family history with the fascinating tale of his German (and American) ancestors who fought on the Western Front. All of this is top and tailed by Steve, Bob and George's camera, and Andrea's usual list of the upcoming must reads. Until next time.

Matt Leonard

Front Cover:
The Indian Memorial at Neuve Chapelle memorialises over 4,700 Indian soldiers and labourers who lost their lives on the Western Front during the First World War and have no known graves. The memorial rests on the ground where the Indian Corps fought its first major action as a single unit (Editor).

Twelve Irish Guards on the Western Front

Leadership and camaraderie

Peter Lees

Leadership principles for the British Army in the Great War were set out in *Field Service Regulations (FSR) 1*:

> Success in war depends more on moral than on physical qualities. Skill cannot compensate for want of courage, energy and determination; but even high moral qualities may not avail without careful preparation and skilful direction. The development of the necessary moral qualities is therefore the first of the objects to be attained; the next are organization and discipline, which enable those qualities to be controlled and used when required.[1]

Leadership in practice was reviewed by Mitchell for the 32nd Division in the Great War, taking James Neville Marshall as a case study. The qualities he ascribed to him are courage, both in general and under fire, leadership by example, fearlessness, determination, inspiration, loyalty, and instilling discipline and a sense of smartness in a disorganised battalion.[2]

Camaraderie is also a crucial quality in war.

> It is vital that an army should foster the closest acquaintance among its soldiers, that it should seek to create groups of friends, centred, if possible, on someone identified as a 'natural' fighter, since it is their 'mutual acquaintanceship' which will ensure no one flinches or shirks. When a soldier is known to the men around him, he has reason to fear losing the one thing he is likely to value more than life – his reputation as a man among other men.[3]

James Neville Marshall (Author).

Twelve Irish Guards, who served on the Western Front in the Great War, are used in this article to exemplify camaraderie and leadership in practice in war. The unifying figure is Neville Marshall. In the spring and summer of 1916, he described the circumstances which established friendships between himself and 11 junior officers.[4] The Marshall diaries tell of daily routines, hazards faced, wounds sustained and recovery from wounds (or not). This review summarises the backgrounds, experiences shared with Marshall, later war experiences and, for some, post-war lives.

Noël Butler (Author).

Frederick Leopold Pusch (Author).

Introducing

- **Noël Butler** worked pre-war as a 'rubber planter' in Malaysia before commissioning into the Irish Guards.[5]
- **Stephen Edmund Fell Christy**, a scion of the Christy towel making dynasty, commenced his army career at Sandhurst.[6]
- **Percy George Denson** worked pre-war as a company director.[7]
- **Maurice Robert Fitzgerald** was commissioned into the Irish South Horse Cavalry before transferring to the Irish Guards.[8]
- **Henry Cuthbert Holmes**, born in in Bellary, Madras, India, served in the Oxford University Officer Training Corps betweenn 1910-1911.[9]
- **Thomas Francis MacMahon**, born in in Sydney, Australia, served in the Inns of Court Officer Training Corps.[10]
- **James Neville Marshall** served in the Belgian Army before joining the British Army in December 1915.[11]
- **Frederick Henry Norris Lee** served in Transkei Mounted Rifles from 1910 to 1915 and saw military action in German South-West Africa during the Great War in 1915.[12]
- **The Hon Patrick Julian Harry Stanley Ogilvy** was a private in the Officer Training Corps at Wellington School. He entered Christchurch College, but war intervened and he did not complete his degree.[13]
- **Cuthbert Pease** served as a private in Eton College volunteers. Pre-war he was a stockbroker, residing in the Inner Temple.[14]
- **Frederick Leopold Pusch** served in the Territorial Force 19th Battalion before commissioning into the Guards.[15]
- **George Valentine Williams** was a *Daily Mail* journalist in 1908 and attached to the British Army in the Field at General Headquarters in France in 1915. In 1915, he authored a book entitled *With Our Army in Flanders*.[16]

These 12 young men were granted commissions in the Irish Guards as lieutenant or 2nd lieutenant: Pease in August and Holmes in September 1914; Christy in January and MacMahon in August 1915 and the others in the period 9 November 1915 to 16 February 1916. Initial training at Warley Barracks, Essex provided a few months in which to establish friendships, before postings to the Western Front. The *History of the Irish Guards* describes conditions in the barracks:

> Having been condemned as unfit for use by the Honourable East India Company a trifle of 50 odd years ago, this was not the hour to stand on ancient tradition. So, the old crazy barracks overflowed; the officers' damp and sweating dog kennels were double crammed; and by sheer good will and stark discipline, the work went forward… They hailed from every quarter of the Empire, and represented almost every profession and state of life in it, from the schoolboy of 18 to the lawyer of 40 odd… *One and all realised that, humanly speaking, unless fortune favoured them with permanent disablement, they were doomed men; since all who recovered from their wounds were returned to the War and sooner or later were despatched* [Italics, this author].[17]

Although living conditions in the barracks were poor, the food according to one resident 'was expensive and superlative. Most of it came from Fortnum and Mason'. There were raucous moments too:

> Stephen [Christy] being large and strong was splendid on riotous occasions, while little Johnny Kipling (Rudyard Kipling's only son) was very small, a useful ally who fitted neatly under a table, shooting out a leg with admirable timing to leave the attacking giants sprawling on the floor.[18]

Cuthbert Pease (Author).

A first experience of active service

Christy earned a first mention for his action of 15 December 1915 – with the battalion entrenched near Le Tilleloy, Laventie – in sending a message, in German, to the enemy.[19]

> For a reason, not explained officially, Lieutenant SEF Christy was moved to go out with a patrol and to hurl into the German lines a printed message demanding that the Germans 'should surrender'. There is no indication whether the summons was to the German Army at large, or merely to as many of them as lay before the battalion; but the invitation being disregarded, Lieutenants Christy and Law made themselves offensive in patrol-work to the best of their means.[20]

Life with Marshall on the Western Front

In May 1916, Marshall was based at the Guards Depot in Le Havre, where he met Pusch, describing him as 'quite one of the most able juniors in the brigade here. If he is spared, he will go a long way'. Marshall moved to Albert on 3 June and was joined there by Denson and Fitzgerald, describing them as 'both good fellows' then noting two days later that 'they have their baptism of fire. We have a warm 20 minutes; a piece of shell falls within a foot of my konk' [*slang for head*]. On 15 June Marshall and Fitzgerald moved to Poperinge to join the 1st Battalion Irish Guards. Marshall noted that 'I fought on this same piece of country in October 1914. By God, it is a rat's life living in the dugouts'.[21]

In mid-June Christy had a narrow escape. 'An enemy sniper put a bullet through the narrow slit in the steel shield. It grazed his right ear and made it bleed profusely. Having patched him up, [his colleague Lieutenant Law] congratulated him on his escape and considered him secure for the rest of the war'.[22] On 18 June a patrol was sent out to examine the German wire, wherein,

> Ogilvy, had a lucky escape, finding his way by mistake into the German wire and, being fired on, having to leave his rifle tangled in the wire. Also on patrol, Lee was wounded in the leg while close to the German wire. He was carried back most of the way to our line by Corporal Redmond.

The next day, Marshall himself was wounded, while out on patrol, recording, 'I got wounded in the forearm. I am sent to 10th Clearing Station at Remy, where I find poor Lee who was shot in the leg the day before. He looks damned ill'. In commenting on his own wound, Marshall gave the briefest of descriptions, leaving it to the battalion diary to record that he finished the allotted tasks before reporting in, two hours later.[23]

On 23 June, Pusch, Butler and MacMahon joined Marshall from an entrenching battalion. Marshall's diary recorded 'Little do we think that Pusch, so full of ambition and throbbing vitality, is to meet his death in three more days. He is so anxious as to his future, his promotion etc. His death was worthy of his young, anxious life'. Further detail was recorded in the battalion history, 'Lieutenant FL Pusch, DSO, as brave a man as the war made was sniped and killed at once. He had gone with his orderly to pick up a wounded man in a trench, and both were hit by the same bullet'.[24] Pusch was buried in Essex Farm Military Cemetery, 1.5 miles north north-west of Ypres.

Henry Cuthbert Holmes (Author).

On 28 June Marshall recorded, 'MacMahon and Butler call at the hospital to see me on their way up to front', but then the battalion diary of 30 June indicated that Butler had himself been moved 'to hospital (sick)'. However, his wound soon healed. In contrast, Lee's wound of 18 June had turned gangrenous and a telegram to his father of 28 June indicated that he had been seriously wounded by gunshot, his left leg amputated and that he was dangerously ill in Stationary No 7 Hospital. On 5 July Marshall recorded that 'Lee died of his wound. We are all very sorry: he was a brave fellow'. He was buried in Boulogne Cemetery, grave 3344.

> *Marshall's diary 7 July.* The war now is dull and uninteresting, and the canal is sordid in the extreme. The ground is sodden with the feculent matter of troops. If one had not the sun and birds, it would be appalling.

> Sitting here by myself, I am more and more convinced of the materialism of life. One short week has passed by and the names and memory of Pusch and Lee have already sunk into the past. Their voices are no longer heard, their mouths are no longer hungry, and so, having ceased to make their presence felt by material and physical evidence, they have lost all memory in the minds of their fellow officers, with a few exceptions, who possibly will always cherish happy visions of their gallant young lives.[25]

Deeply moved by the death of his comrades, Marshall wrote to his mother on 9 July,

> I have been wounded a month ago but am back again at duty. I am sorry to say that we have lost many good young officers killed. Lieutenant Pusch was very gallant and was shot dead binding a man's wounds. When he was buried, they found on his disc the quotation: 'For ye shall fall as men and die as one of the Princes'. He was very young.

Mid-July saw yet another casualty. On the banks of the Yser the battalion was shelled and 'Christy, who, but a little while before, had just escaped a sniper's bullet, was killed'. The grave inscription reads THEY THAT ARE TRUE OF HEART SHALL BE GLAD: LOVE, DUTY, HONOUR, FAITH.

> *Diary 12 July*. Poor Stephen Christy was killed here. I am glad to say that he was killed outright. I only had tea with him the same afternoon. He was a well set-up youngster and very modest. I am writing in a dugout with all the attendant stinks. There are many bodies here that are not quite 'Eau de Cologne'.

Christy's family later placed a memorial window 'Soldiers of Christ' in St Michael and All Angels Church, Cheriton, Winchester.

> *Diary 13 July*. I took a party of 20 men at night to clear up the ground between trenches. I was wounded in the back before going out, but I got through the wire all right and successfully bombed two German parties who fled. Lieutenant Cuthbert Holmes had an extraordinary experience. Four Germans (two wearing Iron Crosses) arrived at 11am in the morning and took four men out of his trench. He was alarmed by hearing voices saying, 'Vill you come German line' and was just in time to rescue his men.

On 21 July Holmes was active again. This time roles were reversed. Making 'strenuous efforts to catch a prisoner, he reconnoitred an enemy sap, going through their first line right up to their trench'.[26]

Meanwhile, on 16 July Marshall declared himself to be 'damned stiff, back still sore from the shrapnel wound'. Ten days later he noted 'I am glad to leave Ypres: it is far too sad a place for me'. He left Poperinge by motor ambulance and arrived at Bouquemaison on 30 July 'very dusty and dirty'. There, with comrades Ogilvy and Williams, he slept in a tent in an orchard. Next day, he bought two chickens and two ducks and, with the aid of an old lady who lent her cottage kitchen, he 'prepared a good feed for Williams, Ogilvy, Pease and me'. However, his wound festered.[27]

> *Diary 8 August*. My side is still very sore. I am sent to Gézaincourt Field Hospital and given a bath and dose of morphine for an operation at 2.00pm. I awake to find a very kind nurse by my bedside. I do not know why but I was crying like a baby. She was a good sort and told me all strong men did so. I was sent on to Boulogne where I am writing now. I have a long slit in my side and a little drainage tube to ornament it.

Marshall returned to England on 3 September, fed-up. By 8 September, the battalion had relocated to Méaulte, in advance of its engagement in the Battle of the Somme.

Lieutenant George Valentine Williams (Author).

Without Marshall on the Somme

The Battle of the Somme on 15/16 and 25/26 September 1916 has been described in considerable detail.[28] Here, a very brief review provides context to the roles of and outcomes for Marshall's colleagues.

15/16 September. Battle of Flers-Courcelette. Butler, Fitzgerald, Holmes, Pease (in command of No 3 Company) and Williams were in action and MacMahon and Ogilvy were in reserve. Fitzgerald was a casualty on the day preceding the attack; he suffered a gunshot wound to the head and left hand. He became home-based and was declared unfit for service for two months. At zero hour (06:20) on 15 September the BEF barrage opened, the

enemy counter-barrage responded and, through a haze of flying dirt, No 1 Company of the Irish Guards saw a platoon of Coldstream in front of them crumped out of existence with one flash and roar.

After that, the lines moved into a blizzard of shell and machine-gun fire where all landmarks were indistinguishable. Once the affair was launched, 'there was little chance of seeing far or living long. The two leading platoons of No 3 Company, following the Coldstreams, charged, through the ripping fire that came out of Ginchy Orchard, to the German first line trench. The others came behind them'.[29]

Some 90 minutes after zero, three of four Irish Guard company commanders, including Pease, were casualties and all officers of No 2 Company were out of action. They remained in the battered German trench or in front of the German wire. 'The right flank of the Guards Division was left in the air, the enemy zealously trying to turn it – bomb versus bayonet' – from the fortified Quadrilateral, which controlled the landscape for 1.5 miles. A party of snipers appeared behind the Irish in a communication trench and wounded the fourth and last of the surviving company commanders, Lieutenant JK Greer. Now three hours into the battle, the Irish cleared out the trench which they occupied, as best they could.[30]

By 11:30 the battalion commanding officer, the adjutant, 2nd Lieutenant Williams and Lieutenant LC Whiteford were all that was left of the Irish Guards officers; they stepped out 'from the sickening trench' and headed uphill. Beyond the rise, they scraped themselves into a shallow trench, whilst under continuing enemy fire. By now, the 1st Battalion 'lacked supports, lights, signals, information, wood, wire, sandbags, water, food and at least 50 per cent of its strength'. Next day, the expected enemy attack did not materialise. On 17 September, they were taken out of the line.[31]

Human outcomes

By 07:50 on 15 September Pease was injured; he died from his wounds on 18 September in London 2/2 CCS Hospital. Butler was killed on 15 September. He was buried in Delville Wood Cemetery, Longueval. Holmes sustained a gunshot wound to the right thigh and he returned to Blighty. On 17 September the total officer strength of the battalion was seven. The battalion marched to Citadel Camp arriving at 09:00 with drums playing.[32]

25/26 September. Battle of Morval

With more than 300 new recruits from Warley and Caterham, the battalion, still less than 600 strong and with only ten officers, moved from Citadel Camp to trenches on Ginchy Ridge. Company Nos 1 and 2, the latter commanded by Ogilvy, were in the front line. MacMahon was brought up from Reserve as replacement for 2nd Lieutenant Gibson. As they moved forward, Lieutenant Blum was wounded and MacMahon took over command of Company No 3. The advance continued to the final objective, where the battalion dug-in in a potato field just beyond the village of Lesboeufs. They were relieved on the evening of 26 September.[33]

Human outcomes

Williams was injured by a shell explosion and was briefly unconscious. The officer casualty count was one killed and five wounded.

Gallantry awards

The Military Cross was awarded to Williams for his actions on 15 September; Ogilvy for 25 and MacMahon for 15 and 25 combined.

The adventures of an 'Ensign'

The September events on the Somme have been described by one who was there. Williams authored a 316-page account of the September assaults. Names were altered on security grounds; he became the 'Ensign'. This is an extract.

> *September 15*. Then the whistles sounded, and with a roar like the breaking of a tropical squall, the hurricane was let loose. Amid the most appalling roar of the guns, the Guards moved steadily off up the long brown slope, while from the German lines in the distance rose great spouts of red and green and white rockets. The whole line moved forward in a dense irresistible impact, wave on wave. The rising shriek of the shells, simultaneous, successive, incessant, formed a vast diapason accompaniment to the snap and whinny and whistle of the bullets whirling through the air. It was a slow steady advance, relentless, irresistible. It carried our Ensign past white and flaccid figures lying in curiously bent positions in or on the edges of the shell hole, past men moaning and running with blood, past others shivering with ghastly wounds. Our Ensign caught a glimpse of many of his friends – The Don, Bruce, Apollo. The commanding officer told him he was to take command of No 2 Company. Roderick gave our Ensign a brief budget of news. The Don had been shot though the thigh [possibly Holmes].
>
> And now our Ensign felt the reaction of the morning's excitement coming over him. All the exhilaration in the magnificent opening act seemed to have evaporated. He found himself dwelling with loathing on the mere thought of war. The hours he spent in that trench left the deepest impression on our Ensign's memory, and ran their span again and again, with horrors intensified, in the battle-dreams that came to him in the many nights subsequently. The morrow of battle is worse than battle itself. For when the weary body has been rested, the flood of realisation pains like the rush of blood to a numbed limb. The empty messes, the missing faces, the shrunken appearance of the battalion when the roll is called, the pile of kits lying ownerless outside the Quartermaster's store.

> *September 25*. In a shell hole a few yards away, sat a brother officer. Our Ensign walked across and dropped on to the edge of the shell hole… He filled his pipe and got out his matchbox to light it. Then, from behind, something struck him with a tremendous blow and lifted him high in the air with a mighty force, against which he struggled in vain with mind and body, desperately fighting to remain on the ground, striving to retain mastery over himself. It was during his convalescence that this narrative came to be written.[34]

In war after the Somme

Denson

18 November 1916 saw the end of the Battle of the Somme, but Christmas brought no respite for the Irish Guards. On 23 December Denson's battalion (2nd Irish Guards) comprised only seven officers fit for duty.

> The Acting-Adjutant (Lieutenant Denson) attended a consultation with the Brigade Bombing Officer on the morning of the 30th at Support Company's Headquarters in the Quarry [Sailly Saillbel]. Business took them to the

> Observation Post in the wreckage of the church; and while there, the enemy opened on the support-line. They tried to get to the Support Company's dug out; but on the way a shell pitched in among them, wounding the Brigade Bombing Officer, Bombing Sergeant and Denson. Denson was hit all over the body. Hereupon Lieutenant Black and his orderly, Private Savage, ran to where he lay and, as they lifted him, another shell landed almost on them. They did not dare to risk of taking Denson down the nearly vertical dug-out stairs, so Private Savage carried him on his back six hundred yards to the dressing-station.[35]

Denson's wounds were at three sites: (1) A face wound, the bullet passing 'upwards and forwards into the oral cavity; three molars were carried away with much laceration of soft tissue'; (2) A back wound, over the angle of the scapula; (3) Wounds to calf muscles, both legs and left arm. Wounds two and three were classed as superficial. He travelled to Southampton from Rouen on 3 January 1917 and was declared unfit for general service for one year. He wrote from hospital on 16 August:

> It was decided that the left side of my lower jaw being completely shot away, it was impossible to repair it. I was also wounded in both arms, both legs, groin, right shoulder and back. I therefore beg to ask you, as the loss of my lower jaw is a permanent disablement, if I am entitled to either a pension or a wound gratuity.

He was operated on at Frognall on 21 November and placed on the retired list on 31 December 1917.

Fitzgerald

A Medical Report (June 1917) indicated that 'the wound of the head [of 14 September 1916] had quite healed'. In the spring of 1918 Fitzgerald was again in line and on 12 April they were 'imperfectly dug in anticipating a heavy hostile attack'.

> No 3 Company, under Fitzgerald, was detached from the 2nd Irish Guards in support of the Grenadiers and at first lay a little in front of the Battalion Headquarters at Ferme Gomber [before the BHQ] – was [together with the 4th Grenadiers] wiped out in the course of that day and the next. On the morning of the 13 April a message came to Battalion HQ that the enemy had broken through between the remnants of the Coldstream and Grenadiers... Our No 3 Company (Captain Fitzgerald) was despatched at once with orders to counterattack and fill the gap. No more was heard of them. They went into the morning fog and were either surrounded and wiped out before they reached the Grenadiers or, with them, utterly destroyed. Vieux-Berquin had been a battle, in the open, of utter fatigue and deep bewilderment.[36]

Fitzgerald was reported missing on 13 April. Then, a German document, headed 'List of Dead', sent to the War Office through the Geneva Red Cross, indicated that he had 'died (a Prisoner of War in German hands) on 19 April 1918', in a church converted into War Hospital 670 St Franziskus. He was buried in Leuze Cemetery, Belgium, Section 23, Grave 31. A witness to his death, Sergeant Donaghey, wrote that 'he was wounded in the lung by machine gun fire and did not suffer at the end'.

Holmes

Following his wound of 15 September 1916, a Medical Board of 13 October declared him unfit for active duty for eight months and granted a wound gratuity of £104-3-4, with leave extended to 29 July 1917; this was further extended by six months from 11 September 1917. Another Medical Board of 1 October 1918 reported considerable atrophy of the thigh muscle. Nevertheless, from 3 November 1917 he served as Secretary to the Military Council in Ottawa, Canada, returning to England in January 1918.

MacMahon

On 11 September 1917 the battalion was housed in shell holes on the Widjen Drift Rd close to the Ypres-Staden railway. The enemy guns conducted a shoot out on the pill boxes occupied by members of the battalion, and MacMahon (now Acting Captain) was engaged dispersing the enemy with rifle fire. It was 'a long tense night of alarms and fatigues, and fatigue-parties dropping like partridges'. MacMahon was severely wounded and 16 days later he entered the Empire Hospital. He was granted leave, initially until 18 October, later extended to 22 March 1918.[37] On 2 March 1918 he left for the USA, where he was attached to the British and Canadian Recruiting Mission. There followed further Medical Boards, and he was finally discharged.

Marshall

Marshall's war after the Somme involved a long period of convalescence, followed by active service in the 2nd Battalion Irish Guards and secondment to three Lancashire battalions, culminating as commanding officer of the 16th Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers. He was awarded: the soubriquets of 'The Mad Major' and 'Marshall-of-The-Ten-Wounds', along with five gallantry medals, including posthumously the VC. He was killed in the final battle of the war on the Western Front, on the banks of the Sambre-Oise canal on 4 November 1918.[38]

The Hon Patrick Julian Harry Stanley Ogilvy (Author).

Ogilvy

Whilst on Leave in England in January 1917, Ogilvy fell down the stairs and sustained a severely sprained, left ankle. On 19 February a Medical Board found his condition to be improved but he was still judged unfit for general service for six weeks. By 23 March he had recovered and rejoined his battalion.

In early October 1917, the battalion renewed an attack from north-west of Langemarck across the Ypres-Staden railway to a point east of Zonnebeke. They set out, in heavy rain, at 21:30 on 8 October for their assembly lines, with Ogilvy (now Captain) in command of No 1 Company. On 9 October, after crossing the Broembeek river, in three feet of water with mud at the bottom, they faced intensive sniping fire from the flank, as they moved from one shell hole to the next. They reached their destination, but the heavy sniping continued on 9 and 10 October. Ogilvy established his company headquarters in a captured German pillbox. It was struck by a shell and all inside were killed. Ogilvy was buried in Cement House Cemetery.[39]

Marshall had occasion to recall his friendship with Ogilvy in his diary of 7 April 1918,

> I am now housed in Vauchelles-lès-Authie Chateau. What strange memories the scene again stirs. It was here that we halted with the 1st Irish Guards Battalion in 1916 before the Somme. Our names are still written on the window: Pat Ogilvy, Jock Butler and my own. Two years have gone, and the sacrifice of that gallant blood has been wiped away by the victorious advance of the Germans.[40]

Frederick Henry Norris Lee (Author).

Williams

Williams achieved the rank of Acting Captain. His wound of 25 September 1916 had healed by 27 March 1917. In the summer of that year, he suffered an inguinal hernia, a consequence of digging trenches, whilst based at Warley Barracks. A corrective operation was carried out on 10 but on 25 October he remained unfit for general service for three months. Further examinations were conducted in December 1917, January, March and April 1918. He was finally declared fit for general service, but his application for a gratuity was rejected. He appealed on the grounds that he led an athletic life and would be left permanently weak in the region affected, adding 'I shall have to take great care of myself in the future'. Published in 1918, he wrote a best-selling book (of fiction), *The Man with the Clubfoot*. Also in 1918, having already authored two books on the Great War, he now added a third on the history of the Irish Guards, in which he wrote:

> On September 15, The Guards Division delivered a great attack against the Ginchy Ridge. Though the enemy resistance was desperate, and the Guards casualties were exceptionally severe, the Ridge was carried and securely held. On September 25 the Guards Division attacked again and all objectives were captured in splendid style.[41]

Officers at Warley Barracks (Marshall highlighted) (Author).

Officers at Warley (Author).

After the war

Denson

Denson's face/head wound was classified as severe. Several Medical Boards indicated, scarring of cheek and soft palate, requirement for a permanent parotid fistula, loss of second and third molars and first bicuspeds, persistent depression of the left angle mandible, deafness and tinnitus in the left ear, indigestion and an inability to masticate normally. He was awarded an Army Wounds Pension, which continued as late as 1935. He died on 2 June 1949 in Linkoping, Sweden.[42]

Holmes

From July to November 1919 Holmes served as Camp Commandant, British Section, Supreme War Council in Versailles. A Medical Board of 25 February 1920 reported damage to his sciatic nerve, leading to footdrop. Nevertheless, the officer stated, 'I can walk three miles without a limp, after that some stiffness and pain'. He was placed on the Retired List on 4 February 1920 and awarded a Wound Pension. He became President of the Real Estate Company, Pemberton, Holmes Ltd in Canada, where he died in 1968.

MacMahon

After his stint in the USA, he returned to the UK on 13 November 1918, on account of the closure of the Canadian Recruiting Mission. He was place on the Retired List in February 1920.

Williams

De-mobbed on 25 January 2019, Williams returned to his work as a journalist, covering the Versailles Peace Conference and Discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamen. He next embarked on a literary career, focussing on novels of espionage and suspense. His creations included Clubfoot, Baron Alexis de Bahl, Dr Adolph Grunt and Mr Treadgold the tailor. He also became a Hollywood script writer, co-writing for the films *Land of Hope and Glory* (1927), *Fog* (1933) and *This man Reuter* (1940). At the outbreak of the Second World War he undertook confidential work, first for the Foreign Office (Secret Service) London, 1939-41; he vetted as potential recruits Kim Philby and Malcolm Muggeridge. In 1941-42 he worked at the British Embassy, Washington, DC, and from 1942-45 he was a member of the United Kingdom's Political Warfare Department.

Statistics and personal lives

All 12 Irish Guards reviewed in this article were wounded (100 per cent) and eight were killed or died of wounds (67 per cent). Of the nine whose schools have been identified eight were public schools. For these schools, total killed were as follows:[43]

School	Number of pupils serving	Number killed	Percentage of those serving killed
Downside	506	109	21.5
Eton (two persons)	5,656	1,157	20.5
Felsted	1,262	244	19.3
Harrow	2,917	644	22.1
King Edward Birmingham	1,400	246	17.6
Wellington	3,500	707	20.2
Winchester	2,418	505	20.9

Mean 20.3
Standard deviation 1.38
Coefficient of variation 6.80

Joseph Stalin is reported to have said 'a single death is a tragedy; a million deaths is a statistic'. One estimate of the number of British military deaths in the Great War is 887,858 – not far short of a million – comprising 12.5 per cent of those serving. Many more were wounded and some individuals contributed to both statistics. These are the cold facts. This review has sought to illustrate that going beyond these facts, and delving into individual lives, enables the importance of the casualty statistics to UK society – both then and now – to be appreciated. And lest we forget, whilst the percentage of deaths of Other Ranks was smaller than those of officers, they were considerably greater in absolute numbers.

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The Camera Returns (117)

Bob Grundy and Steve Wall

French ambulance wagons outside the church at Dickebusch, which was used as a hospital. 6 November 1914 (IWM Q57330).

Image by George Wall.

The Camera Returns team has surprisingly never visited Dickebusch or, as it now appears on modern maps, Dikkebus, a small village situated three miles southwest of Ypres. Taken on the 6 November 1914, the accompanying two photographs were captured by a prolific unit photographer of 2 Scots Guards, Sargeant Christopher Pilkington, who was in fact a civilian attached to the Scots Guards via the Artists Rifles. A very competent photographer, but at the age of 58, quite old for military operations. They both show French ambulances of the 'Service de Sante Militare', which was the equivalent of the Royal Army Medical Corps, unloading casualties at the Church of Saint Jan Baptist, which at the time was being used as a hospital. The church is in the Kerkstraat, which translates as Church Street.

IWM Q57330 shows horse ambulances drawn up outside the church. The other photograph, IWM Q57331 is taken looking directly at the church entrance and tower, and the ambulances here are motorised. Interestingly, the gas lamp on the right appears to be illuminated. Both photographs were taken from land on the opposite side of the Kerkstraat, now developed with some particularly uninspiring buildings.

Although the church was demolished by shellfire during the war we were still able to find one original (but badly damaged) headstone in the graveyard. It's easy to spot, being to the right of the entrance. Situated to the southeast of the church is Dickebusch Old Military Cemetery on Neerplaats. An early cemetery of 1915 that also contains several burials of the BEF killed during late May 1940.

The front of the church at Dickebusch with troops unloading patients from motorised ambulances (IWM Q57331).

Image by George Wall.

Jackie, Billy and Dinks: The Baboon, the Bold and the Immortal

Dirk Danschutter

Summary

In his historiographic review on South African Service Pets (1956), HH Curson explained that baboons 'although liable to be teased by those of less intelligence', made lively, intelligent, popular and therefore excellent pets.[1] At the time, detaching monkeys and apes from their wild habitat to train them as pets or vaudeville artists was not considered as something harmful. When the Great War broke out, it was quite natural to allow (among a variety of exotic and other animals) pet monkeys in combat units. This was not a '1914-newness': soldiers caring for animals (with or without an emblematic role) was a widely accepted tradition, rooted in the mists of time. Baboons Jackie and Billy joined the South African (SA) Expeditionary Force, while Dinks, yet another baboon, was the mascot of a British Field Company of the Royal Engineers (FCRE), stationed in Pretoria before the war began.

With the help of hired services and a direct descendant, the military, medical, legal and police records of Jackie's owner (Albert Marr), the man's parents and several of his siblings have emerged. Sufficient documentation is now available to (re)write a fact-based sequel on Marr and his baboon. This will undoubtedly reset the original story told by so many.

Billy 'the Bombardier' landed with the SA Heavy Artillery (SAHA) at Cooden Camp (Bexhill-on-Sea), where he was very popular. However, when the SAHA embarked for France, Billy's story suddenly stopped, and after the war he resurfaced again as abruptly as he had vanished in 1915. Amused newspaper correspondents described in detail how Billy had demolished a lion cage 'on the grounds of the Grand Hotel' (London, 1918), and whether during a military parade at Port Elizabeth in 1921 he had ignored Earl Haig's respectful salutation. Other reporters noted how Billy had become a liability and therefore remained with the SAHA Reserve in Britain. They wrote that eventually he was donated to Bristol Zoo Gardens in 1918. Unfortunately, the Bristol Zoo Project could not locate any archival documentation regarding the assumed donation. The least known monkey, in fact quite an anonymous one, most likely saw the most action during the war. A careful review of surviving pictures, and the reminiscences of a sapper of the 54th FCRE, 7th Division, forwarded to me recently (by a direct descendent), enabled the piecing together of Dinks' story leading up to his tragic end.

Jackie the Baboon: the epilogue

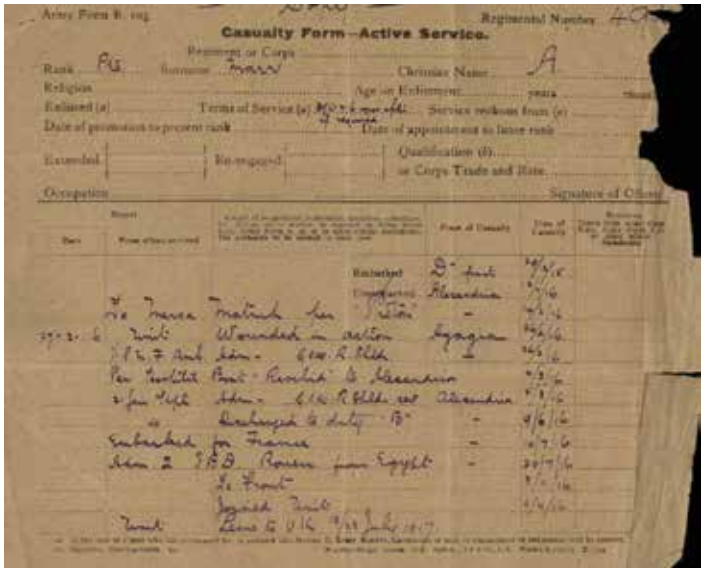
During our search for validated sources, in February 2021 the 'Chief of the SANDF: General' declared that 'despite extensive searches no documents with regards to Albert Marr, No 4927, could be located'.[2] Consequently, it was (wrongly but understandably) assumed that Marr left no footprint in the SA military archives. However, in mid-2024, a hired (antiques) service 'located' 20 different official records of Marr, filed at the (same) SANDF. Supplementary to Albert's medical/military records, copies of his will, his mother's will, inventories ('final liquidation and distribution accounts'), newspaper clippings, the family's history and police reports to the Supreme Court of the Transvaal Province were shared by Jo Wells, a great-granddaughter of Harriett Mort's 12-year-older sister Ann (Harriett was Albert's mother). As none of Albert's recently acquired official records suggest the authorised presence of a pet, whether Jackie's 'iconic' records as shared by PKA Digby are reliable or genuine must be considered uncertain.[3] In 1959, RN Woodsend, the doctor who amputated Jackie's leg somewhere in the Kemmel sector, published 'Jackie's Epilogue' in a medical Journal.[4] Jackie's story (previously published in *Stand To!*) will need to be adjusted, based on about 40 additional documents, located and retrieved from official institutions.

Renowned historians and authors such as PKA Digby, I Uys, P Dickens and S Rossouw all praised the duo's heroic status.[5, 6, 7] Perhaps a bit hesitant about the Delville Wood ordeal (except for Digby who was a true believer), none doubted the duo's 'heavy fighting' over several years, including during the Somme campaigns (which lasted until November 1916).[8] From Marr's records kept at Centurion, these claims (Delville Wood and Somme) can now be debunked.[9] On 26 February 1915, Albert Marr was shot in the right shoulder while on active service in Egypt. He was then sent to No 21 General Hospital at Alexandria, where he was interviewed by WHC Brinks. Brinks would later explain how Albert caught the infant baboon near Premier Mine, 'where he was farming'.[10]

When the First SA Infantry Brigade (SAI) embarked for the Western Front, Albert of the 3rd SAI was transferred to the British Red Cross Convalescence Home (BRCCH) at Montazah. Albert remained in Egypt after he was transferred from the BRCCH to the 52nd Divisional Base Depot at Mustapha (also in Alexandria).[11] On 20 July 1916 (SAI fought at Delville Wood 15-20 July), Albert embarked for No 2 Infantry Base Depot (IBD) at Rouen, where he was medically 'degraded' from A2 (overseas full combat soldier) to B2 (sentry or labour overseas, at unit level).[12] The gunshot wound he sustained at Agagia had led to a debilitating loss of strength in his shoulder. He, and presumably Jackie too (as it had been Albert's condition before joining the SAEF that he would never be separated from his monkey), remained at the IBD in Rouen until the beginning of November 1916. On 6 November the duo rejoined their unit, but the 9th Scottish did not participate in the last two battles of the Somme.[13] Hence, based on Albert's official records, he (and Jackie) never participated in the Delville Wood ordeal, nor in any Somme battle. Interestingly, Albert being appointed to B2-duty might explain why so many authors have highlighted Jackie's keen sentry qualities (eyesight, hearing, warning).[14]

Before and after the war, Albert was employed as a tradesman at the Pretoria Works Company (CSAR), the largest manufacturing and repairing company for railway steam engines and waggons. His military records (without exception) and his mother's will mention his trade as 'SAR & H Plumber' (SA Railway & Harbours). His civilian records mostly mention 'tinsmith', but never 'farmer', although he allegedly found Jackie 'while farming near Premier Mine' (Magaliesberg). Albert was English, born in Northwich, Cheshire (1 November 1888). Albert was the fourth child (25 years between the oldest and the youngest), and four siblings had died in childhood. James, Harriett, and eventually all

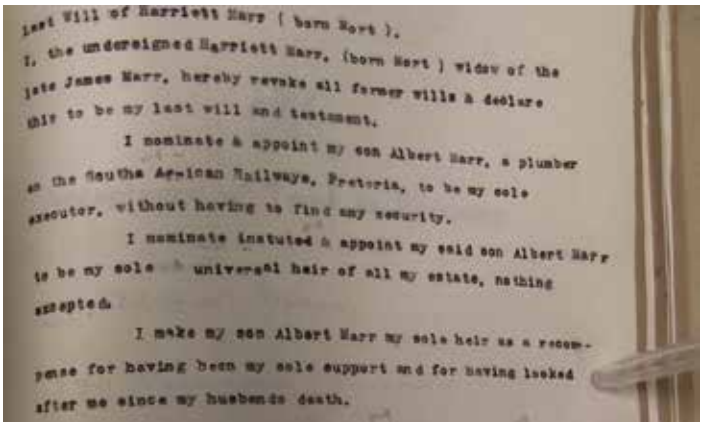
their 11 children, emigrated to Pretoria in 1904. Here, the family illegitimately occupied the property of the late common-law husband ('Texas Jack') of one of the daughters (Lyle, born Margaret Elizabeth). Their subsequent eviction, followed by other allegations about 'land-squatting' and tricking people out of their money, led to court cases (at least until 1919), even though a police report from 1908 mentions the Marrs had bought a house (Lot 33), which they called the 'Cheshire Farm' (situated on #850 of Lot 33). However, Harriett's will in 1924 clarifies that Lot 33 consisted not of one, but of four areas: #790#810#820#830 (including 'buildings and erections', net worth £458). The property began at the corner of Terblanche Street – 33rd Street and ran northwards. In other words, four gardens or grounds wherein Jackie (hypothetically) could have been buried.


Casualty Form—Active Service.

One of Albert's records from the SANDF (Author).

Several reports in local (Northwich) newspapers, and a record to the Master of the Supreme Court of Transvaal, evidenced that Harriett was a problem causer, even before the Marrs had emigrated. Albert's brothers Herbert and James Frederick were juvenile 'criminals', sent to reformatory institutions, each for periods of three-five years. George (another brother) was sentenced to jail. Harriett remained abusive towards her daughters, at times forcing the Transvaal Police to intervene. Albert is not mentioned once in these reports wherein his family members are described as 'of indifferent morals'. Moreover, his military discharge record mentions 'very good conduct'.[15] In 1924, Harriett appointed Albert as her 'sole and universal heir as a recompense for having been my sole support and for having looked after me since my husband's death' (from cancer in 1915). Hence, Albert appeared not like the rest of his family, perhaps more like his father, a 'hard working SAR engine driver', explaining before the judge that he did not understand where it all had gone wrong… Albert's empathy with an orphaned chacma baboon, the caretaking of his mother, maybe of his sister Lyle too (signing witness on the 1924 will), and being inseparable from his cat and dog all indicate that Albert was the 'good son'.

In 1949 Albert was pensioned off from the SAR. He received a monthly amount of 105 R. He died in a hotel room of the Victoria Hotel (Pretoria) on 18 August 1973, aged 84. He left no estate and at some point must have sold his inheritance. His meagre savings (1,000 R) from a Post Office Savings Account went to his niece Thelma Avent (Kensington, Johannesburg).


Last Will of Harriett Marr (born Mort).

I, the undersigned Harriett Marr, (born Mort) widow of the late James Marr, hereby revoke all former wills & declare this to be my last will and testament.

I nominate & appoint my son Albert Marr, a plumber on the Southe African Railways, Pretoria, to be my sole executor, without having to find any security.

I nominate instuted & appoint my said son Albert Marr to be my sole universal heir of all my estate, nothing excepted.

I make my son Albert Marr my sole heir as a recompense for having been my sole support and for having looked after me since my husbands death.

Harriett Mort's will, kindly received from Jo Wells (Author).

Jackie's cause of death was noted by many, and widely assumed to have occurred between 21-22 May 1921, but other sources mention 1920 and 1927. Jackie died from a heart attack (or panic attack) after a thunderclap over 'the farm'. Or, alternatively, after 'the farm' had burned down, or strangely, 'after a happy life at Pretoria Zoo'.[16] In July 1950, three different MOTH members, all from different shellholes, claimed to remember Jackie (and Albert) very well.[17] H Cuthill, mentioned that he was a neighbour and wrote that Jackie could not be soothed and died a few days after an aeroplane passed at low altitude over the house. L Heymann (Levitt or Leo Goodman?) mentioned that Albert, 'a SAR tinsmith and now a pensioner resided with him' and that a Siamese cat and a fox terrier were inseparable from Albert. If 'L Heymann' was Leo Goodman, entrepreneur and manager of the Victoria Hotel, then Albert had lived in Room 104 (at least) since the 1940s, apparently with pets (allowed), until his death in 1973. However, the prerogative is that 'L' was a MOTH member (from Coalbox Mark II Shellhole, Pretoria). If Leo wasn't (which is not currently established) then the author might have been another Heymann (e.g., Levit Heymann, a doctor and reserve-major retiring in 1946). The odds would then have been in favour that for a period Albert resided in a home assisted by the MOTH. In 1959, C Pijper (a Dutch professor in skin disorders, practising in Johannesburg) described to Woodsend what eventually happened to Jackie. Unfortunately, Woodsend's reminiscence about this communication is extremely confusing.

Woodsend states he treated Jackie because of a 'second wound', but it is a mystery what he meant by this. At the time, Woodsend bandaged an obvious (jagged) arm wound after he treated the leg, while the broken foot was not diagnosed nor treated by him, but rather later at CCS No 36. As in his account the 'second wound' sentence is immediately followed by the diagnosis of a chronic wound infection (of the stump), leading to blood poisoning and death. But the question is: are these two sentences associated and consequently a reflection upon a physiopathological complication described by C Pijper? Or does Woodsend refer to himself in the Nedergraafstraat (the 'Main Road' west of Reninghelst), which is followed by a newspaper correspondence sent to him by Pijper, excluding the latter from the monkey's treatment? Unfortunately, the *Natal Daily News* article to which Woodsend refers, could not be retrieved. Yet, sepsis, septicaemia or osteomyelitis all remain plausible causes of death (even today). The photograph of Jackie holding a teddy bear (taken at the Marble Arch Studios in London, 1918), clearly shows exposed bone, which this time is not concealed by the monkey's fur (as in the other postcards).

Jackie with teddy bear (Author).

Whether Cheshire Farm was a tumultuous household or a quiet place after Albert and Jackie returned home is difficult to assess. As Frank (the youngest sibling) would have been 18-19 years old, and the others between their mid-twenties and early forties, most likely they had all left home. Cuthill (the man who claimed that a passing plane led to Jackie's death), wrote that Jackie went into hiding 'in his kennel', suggesting that Jackie could choose between free roaming or his private quarters. Harriett's death certificate (1927) mentions #850 (Cheshire Farm) as immovable property. Hence, was Jackie buried in this house's garden in 1921 or in Villieria? Or perhaps in the adjacent grounds of Lot 33? Or was, according to Brink who visited Albert and Jackie in Alexandria, Jackie buried 'near Premier Mine where Albert was farming before and after the war'? Whether a headstone was placed on Jackie's grave remains unclear.

Billy the Bold

Billy 'the Bombardier' could have become equally notable but his existence has also been lost to time.[18] In mid-September 1915, and amidst a lot of media attention, the South African Heavy Artillery (SAHA), 700-strong and accompanied by a cheerful monkey, landed at Cooden Camp (Bexhill).[19] The bulk of pictures and articles in local newspapers (several originals are available in the Bexhill Museum and were kindly received from D Hatherell) suggest the baboon was very familiar with the gunners. 'Billy had achieved the heights of higher civilization. He chewed tobacco, drank beer and generally behaved like a Christian. Billy's friends in the South African forests would disown this if he ever returned to them'.

Billy was said to be a Cape ('Blackfoot') baboon, 'smuggled' from Cape Town in a tarpaulin-covered lifeboat aboard the *Kildonan Castle*, and praised for his intelligence and good behaviour, especially with children in the nearby Little Common. He was a favourite of camp visitors who watched him in his quarters (which was a hut under a tree). He received a great deal of attention, and 'as much food as would keep a dozen baboons from starvation'. Bread, potatoes, pears, apples – all came alike to Billy. That is to say that if he fancied the goods he ate them… otherwise he threw them back at the sender!

Billy frolicking with the SAHA gunners (courtesy of Bexhill Museum).

Billy withstood the cold, English climate wonderfully well. He liked frolicking, 'had quite a sense of his own importance', and was 'a much more intelligent mascot than the bears of the Canadian comrades-in-arms', and when the band played Billy proudly marched in front, enjoying the fun as much as anyone.[20] The SAHA was clearly very fond of their mascot: during football games he was chosen to hold the Union Flag aloft, or he sat on the goal's crossbar.[21] Despite the monkey's (reported) presence at the inauguration of a memorial in Port Elizabeth, no pictures other than those taken at Cooden Camp (some by a 'Mrs Portier') seem to have survived.[22] Most pictures of Billy suggest a link with the 74th Siege Battery (SB), one of the five SAHA SB (which included about 20 per cent of the men being detached from the RMA).[23] Moreover, Billy was 'led' by JB Kruger, a gunner (and ace cricket player) of the 74th. Aditionally, he was also pictured on the shoulder of a gunner of the 71st SB, playing with NCO's of the 73rd and when he accepted goodies from an RMA bombardier.

However, concerning Billy's service, the only references found so far are from Cooden Camp (September 1915), the Lord Mayor's Parade (LMS) of 9 November 1918 and a ceremony held in Port Elizabeth during April 1921.[24, 25] Some newspaper reports seem to suggest that Billy never went to the front line, instead staying with the SAHA Reserve, first at Cooden Camp and then when it moved its HQ during September 1917 to Staddon Fort (Plymouth). Major AE Rann (formerly a captain with 71st SB), CO of the SAHA Reserve, donated Billy 'during the year 1918' to the Bristol Zoo Gardens (Bristol, Clifton and West England Zoological Society). Billy was received with accolades: 'the finest

specimen of its species they ever had in the Gardens'.[26] Another newspaper correspondence mentioned,

> One interesting fact in the battery's history centres round its mascot, a tame baboon brought over from Africa. Unhappily, familiarity bred fierceness, and the animal… sent to the zoo, where it remains.[27]

Billy and the 74th SB flag (courtesy of Bexhill Museum).

Worthy of mention is that the IWM captioned Billy as 'Jacko' (Q54354), while there is no single (other) reference that Billy was named as such. It could be an error by the IWM, although in the 1950s Colonel EF Thackeray (1871-1956) explained that 'Jacko', who was at the LMS of 1918, was handed over for 'safe keeping to Pretoria Zoo where he peacefully died in 1927'.[28] Oddly, Marr's baboon was never in a zoo, meaning that either Thackeray, or the correspondent, confused Jackie with another monkey. Indeed, there is a newspaper report claiming that Billy spent his final years at Pretoria Zoo. However, it is a mystery as to how the article entitled 'Baboon Bombardier: Lord Mayor's Show Participant's Haven of Rest' (1921) should be understood. The reporter cites 'during the war-time LMS' thousands witnessed how Billy was introduced to Royals and Field-Marshal Haig. If Billy was donated to the zoo after the wartime LMS, his presence might have been hypothetically possible, although the monkey was (by then) known to be a liability. Jackie (and Albert) were filmed and photographed during the 1918 LMS while they were saluting the crowd from a captured 77mm gun. Maybe the reporter confused the monkeys. However, parts of Billy's story differ from Jackie's. Billy was said to have been in the Grand Hotel (Trafalgar Square) 'since the return of his unit' (hence excluding earlier wartime LMSs) and from there he was sent to his 'permanent and comfortable home for the remainder of his life'. Pretoria Zoo sent a lion cage, but before Billy had entered it, he had worked his fingers between the cracks in the floorboards ripping up the flooring.[29] There is no way this story could apply to Jackie, but maybe Billy's destructive behaviour forced Major Rann to reconsider a long sailing trip across the ocean versus three hours (or less) on a train to Bristol (Clifton). K Webb of the Bristol Zoo Zoological Society was not able to retrieve any information from Bristol Zoo's Archives (closed to the public since 2022). The SAHA demobilised at Cape Town (Maitland) in July 1919, likely with the disbanding of the brigade. In 1921, when Field Marshal Haig inaugurated the 74th war memorial at Port Elizabeth, several newspapers reported how the field marshal rose before the simian and saluted it respectfully, albeit leaving the readers amused and wondering whether Billy was well-behaved enough to have returned the salute. No pictures of Douglas Haig with the monkey have yet emerged.[30, 31]

Dinks the Immortal

On the Italian Front during spring 1918, Lieutenant E Brooks took a picture of a robust, pipe-smoking baboon sitting on a log, frolicking with four amused 'servicemen from SA'.[32] To Brooks, image Q26623 was probably self-evident, even if his (personal) description seems to make no sense. The monkey's cap and the sergeant's collar badges indicate that the sergeant, and seemingly the warrant officer too, were 'Oldham Comrades' ('OC'). As the OC (24th Manchester Regiment, 22nd Brigade, 7th Division) was a 'Pals Regiment' raised at the beginning of the war mainly from volunteers who never set foot in SA, (nor did they come from SA), the OC caring for a baboon and a SA origin are unlikely. Brooks' caption implies that the monkey was a famous mascot, serving throughout the war from 1914, with 'servicemen of the Royal Engineers from SA'. After the Italian defeat at Caporetto, the OC were one of the pioneer battalions sent from Flanders to Italy (Asiago and Piave River sectors). From 1916 onwards, they supported the 54th Field Company Royal Engineers (FCRE). The eye-catching Manchester badge on the monkey's cap acknowledges a close relationship between the OC pioneers and the baboon's handler(s). Given the 54th's position during spring 1918, and one of the men wearing a cardigan, Brooks probably took the picture in a rest camp in the Asiago sector. Hence, the soldier holding the chain, and probably the one in the cardigan too, were sappers of 54th FCRE. Strangely, most publications tend to crop them out of image Q26623.

Dinks the Immortal (IWM Q26623, kindly rendered by Jef Smet).

A caption revealing Dinks' name, regiment and post (next to a driver wearing a leather gaiter and protective leg-iron), appeared for the first time in the *Sketch* of 28 October 1914. Another picture (estimated 1916) shows a restrained baboon sitting on top of a Warren Woolwich clock, at the front of what looks like a tent camp. As the image bears the inscription '54th Coy RE Mascot', it most likely portrays a juvenile Dinks. In the 1960s, Ernest Bracewell (1893-1971) wrote about his experiences in the Great War. Ernest was a sapper (No 299440) of the 54th FCRE. His family kindly gave access to an extract of his hand-written memoirs, recalling his time in Italy in 1918.[33] In his 'random recollections' Ernest mentioned he had been appointed recently to,

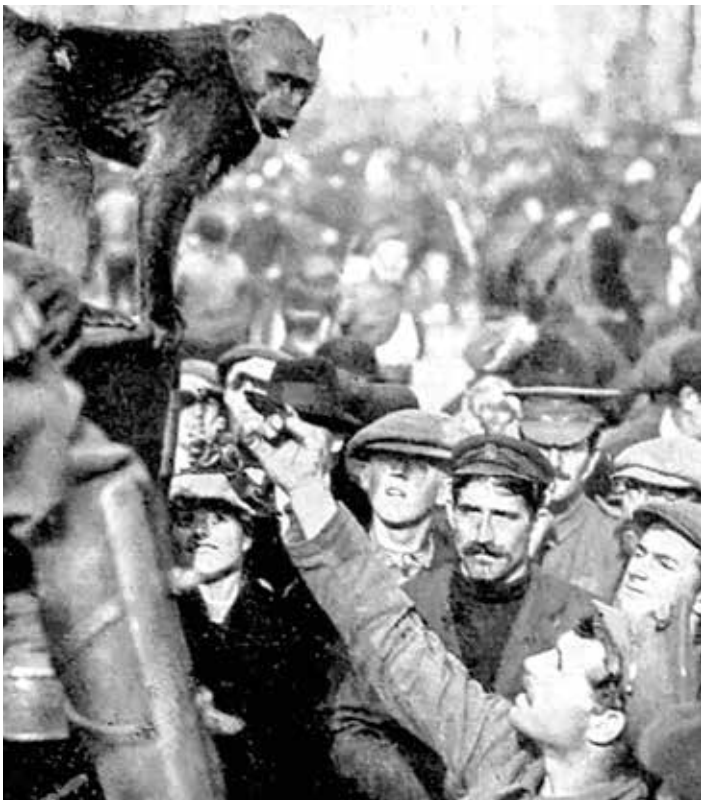
> A Regular Division and part of the Contemptible Little Army. Many had been through the war from Mons onwards. They had been serving in Africa and were recalled when Kaiser Bill got awkward and had brought back a baby ape who of course was fully grown when I joined them. He had a tunic with one gold stripe to tell the world he had been wounded. The drivers idolised him and on pay nights would get him drunk and next morning there he would be with his head in his hands, rocking to and fro, but came back for more next pay night. In a way I suppose he was unique.

Bracewell's diary included a photograph of a group of sappers of the 54th FCRE, mentioning Sapper 'Tug' Wilson. Some Italian authors refer to 'AL' Wilson's memoirs (alas unreferenced) of the 54th FCRE, in which Wilson mentioned that his unit was stationed in SA and that the baby ape was acquired then.

When war broke out, the 54th FCRE (part of the Territorial Force) was grouping at Chatham and raised to war strength with Regulars arriving at Lyndhurst.[34] The latter, 55th FCRE, 7th Division, were based in Pretoria (1911 census). With the general mobilisation (4 August 1914) all (small) overseas cadres of professional soldiers of the British Empire, including those posted in SA, were recalled to reform the 7th Division. The 55th's cadre in Pretoria was 155 NCOs and men, two captains, two lieutenants, 20 horses and one 'baby ape'. Arriving at Chatham onboard the SS *Goorkha* and SS *Guildford Castle*, once the 55th FCRE had moved to Lyndhurst, the cadre (from 4 September on) amalgamated with the Territorials and reservists of the 54th.[35] Dinks, who seemed not to have belonged to one specific handler, 'swapped' units, perhpas at Lyndhurst. In any event, before the 55th FCRE left 7th Division to join the Guards Division (1 September 1916) Ernest Bracewell mentioned William 'Matey' Caselton (No 18045), a Regular with the 55th in SA and section cook. Caselton's medal card shows he was a sapper in the 54th FCRE from 5 October 1914 on (i.e., 'qualifying date'), indicating that the change from 55th to 54th occurred before (or on the date that) the field companies left for Zeebrugge. During the first week of October 1914, 54th and 55th FCRE embarked from Southampton to Zeebrugge (Flanders). From here the two field companies went in slightly different ways, from the coastal area (billets) towards Ghent as they were too late to curb the German pressure upon the Antwerp forts (which had already fallen by then). The field companies were never more than 30km apart. In mid-October they met at Roulers, and the day after headed for Ypres (Zillebeke and Wieltje) to be among the first to endure the enemy's assaults. While the 7th assisted Belgian soldiers in their passage to Ypres, they were the first to ultimately oppose German pressure during the First Battle of Ypres, and Kaiser Wilhelm famously mocked what he deemed an insignificant effort of a mere 15,000 British troops as 'that little contemptible army'. At Langemarck and Gheluvelt (where the two field companies were digging trenches and building obstacles), the infantry brigades of the 7th suffered terrible losses. The overall cadre was cut to 2,000 troops. Nevertheless, 7th Division, indeed a little army compared with the German war machine, turned out to be undefeatable, abruptly halting the German's race for the sea. 'The little contemptible army' had stopped Goliath. As the war continued, men of the 7th were entitled to call themselves the 'Old Contemptibles' or, 'the Immortals'. After the First Battle of Ypres, and near annihilation in October 1914, it took until January-February 1915 to return to the original war strength. But the 7th reemerged like a phoenix from the ashes and continued as 'a happy team, one of the greatest fighting formations Britain ever put into the field'.

IWM Q26623 is most likely the last picture taken of Dinks. By the spring of 1918, 54th FCRE were based in Camisino di Caltrano at the foot of the Asiago Plateau. However, much of their time was spent nearer the front line, high up on the edge of the plateau in a little valley called Magnaboschi.[36] Dinks, while the 54th were improving a railway tunnel at Cesuna (used to shelter battalions held in reserve), remained in Camisino with the drivers. It was here, on 2 July 1918, that he met a sad end. Dinks, who was normally restrained by a chain, was said to have escaped, frightening the locals. An Italian soldier shot him by mistake. Dinks was buried with full military honours and the spot was marked with a tombstone inscribed:

2-7-18
To Dinks
Mascot
of the
54th Fd Coy
Royal Engineers
Accidentally shot



The Sketch, *displaying Dinks (kindly received from Katherine Bracewell).*

Dinks in 1916 (Author).

The headstone was later found in the cellar of a cantina and restored by the Commune of Caltrano and is now in the hands of a private individual.[37, 38] Losing Dinks in such a (pointless) way must have been very painful to the 54th FCRE, to his human drinking brothers among the drivers, his Manchester comrades and the 2nd Gordon Highlanders. They were all very fond of him, soldiers of the kilted 2nd Gordon Highlanders (20th Brigade) were often seen taking him for walks around the village. It suggests he was a happy monkey cherished by all those 'Old Contemptibles'. In the end, and rather sadly, Dinks of the 'Immortals' proved to be mortal after all.

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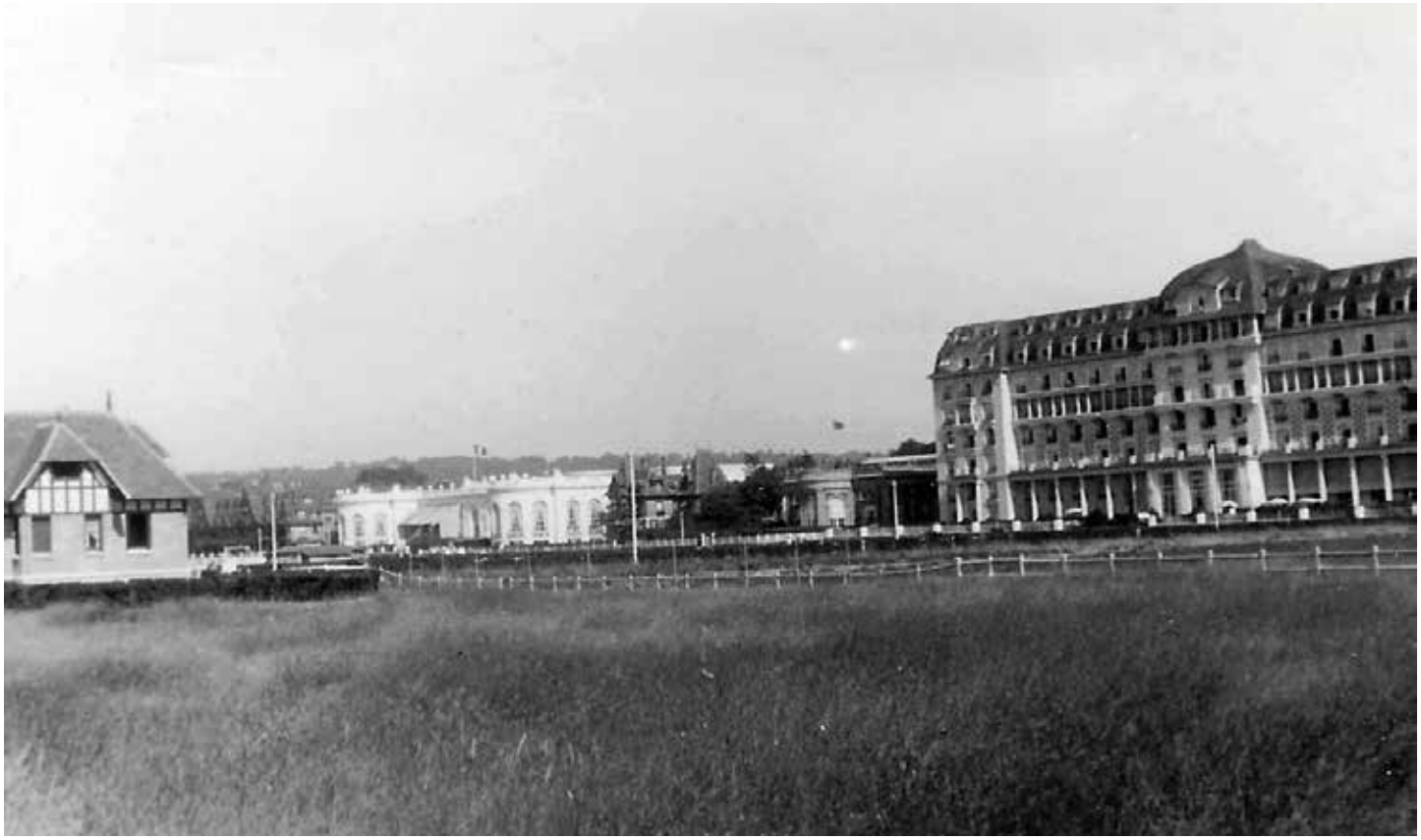
Trouville Hospital Centre

Roy Larkin



Royal Hotel and Casino, Deauville (Author).

In June 1915, Major-General FT Clayton, when Inspector-General Communications, refused Lord Michelham's offer of taking over the Royal Hotel entirely at his expense at the Trouville suburb, Deauville. His offer was declined due to the remoteness and difficulty of supplying the hotel, which could accommodate 250 convalescing officers.[1] Two years later, on 19 April 1917, the Quartermaster-General informed the Director of Works that it had been decided to establish hospitals in the Trouville area, to the west of Le Havre, as soon as the French authorities approved. The plan was to use available buildings in the area with the casino at Trouville accommodating 1,000 beds and the Royal Hotel at Deauville 1,000 beds too. A long way short of the 20,000 beds and 10,000 convalescent places required.[2]

On 7 May the QMG convened a conference at his office with senior officers, including the Adjutant General, General Officer Commanding, Engineer in Charge, the Directors of Works, Transportation and Transport, and the Director-General Medical Services. He reported that the French authorities had given approval for the Trouville site and a new hospital centre at Trouville was sanctioned, despite the difficulties highlighted in 1915. Admiralty pressure to keep more wounded in France due to the increasing danger to hospital ships from enemy submarines had won the day.[3]

An entirely new hospital camp was to be built on an area of 350 acres defined and designated 'Trouville Hospital Centre' on 18 July 1917.[4] Bizarrely, in the rural Trouville area, it was to be on Mont Canisy, a plateau some 300ft above sea-level, about two miles south of Trouville railway station. The only access to the plateau was by three very narrow roads with an average gradient of 10 per cent. Little more than farm tracks, they were unable to withstand the lorry traffic necessary to service either the building or supply of the camp, requiring constant maintenance. It was estimated that 27,000 tons of construction materials would be needed over 100 days. Thereafter, the normal hospital supplies plus 100 tons of foodstuffs would be needed for the planned 40,000 staff and patients at the camp.

A conference was convened to determine what transport would be needed. Light railway was the chosen system, provided the gradients were countered by winding the railway around the hill. Ensuring that the gradient would never exceed 2.5 per cent, two miles of rail were required to reach the summit. A Transhipment Station from the broad-gauge railway was built at Tourgeville Halte. Sidings were constructed to each hospital atop the plateau and the LR stretched for 5.5 miles. The rail chosen was 60cm, 20lbs per yard, flat bottom section clipped to steel sleepers.[5] The cost for the rails alone amounted to £116,160 [£6,631,732 in 2024].[6]

Headquarters was established at Tourgeville, with a camp for 65 skilled personnel and repair sheds for the rolling stock. A diagrammatic board was installed in the Control Office and the movement of trains was controlled by a telephone system. This ensured that the 'up and down' trains safely passed at the passing loops built into the single-line track. The maximum number of trains on the line at any one time was eight.

The locomotives were 4-6-0 types, built by the American Baldwin Locomotive Works. The 4-6-0 type was chosen over the

Unidentified hospital ward from period postcard (Author).

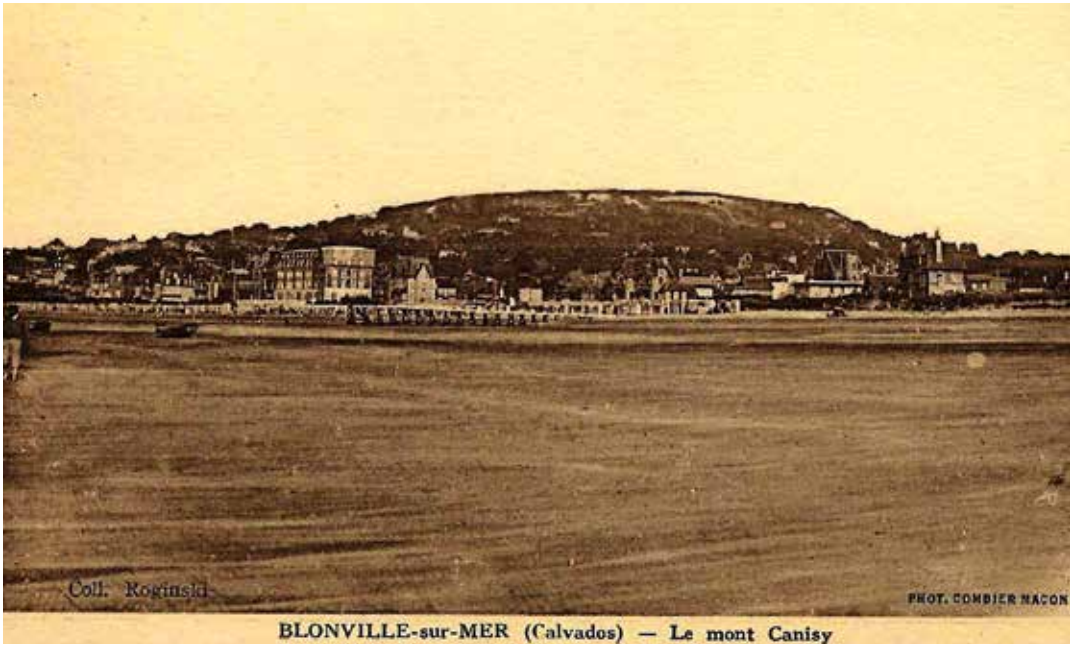
favoured 2-6-2 design simply because it was quickly available from Baldwin's.[7] They could haul a train up to 50 tons gross weight to the top of the plateau. There were 100 wagons available with either 3.5 or 9.5 tons capacity, and covered ambulance wagons with room for 30 patients. The maximum amount carried in one week was 3,736 tons, with the loading/unloading speed determining the tonnage carried, which never reached its potential capacity.[8]

Despite being the preferred transport system, it was November 1917 before the railway was fully functional. Issues obtaining sufficient land from the French and the difficult terrain slowing construction were the main reasons for the delay. The burden of transport naturally fell on the roads while the railway was being constructed. With 40 five ton Foden steam lorries, often doing several journeys per day, the roads needed constant maintenance. Remarkably, during this period the roads were also widened and by November the existing single-track lanes were 18 feet wide, enabling the lorries to easily pass each other. The nearest suitable roadstone was quarried from the Caen area and conveyed by rail to Tourgeville.[9]

A supply depot was opened at Trouville, at the mouth of the River Touques for the sole purpose of supplying the hospitals in the area. Trouville Supply Depot was an outstation of No 1 Supply Depot, Havre. The depot later moved to the Army Ordnance Department depot in the old timber yard at Deauville Quay, by which time the feeding strength of the depot had risen to 250 and the staff consisted of one captain, two sergeants, three Other Ranks with labour provided entirely by Prisoners of War.

When the Deputy Director of Transport visited Trouville on 24 July, he discovered 1,600 tons of stores just lying at various locations pending transport to permanent store, or where they were needed. He ascertained that this was due to lack of labour rather than lack of transport. Stores not arriving at regular times or quantities also caused difficulties with the onward distribution of supplies.[10]

The depot moved onto Mont Canisy following the erection of permanent buildings.[11] It comprised general stores, medical comforts, ambient and chilled meat stores to hold one week's



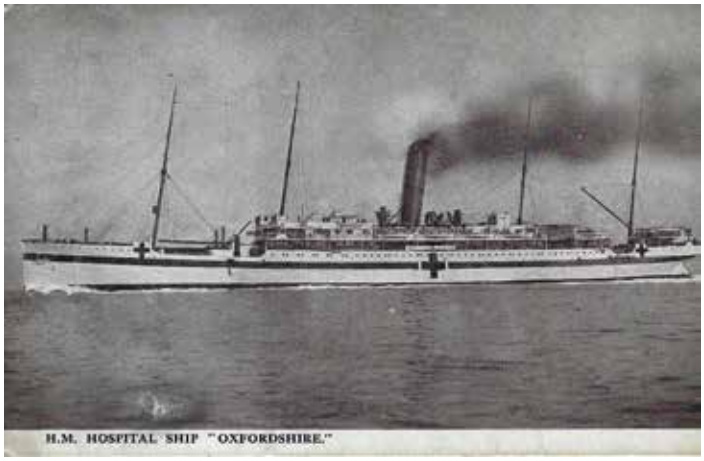
Mont Canisy (Author).

supply. Personnel were accommodated in the Officer's Mess, Sergeant's Mess with kitchen, dining room, cookhouse and three buildings for 90 men and 33 officers. Cost of the buildings was £10,608 [£605,625]. Baths, ablutions, latrines, etc. cost an additional £1,510 [£86,208].[12]

A bakery comprising four Perkins ovens, closed in brickwork and covered in clay was commissioned in August, negating the need for the daily packet boat from Havre.[13] The bakery moved with the supply depot onto Mont Canisy in March 1918, when it expanded to six ovens costing £4,127 [£235,616], including the buildings that housed it.[14]

On 1 June, Lt Col PJJ Radcliffe RE was appointed CRE, Trouville[15] to work under the director of works, with temporary offices in Trouville. He was to oversee the scheme intended to provide three hospitals of 5,000 beds, and three convalescent camps for 5,000 men each. The hospitals would be accommodated in Nissen hospital huts and the camps in Nissen bow huts. Each convalescent camp was to include a parade ground with capacity for 4,000 men. Contracts were awarded to Messrs Geo. Trollope & Sons and Colls & Sons Ltd to supply the hospitals from England. This necessitated them chartering the shipping and a quay at Deauville was made available. They were also required to ship whatever extra RE stores were required but not available in France.

The Director of Works reported that he needed four sappers per 100 beds and the War Office was asked to send three army troop coys, RE complete with tools and transport to France along with two labour coys providing 1,000 unskilled labourers. Nos 7 and 8 AT Coys from the Royal Monmouth Royal Engineers arrived at Havre aboard SS *Hunslet* on 12 June and subsequently at Trouville on 13 June.[16]



HM Hospital Ship Oxfordshire *(First published by GA Pratt – Author's collection).*

Unidentified Nissen hut camp (Official Photograph (C.1224) circulated by Central News Ltd from Author's collection).

First to be constructed were the huts to accommodate the Royal Engineers, the seven Prisoner of War companies, Trollope and Colls' own skilled men and miscellaneous unskilled labourers. Once the construction tradesmen had been accommodated the convalescent depots were built. These were No 13, 14 and 15 Convalescent Depots with No 13 opening on 4 August. No 14 Convalescent Depot opened on 30 August and 15 on 25 October. Only No 13, commanded by Lt Col S Boylan Smith, RAMC, provides any meaningful detail in its war diary.[17]

The 5,000-bed depots included an administration block, quartermaster's block and a central dining hall with seating for 2,500. Unusually, the depots were fully hutted from the outset, comprising 20 groups of 16 Nissen bow huts. Each hut was heated by a stove and had electric light. Each depot had a Russian steam bath with shower, a dental institute, eye specialist institute, barber's shop, chaplain's quarters, drill shed and miniature rifle range. The cost of each depot, using Royal Engineers and Prisoner of War labour, supervised by the CRE, and Trollope and Sons was £40,000 [£2,283,655].[18]

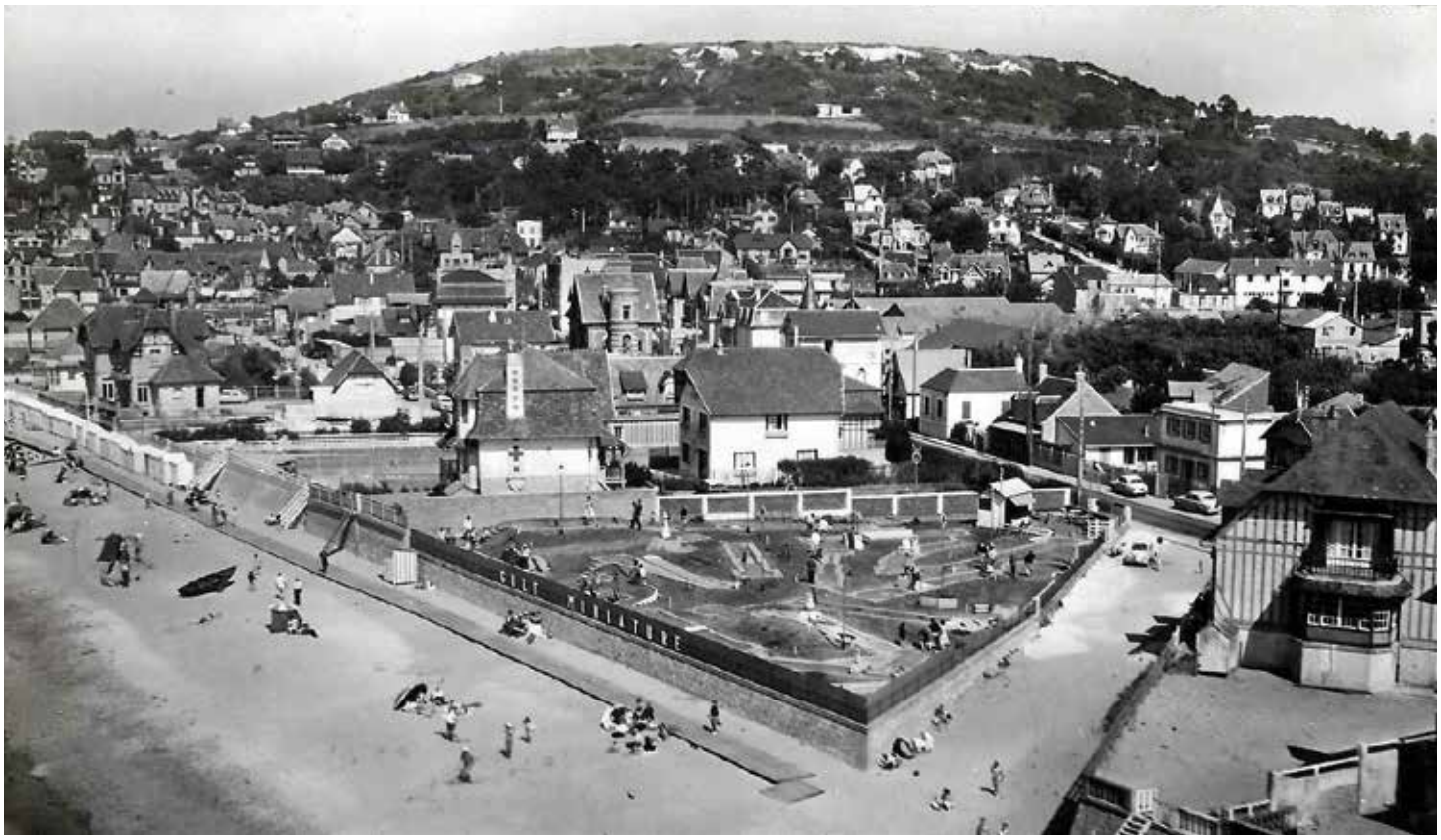
At Nos 13 and 14 Depots, all the convalescents dined in a large hall of 100ft x 168ft in two shifts. In No 15 Depot, three dining halls were built, two for 1,000 men each and one for 500. Each had its own cookhouse. Initially the huts had wood lining, but the men soon ripped the lining from the walls to use for firewood. Corrugated iron linings replaced those used for firewood. No 15 Depot was situated in a very windy position and suffered from the wind tearing the oiled linen curtains.

Unidentified hospital ward. Real photo postcard stamped on reverse 'York Series, Bristol' (Author's collection).

By the time, construction of the hospitals was able to begin, in November, the specification had been modified from the original 5,000-bed capacity to the more realistic 2,500 beds. Three general hospitals were built, being Nos 72, 73 and 74. Each was separated from the others by open spaces, was self-contained and served by light railway sidings from the main LR line from Tourgeville. The railway brought walking wounded and convalescents up to the centre as well as the necessary stores.

Each hospital had 12 blocks of Nissen hospital huts, ten with 25-bed wards with an accessory block containing a dressing room, nurses' room and scullery with accessories, Bedpan rooms and night latrines. There was one block of five wards and one accessory hut. A single officer's block with five wards in Nissen hospital huts, accessory block, lavatory, latrines, kit room, Officer's Mess, anteroom and kitchen.

Each hospital had its own operation block, laboratory and personnel compound to accommodate 100 Officers and 2,400 men. The other buildings were of timber framework with painted



Tourist postcard of Mont Canisy (1960s?) published by Lapie (Author's collection).

or tarred corrugated iron walls. A central cook house and large dining hall able to seat 900 patients at a sitting provided for those not confined to bed. Contracts with Trollope & Sons and Colls & Sons were signed on 15 June 1917, with the cost of each hospital being £234,173 [£13,369,255]. No 74 General Hospital also included an isolation hospital of five self-contained patients blocks, each containing four wards for two cases and two wards for one case.[19]

The three hospitals mobilised from Blackpool, Lancashire.[20] No 72 on 14 November 1917, arriving Trouville on 6 December, 73 on 21 January 1918, arriving on 26 January and 74 on 25 February 1918, arriving 8 March. All three departed England from Southampton and disembarked at Le Havre.

The bombing of Etaples during the spring of 1918 resulted in the St John Association Hospital and the Liverpool Merchants BRCS Hospital being transferred to Trouville and a new hospital was built to accommodate the 1st Canadian Hospital, also from Etaples. The St John Ambulance Association insisted on using their own contractors, Humphrey & Co, to reassemble their 'demountable' huts. This proved less successful and time consuming than the Liverpool Merchant's Hospital who used the War Office contractors, Trollope & Sons and Colls & Son Ltd who gave most satisfactory service considering the site was on a slope. The Canadian Hospital was also built by Trollope under Royal Engineer supervision.[21]

Between 4 August 1917 and 3 February 1919, No 13 Convalescent Depot admitted and discharged 66,798 convalescents with 57,600 discharged by the Armistice. Attempts to employ convalescents with helping construction and maintenance of the hospitals and depots failed as, despite only expected to work a four-hour day, they considered they had earned a rest and refused to work.[22] The unit closed on 28 February 1919 and reopened on 3 March as No 4 Prisoner of War Convalescent Depot with no final closing date recorded.

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18 TNA, WO 106/1484 – Trouville Hospital Centre
19 TNA 106/1484 – Trouville Hospital Centre
20 No.53 General Hospital was the first to mobilise from Blackpool on April 12th 1917. Subsequently, Nos.54,55,56,57,58,72,73,74 General Hospitals mobilised from the Sheffield Training Centre, Blackpool. No information regarding Sheffield Training Centre has been found to date
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The Madness of War

Richard P Hughes

Everybody is suffering from the terrible strain of the war. Nerves are jagged and sore… The world is suffering from shell shock on a great scale'.
(Prime Minister David Lloyd George, speaking in the House of Commons on 18 August 1919).[1]

On 24 December 1919, General Sir Nevil Macready, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, gave a press conference in his office at Scotland Yard. Asked about the recent spate of homicides committed by ex-servicemen, Sir Nevil stated that, 'There was a large number of men who had been in the army and who were suffering from a peculiar state of mind, undoubtedly caused by the war, and these people seemed to have no control over themselves'.[2]

The distinguished war correspondent Philip Gibbs, who had seen for himself the devastating consequences of the conflict on those who took part in it, was also troubled by this phenomenon:

> The gospel of hate, when it dominates the psychology of men is not restricted to one objective, such as a body of men behind barbed wire… Death, their own or other people's, does not mean very much to some who, in the trenches, sat within a few yards of stinking corpses, knowing that the next shell might make such of them. Life was cheap in war. Is it not cheap in peace?[3]

Gibbs also referred to 'the disease and insanity in our present state, due to the travail of the war' and remarked how 'The daily newspapers for many months have been filled with the record of dreadful crimes, of violence and passion. Most of them have been done by soldiers or ex-soldiers'.[4] Press coverage of these crimes was indeed extensive and highly charged. *The Times* referred to 'the disregard of the sacredness of human life inevitably created and fostered in thousands of uncontrolled minds by the war';[5] while the *Yorkshire Post* concluded that the perpetrators must have been 'in an abnormal mental condition, either directly or indirectly, as the result of five years of war-strain'.[6]

In fact, the demobilisation of hundreds of thousands of servicemen did not result in the much-feared mayhem predicted by the press. A report delivered by the Commissioners of Prisons in July 1920 noted that overall crime figures for indictable offences such as murder, manslaughter, wounding and burglary during 1919 and 1920 were lower than in the five years preceding the outbreak of war in 1914. Out of a total prison population of just under 40,000, only 6,461 were men who had served (or in some cases were still serving) with the armed forces. And of these, 3,411 were first-time offenders and 1,398 'habitual criminals', the remainder being prisoners transferred from military prisons in France.[7]

The report also highlighted that:

> A large proportion of these ex-soldiers were young men, some earning good wages at the time of their committal and that they were not prompted to commit crime because of want but through sheer lawlessness – which may not have been due to criminal instincts but generated by the conditions of active service in different parts of the world, where the normal restraints of conduct had been banished by the stress of war.[8]

But for a press no longer dominated by news of the war, any crimes committed by ex-servicemen inevitably attracted a disproportionate amount of coverage. And no crime attracted more attention than murder, particularly if (in Sir Nevil Macready's words) it was 'of a more sensational kind'.[9]

Between January 1919 and December 1920, 70 men who had served with the armed forces during the war were convicted of homicide in England, Scotland and Wales, with 51 being found guilty of wilful murder and sentenced to death. Of these, 24 were hanged, 16 judged to be guilty but insane and committed to asylums, and 11 had their death sentences commuted.

Of particular interest are the cases where insanity due to the effects of shell shock was used as the primary mitigating factor in the committing of the crime. Shell shock was still a relatively new and ill-defined term which covered a variety of mental and physical conditions. It was employed as a defence in crimes ranging from the trivial to the most serious, but opinions were sharply divided as to its validity in criminal cases.

The *Report of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into "Shell-Shock"*, commissioned by the Army Council in 1920 and published two years later, concluded that: 'There is no justification for the popular belief that "shell shock" was a direct cause of insanity, or that the service patients still in asylums were originally cases of "shell shock" who have since become insane'. Indeed, the committee regarded the term itself as 'a grievous misnomer'. It preferred 'war neurosis' and only retained 'shell shock' (provided that it was always in inverted commas) because it was now 'the popular or vulgar term in general use'.[10]

Whatever the terminology, the problems faced by judges and juries who had to deal with such cases were considerable. They themselves were not experts in mental illness and therefore had to rely on the opinions of those who were. However, these opinions were often partial and contradictory and frequently led to inconsistencies in verdicts and the application of the death sentence. In 1919, there were six murder cases involving ex-servicemen where shell shock was employed as the primary defence. Three of these men were found guilty but insane and committed to asylums:

Sidney Hume, an RFC pilot, was shot down over France in May 1917 and captured by the Germans. Following his repatriation in August 1918, he was diagnosed with delusional insanity and admitted to Latchmere House Military Hospital for shell-shocked officers. On 30 November 1918, Hume shot dead one of the male orderlies, telling police 'I am not mad… it was for the benefit of England'. He later claimed that he had been hypnotised and experimented on by German doctors and thought the same treatment was being carried on at Latchmere House.[11]

Harry Bohle, a private with the 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, was wounded several times and 'blown up by shells three times in one day'. Doctors who examined him admitted that

he had a 'mental instability' caused by 'the hardships and strains' of war, although 'divergent views were given as to the effects of shell shock'. Bohle was found guilty of cutting his girlfriend's throat but in his summing up the judge stated that 'It is quite obvious the prisoner was not normal in his physical and nervous system'.[12]

Arthur Hopwood returned home after three years' service as a private with the Lancashire Fusiliers 'dazed and emotional', unable to recognise everyday objects and plagued by voices urging him to commit acts of violence. When asked about the war, he thought that Britain had been fighting France and could not recall on whose side the Germans had fought. Hopwood also suffered from loss of sensation in the arms, legs and face, and hyperreflexia (an overactive muscular reflex response). His condition was so severe a jury found him insane and unfit to plead to the charge of murdering 45-year-old Edith Manning.[13]

Two other men had their death sentences commuted:

Roy Joseph Hutty was a US citizen who had served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. On 24 July 1919, while a shell shock patient at David Lewis Northern Hospital in Liverpool, he shot dead one of the nurses after she had refused to marry him. Hutty was reprieved but hanged himself in his cell at Maidstone Prison three years later.[14]

George Rowland had enlisted in the army in April 1915 and was gassed and wounded in action three times. He left the army in February 1919 with a good record but after his demobilisation he began acting 'peculiarly' on one occasion threatening his sister with a razor and shouting 'Jerry is coming over the top'. On 31 May 1919, Rowland cut the throat of his 18-year-old girlfriend and was sentenced to death, but following a strong recommendation for mercy by the jury this was commuted to penal servitude for life.[15]

Henry Perry, however, was granted no such clemency. By the time he enlisted in the Suffolk Regiment in 1916, he was already a hardened criminal with a string of convictions for violent crimes and robberies. While serving in Palestine in 1917, he was captured by Turkish forces and spent the rest of the war as a PoW, later claiming to have been repeatedly beaten and tortured. On 28 April 1919, Perry brutally murdered his step-aunt Alice Cornish, her husband Walter and their two young daughters at their home in Forest Gate. At his trial, three eminent experts in mental illness concluded that his ill-treatment at the hands of the Turks, combined with epileptic seizures allegedly caused by a piece of shrapnel embedded in his brain, had rendered him of unstable mind and not responsible for his actions. But prosecutor Sir Percival Clarke took a different view, stating that 'the brutalities of war may have made more vicious a person who was vicious before'. The jury agreed and it took them barely ten minutes to find Perry guilty of murder with no recommendation for mercy.

At his appeal hearing, Perry was described as being 'quite wrong in the head… as a result of treatment he received as a Prisoner of War' and 'Insane since the wounds received during the war'. It was also argued that his epilepsy meant he was incapable of distinguishing right from wrong and unable to remember what he had done. But the court dismissed the appeal and with no intervention from the Home Secretary forthcoming, Perry was hanged at Pentonville on 10 July 1919.[16]

Five further shell shock cases came to trial in 1920. Charles Henry Smith, a private with the 2nd Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment, sustained a serious gunshot wound to his left hand at Mons in August 1914 and was later diagnosed with shell shock and delusional insanity. A police inspector, who had known Smith for 20 years, described him as 'a steady hardworking man' but following his discharge from the army in March 1915 'he had been strange in his manner'. Smith's mother also expressed concern about his increasingly depressed state and odd behaviour.

On the evening of 28 March 1920, Smith cut the throat of his 5-year-old son with his army jack-knife then attempted to cut his own jugular vein. Just before the attack, he was heard to say 'My son is a cripple, and we will both die together' but after his arrest he claimed to have no recollection of what he had done.[17] Smith was said to have been 'very fond' of his son but he 'remained unmoved' when indicted at the Birmingham Assizes in April 1920.[18] The jury found him guilty but insane and he was ordered to be 'detained during the King's pleasure'.[19]

An even more disturbing case of filicide was that of William John Howes, who on 28 May 1920 raped and murdered his 13-year-old daughter. Howes, a former private with the 1st Battalion, Suffolk Regiment, fought at Loos in February 1915 and was later blown up by a high explosive shell near Ypres. While serving in Salonika he contracted malaria, dysentery and syphilis and also developed symptoms of shell shock. On his discharge from the army in August 1918, an Army Medical Board found him to be 'tremulous in every limb, to have hesitancy in his speech, to complain of weakness, insomnia, and general pains and to be unfit for any form of military duty'. A police report concluded that Howes was insane and not responsible for his actions, a view endorsed by the prison medical officer and several doctors. It was also noted that Howes was delusional, believing his wife 'had beetles in her throat' and that she had poisoned his food and infected him with syphilis. The jury found Howes guilty of murder but recommended mercy (something the judge thought 'was in no doubt worthy of consideration') and in November 1920 he was reprieved and sent to Broadmoor.[20]

But the jury in the trial of Samuel Westwood were less sympathetic. Westwood, a private with the 2/6th Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, was blown up by a shell on 21 March 1918 which rendered him unconscious for 24 hours. He was then taken prisoner by the Germans and remained in captivity until his repatriation in December 1918, later claiming that he was 'underfed and overworked' in a coal mine.

On 11 September 1920, Westwood stabbed to death his wife of barely two months after a domestic argument and then swallowed what he thought was poison in an attempt to kill himself. At his trial, a doctor called by the defence stated that the effects of being 'knocked down by the shell explosion' and his experiences as a PoW might have affected Westwood 'such that he reacted somewhat violently to emotional stimuli'. It was further suggested that 'he might as a result lose his temper and act violently under provocation, whilst a man that had not gone through what he

Frederick Rothwell Holt (Author).

had would not have done so'. But the jury was not convinced. They found Westwood guilty of murder with no recommendation for mercy and following the dismissal of his appeal he was hanged at Winson Green Prison in Birmingham on 30 December 1920.[21]

The final two cases both involved junior officers and aroused considerable press and public interest. On the night of 23 December 1919, Frederick Rothwell Holt (always known as 'Eric') shot to death Kathleen Elsie Breaks, a 25-year-old married woman from Bradford, on the sandhills near St Annes-on-Sea in Lancashire. The couple had been involved in a tempestuous 18-month love affair and it initially appeared to have been a crime of passion. However, it later emerged that Holt had insured Mrs Breaks' life for £5,000 which she left to him in her will.

At his trial in Manchester in February 1920, Holt was represented by the foremost defence lawyer of his day, the charismatic Sir Edward Marshall Hall. He made much of Holt's brief period of active service in France with the 1/4th Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, where in 1915 he had endured 'the nerve-wracking, nerve-killing experience of the Festubert bombardment… listening to the pounding of those shells above, with the ghastly noise that drove men mad'. Army Medical Board reports, made after Holt returned to England in June 1915, described him as 'thin and nervy' with distinct signs of 'neurasthenia' (a common euphemism for shell shock) resulting in 'loss of confidence, impaired memory, poor concentration, headaches and considerable mental depression'.

Evidence was also given by three doctors who specialised in mental illness that Holt was suffering with delusional insanity and was not responsible for his actions. But neither that, nor 'the very definite inheritance of mental disorder' on the maternal side of Holt's family, was sufficient to persuade the jury that Holt was insane at the time he killed Mrs Breaks. He was found guilty of wilful murder with no recommendation for mercy and sentenced to death.

An appeal hearing followed at which Marshall Hall attempted to have that verdict changed to 'guilty but insane', arguing that Holt acted on an 'irresistible impulse'. It was also revealed that in 1917 Holt had been diagnosed with secondary syphilis; and the doctor who treated him stated that for a man already suffering with shell shock this might have affected his nervous system and undermined his willpower. The court, however, was not impressed by this new evidence: the original trial verdict was upheld and the appeal dismissed on all grounds.[22]

Marshall Hall never doubted that Holt shot and killed Mrs Breaks; but he was equally sure that 'the deed was done under the influence of some sudden uncontrollable passion acting on a mind affected by shell shock and disease'. And he felt 'so strongly that he is now mad, I as a man can't contemplate with honour the idea of executing a madman… It is not a case for the lawyer but for the mental specialist'.[23]

Several newspapers expressed similar concerns about the case the press had dubbed 'The Sandhills Murder'. The *Daily Dispatch* posed the provocative question 'Shall We Hang the Insane?', commenting that 'There is no law to prevent a murderer, who has become insane since trial, from being hanged, but of course… the Home Secretary can suspend the sentence'.[24] For the *Yorkshire Post* 'it was probable that if Holt had been a normal man, or had escaped the mental strain of war service and his consequent collapse, both his own wretched fate and that of his victim would have been otherwise ordered'.[25]

The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* considered it 'painful to think that any fellow creature, let alone a man who had borne His Majesty's Commission and had fought and bled for his country, could be capable of such infamy as this'. But 'did the suffering caused by the war, influencing a temperament naturally moody and unstable, bring about this horrible perversion? Here is a deep and anxious psychological problem but the law cannot take it into account'.[26]

There was also criticism of the legal process by which the verdict had been reached. The *Daily Dispatch* doubted whether a jury was 'a fit body to decide when the experts disagree' and one of Marshall Hall's correspondents agreed:

> How can the men who have remained at home, in quiet and safety, be competent to judge the brain-waves of a man who has seen so much death that it is almost of no importance?… Why is not the jury for such cases composed of men who have been in the trenches and in Mesopotamia, and know all the horrors and how these can affect some men?[27]

But Home Secretary Edward Shortt turned down all appeals for clemency and at 8am on the morning of 13 April 1920, Eric Holt was hanged at Strangeways Prison in Manchester. This prompted one newspaper to contrast Holt's fate with that of another ex-army officer whose death sentence had recently been commuted, noting that 'of the two murderers… the one reprieved seemed to have acted less under the influence of madness than the one who was hanged in Strangeways Gaol this morning'.[28]

Albert Edward Redfern (Author).

The officer in question was 24-four-year-old Albert Edward Redfern, a former lieutenant with the 1/5th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment. While serving in Palestine in April 1918 he had suffered severe shrapnel wounds, one piece remaining in his spine and causing partial paralysis. He underwent many months of treatment and several painful operations but by the summer of 1919 he appeared to have made a remarkable recovery. However, he then began to experience periods of memory loss and increasingly frequent fits during which he was 'in a state of absolute irresponsibility yet afterwards he seemed to be quite unaware of where he had been or what he had done'.[29]

On the afternoon of 11 December 1919, Redfern carried out an armed robbery at a bank in Leeds during which he shot dead the bank manager and escaped with over £400. During his trial at Leeds Assizes 'he sat perfectly rigid, with his eyes fixed… apparently quite oblivious to his surroundings'. He was described as looking 'pitiably ill' and was so weak he had to be helped in and out of the dock.[30]

Redfern's defence counsel argued that his client was insane as the direct result of his war service and that he was not responsible for his actions at the time of the murder. But, as with Eric Holt, medical opinion was divided about Redfern's true state of mind. A doctor who had treated him at Southmead Hospital in Bristol thought he was in a condition of 'mental irresponsibility at the time of the murder'. But two other doctors testified that they could find nothing to suggest he was of unsound mind and thought the fits might be 'epileptic in origin' or 'attributable to hysteria'.[31]

On 17 March 1920, Redfern was found guilty of wilful murder and sentenced to death. However, the jury did make a strong recommendation for mercy, something the jury at Eric Holt's trial had chosen not to do. No appeal was made against the sentence but on 1 April Edward Shortt, the Home Secretary who only nine days earlier had refused to intervene on Holt's behalf, commuted the death sentence to penal servitude for life (Redfern was eventually released in 1935).[32]

As late as 1927, shell shock was still being used as a defence for an ex-serviceman. In Sunderland on 28 June, 31-year-old Edward Lloyd shot dead a police constable who had served a summons on him. Lloyd had joined the army in November 1914 and was blown up by a shell on the Somme in October 1916. After being discharged from the army he was treated for shell shock at Smithston War Hospital in Greenock, the Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley and Harrowby Camp Hospital in Grantham.

At his trial, various symptoms of Lloyd's shell shock were read out in court. These included: 'night terror, inability to speak, simple-mindedness, childish manner and stammering'. He was also said to have been 'easily frightened, cried like a child, buried himself under the bedclothes, was very excitable, was nervous in the dark, required light in his bedroom and was of a neurotic temperament'. As he listened to this 'recital' of symptoms, Lloyd 'wept convulsively'. But a doctor who went to his assistance told the judge that 'the trouble was simply emotional, and that the prisoner said he was all right'.[33]

According to the *Sunderland Daily Echo*, 'The evidence showed that Lloyd was a victim of nervous derangement' although 'none of the medical witnesses would say he was insane'. However, they admitted that he was suffering from 'moral deterioration' and his relatives 'testified to the fact that he had been shell-shocked in France and since his demobilisation he had been a different man to what he was before the war'.[34]

The paper concluded its editorial, captioned 'Nerves and Crime', with this observation:

> While it would be an exceedingly dangerous doctrine to extenuate the conduct of any man who commits a crime of violence merely because he was under shell fire in the War, there can be no doubt that the trench experiences of many men who were actually in the front line has played a more devastating effect on the characters and tempers of War veterans than many of us care to admit. The trouble, too, is that many, who never experienced the ordeal, are apt to be less patient and long suffering with those who have.[35]

In 1929, Sir Edward Marshall Hall's biographer reflected on the psychological damage that was still being felt ten years after the war had ended:

> The war left behind other evils besides houses of remembrance and mourning throughout Britain… Medical men say that it affected health and nerves throughout the whole population… At any rate it is certain that, among those who faced the frightful ordeal of modern warfare, many survived far less fortunate than those who fell.[36]

Further Reading

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BEF Machine Gun Tactics

First Year of War

Greg O'Reilly

During the 1840s several key technical improvements led to a dramatic increase in the effectiveness of hand-held firearms:

- Rifled barrels improved both the range and accuracy.
- The Minié ball cartridge greatly improved the rate of fire of breech-loaded weapons.
- Smokeless powder that followed the synthesis of nitroglycerine made the firer much more difficult to locate, and small arms fire became extremely lethal in the second half of the nineteenth Century. Dupuy et al suggested the effect of the 'conoidal bullet' increased casualties from 30-40 per cent in pre 1850 battles to 85-90 per cent of all casualties after 1860.[1]

In 1853, the School of Musketry was established at Hythe, Kent, to train the British Army in the new weaponry being developed, specifically the Minié rifle, which replaced the smooth-bore musket after more than 100 years of service. In 1855 the army began experimenting with firing the weapon indirectly at 900yd range, something that generated much enthusiasm amongst the instructors. On 10 July 1857, Lt Col EC Wilford confidently declared to the United Services Institute that he believed 'a taught regiment of 800 men could throw 16,000 bullets per minute into a fort in an area of 50 square yards; and this could be done over the heads of a column advancing to storm'. It was a logical modern extension of the ancient practice of archers firing over the heads of foot soldiers protecting them with spears. Individual projectiles fired in co-ordinated ways to form a much larger, more effective weapon which could assert fire superiority at distance.

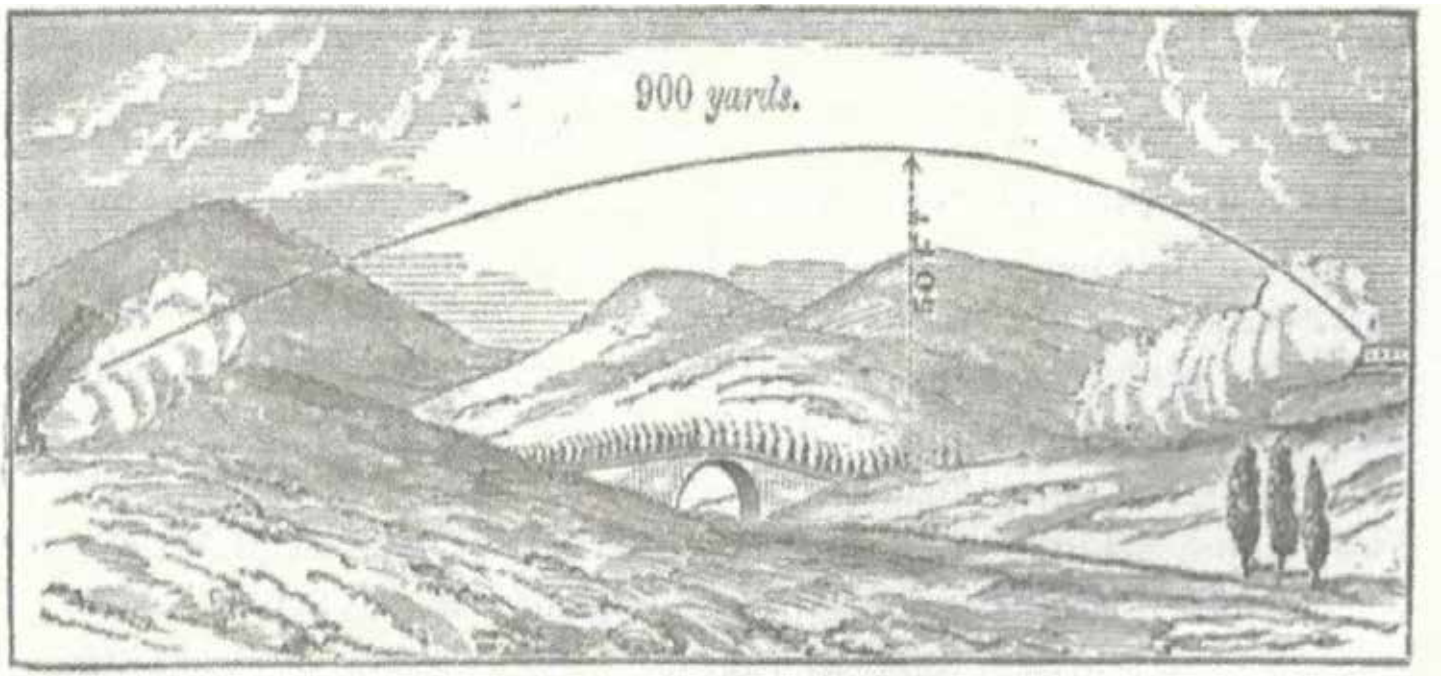
Hiram Maxim changed everything again in 1884, though as American naval historian and tactician Alfred Thayer Mahan insightfully noted, weapons technology could change overnight but tactics invariably took much longer to develop. Large organisations like the army, he also identified, were much inclined to resist such changes.[2]

Overhead fire using machine guns was taught at Hythe from 1906 and in 1909, 'immensely successful' trials were conducted on Salisbury Plain. According to George Lindsay, 'Accuracy on hidden targets was most striking. A report was made, but nothing was done, and an order came out that indirect fire was not to be taught'.[3]

It is widely accepted that artillery caused the majority of casualties during the war, however none of the very rare selective studies into this question examines the early period of the war in 1914 when the heaviest casualties occurred, some 1.5-1.7 million men. Furthermore, there is simply no evidence that artillery inflicted the most casualties *during* an attack, the most crucial time. CS Forrester suggested the Duke of Wellington frowned on sniping and outpost fighting because it yielded him no tactical advantage on the battlefield and that the enemy would inevitably do the same. Killing 20-30 men standing around a cooker, tragic as it was, also gave no tactical advantage on the battlefield.

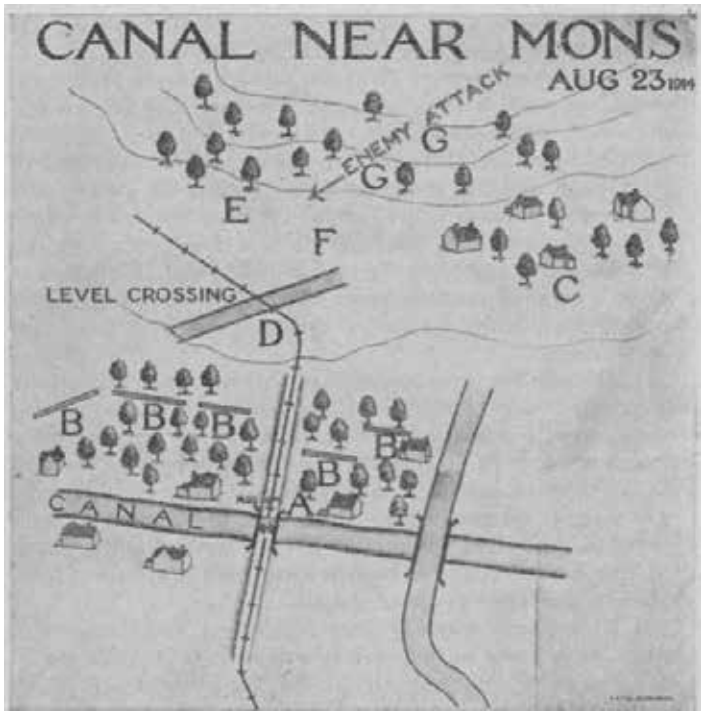
The reality was that machine guns caused the most casualties at the most crucial times and were the greatest stumbling block to advancing. Both sides' machine guns were soon consuming most of the huge quantities of small arms ammunition (SAA) being sent to the front line, but whose actions and effects were rarely observed first-hand by even battalion level commanders. At the outbreak of war, Britain had 400 million rounds in reserve but within eight months this had shrunk to two million rounds despite producing 26 million rounds per month. By June 1915 over 100 million rounds per month SAA was being produced.[4]

The pre-eminence of the weapon came in the first Victoria Crosses of the war awarded to Lt Maurice Dease and Pte Sidney



Indirect overhead fire from Lt Arthur Walker's 1864 manual of musketry instruction (Author).

Godley during the battle of Mons in August 1914. With 12 hours to prepare and only two Maxim guns, a 'strong barricade of railway sleepers' was made, ranges taken with a Barr and Stroud Range Finder and 'Range Cards' quickly made up to cover all key tactical points on the prospective battlefield in front of the canal. When Dease called for the two guns to fire with 'combined sights' on a house at about 800 yards range, the guns were aimed at the same target but with slightly different elevations to allow for distance uncertainty. The right gun hit the top of the window, while the left gun went straight through taking out an MG08 crew. They fired on other attempts at between 500-1,000 yards, keeping German infantry well beyond accurate rifle range.[5] Dease was killed on his third wounding, while Godley, hit with shrapnel in the back, continued on his own, holding back the Germans for another two hours until finally running out of ammunition, destroying the gun and then later being captured.



Defence of the canal at Mons. Two Maxim guns with crews stationed at A, infantry protecting them at B (Author).

A number of important lessons should have been learned by the BEF, specifically:

- Dug in machine guns were very difficult to eliminate with artillery.
- Volume of small arms fire could be used as an effective substitute for accuracy.
- Aggregated machine guns could exert small arms fire superiority over the enemy.
- Rifle fire had become largely obsolete and that some of the infantry should carry other weapons.

Whilst 80 per cent casualties may completely destroy an infantry battalion's capacity to defend, such losses in a machine gun crew do not guarantee any reduction in its effectiveness. It was a nerveless weapon, and Godley was on his own and wounded for much of it. Throughout the war, the probability of a very heavy bombardment destroying an individual dug in machine gun position was rarely more than 1 in 4.[6] The probability of destroying most of them was near impossible. The combined sights method, used by Dease, would be developed to be used by more and more guns firing in co-ordinated ways to cover larger and larger areas.

Many of these early interactions were from much longer ranges than either side had been expecting and well beyond the rifle range that so many had practised. Though all sides' machine guns fired the same calibre as their rifles, the stable platform and continuous stream of bullets meant that fire could be concentrated at a distance in a way that the infantry could not. The Black Watch cleared a wood near Vendresse from 950 to 1,250 yards range on 14 Sep 1914, the Germans incapable of returning any fire.[7]

This early war of movement saw some of the biggest slaughters of the war, men caught out in the open and exposed to this unreturnable machine gun fire. Attempts to outflank these positions led to the 'Race to the Sea'. By Christmas 1914, the front line had become static and the space in between the two sides' trenches was full of barbed wire and covered by machine guns. Each major power had around 24 machine guns per division at the outbreak of the war.[8] However, the search for small arms fire superiority began in earnest before the end of 1914, the Germans doubling the number of MG08s in each infantry regiment from three to six and forming them into companies.[9] In January 1915, General der Infanterie Erich von Falkenhayn issued orders requiring the existing front line to be made capable of being easily defended by small numbers of troops and that anything lost would be recaptured by counterattack from a second line to be constructed, with communication trenches to be dug between them. The importance of depth of defences was apparent to all. General Joseph Joffre, the French Commander in Chief, cautioned his men against crowding the forward line as early as 5 January 1915, though many under him were reluctant to cede any more French soil.[10]

At first, expanding the number of machine guns met with resistance within the BEF, whose commanders reasoned that 'they were no good on the offensive'.[11] At the outbreak of war they had 1,963 machine guns, of which only 5 per cent were Vickers, the rest were Maxims or even older 0.450 Maxims converted to 0.303 calibre. The first tentative order on 11 August 1914 of 192 Vickers was soon amended to 1,792 in the early weeks of September, though only 1,022 would be delivered before June 1915.[12] When available, each battalion doubled their two machine guns to four from February 1915 onwards. Motor machine gun batteries, armed with Vickers guns carried around in motorcycles and sidecars, were added as corps troops.

British brigades were largely responsible for their own training, the machine gun school at Whisques would not be established until 22 Nov 1914 under Major Baker-Carr and could only train a little over 100 men per month. This quickly became over 1,000 men per month by June 1915.[13] The Germans added a second company of six MG08s to each regiment. By May, the second line of defences had been constructed at comfortable machine gun range behind the front line, and the additional machine guns were distributed in greater depth. Elite machine-gunners were put together into *Maschinengewehr-Scharfschützen-Truppen* (machine-gun sharpshooter troops) and attached to divisions. The Germans also excavated deep bunkers in which to sit out the increasingly heavy bombardments. The theory was that when the ground stopped shaking, you had about 30sec to get to the parapet and bring your machine gun into action. It was a sound, but ultimately flawed, principle for much of the war.

The BEF experimented with different forms of 'covering fire' using machine guns in the attack. Ominously, they found firing through the infantry during an attack 'not very satisfactory'.[14] A more acceptable form was to find favourable bends in the line and

push machine guns to the flank and enfilade the objective with direct observable fire, something tried by both sides during 1915. However, like firing through, there were problems with the method.

Neuve Chapelle

The Indian Corps had already engaged in heavy hand-to-hand fighting for the town of Neuve Chapelle in late 1914 before First Army Chief Sir Douglas Haig ordered them to recapture it on 10 March 1915. His outlook would characterise much of the later conduct of the war in two key ways, collective overoptimism and an unfaltering belief that artillery could indeed suppress enemy machine gun fire, ignoring the obvious learnings at Mons. On 9 March Haig issued a 'Special Order' which encapsulated his approach, something he would resolutely follow until at least 1917:[15] 'We are about to engage the enemy under very favourable conditions'. Haig declines to state what those favourable conditions might be. The flat, wet terrain of Flanders greatly favoured the defensive machine gunners, and, 'Our guns are now both more numerous than the enemy's are, and also larger than any hitherto used by any army in the field'.

Artillery superiority was enough for Haig to believe things would work out in his favour and he ordered the 8 Division, from Sir Henry Rawlinson's IV Corps, and the Meerut Division to break through the German lines at Neuve Chapelle and open up the stalemate for the cavalry to ride through. It was over-optimistically noted at a conference on 5 March that 'very likely an operation of considerable magnitude may result' from the expected breakthrough.[16]

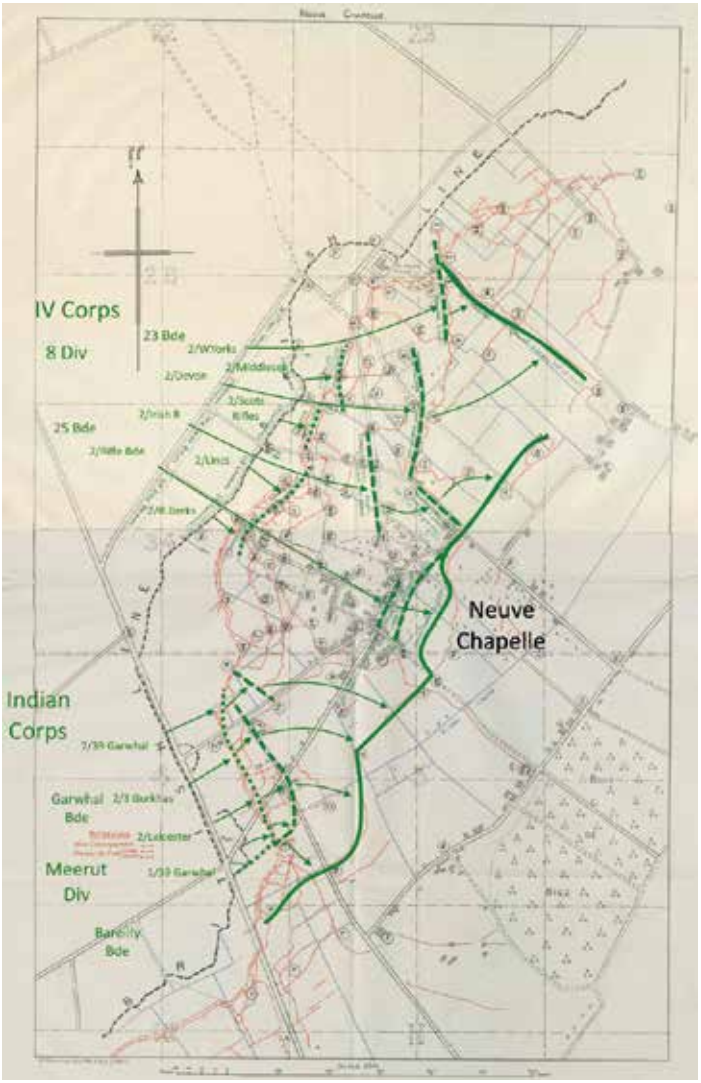
This was despite more than six months of learnings that troops moving across open ground were still very vulnerable to unsuppressed machine gun fire from beyond rifle range, especially cavalry 2m above ground level. Five main purposes were identified for the artillery bombardment:[17]

a) To demolish the enemy's obstacles.
b) To destroy the enemy in his trenches.
c) To put up a curtain of fire in the rear of hostile trenches in order to prevent the arrival of reserves.
d) To cover the southern section, which was not attacking.
e) To engage the enemy's batteries.

Suppression of enemy machine gun fire was an implied outcome of a 'successful' barrage and would continue to be so for the rest of the war. A pincer movement was planned with 8 Division to attack towards the southeast, while the Indians attacked towards the northeast.

It is not clear whether the 'wedge' left in the middle was on purpose to allow machine guns to give covering fire or a happy accident because their actions do not appear in the narratives of operations, simply that each attacking battalion of the Meerut Division would give over two of their four machine guns to 'acknowledged expert' Garwhal BMGO Captain John Lodwick DSO (drowned at sea 31/12/15) of the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles.

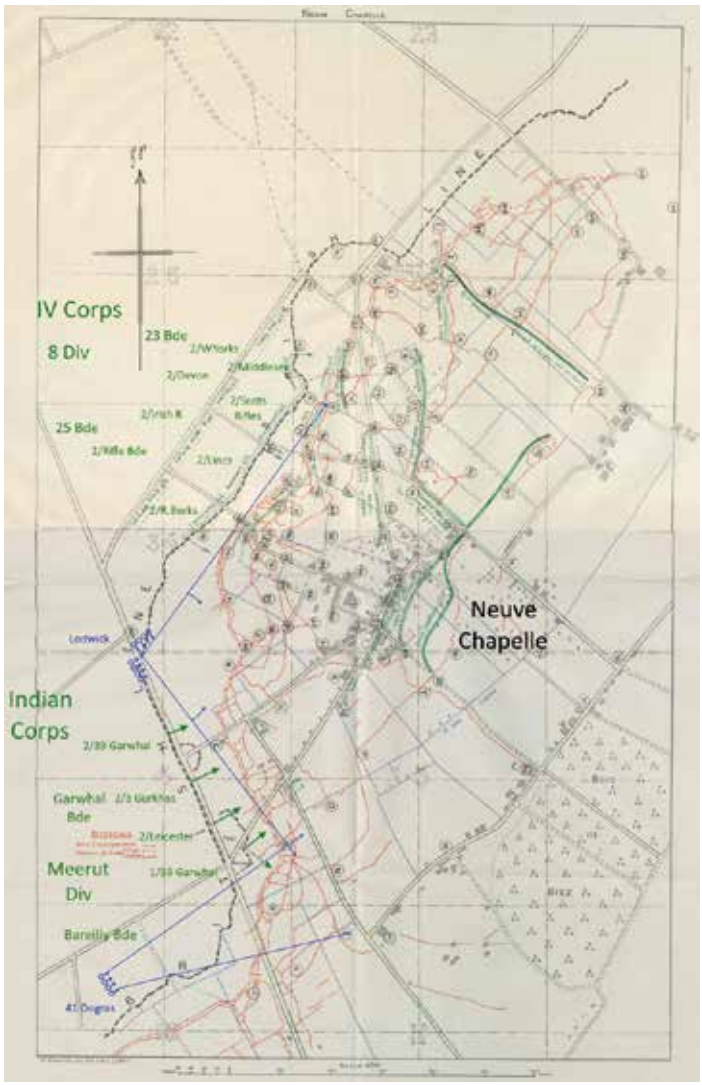
Alongside the eight guns, 20,000 loose rounds SAA were allocated to the task in addition to the approximately 40,000 rounds packed in belts they brought with them. It is not clear whether Lodwick's guns were fired from ground level or, more likely, positions in the roof spaces of nearby houses to clear the four-foot breastworks. At the very least, observation posts were made in these places and in a way that could direct the aggregated machine gun fire.



Plan of attack Neuve Chapelle 10 March 1915 (Author).

House located along Rue de Grand Chemin around the location where Lodwick placed his eight machine guns. In the early part of the war, firing was frequently done from a makeshift platform built inside houses and through a few removed tiles, and why most were later levelled by artillery (Author).

Guns of the Bareilly Brigade were to also fire obliquely along their front and up the River Layes behind the town, in theory firing along a channel on the right flank of the 1/39 Garwhal Rifles. Unlike the guns under Lodwick, there was no need to adjust for the infantry moving forward until 08:30, when the next phase was due to start.



Probable machine gun covering fire plan Neuve Chapelle 10 March 1915 (Author).

At 07:30 on the 10 March 1915 the artillery barrage started and 'the air was rent by the sudden outburst of the general bombardment'.[18] Some of the machine gun batteries also opened fire soon after, the noise of their guns obscured by the din and its effects only noticed by those on the receiving end.

At 08:05 the artillery lifted so that the attack could start. The machine guns probably left their fire lingering along the German trenches until they observed the advancing infantry to be much closer. Whilst there is no report stating such, direct covering fire, when available, was a much preferred and effective tactic used extensively by both sides during their advances in 1918.

23 Brigade were on the extreme left of the attack and well away from Lodwick's guns. The 2 Middlesex were quickly held up by 'heavy machine gun fire at point blank range from their front and left flank'.[19] Three attempts were made, all stopped by machine guns.[20] The unsuppressed machine gun fire in front of their position also put flanking fire into 2/Scottish Rifles, 'although the bombardment had been successful' on their part of the front.

Throughout the war, a 'successful' bombardment came to mean an absence of machine gun fire and the obvious, but wrong, conclusion that one caused the other, was widely accepted. No one seemed to have time, or even the inclination, to properly review a battle in its full context. The pressing demands of the now more important than the past and yet by this point in the war, some reflection on learnings may have been prudent.

In the capture of Neuve Chapelle, the closer the advancing battalions were to Captain Lodwick's guns, the more 'successful' the artillery bombardment was believed to be. The left company of the 2/Scottish Rifles were held up, while the right made the first German trench, reporting fire only from its left.

25 Brigade, much closer to the wedge, were able to cross No Man's Land and capture their first objective within ten minutes 'with little loss', something the Official Historian attributed to artillery:

> The wire entanglement had been completely shattered, and the Germans, demoralised by the suddenness and intensity of the bombardment, were unable to man the battered remnants of the front trench before the assault reached.[21]

The Lincolns too only reported fire from the left and 'suffered somewhat from enfilade fire from the hostile trenches in front of the 23rd Inf Bde'.[22]

25 Brigade do not appear to have been aware of Lodwick's guns, taking all theirs forward except for three left 'under the control of the brigadier', meaning in reserve and used as replacements for those knocked out. None of their guns appear to have supported the attack, only coming into action during later counterattacks. The brigade attributed its success to:

- Complete concealment of troops.
- Partly the effect of the bombardment, and
- That they had 'units in hand and under control'.[23]

The leapfrogging battalions of the two brigades pushed on to take the town itself and by 10:00, most of the 8 Division objectives were in hand except for the left flank, still on its start line. The

Probable enfilade covering fire given to 8 Division by Lodwick's guns (Author).

Probable oblique covering fire given to Meerut Division by Lodwick's guns (Author).

Indian Corps advanced and 'the assaulting infantry, except the 1/39 Garwhal Rifles, reached the enemy's trenches without a check'.[24]

Captain WG Bagot-Chester of the 2/3rd Gurkha Rifles confidently attributed their success stating:

> Our first and second lines reached the enemy's trenches without much loss because the Boche were obviously quite demoralised by the bombardment... There was very little firing from the German side and our attack seemed to have taken them completely by surprise.[25]

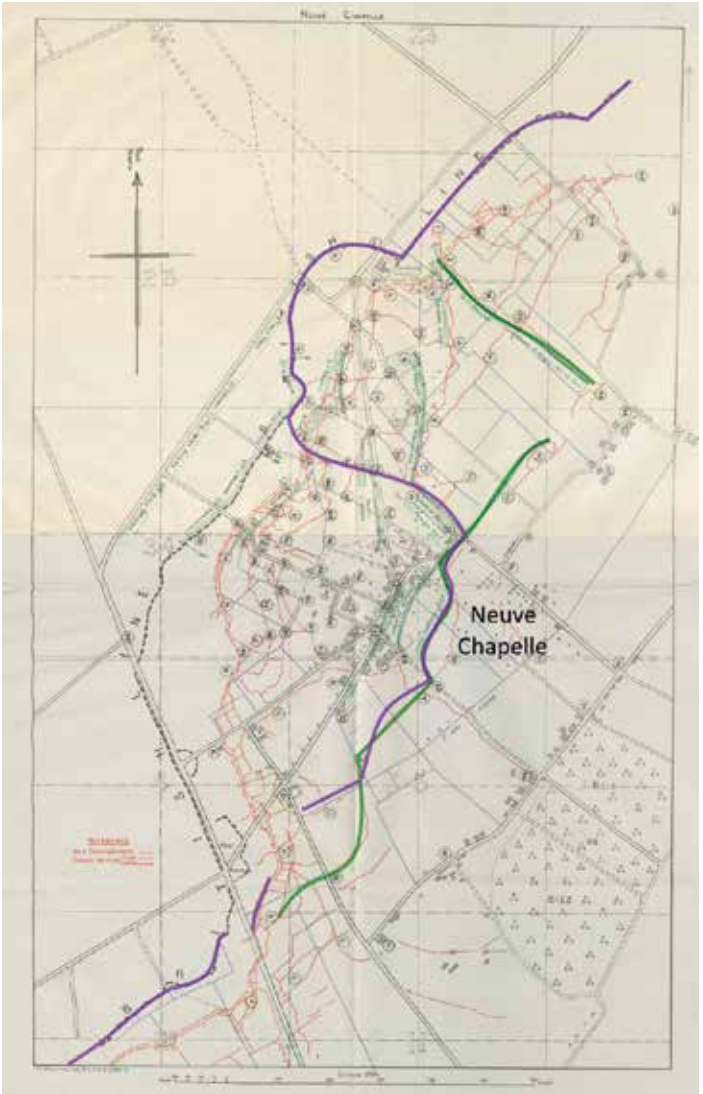
But it was far from well organised. Captains Clarke and Owen (both KIA 10 Mar 1915), of the 1/39 Garwhal Rifles, veered too far right and towards a part of the line 'not affected by the bombardment' where they 'were enfiladed by machine gun fire coming from our right'.[26] Despite this heavy fire and apparently uncut wire and unlike the 2 Middlesex Bn, they were still able to secure a foothold in the German trenches, though not in touch with their left.

This was most likely due to the heavy enfilade machine gun fire coming not from the Germans, but the fire put down by the Bareilly Brigade to protect their right flank. The 41 Dogras placed four Maxim guns to fire along the river bed and reported:

> When the artillery bombardment opened up a most effective rifle and machine gun fire was kept up in carefully controlled bursts which succeeded in preventing any movement on the in support of the troops who were being attacked by the Garwhal Brigade, on his right and practically kept down his fire to a negligible quantity.[27]

Not just that the Bareilly Brigade reported suppression of all the MG08 fire in that area, but that the 1/39 Garwhal Rifles were able to get through uncut wire in the face of machine gun fire also strongly suggests 'controlled bursts' of fire rather than the much heavier defensive fire that the 2 Middlesex had encountered further north.

Furthermore, the 2/3 Gurkhas also reported during the morning that 'orders were now received on no account was an advance to be made from the Smith-Dorrien Line'.[28] Infantry, to whom the front might appear open and advanceable, had no idea how much small arms fire might be in front or to the side of them. The infantry would rarely be told what was going on throughout the war, simply ordered 'on no account is an advance to be made' into this unseen machine gun fire. The following battalions of the Indian Corps also pushed on and by 10:00 they too held most of their objectives, except for some of the right flank. At around 10:30, 'attention was turned to the triangle 24-33-H lying between the attacks of the two Corps, and by 13:30 this area was in our hands'.[29] Once done, Lodwick packed his guns and moved forward to take up defensive positions.



Line captured morning 10 March 1915 compared to objectives (Author).

That friendly fire might be formally unreported but dealt with at lower levels is not just possible but overwhelmingly likely in cultures where denial is always the first response. When the 1 Grenadier Guards complained they had been shelled by a battery of 6" Howitzers on 12 March, some 500 yards from the nearest enemy target, Rawlinson's GSO1 Brig Gen Dallas, demanded 'What evidence is there that heavy shells which dropped persistently on rear of and into our own trenches were those of our own guns?'.[30]

It was an extraordinarily naive question and demonstrative of someone who had not spent much time in the front line. Moreover, the Guards had very good reasons for believing it to be one of their own batteries, not the least being it lifted with the rest of the barrage at precisely 09:40.[31] This astonishing accusation was quietly dropped at the instigation of Rawlinson, but was followed by another, more revealing, memo about how blame substituted for learning. Dallas wrote demanding to know which battery of the 7 Div CRA had not just caused casualties, but whose 'highly inaccurate fire' was 'largely responsible for the failure of the second attack on the MOULIN de PIETRE'.[32]

The attacks stumbled in the ensuing days for the same reasons as why the massive breakthrough at Amiens broke down 9 and 10 August 1918, insufficient machine gun covering fire put in ahead of the advance. Convenient scapegoats to blame rather than a methodical breakdown of what had actually worked and what had not made tactical learning almost impossible in the BEF in 1915. Astonishingly, both Haig and Rawlinson would be rewarded by promotions without either understanding why they had captured Neuve Chapelle with initial success, nor why they subsequently failed in follow up operations.

Rawlinson at IV Corps was confident in the analysis of the battle, drawing the conclusion. 'The assault took place 08:50am and was very successful, except on the left where the artillery bombardment had not been effective, and the wire had not been cut'.[33]

5 Division at Hill 60 - 17 April 1915

Elsewhere machine guns were grouped but scarcely reported. In the construction of the substantial Comines-Ypres Railway, three man-made spoil heaps became the highest features in the area. Specifically, Hill 60 and the Caterpillar, held by the Germans, and the Dump held by the British. 13 Brigade was tasked with the capture of Hill 60, while the 15 Brigade was tasked with giving covering fire for the assault 'by keeping down the fire from the trenches east of it'. The attacking battalions would be permitted to take only six of their 16 guns forward, the rest put under the authority of Captain Reginald Woods, BMGO of the 15 Brigade. To this, the 4 Motor Machine Gun Battery (six guns), were added and Woods placed some 29 guns on the left and right flanks of the attack and, importantly, on 'The Dump', the highest point held by them and only 350 yards from Hill 60.[34] Direct overhead covering fire in large volumes could be given from here onto the forward slope defences as the infantry approached, preventing the Germans from firing on them. The unnaturally steep banks of Hill 60 giving very favourable conditions for safe direct overhead fire. The Official Historian recorded the attack was made on the firing of two pairs of mines and one single mine exploded at ten second intervals and the 'crash of bombardment' of numerous artillery and that 'the surprise was complete' in taking the hill with only seven casualties.[35] 5 Division itself would also credit the mines as the instrument of success.[36]

The use of covering machine gun fire was largely ignored in reports on operations. The 15 Brigade diary entry for 17 April simply noting, 'the fire of 29 other machine guns was arranged for by Captain Wood, BMGO, with splendid results'.[37] It was only a brief success however, as Hill 60 changed hands several times after.

Aubers Ridge - 9 May 1915

First Army Chief Sir Douglas Haig tried to replicate much of what had occurred at Neuve Chapelle, including a pincer movement between the IV and Indian Corps attacks. The Official Historian described the thinking:

> The confidence with which the new battle was undertaken on the British side was due in great measure to the success of the early stages of the battle of Neuve Chappelle in the ease with which the German front defences had been overrun.[38]

Furthermore, they were confident they now understood the battlefield, as some officers put it, 'This should be Neuve Chapelle over again, and much more successful because we have learnt its lessons and shall know what to avoid this time'.[39]

This time however, there would be no great grouping of machine guns. Haig seemingly understanding the importance of covering fire, but unwilling to dedicate the resources to do so, outlining his thinking in April:

> Fire of our machine guns must be developed to the fullest extent to keep down the enemy's rifle and machine gun fire, even should his guns and infantry not be accurately located. A continuous fire should be directed on his front and flanks by pairs of guns firing alternately, especially during the assault and when our own infantry is on the move subsequently. A continuous fire of this kind will have far more effect than short bursts of fire at intervals.[40]

The Indians, having fired on their own men at Neuve Chapelle, were reluctant to even do that. Machine gun covering fire for this attack would be almost non-existent.

Haig confidently also declared:

> The best means of knocking out the machine gun is, of course, with artillery, and every endeavour should be made to get 18 and 13 pounder guns by hand if necessary and bring them into action at close range with high explosive shell.[41]

The attack, however, ran into 'devastating fire of machine guns' and was over within minutes. Men of the 25 Brigade, retiring with German prisoners, were fired on by machine guns in the belief it was a counterattack. Their commander, Brig Gen Arthur Lowry Cole CB DSO (KIA 9/5/15), among the over 11,000 casualties on the day.

Again, success or failure would be attributed to the artillery, 'It was evident that for the most part the bombardment had completely failed in its primary task, the neutralization of the enemy's fire power'.[42] Yet the artillery themselves were stating they could not hit them, 'One battery commander, who spent the whole day in the front trenches, reported that he failed to discover the position of a single machine gun'.[43] The problem being, 'As it required a direct hit from a high explosive shell close to the loophole to put a gun out of action, practically all of them remained intact'.[44] Pairs of guns were no match for the 22 MG08s of the 57IR, 55IR and 15IR on the front of the attack, who exerted complete small

arms fire superiority over the British, unable to even bring back survivors from No Man's Land.[45]

Haig, on hearing the reports of failure 'felt inclined to repeat the whole operation'. His failings would be covered up by Sir John French, who arranged for the Times to blame the lack of high-explosive shells as the cause of failure for Aubers Ridge, precipitating the political scandal known as the Shell Crisis of 1915.[46]

The first nine months of the war should have revealed several key learnings, specifically:

1. Adding artillery did not result in a significant rise in suppression of machine gun fire.
2. Machine guns were much better at suppressing other machine guns than artillery.

The seeds of failure for 1 July 1916 were sown in a culture that was unable to learn from its mistakes and that such flaws were no great impediment to advancement in the British Army. Much like CS Forester's fictitious General Curzon, both Haig and Rawlinson would be promoted well beyond their modest records, not because they had any real insight into the problems, but because they would persist. Forester compared their behaviour to that of a primitive culture, accustomed only to nails, encountering their first screw. The only conceivable solution was to simply apply more and more force to the problem, blind to all alternatives.[47] Some had noticed the correlation between covering small arms fire and success, but they were few and far between and others would have to work things out for themselves.

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A Tale of Two Landser

David T Zabecki

Gustav Schweigler (1890-1964) and Ernst Lehmann (1889-1969) were my wife's grandfathers. They were both farmers in the Markgräflerland, that part of the former Grand Duchy of Baden that today constitutes the far southwest corner of Germany. They both were called up in early August 1914 and then served on the Western Front for the subsequent 51 months of the war. Between the two, they participated in most of the major battles on the Western Front, with the exceptions of the Marne in 1914, the Somme in 1916 and the Operation MICHAEL offensive in 1918. Gustav was a foot artilleryman (heavy artillery), and Ernst was a field artilleryman. Both were awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class. Gustav also was awarded the Wound Badge.

We have both primary and secondary sources of information about their wartime experiences. For Gustav we have a summary listing of the battles he was credited with fighting in. We also have a detailed published history of Foot Artillery Battalion 35, which was his unit during the last two years of the war. For Ernst, we have his complete *Militärpaß* that covers from when he was first drafted in October 1909 to his final demobilisation in February 1919. We also have a diary that he kept in a small pocket-sized notebook. Unfortunately, the diary only runs through the early days of January 1915, when the notebook was filled up. Did he start another one that is now lost? We do not know. It is plausible, however, that he decided not to continue keeping a diary because it was strictly forbidden for front line troops to do so.

Although Gustav and Ernst lived only a few miles apart, we have no evidence, no family traditions, that they knew each other before the Great War, or even during the inter-war years. After the Second World War, Gustav's younger son married Ernst's older daughter.

Gustav Schweigler

Gustav 2-Gefreiter Gustav Schweigler in Dress Uniform 1912 (Author).

22-year-old Gustav Schweigler was called up for his two-year military service on 11 October 1910. He was assigned to the 7th Battery, Baden Foot Artillery Regiment 14, headquartered in Strassburg. The regiment was the heavy artillery component of the XIV Army Corps, which constituted the army of the Grand Duchy of Baden that had been integrated into the Prussian Army command structure in 1871. The 7th Battery was armed with the 15cm heavy field howitzer 02. In September 1912 Gustav was released from the standing army as a *Gefreiter* and assigned to the Landwehr for a seven-year commitment.

Germany mobilised on 1 August 1914. Four days later, Gustav was called up. He was assigned to the Seventh Army's Foot Artillery Ammunition Column 6, one of eight such field army-level formations in the German Army. At the start of the war the army-level foot artillery ammunition columns had the mission of supplying all foot artillery batteries that were not equipped with their own draft horses. In August 1914, Baden Foot Artillery Regiment 14 was the Seventh Army's only heavy artillery. As the war progressed, and more foot artillery units were assigned draft horses along with their own dedicated ammunition columns, the army-level columns were phased out by late 1916.

The southernmost of the German field armies, the Seventh Army, was from the start of the war under the operational control of the Sixth Army to its north, commanded by Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria. While part of Seventh Army fought against the French advance into southern Alsace at the Battle of Mulhouse (7–10, 14–26 August 1914), most of Seventh Army supported Sixth Army during the August-September battles in Lorraine. Gustav was credited with participation in the following battles:

16-17 August 1914	Battle of Saarbourg
24 August 1914	Battle of Taconville
24-26 August 1914	Battle of Mortagne (Trouée de Charmes)
4-13 September 1914	Battle of Lunéville (Grand Couronné)

In accordance with their Plan XVII, the French on 14 August launched a major attack into Lorraine and northern Alsace, with Germany as the ultimate objective. The Germans repulsed them at Saarbourg with heavy casualties. On 24 September the Germans launched a counteroffensive in the direction of Trouée de Charmes. The French stopped the German attack, forcing Rupprecht to order a withdrawal on 26 August. After regrouping, the Germans attacked again on 4 September at Grand Couronné with the intention of capturing Nancy. The French defences held, and Rupprecht, on 13 September, was forced to suspend offensive operations. The front line in Lorraine remained relatively stable for the next four years. The Sixth and Seventh Armies suffered 136,500 casualties in Lorraine and Alsace between 14 August and 13 September. After the French and the British stopped the German invasion short of Paris at the First Battle of the Marne (5–12 September), both sides between 17 September and 19 October attempted repeatedly to outflank each other to the north in a series of manoeuvres towards Europe's northern coast known as 'The Race to the Sea'. In the process, the Germans shifted Sixth Army and large elements of Seventh

Gustav Gefreiter Gustav Schweigler in Feldgrau Uniform 1912 (Author).

Army to their northern flank. Sixth Army took up a position in the line to the south of Germany's northernmost Fourth Army. Heavy artillery, by that point, had become such a critical component of fighting the war that the Germans started attaching and cross-attaching Foot Artillery battalions and even individual batteries wherever the tactical situation required.

During the apocalyptic First Battle of Ypres (19 October – 22 November) Gustav's Ammunition Column 6 supported the Fourth Army's XXVI Reserve Corps during the 21-24 October attacks against a French Territorial unit and the British IV Corps at Poekapelle, Langemarck, and Zuidschote; and on 29 October supported XXIII Reserve Corps defending against British I Corps' attack to retake Bixschoote. By the end of the First Battle of Ypres the Germans had taken 80,000 casualties; the British, French and Belgians a combined total of 159,000.

1st Battery 21cm firing ca. 1917 Gustav Schweigler on the far left shielding his ears (Author).

Gustav's Ammunition Column 6 supported Third Army during the Second Battle of Champagne (25 September – 6 November 1915). At the start of the attack only seven German divisions with a combined strength of around 160,000 faced 27 French divisions with some 450,000. Before the end of September, the German High Command (OHL) committed reserves to increase the defender's strength to 12 divisions and 220,000 troops. During that period heavy artillery reinforcements, including Ammunition Column 6, were shifted south from the Fourth Army sector. Throughout October the Germans continued to commit more reinforcements to the battle, eventually preventing the French from breaking through. The battle cost the Germans 72,000 casualties: the French 145,000.

The Battle of Verdun (21 February – 18 December 1916) was the largest protracted artillery duel of the First World War to that point. The Germans massed 1,200 guns at Verdun, two-thirds of which were heavy or super heavy. By attacking towards Verdun, the German Fifth Army attempted to draw as many French troops as possible into an artillery killing zone. But instead of attacking simultaneously down both banks of the Meuse River, the initial attack was launched on the east bank only. After some early success the German advance on the east bank stalled. On 6 March the Germans expanded the offensive by attacking with two corps on the west bank. In preparation, they brought in 25 heavy artillery batteries from other sectors of the front, including a battery from Foot Artillery Regiment 14 and Gustav's Ammunition Column 6. The battle to capture the key hilltops of le Mort Homme and Côte 304 was one of the bloodiest phases of the campaign. After those two positions fell on 11 March, much of the German heavy artillery repositioned to nearby Côte 265 but was then subjected to intensive counterfire by the French artillery. To secure their initial gains on the west bank, the Germans continued attacking from 11 March to 9 April. Gustav was wounded on 28 March by shell fragmentation from French counterfire. He was awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class during the battle.

We have no record of how long Gustav was in hospital. Nor do we know if upon his release he returned to Ammunition Column 6, as would have been the standard procedure in the German Army. By the end of 1916 all the field army-level ammunition columns had been phased out and the soldiers assigned elsewhere. Early in 1917 Gustav was assigned as an *Unteroffizier* to the 1st Battery, Foot Artillery Battalion 35, Thuringian Foot Artillery Regiment 18. The 35th Battalion supported X Reserve Corps, which was also on the west bank of the Meuse north of Verdun.

Foot Artillery Battalion 35 was commanded by Captain Joachim Bernet. Through all of 1917 and until March 1918 the 1st Battery was commanded by Reserve Lieutenant Kolbe; and from then until the end of the war by Reserve Lieutenant Lattmann. Throughout the period 1917 – 1918 1st Battery had an average strength of eight officers, 170 men and 115 horses. In four years of war 1st Battery fired 24,526 rounds of 21cm. It had seven guns destroyed by enemy fire, and three captured.

Foot Artillery Battalion 35 had three firing batteries of four guns each. They were armed with the new 21cm *lange Mörser 16*, which despite the name was actually a heavy howitzer. The gun was designed by Krupp in 1915 and introduced in 1916. It was based on the earlier 21cm *Mörser 10* but had a longer barrel, a gun shield and other refinements. The gun weighed 6,690 pounds in battery. It broke down into two loads for transport and had a maximin range of 11,100 yards. A trained crew could fire one to two rounds per minute. It fired four types of shells:

- The 21cm Gr.16 high explosive shell, weighing 249 pounds.
- The 21cm Gr.18 Be concrete-piercing shell, weighing 268 pounds.
- The 21cm Gr.96 Green Cross 2 gas shell (non-persistent, lethal), weighing 257 pounds.
- The 21cm Gr.96 Yellow Cross gas shell (persistent, lethal), weighing 257 pounds.

In March 1917, Foot Artillery Battalion 35 deployed by rail, north to Fourth Army's sector in Flanders. On 11 April, 1st Battery occupied a firing position in the Wytschaete-Messines Salient, three miles south of Ypres. Their mission was to support the XIX Army Corps, operating as 'Group Wytschaete.' On 21 May, 2,100 guns of the British Second Army started a 17-day bombardment of the German positions. The British infantry attacked on 7 June, eliminating the salient by 14 June. The battle cost the Germans 48,000 casualties.

Battalion 35 temporarily shifted to the extreme northern end of the German line in support of the Naval Corps, which had the mission of defending against anticipated Allied amphibious landings. 1st Battery went into position near Brugge. On 13 July 1st Battery shifted back to the south to Artoishoek, nine miles east of Ypres and just north of Menin. Four days later British artillery began a 14-day preparatory bombardment starting the Third Battle of Ypres – also known as the battle of Passchendaele. During that preparatory bombardment 3,168 British guns fired 4.3 million rounds against the German positions. Foot Artillery Battalion 35 returned fire with HE and Green Cross gas. On the first day of the Allied bombardment five 1st Battery gunners were wounded. On 11 August the battalion fired in support of a German counterattack which failed to prevent the British from reaching the edge of Polygon Wood. The following day 1st Battery destroyed a forward British battery with counterfire. On 16 August 1st Battery fired in support of a counterattack by five regiments during Battle of Langemarck.

From 13-19 September 1st Battery was subjected to 500-600 rounds of counterfire per day, destroying and burning the battery position. Although heavily gassed, the battery still managed to fire 228 rounds during the period. By 20 September 1st Battery had only one operational but heavily damaged gun. The 1st and 3rd Batteries were no longer capable of firing and were forced to evacuate their positions. After a day of very arduous work, the 1st Battery gunners finally made their remaining but heavily damaged gun mobile for transport.

Foot Artillery Battalion 35 was pulled back to Fourth Army reserve on 4 October, and further to OHL reserve near Namur on 22 October. So far in the battle 1st Battery had suffered three dead and 38 wounded, and had fired 5,378 rounds. On 29 October 1st Battery moved back to the north to support the 2nd Naval Division. Although there was little tactical action on this sector of the front, the artillery batteries on both sides engaged in long-running counterfire duels with each other. On 11 November 1st Battery lost one gun to enemy fire. It was hit while the crew was loading a round, killing two gunners, wounding three seriously and destroying the gun's fire controls.

Through to the end of March 1918 Foot Artillery Battalion 35 remained on the far northern flank in support of the Naval Corps. Between 3 and 25 March 1st Battery was in position at Kortemark, 15 miles south of Brugge and 15 miles from the coast. During that period the battery fired 629 rounds, including Yellow Cross gas against Allied artillery positions.

Gustav 8-Sergeant Gustav Schweigler's War Chronicle (Author).

After Germany's 26 March Operation MICHAEL offensive on both sides of St Quentin failed, Foot Artillery Battalion 35 again shifted to the south as part of the fire support for the follow-on Operation GEORGETTE aimed at Hasbrouck. On 2 April 1st Battery went into position at Reckem, a mile southeast of Menin in support of Fourth Army's X Reserve Corps. On 10 April 1st Battery fired 686 rounds against British batteries and strong points east of Wytschaete. The following day the battery established a forward observation post near Messines.

Early on 17 April 1st Battery's 1st and 2nd Gun Sections displaced forward west of Messines to support the 17th Reserve Division during the unsuccessful attack to capture the key high ground of Mont Kemmel. Soon after the British beat off that attack, they were replaced on Mont Kemmel by newly arriving French reinforcements. The Germans attacked again on 25 April, with 1st Battery firing 430 rounds of HE and Green and Yellow Cross gas in support of 19th Reserve Division. The Germans took the hill the next day. Three days later 1st Battery fired in support of the 3rd Guards Division's successful attack on Scherpenberg hill, two miles northwest of Mont Kemmel. That was the high-water mark of Operation GEORGETTE, which proved to be, like Operation MICHAEL, an operational failure. GEORGETE cost the Germans between 86,000 and 109,300 casualties.

On 30 May 1st Battery again displaced back to the north. It remained in the Naval Corps sector until late August. During the initial planning for the abortive Operation HAGEN, the Naval Corps was supposed to make a supporting attack towards Dixmuide. HAGEN was the extensively planned but never launched offensive designed to push the BEF off the Continent. Gustav was promoted to Sergeant on 20 July 1918.

After the final German offensive of the war failed at the Marne River on 18 July, Operation HAGEN was cancelled. The successful British attack at Amiens on 8 August marked the start of the war's final 'Hundred Days', with the Allies constantly pushing the Germans back. On 23 August Foot Artillery Battalion 35 moved back down to Fourth Army's sector. On 1 September the battery fired 150 rounds against a British battery at Pilckem. On 15 September Allied aircraft hit the battery with 12 bombs. Using flash ranging to adjust the fire, 1st Battery on 26 September fired against a British battery on the Bossuit-Kortrijk Canal, which ran south from the Lys River.

Two days later, the British Second and French Sixth Armies launched the northernmost of the four major thrusts of the final Allied General Offensive. Three of 1st Battery's four howitzers were overrun and 11 gunners taken prisoner. The survivors withdrew to Rollegem-Kapelle (Ledegem). On 7 October 1st Battery drew replacement guns at Lichtervelde, some 18 miles north of Menin. During the Battle of Courtrai, between Menin and Roulers on 14-18 October, the Germans lost 550 artillery pieces. Under heavy pressure, 1st Battery was unable to withdraw in good order. Eight horses were killed and the Allied infantry got to within 50 metres in front of their guns. Two howitzers slid into a ditch while attempting to withdraw. Nonetheless, 1st Battery managed to fire 240 rounds during the battle. On 29 October Gustav was hospitalised temporarily for illness.

1st Battery was pushed back across the Scheldt on 1 November and assumed a firing position on the east side of the river in Merelbeke, just south of Ghent. Starting at 05:30 on 10 November, the battery was subjected to heavy drumfire a little more than 30 hours before the Armistice went into effect at noon (German time) the following day. Since 1 November 1st Battery had managed to fire only 45 rounds.

Two days after the Armistice went into effect Foot Artillery Battalion 35 started withdrawing east towards the German border. On 21 November the battalion crossed into Germany at Laurensberg, two miles north of Aachen. Five days after that they crossed the Rhine at Duisburg and turned north. On 1 December the battalion reached its demobilisation station at Steinfurt, 25 miles southwest of Osnabruck. It was officially demobilised the next day. On 20-21 December the demobilised troops departed for their homes from the rail stations at Osnabruck, Hamlen and Göttingen. After 51 months of war, Sergeant Gustav Schweigler started his long journey home to South Baden.

Ernst Lehmann

Gefreiter Ernst Lehmann ca. 1914 (Author).

22-year-old Ernst Lehmann was called up for his two-year military service on 13 October 1909. He was assigned to the 4th Battery, Field Artillery Regiment 76 (5th Baden). It was a horse-drawn unit and Ernst was trained as a driver of a mounted gun section. A field gun was drawn by a team of six horses, controlled by three drivers who rode the three left-hand horses. Each driver was also responsible for controlling the unmounted horse to his right. It was a job that required skill, intensive training and precision teamwork. It was also a dangerous job, especially in the early years of the war when field guns were expected to go into battery as close to the front lines as possible. Since the towed gun faced to the rear, all four of the battery's gun sections in unison had to rapidly approach the firing point in the direction of the enemy and then turn 180 degrees before dismounting and emplacing the guns pointing in the right direction. During this manoeuvre the drivers and the horses were prime targets. Ernst was often the driver of the middle team.

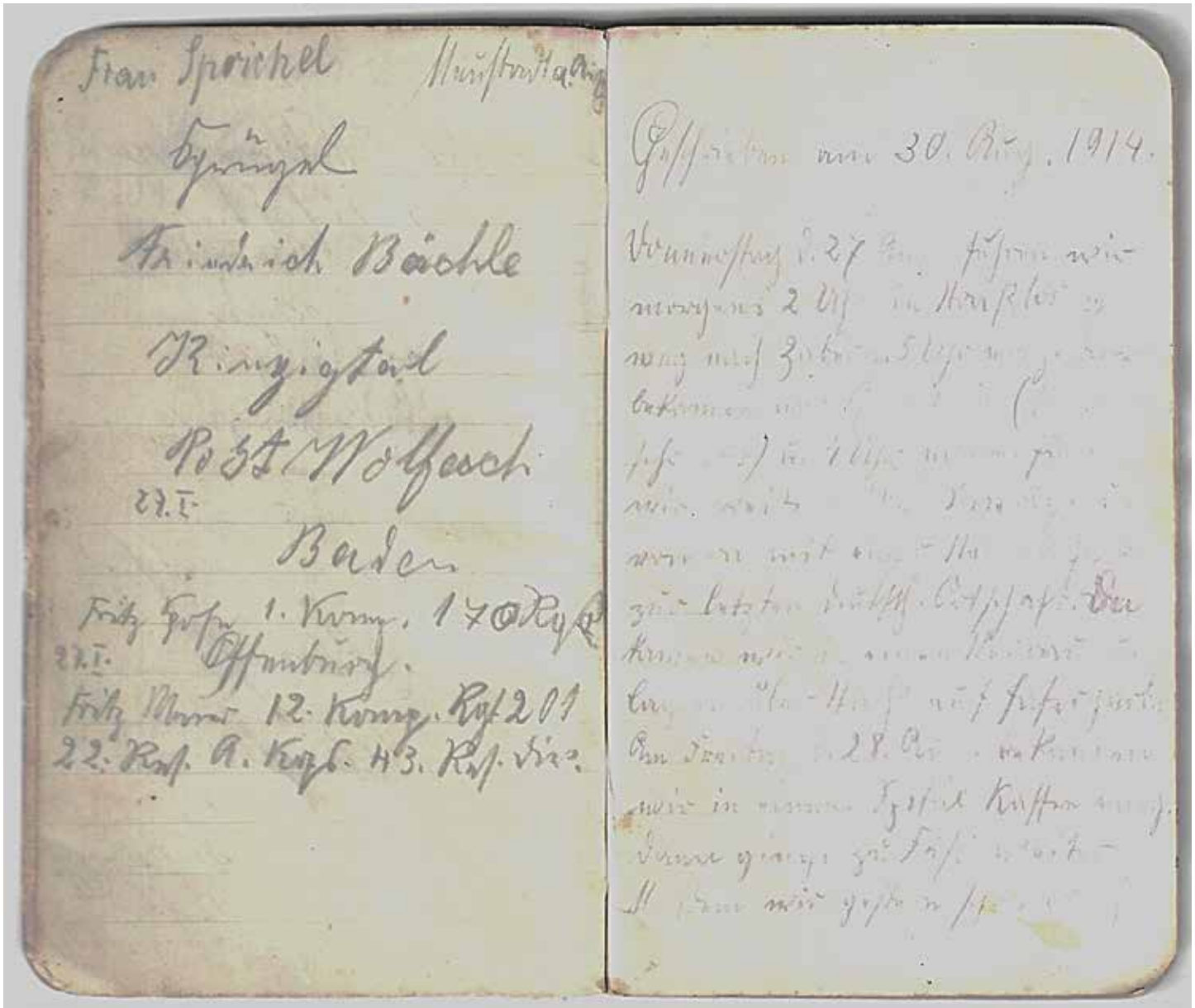
On 17 September 1911, Ernst was released as a *Gefreiter* and assigned to the Landwehr for a seven-year commitment. In January 1914, seven months before the start of mobilisation, Ernst was war-traced to the 3rd Battery, Field Artillery Regiment 66 (4th Baden). He was mobilised with that unit on 3 August 1914. The regiment was armed with the 7.7cm Field Gun 96 n/A, which had a range of 7,800 metres. It fired HE, shrapnel and star (illumination) rounds. After late 1915 the gun also fired Blue Cross (lethal/non-persistent), Green Cross (non-lethal/non-persistent) and Yellow Cross (lethal/persistent) gas shells.

At the start of the war German field artillery batteries had six guns. Early on this was reduced to four, with the two eliminated guns used to equip newly raised batteries. Until the end of the war standard field batteries also had an ammunition wagon supporting each of the four guns. The typical strength of a 7.7cm battery was six officers, 21 NCOs, 64 gunners, and 45 drivers and 180 horses. 66th Field Artillery had garrisons in Lahr, Baden and Neubreisach in Alsace (now Neuf Breisach, France). The regiment was part of the 39th Field Artillery Brigade, 39th Infantry Division, XV Army Corps, Seventh Army.

Six days after he was mobilised, Ernst was in combat. The French VII Corps crossed the Alsatian border and occupied Mulhouse on 7 August. Two days later XV Corps counterattacked and pushed the French back to into the Vosges Mountains. Most of Seventh Army's forces were then shifted 90 miles to the north to support Sixth Army during the fighting in Lorraine and at Nancy, from 4 – 13 September.

On 5 September Ernst wrote in his diary,

> On Saturday morning the cannons continued to boom. Suddenly, around 8 o'clock, the shells hit about 200 to 300 metres north of us. The horses were immediately made ready. We went to the battery, or rather to the limbers, which were hidden behind a small pine forest on a slope. Around midday, we again came under fire here. Fortunately, the shells flew over us (only about 10 to 20 metres high) and hit a pine forest to the north of us. The earth flew up as high as a church steeple. Only 300 metres from us on a hill were six to eight piles of sheaves. To our delight we saw that the French were aiming their guns at these piles. One of these 'straw guns' was hit directly and blown far apart. French heavy artillery was doing the firing. After about 50 rounds had whistled over us, the French stopped firing and were then thrown back by our artillery, which was firing from a concealed position.



Ernst Lehmann's diary 30 Aug 1914 (Author).

The Germans suffered some 30,000 casualties during the Battle of Nancy.

After the German First and Second Armies started retreating from the Marne on 9 September, XV Corps was in the vanguard of Seventh Army units transported north to assume a new sector on the Aisne River. When they first loaded on the troop train, Ernst's battery was told they were going to Belgium. On 13 September Ernst wrote in his diary. 'A train with captured French and English soldiers passed by the Rote Erde station. There were about 1,400 of them. Some laughed, others made cheeky and angry faces, as we shouted at them, asking if they wanted to go to Berlin'. The battery did go through Brussels, but they did not detrain in Belgium. Instead, they were rerouted to the south and finally unloaded at St Quentin. They then started marching east along the Chemin des Dames ridge.

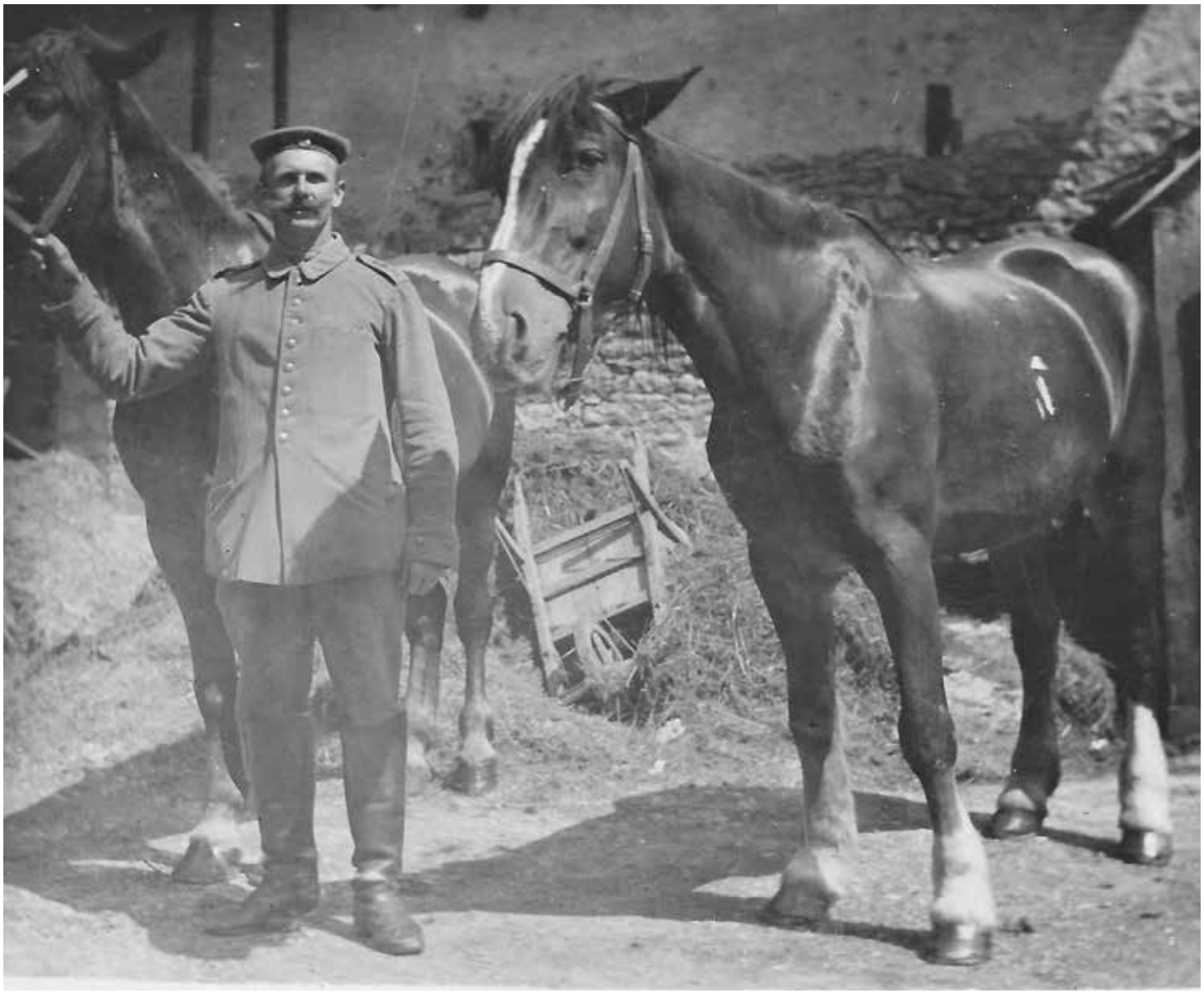
Once 39th Division arrived, the Germans counterattacked, capturing Corbeny on 14 September, and then the Craonne plateau by 19 October. On 24 September Ernst wrote in his diary:

> This morning Lieutenant Grüner had one foot shot off and the other seriously injured. Towards evening we came under fire. Sergeant Hinss and *Gefreiter* Junker were hit, as well as about 15 horses. Three had to be shot immediately and two on Friday. Cannonier Wagner was wounded in the head. *Gefreiter* Keller got his foot caught under a wagon. *Gefreiter* Wehrle shot himself in the foot. If he did it intentionally, he will be punished. The projectile that hit the horses exploded about six paces from me. When I heard it, I threw myself on the ground, which is the best thing to do in this case. We withdrew into a ravine where we stayed overnight.

At 18:30 on 2 October Ernst's battery traded fire with a battery of four British heavy guns. They knocked out two of those guns, but they also lost their Number 1 Gun Section when it took a direct hit, killing the section chief. Two days later Ernst recorded in his diary:

> Last night there was pretty heavy rifle fire on the right wing from about 1 to 3 am. The French tried to storm one of our batteries. Our infantry, which was positioned with machine guns in front of our battalion, let them get very close before opening fire. When it was over 400 to 500 dead Frenchmen covered the battlefield.

During the First Battle of the Aisne the Germans sustained approximately 150,000 casualties.



Gefreiter Ernst Lehmann ca. 1916 (Author).

In late October XV Army Corps was reassigned to Sixth Army and shifted to Flanders, taking up positions in the Wytschaete sector. In late November XV Army Corps was further reassigned to Fourth Army. During the last three months of 1914 Ernst was credited with participation in the battles and dates as noted in his *Militärpaβ*:

27 – 30 October 1914	Battle of the Yser
30 October – 11 November	First Battle of Ypres
11 November 1914	The Storming of Hill 60 (a key piece of high ground for observation purposes).
1 – 12 December 1914	Trench Warfare on the Yser.

From 18 – 28 December Artillery Regiment 66 moved from Ghent, through Brussels and Namur, to Liège. In one of the last entries in his diary he wrote, '09:30 hours. Here we get a good lunch and a Christmas present from the Red Cross'. By the end of 1914 the German Army was expanding rapidly, raising units from the Reserve and the Landwehr. To provide some stiffening for the green units, selected numbers of soldiers were cross transferred from veteran units. This was especially necessary in a branch like the artillery that required highly trained specialists. Field Artillery Regiment 66 formed a cadre battery designated Landwehr Battery 66, to which Ernst was assigned.

Artillery Regiment 66 remained in Flanders throughout most of 1915. Landwehr Battery 66 detached from the regiment and started moving back to southern Germany in early January, finally arriving at the Field Artillery Regiment 66 home garrison at Neubreisach. When the 8th Landwehr Division was formed in February 1915, Ernst and his battery were detached to that division. Initially it was the division's sole artillery unit. By mid-1915 the artillery component of the new division had expanded to include the newly formed Landwehr Field Artillery Regiment 8. Ernst's Landwehr Battery 66 was reassigned to the regiment as its 5th Battery. Ernst remained with the battery until the end of the war.

Ernst spent most of 1915 and 1916 in Upper Alsace. He was credited with participation in the Battle of Ammerzweiler on 11 July 1915, and with 16 separate engagements around Obersept (now Seppois-le-Haut, France) near Altkirch between 13 February and 21 March 1916. The front lines ran right through the middle of the town, which was completely destroyed. In January 1917, 8th Landwehr Division was withdrawn from Alsace and sent north to the Meuse, where it took over the sector west of Fresnes-en-Woëvre. It came under the newly formed 57th Corps (zbV) – *zur besonderen Verwendung* (for Special Use). The corps was part of Army Group Duke Albrecht's Army Detachment C. During all of 1917 and the start of 1918 8th Landwehr Division engaged in the protracted but low-level trench fighting between the Meuse and the Mosel.

In February 1918 Army Detachment C was transferred to Army Group Gallwitz, operating directly east of Verdun. On 20 April 1918, 8th Landwehr Field Artillery fired in support of a 3,000-strong German trench raid at Seichprey, near the southern shoulder of the St Mihiel salient. That sector was held by the US 26th Division's 102nd Infantry Regiment, which was undergoing its initial orientation period in the front lines. It was the first major American engagement of the war. The Americans were caught completely by surprise, suffering 650 dead or wounded, and 100 taken prisoner.

During the last six months of the war German artillery batteries were routinely detached from their parent units and committed as reinforcements at critical points during both offensive and defensive operations. According to Ernst's *Militärpaβ*, his 5th Battery, 8th Landwehr Field Artillery Regiment was committed in numerous actions between Noyon and St Mihiel from May to September 1918. These actions included the final three of the five Ludendorff Offensives; the fighting withdrawal from the Marne back to the Chemin des Dames following the 18 July 1918 Allied counter-offensive, and the final Allied General Offensive that started on 26 September 1918. Between 27 May and 7 August, the final three Ludendorff Offensives and the Allied counter-offensive cost the Germans 265,000 casualties.

13 – 26 May 1918	Positional battles north of the Ailette River and the Chemin des Dames Ridge. This was the German line of departure for Operation BLUCHER.
27 May 1918	Storming of the heights of Chemin des Dames, supported by the fire of 5,263 German guns.
27 – 31 May1918	Battles between Soissons and Reims.
1 – 8 June 1918	Fighting on the Avre and at Montdidier and Noyon.
9 – 13 June 1918	Battle of Noyon (Operation GNIENSAU), supported by 2,276 German guns.
14 – 19 June 1918	Fighting between the Avre and the Meuse.
20 – 25 June 1918	Positional battles between the Oise and the Marne.
26 June – 14 July 1918	Positional battles between the Aisne and the Marne.
15 – 17 July 1918	Battle of the Marne and in Champagne (Operation MARNESCHUTZ-REIMS), the final German offensive of the war, supported by 6,353 German guns.
18 – 25 July 1918	Defensive battles between Soissons and Reims.
26 July – 3 August 1918	Mobile defensive battle between the Marne and the Vesle.
4 – 6 August 1918	Positional battles on the Vesle.
7 August – 11 Sep 1918	Positional battles between the Meuse and the Mosel, and in front of Verdun.

On 12 September 1918 US First Army launched its first major offensive of the war at St Mihiel. 8th Landwehr Division was on the far northwest shoulder of the salient near Haudiomont, opposing the French 4th Infantry Division under the operational control of US V Corps. During the battle the Germans lost 22,500 casualties and 450 guns. After the large salient was reduced by 16 September, 8th Landwehr Division withdrew to the east and remained in the Woëvre plain until the second week in October.

On 26 September the US First Army launched the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the first of the four major thrusts of the Allied General Offensive. Aiming north towards the key German rail hub at Sedan, the American right flank was anchored on the Meuse River. High bluffs ran along the east bank of the Meuse. During the last full month of the war Ernst's 8th Landwehr Field Artillery, along with many other German artillery units, occupied firing positions on the Meuse bluffs, shooting into the American right flank.

When the Armistice went into effect on 11 November 1918, 8th Landwehr Division was three miles north of Thiaucourt-Regniéville. Ernst marched back to southwest Germany with his regiment and was released from duty on 27 December 1918. He was mustered out of service officially at Loerrach, Germany on 7 February 1919. For his service he was awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class and the Duchy of Baden Silver War Service Medal.

Epilogue

Marlies Schweigler with Ernst Lehmann 1954 (Author).

After the war Gustav and Ernst returned to their farms in South Baden. They both married in the early 1920s. Gustav had two sons; Ernst, two daughters. Both of Gustav's sons served in the Wehrmacht during the Second World War. Older son Maximilian (1921-1943) was killed in action near Leningrad. Younger son Fritz (1924-2018) was severely wounded at Anzio and captured by the Americans. Evacuated to a prison hospital in North Africa, he eventually spent the rest of the war as a PoW picking cotton at Camp McKane in Mississippi. At the end of the war, he was transferred to a PoW transit camp in the United Kingdom. He finally got home to Binzen, Germany in 1947. In 1952 he married Ernst's eldest daughter Margrit (1931-2019). Gustav and Ernst's first grandchild, Marlies Schweigler, was born in 1953.

Marlies Schweigler and then-Colonel David Zabecki, 2001 (Author).

Fritz took over management of the family farm. He also served as the mayor of the village of Binzen from 1956 to 1989. The Schweigler farm had always produced grapes and made their own wine. As the 1950s progressed, viticulture became an increasingly major part of the operation, with the family producing and bottling Baden wines under their own label. Today, under the direction of Gustav's grandson Dieter, great grandson Stefan Schweigler and their families, *Wein und Sektgut Schweigler* continues to produce award-winning regional wines.

Ernst Lehmann working the harvest, mid-1950s (Author).

In one of history's little tricks, Marlies Schweigler married an American officer. Adding another twist to the story, in November 1918 when Ernst Lehman was on the high ground above the Meuse firing into the American right flank, my grandfather, Private Oscar Luthgren, US 347th Infantry, was in the target zone. Fortunately for our son, Jonathan Zabecki, his German and American great grandfathers never met professionally in 1918.

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‘Unmanly, Absolutely Contemptible’?

The motivations of absolutist conscientious objectors examined

Frances Hurd

*Some absolutist conscientious objectors: top row left to right: Henry William Firth (by kind permission of the Men Who Said No Website, https://www.menwhosaidno.org/index.html); Arthur Amos Birkby (by kind permission of Avril Ravenscroft); Stephen Clarke Allonby (also the Men Who Said No Website, https://www.menwhosaidno.org/index.html); bottom row left to right: Ernest Yeoman Renton (by kind permission of B.W. Schultz, https://truthhistory.blogspot.com); Robert Fincham (*The Horticultural Journal, *31 December 1951); Charles Rodgers (by kind permission of Gillian Rodgers).*

Introduction

When the Military Service Act (MSA) was being debated in Parliament, the government had already recognised that some exemptions from conscription would be needed for men working in vital industries such as farming. However, a group of MPs argued successfully for an additional ‘conscience clause’, extending exemption to men who demonstrated a principled objection to military service.[1] When the MSA became law on 2 March 1916 it included provision for three different levels of exemption. *Partial exemption* enrolled men in the army to perform non-combatant tasks, for whom the Non-Combatant Corps (NCC) was created. *Alternative service* exempted men on condition that they undertook work of national importance, such as serving in one of the voluntary ambulance services. *Absolute exemption* completely absolved men from the terms of the Act.[2] The men discussed in this article all sought absolute exemption, and were consequently known as

'absolutists'. Why did they refuse to support the war effort when Britain faced such an immense challenge?

Before the war the continental powers all increased their spending on armaments and made plans for swift mobilisation in the event of war, while Britain invested heavily in a larger and better-armed navy. In reaction to this militarism, European socialists and various nonconformist denominations promoted pacifism and international brotherhood.[3] Following the outbreak of war most religious organisations and some socialists changed tack and supported the government, but the formation of the No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF) in August 1914 demonstrated that thousands of British men were still opposed to enforced military service.[4]

The March 1917 cohort

All COs were initially sent to HMP Wormwood Scrubs to be assessed by the Central Tribunal. This article will examine the motivation of the 100 COs arriving during March 1917, the first month for which a prison register survives.[5] A CO's motivation played a major role in determining what would happen to him when he appeared before the Tribunal. Assessments took only about three minutes, and were based on the men's files.[6] Men judged 'genuine COs' were offered a Home Office work camp, where they would undertake tasks deemed to be of 'national importance'; those considered 'not a CO' were sent back to the army; and those graded 'political' were sent to another prison and not offered the chance to go to a work camp, presumably because they were seen as likely troublemakers. 92 of my cohort were considered 'genuine', but 16 of these refused the work camp offer, which they believed still contributed to the war effort. They were sent to another prison. Of the remaining eight COs, three were graded 'political' and five were graded 'not a CO'. Returned to the army, they once again refused to obey any military order, were court martialed and returned to prison.[7] These percentages are similar to those given in John Rae's *Conscience and Politics* for all known COs during the war: 11 per cent refused the work camp scheme; 0.8 per cent were judged 'political', and 4.7 per cent were judged 'not genuine'.[8]

Virtually all CO's individual files were destroyed in 1921, which means that except in the case of national figures like Fenner Brockway or Stephen Hobhouse even identifying them is challenging, and the only way of discovering their motives is from statements they made when appearing before a local tribunal, or from private letters.[9] In 1916 conscientious objection was a shocking novelty, and local newspapers frequently reported on tribunals. A year later this was rare. Only 24 of my cohort even had their tribunal appearance mentioned in a newspaper, of whom only 19 had anything recorded about their motivation.[10]

Religion

16	Quaker	3	Peculiar People	1	Free Religion
13	Non Sectarian	3	Roman Catholic	1	Methodist
11	Church of England	2	Jew	1	Theosophist
10	International Bible Students' Association	2	Pentecostal	1	Unitarian
9	Baptist	2	Testimony of Jesus	1	Agnostic
7	Congregationalist	2	United Methodist	1	Atheist
6	Plymouth Brethren	2	Wesleyan Methodist	1	No religion
4	Presbyterian	1	Church of Christ		

Table 1 shows church membership of the cohort according to the prison register (Author).

Quakers (Society of Friends)

Young Quaker men were the second largest group in the NCF (after members of the Independent Labour Party (ILP)), and thus it seems unsurprising that they were also the largest group in my cohort.[11] Two came from Birmingham, where there was a well-established Quaker population, and they were court martialed together at Norton Barracks in March 1917, having been sent to the Worcestershire Regiment.

> [Joseph] Mallard said they were pacifists, believing in the brotherhood of man, and objected to military service, and had therefore declined to obey military orders. [Clarence] Pickering addressed the Court as 'Friends' and said that to obey military orders would be 'disobeying the legal orders of God'.[12]

The first Quaker prison chaplain was appointed at Wormwood Scrubs in 1916, and others soon appeared elsewhere. However, by March 1917 absolutist COs knew that claiming to be 'Quaker' on entering prison offered significant advantages.[13] Quaker Meetings were a more sociable setting than the prison chapel where attendees faced each other and shook hands, a psychological treat given the severe ban on prison communication. Most importantly, chaplains recorded all attendees and thereafter Quakers kept track of them, extremely helpful as COs were often sent around the country without notifying families. Cyril Pearce gives examples of 'Quakers for convenience': for instance, many Jews were listed as Quakers.[14] The agnostic CO, WS Chamberlain, wanted the Quaker benefits without even claiming membership when he entered Pentonville Prison:

> 'I want a Quaker Chaplain.'
> 'Are yer Church of England, then?'
> 'No! I belong to no denomination, but I want a Quaker Chaplain.'
> 'I must put yer down for something. If you ain't Church of England, I'll put you down for Quaker.'[15]

George Coppuck, listed in the register as a Quaker, may also have been so 'for convenience'. He was a member of the Brotherhood, a pacifist/socialist movement with strong links to the ILP, and after the war stood for election as a Labour MP. The military representative at Coppuck's tribunal repeatedly questioned him about his political rather than his religious views, and strongly argued against him being given conditional, let alone absolute exemption.[16]

However, even genuine Quakers had a precarious hold on freedom, as the case of Charles Lloyd demonstrates. Lloyd was granted absolute exemption in March 1916. Subsequently, however, the military representative on his local tribunal insisted that Lloyd should undertake work of 'national importance'. Lloyd refused as this meant he would be releasing another man to do military service. His absolute exemption was withdrawn, and he was handed over to the army.[17] The only 'Quaker' in the cohort found 'not a genuine CO' by the Central Tribunal was Harry Hodson, who had 'a deep conscientious objection to taking part in the war' as his mother and wife were both German and he'd spent much of his life there.[18] Hodson was returned to the army. In May 1917 he slashed his right arm with a razor and was discharged on medical grounds.[19]

Other religious denominations

Quakers did not have a monopoly on pacifism: in fact, contrary to popular belief, pacifism is not a compulsory doctrine for members of the Society of Friends, because of its emphasis on self-determination. Thomas Kennedy has demonstrated that a third of Quakers of military age joined up, mainly before the introduction of conscription.[20]

According to the prison register Valentine Stringfellow was a member of the Church of England, but he was more probably a 'free religionist', to judge from his appearance at the Yeovil tribunal:

> Chairman: You belong to no religious body.
> *Stringfellow: I am not an attender at present.*
> Why do you call yourself a Christian?
> *Because I am opposed to war … all Christians are opposed to war.*
> The conscientious objectors are very few, and they are the only Christians?
> *That is my contention.*
> The Archbishop of Canterbury is not a Christian?
> *Christ had nowhere to lay his head, and he has got a palace, so he is certainly not a Christian.*
> This has been the worst case I have ever come across, and I hope this man will have to pay for it.[21]

Pacifism was also a core belief for the International Bible Students Association (IBSA), whose Biblical analysis, seeking information about the date of Christ's Second Coming, meant that, as Gary Perkins explains, that 'they were not prepared to… support narrow national interests which might involve killing fellow citizens of God's kingdom'.[22] The MSA exempted ministers of religion from conscription. The Edinburgh Court of Appeal had decided in July 1916 that the IBSA was a religious denomination and accepted an IBSA elder as a minister.[23] Herbert Kipps, one of the ten IBSA men in my cohort, became the test case for the IBSA in England.[24] Every day after work and every Sunday Kipps preached, baptised and conducted services. At his first appeal in 1916, the prosecution contended that the IBSA *was* not a religious denomination but 'did similar work to the Church Army'.[25] In March 1917, however, the Lord Chief Justice accepted that the organisation was a religious denomination, but Kipps was *not* a minister, because 'it was not his exclusive privilege or duty to conduct the services'.[26] Consequently Kipps and all other IBSA ministers were handed over to the military authorities. Ernest Renton, another IBSA member, stated in a private letter in 1916 that the 'Christian principles' of the denomination had 'governed my life for the last ten years'.[27] Renton gave his occupation in the 1911 census as 'colporteur' (distributor) for the *Watch Tower* magazine. Sent to the NCC, Renton refused to obey orders, as his beliefs forbade him to be a soldier, even a non-combatant one.[28]

The Plymouth Brethren also believed pacifism to be ordained by the New Testament. Lewis Barber stated at his tribunal hearing that 'if the Germans invaded England, he would not take up arms; if they attacked his wife and children he could not and would not take up arms'.

> The Chairman: You are a butcher and slaughterer. If you object to killing Germans, you don't object to killing beasts?
> *No, certainly not.*
> Well, they are very little better than that. (Laughter.)
> Military Representative: You say, 'touch not the unclean thing'. Do you mean that the British Army is unclean?
> *Barber: People who are unsaved are unclean.*
> I don't believe a word of it. You say you preaching the Gospel is a national duty. Are you ordained?
> *Ordained by the Spirit.*
> Have you any education?
> *Only the education of the Lord.*
> My opinion is that you are the worst sort of man who can be allowed to go about preaching … Did God never say 'Smite them'?
> *Not in the New Testament. I believe in the New Testament.*
> I don't want to ask you any more. I am disgusted. It is unmanly, contemptible.[30]

Like other denominations, Plymouth Brethren were divided. Some Open Brethren joined the NCC, whereas Exclusive Brethren like Barber refused to be 'yoked with unbelievers' in the army.[29]

Unsurprisingly, Barber's appeal against conscription was rejected.

Other less well-known denominations also adhered to pacifism. There were two members of the 'Testimony of Jesus' in my cohort. This is one of various names used by the group solely to identify themselves to outsiders: they pride themselves on being 'no-namers'.[31] Members take vows of celibacy and submission, and surrender their income to a common purse. As pacifists they cited Matthew 26: 52, 'put your sword back in its place'. Both members were accepted as 'genuine' by the Central Tribunal.

Most religious organisations abandoned their support for international unity following the outbreak of war. The Church of Christ was an exception. This was a loose association of autonomous congregations seeking to establish international Christian reunion through a return to New Testament principles.[32] Many members became COs, and the single member in my cohort was accepted as genuine. Despite Unitarians' long-standing support of the individual against the state, its leaders initially gave the British war effort strong support. Their journal the *Inquirer* stated in 1914 that 'So far as England is concerned, it is a war against war… One thought alone should dominate us – our duty to the State'.[33] Very few Unitarians became COs, but as the harsh treatment given to COs became known, the denomination became involved in efforts to support them and their families.[34] Theosophy seeks the creation of 'a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour'.[35] Rather surprisingly, most Theosophists strongly supported the war. Janet Kerschner of the Theosophical Society states that 'loving peace but viewing the world with the perspective of the ancient wisdom, they knew that just wars must be waged at times to transform society'.[36] Unitarianism and Theosophy each had a single representative in my cohort, both of whom were accepted as 'genuine'.

Methodists' work for international peace and understanding abruptly terminated in 1914, and young men were strongly encouraged to join up. Only a minority became COs.[37] There were five Methodists in my cohort. Bertram Mansell was clearly driven by his political beliefs, stating that 'he had been for some years an International Socialist and a member of the ILP and was bound… not to take part in war'.[38] Three others had been willing to undertake non-combatant roles such as medical aid outside the army. Having been sent instead to the NCC, they refused to obey orders and were court martialed, a common CO pattern.[39] It seems possible that Henry Bradshaw's claim to be a CO was not entirely

Arthur Amos Birkby (Author).

genuine. Having ignored his call-up papers and not attended his local tribunal, the police arrived to arrest him: it took an hour to drag him out of his house. Bradshaw's first reason for claiming exemption was because he supported his sister, only subsequently adding that he had an unspecified conscientious objection.[40] Rather surprisingly, Bradshaw was graded 'genuine', as were the other four Methodists.

Adherents of the Pentecostal movement believed that the Biblical experience of Pentecost (including speaking in tongues) could and should be recreated.[41] Although some senior leaders supported the war effort, many younger Pentecostals thought the outbreak of the war signified the beginning of the end times, and felt that Christians should play no part in a conflict which might lead to Armageddon.[42] The two in my cohort were graded 'genuine' and went to work camps.[43] Now the Union of Evangelical Churches, the Peculiar People denomination developed in rural Essex. Faith healing is a central belief and at this date they rejected all medical intervention.[44] The cohort's three Peculiars were sent to the NCC, then court martialed for disobeying orders, probably for refusing to assist with medical procedures. All three were graded 'genuine' and went to work camps.[45]

Catholic men were also strongly encouraged to join up, and only about 100 COs are known. Pope Benedict XV had denounced the war in the name of humanity, but national Catholic leaders rejected his stance and supported their governments.[46] There were three Catholics in the cohort, all working-class Londoners. William Brock was willing to undertake non-combatant work, so refused to obey military orders when he was sent to the Royal Fusiliers. Alexander Macdonald belonged to the ILP and the NCF, so his motivation was probably political.[47] Nothing is known of what motivated John McCall. Like Catholics, British Jews were anxious to prove their loyalty, and most eligible men joined up. Karen Lush has demonstrated that the few Jewish COs were politically driven and not religiously observant.[48] Both Jews in my cohort followed this pattern. Alex Epstein was an active Zionist before the war, and Harris Peltz a member of the NCF and ILP. Epstein was graded 'genuine' and went to a work camp, but Peltz was rejected and sent back to the army.[49]

The Church of Scotland also gave strong support to the war effort, and very few Presbyterians became COs.[50] The four in my cohort were all graded 'genuine' but John Pridie and Alexander Cook refused the work camp scheme. Both were sent to the notoriously tough Barlinnie Prison in Glasgow. Cook became seriously ill and died, while Pridie developed mental illness, and was released on medical grounds.[51]

Congregationalist churches are organised by the congregation as a whole.[52] Their belief in the 'priesthood of all believers' and thus in equality and human rights overlapped with socialist ideals, and there were many Congregationalist chapels in south Wales, where Labour and socialist movements were powerful.[53] Mansel Grenfell, a Congregationalist Welshman, was active in trade unionism and the Independent Labour Party (ILP), and quoted a hymn which gave 'true indications of the state of my mind: 'Yea! With one voice, O World, though thou deniest/Stand thou on that side, for on this am I'.[54] All eight Welshmen in my cohort came from within a ten-mile radius of Briton Ferry in Glamorgan. Five had 'certified' occupations (in steel or tin production) which exempted them from conscription, but instead they chose not only to be COs, but absolutists. As Pearce comments, it took 'a very determined and unusual CO who would set aside the security of his reserved occupation', yet this area produced many such cases.[55]

Grenfell, an ironworker, resigned his job to become a CO. When he appeared before the local magistrates, the prosecutor claimed that Grenfell 'had attended meetings against conscription and other insidious campaigns'. In reply Grenfell stated that:

> There is a two-fold violation of the old code in the new law of conscription, it violates that most valuable principal of personal liberty in its most sacred personal sense, and requires a man to go to war to kill a fellow man… To witness to the price of personal liberty, and to peace against war, I consider no price too high to pay for those great objects, and humbly hope the little testimony will help humanity a little nearer to the free abundant life which is possible for it, and to the lasting peace it so surely needs.

The Chairman replied that 'his case was a rotten case; that it did not hold water; and if we didn't fight the Germans, the Germans would fight us'. Grenfell was fined and handed over to the army. There was a high degree of organised support for COs and their families in the district. When Grenfell left Wales under military escort, 'there were a few hundred ready to give him a hearty send-off, one with a bag of apples, another a ham-sandwich, a third a jug of tea, &c… With a "Good-bye", "God speed", and the singing of the Red Flag, we lost his genial face, but not his spirit'.[56]

Political beliefs

No Conscription Fellowship	18
Independent Labour Party	12
NCF and ILP	6
Trade unionist	3
Union of Democratic Control; Christian Socialist; International Socialist; Socialist; National Council for Civil Liberties	One man in each case

Political affiliations of the cohort (from contemporary newspaper reports and the Imperial War Museum's 'Lives of the First World War').

As already mentioned, it was not only religion which led men to support pacifism. Adam Martin's passionate speech at his tribunal was reported in unusual detail:

> War was murder… and he would have nothing to do with it, whatever the consequences. He took his stand on that as a socialist, and… had been an active member of the local branch of the ILP for many years… History had proved to him that war was wrong and futile and settled nothing. We had never had a real peace, but only a succession of truces, during which Governments went on piling up colossal armaments to degrade and destroy life. He was against the system of International Treaties which created war and lived on war…[57]

Ernest Dickes, the deputy chief cashier at Portsmouth Dockyard, was arrested in 1915 and charged with tampering with a war service card. Newspapers reported excitedly that a search of his lodgings had revealed 'a large quantity of correspondence, books and other items in various languages'.[58] (Dickes was a professional translator in his spare time.) The matter was mentioned in Parliament, where one MP pointed out darkly that Dickes was 'a Passivist [sic]' and another asked if this meant he was 'an advocate of Pro-Germanism'.[59] The story eventually fizzled out without Dickes facing any charges, but it is not surprising that he, like Martin, was assessed by the Central Tribunal as 'political'.

According to the prison register, Ernest Smith was an atheist, an unusual stance in 1917. He was arrested as an absentee, having been told to report to the NCC. Smith stated that he 'believed in the universal brotherhood of man, and was opposed to the taking of human life, and therefore he could not agree to become a soldier'. The magistrate replied 'we are not here to try your views. The law says you have to do some service' and handed him over to the army.[60]

No other 'political' statements by my cohort apart from those already quoted have been discovered. All discernible political allegiances were left-wing.[61] Some were evidently very dedicated: Percy Wallis and William Noble both gave their occupation in the 1911 census as 'political secretary' (that is, of their local ILP branch). Joseph Mallard named his son after Keir Hardie, while Herbert Whatley's son Lenin unsurprisingly preferred to be known as Len.[62]

Conclusion

Before 1914 support for international cooperation and pacifism were mainstream beliefs, but those who continued their support thereafter were very much in a minority. Examination of this cohort shows that while the image of COs as Quakers objecting on religious grounds has some truth in it, the reality was more varied, and religious and political beliefs were often intertwined. Bibbings quotes the CO BN Langdon-Davies:

> There were class-war warriors who had no objection to killing capitalists, but whose consciences baulked at fellow-workers. There were… men… who would do anything except actually kill… and men who tried to give up or avoid anything which directly or indirectly contributed to the financing or conduct of the war…[63]

Becoming a CO could prove physically and mentally very taxing, and for two of my cohort (Henry Firth and Alexander Cook) was actually fatal. Mansel Grenfell embraced his imprisonment, buoyed up by the support of his community. Henry Allonby wrote to his mother from Wormwood Scrubs that he was experiencing 'the happiest days of my life (the Lord can bring good out of evil)',[64] whereas a single CO from a rural area, like Herbert Jay, a farmer from Herefordshire, faced incomprehension and hostility. Elinor Kelly comments in her study of Herefordshire COs that her overwhelming impression is of 'how lonely they were'.[65] Others, like Henry Bradshaw and Harold Fricker, did all they could to avoid the consequences of their refusal to fight: behaviour which, to serving soldiers and bereaved families, must truly have seemed 'unmanly, contemptible'.

Author's note

Please contact me if you have an interest in one of the cohort:
John Charles Adams; Stephen Clarke Allonby; Edwin William Ashley; Lewis Ashley; Frederick Bann; Lewis Harold Barber; Lewis Batley; James Henry Batten; Amos Arthur Birkby; George William Bosworth; Herbert Bracewell; Frank Bradshaw; Henry Bradshaw; William Charles Brock; Donald Barclay Cameron; William Campbell; Ernest Theodore Cole; Arthur Clayton; Alexander Robert Cook; George Coppuck; Albert Glyn Davies; Daniel Thomas Davies; Frederick Charles Dearlove; Ernest Walter Dickes; Clifford James George Ramsgate Emery; Alex Epstein; Henry James Farish; Thomas Felton; Robert Fincham; Henry William Firth; Harold Augustus Fricker; Thomas Gavin; Richard Gethin; Sidney Gibbons; Fred Gooch; Cuthbert Arthur Gray; Arthur Green; Mansel Grenfell; John Groom; John Grounds; Isaac Daniel Harry; Harry George Hodson; George Alfred Holland; Charles Honeywood; Leonard Thomas Howard; Charles Robert Howe; Arthur Stewart Ingram; Herbert Samuel Jay; Edward William Johnson; Arthur Jones; Edward Jones; Joseph Parry Jones; Frederick Richard Josling; Herbert Richard Kipps; Charles Alfred Lloyd; Norman Macleod; Joseph Ernest Mallard; Bertram John Mansell; Charles Edward Mansfield; Adam Martin; Harry Matthews; Alexander Millar; Alister McArthur; John McCall; Alexander McDonald; Marmaduke Claude Lye Mitchell; John Mosley; William Noble; Rothwell Osborn; William Harcourt Ottley; Hubert Parris; Harold Alfred Paull; Harris Peltz; Thomas Philipps; Clarence George Pickering; Philip Alexander Platt; John Pridie; Ernest Yeoman Renton; Herbert William Reynolds; Harry Rhodes; James Robertson; Charles Rodgers; Arthur Henry Samms; Frederick William Samms; Ernest Smith; Horace Henry Smith; Valentine Bertram Turner Stringfellow; Frank Sutton; William Isaac Thomas; William Reginald Thomas; Frederick Thompson; Harry Tomlinson; Harold Tonge; John Waite; Percy Wallis; Peter Weir; Herbert William Whatley; Sidney William Wilson; William Woodrow; Gilbert Stanley Wride.

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Tribunal judgements are taken from the Pearce Index of COs, 'Lives of the First World War', https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/, hereafter LOTFWW.

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[45] LOTFWW: Thomas Felton, Arthur & Frederick Samms.

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[55] Pearce, p. 218.

[56] *The Pioneer*, 24 March 1917, National Library of Wales, https://newspapers.library.wales/.

[57] *Barrhead News*, 21 July 1916.

[58] *Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 September 1915.

[59] *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 22 November 1916.

[60] *Bradford Weekly Telegraph*, 2 March 1917.

[61] ILP members: George Coppuck, Mansel Grenfell, Isaac Harry, Norman Macleod, Bertram Mansell, Adam Martin, Alexander MacDonald, John Mosley, Valentine Stringfellow, Frederick Thompson, Percy Wallis. Trade unionists: Arthur Clayton, Frederick Thompson.

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The Pre-war Military Experience of Soldiers of the 5th Battalion (Territorial Force), Gloucestershire Regiment

Martin and Teresa Davies

In 1914 there was a tendency, still evident in today's literature, to assume that the Territorial Force (TF) was a homogeneous entity with all – or at least the majority – of the men having trained, albeit on a part-time weekly basis, for the six years and four months prior to 4 August 1914. But was this a reasonable assumption considering that the TF was composed of part-time soldiers whose focus had been providing for their families whilst in occupations where employers were not always sympathetic to the demands of the army and the government regarding their employees.

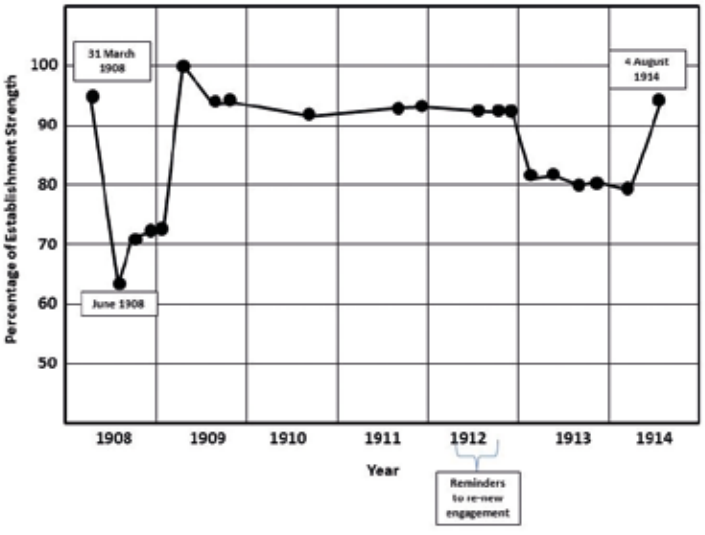
In general, the soldiers along with much of the population did not know that 3 August 1914 would be their final day of peace. They did not know that their six years of training had been building to that moment in time. This is illustrated by Captain Gilbert Collett, a TF soldier since its formation and OC A Company, the 5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment (5/Gloucesters). He resigned his commission in June 1914 as demands on him from the family chemical manufacturing business, JM Collett and Company Limited, had become a higher priority. However, by 8 August 1914 with new priorities, and as his resignation had not yet appeared in the *London Gazette*, Gilbert simply re-joined the TF and would go on to command both the 1st/5th and 2nd/5th Battalions.[1]

Following the reforms proposed by Richard Burdon Haldane, the old part-time volunteer units were disbanded and on 1 April 1908 the new part-time volunteer Territorial Force (TF) came into existence under the authorisation of the Territorial and Reserves Forces Act, 1907. The TF, now a key part of the British Army, was formed with the specific and legal objective of defending mainland Britain against possible invasion in time of war, thereby allowing the Regular units of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to be deployed overseas to engage directly with the enemy. However, shortly after the declaration in 1914 it was decided that after due legal process the men of the TF would be deployed into an overseas theatre of war. It was recognised that most of the TF units, despite the previous six years of training, would require some months of 'battle-hardening' training in readiness for deployment on active service.

On the evening of 31 March 1908 at 19:30 the companies of the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment (2/VBGR) had assembled at the Cross in Gloucester where a bugler sounded the *Last Post* to mark the passing of the old volunteer system. Within a few minutes *Reveill*e was sounded and the 5/Gloucesters came into existence. After this ceremony the men of the assembled companies marched away to Garrett's Restaurant where a smoking concert was organised to celebrate the event.[2]

The new battalion had a catchment area equivalent to the modern county of Gloucestershire and initially it was composed of 13 companies, a structure mirroring the 2/VBGR which itself was a vestige of the previous 2nd Gloucestershire Rifle Volunteer Corps. These companies were rapidly reduced in number, initially to 11 and then to eight by late 1908. The new companies were based at Gloucester (A and B Companies), Stroud (C Company), Tewkesbury (D Company), Cheltenham (E and F Companies), Dursley (G Company) and Chipping Campden (H Company); there was some disquiet particularly in Cirencester and the Forest of Dean that they no longer had dedicated volunteer companies.[3]

The Establishment Strength of the 5/Gloucesters was officially set in 1908 at 28 officers and 980 other ranks (ORs).[4] On 31 March 1908 the actual strength was recorded as 28 officers and 932 ORs which was 4.7 per cent below strength. To serve in the TF the soldiers had to sign on for four years with the subsequent option of one-year extensions. If a soldier wanted to resign before his term was complete he could make a payment of £1 5s for each year or part of year remaining.[5] However, there was some confusion regarding the conditions of service associated with the new unit and as a consequence by 5 June the strength was recorded as 18 officers and 624 ORs, resulting in the battalion being 35.4 per cent below strength.[6] The published figures for the other ranks showed they were comprised of 51 new recruits and 573 former men of the 2/VBGR; hence only 61.4 per cent of the latter had signed up to the new TF.



The published strength of the other ranks serving in 5/Gloucesters between 1908 and 1914. The figures are presented as a percentage of the official Establishment Strength (Authors).

By August 1908, at the time of the first annual training camp, the strength was listed as 24 officers and 700 ORs, still 28.2 per cent below strength.[7] The OR strength was published at the quarterly meetings of the Gloucestershire Territorial Force Association; there seems to be an acceptance that officer numbers were not a problem. The initial decline in strength began to recover after August 1908 and by June 1909 it was back to pre-1 April 1908 levels. Throughout April 1912 Territorial Orders were used to encourage the men to re-engage, however there was a significant drop in the strength

in 1913 as men left the battalion after their initial period of service of four years; figures published that year revealed that on average the battalion was 18.1 per cent below strength. This trend continued into 1914 where in March the battalion was 20.9 per cent below strength. Nevertheless, with war rumours in abundance more signed up and by August the battalion was only 7.2 per cent below strength having had an influx of untrained men. Periodically throughout the pre-war years, the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Allen Benjamin Bathurst, appealed to employers to assist in bringing the battalion up to establishment strength.[8] Speaking at the annual dinner in December 1910 Captain Gilbert Collett largely attributed this problem to the criticism in the *Gloucester Journal* and the *Citizen* of the conditions endured by the battalion during manoeuvres in October with the Regular Army on Salisbury Plain.[9] He appealed for more support although he did acknowledge the generous way in which both papers reported on TF activities and published the weekly Territorial Orders.[10]

Following the formation of the TF there were a number of manuals published and at an operational level there were two main volumes. The first was the *Regulations for the Territorial Force and for the County Associations 1908* produced by the Army Council in July 1908, which was a practical approach to all aspects of the volunteer units. It was laid out in 690 paragraphs with 15 appendices. Between them specific topics were dealt with including enlistment, physical standards for recruits, training schemes and finances. The second notable manual, published by the General Staff, War Office, was *Musketry Regulations 1909 (reprinted with amendments, 1914*) which dealt with all aspects connected to the art of military musketry. Between them these two manuals dictated the detailed approach required to train the pre-war Territorial soldier and decreed that training should officially consist of three parts – drills, annual training in camp and musketry.[11]

Drills

Drills were defined as the '… training of a soldier to execute certain movements as a second nature…' and were designed to instil '… discipline, cohesion and the habit of absolute and instant obedience to the orders of a superior'.[12, 13] It was the officers' responsibility to produce a drill scheme, within the guidelines, that was suitable for their unit.[14] Further, in view of the time limitation on part-time soldiers, the scheme should introduce only the fundamentals, with the more advanced concepts being taught at length in camps following a declaration of war.[15] The drills consisted of simple commands issued to both individuals and small squads and each drill consisted of one hour's actual instruction.[16], [17] For new recruits, training in their first year consisted of 40 drills of which 20 had to be performed before the annual training camp in order for them to draw pay during that period.[18] The pay was set at one shilling a day for a private soldier with a messing allowance of 3d per day provided there is no grocery allowance – there was no direct compensation for any loss of wages.[19, 20] Any recruit who joined after the annual camp could count drills performed prior to 1 November towards his first year requirement. In subsequent years the trained soldiers had to have performed ten drills before the annual training camp in order for them to draw pay during camp. Despite the prescribed number of drills, the trained men and recruits were encouraged to attend as many drills as possible throughout the year.[21]

Annual training camp

The annual training camp for the 5/Gloucesters was held in early August and it was directed that its duration should '… be for a period of not less than eight, or more than 15 days…'. [22] The camp focussed on training in field operations with '… as much time as possible devoted to… company training'.[23] A day's training at the camp consisted of '… not less than six hours' work or if day be Sunday, of not less than six hours' military duty'.[24] There was the expectation that the new recruits would attend the annual training camp and that the trained soldiers would attend at least the first week and if possible also the second week of the camp. The attendance of other ranks at the annual camp was published at the Gloucestershire TF County Association quarterly meeting. In 1908 the attendance figures for the ORs for the first week were 650 (92 per cent of strength) and for the second week as 342 (49 per cent of strength). These figures were mirrored in the following years where the attendance for the first week varied from 81 to 95 per cent of strength and for the second week from 51 to 67 per cent.[25] Besides the annual camps, weekend camps were periodically arranged at a company level. For instance, in 1912 four camps were organised for the A and B Companies in the vicinity of the Sneedham's Green musketry range.

Musketry

There were two main types of musketry courses for the TF, the first for recruits and the second for trained men. The Recruits Course was in two parts, 'Table A Part I Instructional Practices' and 'Table A Part II Standard Test'. Recruits were expected to complete this course within their first year and once completed they would be regarded as 'trained soldiers'. However, those who failed, could repeat over subsequent years until the qualifying standard was attained. The trained soldiers i.e. those qualified in Table A, were also expected to complete the annual course of musketry ('Table B Annual Course with Part I Instructional Practices and Part II Standard Test'). These requirements applied equally to officers and men.[26] The Table A and Table B courses were similar although the qualification standard was more stringent for the latter. Both courses consisted of ten 'practices' (or tests) and there were five different categories of practices:

(1) Grouping (firing without altering aim or sighting between shots).[27]
(2) Application (alteration of aiming or sighting between shots as necessary).[28]
(3) Snapshooting (firing at different silhouette representations of soldiers which as a target was only visible for short period of time, either five or six seconds depending on the practice).[29]
(4) Slow fire (firing at a soldier silhouette, where the shooter was allowed 20 seconds for each shot reckoned from the act of loading).[30]
(5) Rapid fire (each man firing at his own best rate but only 35 seconds allowed for five shots at 200 yards and unless stated otherwise the magazine was loaded with four rounds before target appeared - a variant allowed one minute but the chamber and the magazine had to be completely empty at the commencement).[31, 32]

The practices used a mixture of shooter positions (lying, kneeling or firing from cover), variable distances (100, 200 and 500 yards) and variable targets (bull's eye or figures, i.e. soldier silhouettes).

For the trained men there was also 'Part III Field Practices' which represented musketry under battlefield conditions and was intended to develop further the skills of snapshooting and rapid firing. For reality target distances were unknown, targets were indistinct and could represent advancing or retiring enemy troops with disappearing or collapsible targets, firing positions were chosen to suit conditions and above all officers issued orders sparingly to teach all ranks to think for themselves.[33]

The standard of musketry of the Regular infantry soldiers had been transformed after the Boer War not only by attaining high skill levels but also by instilling pride in that achievement whereby the marksman's crossed-rifles badge became a badge of honour. This ethos manifested itself no less in the Territorials. The TF, as a part-time, home-based defensive unit, was given a realistic standard of achievement in *Musketry Regulations Part I*, 1909 which was below that of the full-time Regulars. However, any TF soldier who demonstrated high levels of achievement could attempt to qualify for the Regular Army's infantry standard. In 1913 over 88 per cent of the trained soldiers in E and F Companies attained a standard sufficient to pass the Regular soldiers' course; this achievement was the result of firing over 17,000 rounds of ammunition in that year at the Severn Springs Range.[34, 35]

Further, as an extension of the musketry training, throughout the summer months the tradition of the shooting competitions, favoured by the 2/VBGR, were organised. The competitions were a 'variation on the theme' as the actual rules did not precisely follow any of the practices of the musketry course. For instance, shooting generally took place under Bisley rules and conditions at 200, 500 and 600 yards with eight shots, the first of which was a 'sighter', at each range with the shooters able to score a maximum of 35 points at each distance.[36] Snapshooting and rapid shooting were the most common forms with time limits imposed for each competition. The weather conditions, temperature and wind speed were all recorded and in general the winning scores demonstrated an average of 93 per cent accuracy. Sometimes rules changed, for example in the annual A Coy competition 10 shots, no sighters at each of 200 and 500 yards.[37]

There were monetary and other prizes attached to the various competitions although the soldiers had to pay an entrance fee to cover the cost of the ammunition. One innovation was wedding rings which were given by the Ladies of Gloucester to the two bachelors with the highest scores at the annual shoot and returned after 12 months in the event of them not marrying.[38] The competitions were organised independently by the different companies but in 1913 the Battalion Cup was introduced with the inaugural event won by E Company (Cheltenham).

Competitions, particularly – but not solely – in winter, were also held indoors on miniature ranges which were set up in the drill halls. For instance, in May 1908 in Tewkesbury Drill Hall a 20-yard miniature range – the equivalent of 400 yards proper shooting – was set up and a competition took place with eight shots allowed. The first was a 'sighter' with the remaining seven shots counting. The highest score possible score was 35 with 26 (74 per cent accuracy) the highest score achieved by several members.[39] The results of the competitions were published in detail in the *Citizen*, while once a month the newspaper also published the results (scores) for the top 30 soldiers across all eight battalions. However, there was a shortage of suitable rifle ranges but some local employers, notably the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Works supported its employees by creating a range at the Wagon Works.[40]

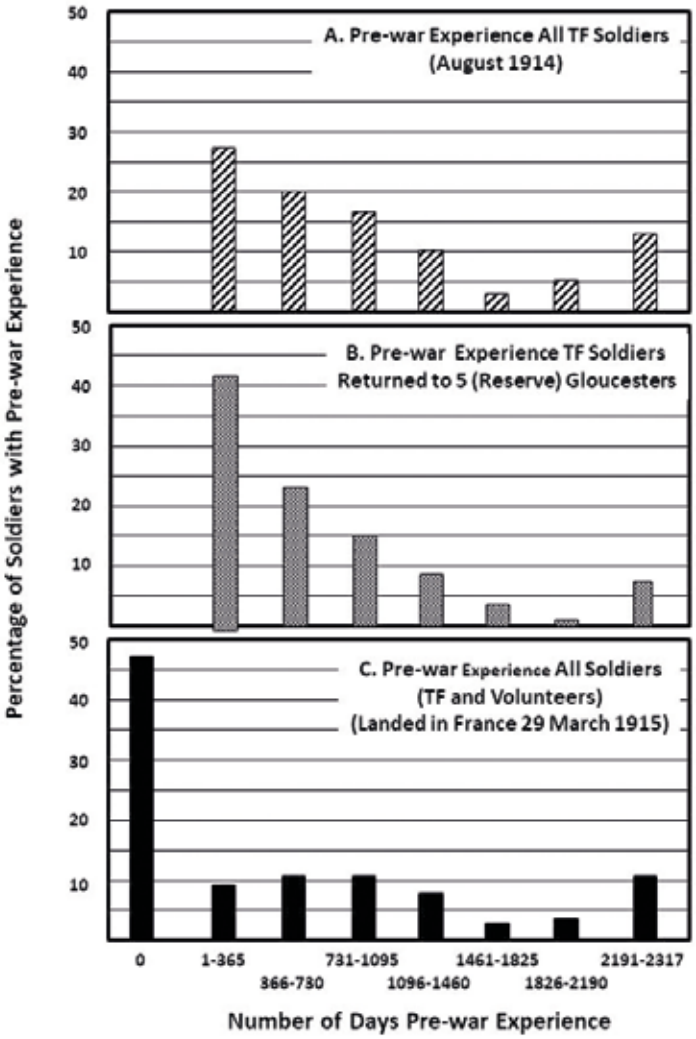
Boys aged between 14 and 17 years could, with their parents' consent, join the unit to be trained as trumpeters, buglers or bandsmen.[41] However, as befits an infantry unit they '… will be trained in the use of the rifle at the discretion of the commanding officer'.[42] All of the drills and musketry competitions were detailed in the weekly Territorial Orders for each of the eight companies. Initially the drills and parades were posted under 'Territorial Orders' on the official notice boards at the various drill halls. However, as was the case across Great Britain these orders started to be published weekly in the newspapers, detailing orderlies for the week, the drills and the parades and the expected attendees. In Gloucestershire the publication of the orders began in December 1909 although not all the companies communicated their orders in the newspapers with the most complete set published in the *Citizen* for A and B Companies.

For the latter there was a pattern to the weekly orders. There were three weekly 20:00 slots for drills for the recruits at which the men had to turn out in drill order dress for training on Monday and Tuesday and often Wednesday, but Thursday or Friday were also common; some of the parades involved inspection by the commanding officer. The main drill for the trained soldiers of A and B Companies usually took place at 22:00 on a Wednesday evening. Using 1912 as the example, there was focus on training new recruits with 104 dedicated drills which equated annually to 104 hours of instruction. For the trained soldier there were about a quarter the number with 23 company drills.

In addition, 33 musketry parades were organised at the full size range at Sneedham's Green although the actual time a soldier spent firing his rifle was limited not only due to the limitation of numbers simultaneously on the range but also due to the constraint on the ammunition. Two of these musketry sessions in 1912 were dedicated to field firing. There were also nine sessions with a miniature range set up at the barracks in Gloucester. There were also specialist parades, and in 1912 there were 30 parades for the signallers and 23 for the bugle band. In 1913 Major Tarrant posted a summary for the Cheltenham E and F Companies which showed a similar pattern with 72 recruits' drills, 39 company parades and 30 musketry parades.[43]

Route marches were another regular feature and an especially good advertisement for any recruiting drive as the marches finished through the main thoroughfares amidst cheering crowds. It was reported that there was an optional one by B Company of 14 miles on Sunday 28 August 1910 which was notable not only for the large turnout in such '… atrocious conditions…', but that 12s 3d was raised towards the testimonial fund for George Harris who, having previously lost his right arm in a works accident, dived fully clothed into Gloucester Docks to rescue a nine-year-old boy who had fallen into the water and was submerged unconscious under a ship – both Harris and the boy (Charlie Mills) survived.[44, 45]

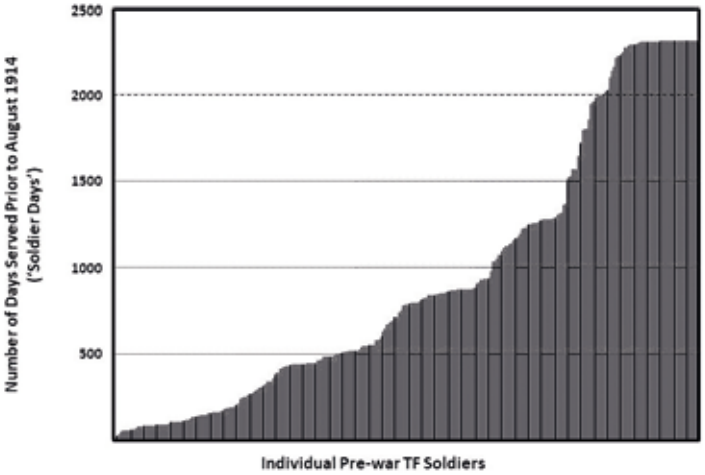
The Gloucester A and B Companies further used the publication of the Territorial Orders to enlist new recruits. In general, there would be three evenings a week when attestation took place as the companies looked for 'smart' recruits aged 17 -35 years. These requests were irregular but were effective in ensuring that the strength was maintained at a high level; on 4 May 1912 the companies needed only another 30 recruits to maintain full strength. This situation was similar across the whole of the battalion as judged by the figures published in August 1914 (see below).



The pre-war experience in days of the Territorials (other ranks). The soldiers are grouped in numbers of days which are then expressed as percentage of the whole. Graph A represents the 5/Gloucesters August 1914; Graph B represents pre-war TF soldiers who were returned to the 5 (Reserve) Gloucesters; Graph C represents all soldiers (pre-war TF and Volunteers) who landed in France 29 March 1915 with the 1/5 Gloucesters (Authors).

At the beginning of August 1914, the strength of the 5/Gloucesters had been published as 22 officers and 914 other ranks which was 7.6 per cent below strength (Establishment Strength was 28 officers and 984 OR).[46] Within days of the declaration of war the notion of purely home defence for the TF was discarded as it began specific training as front line units. By the end of August 22 (100 per cent) of the officers and 886 (86.9 per cent) of the men had signed the Imperial Service declaration.

With the decision to deploy TF units overseas it was assumed that such a body of men, after six years of military training, could be moulded into an effective fighting unit for the Western Front. But there was a problem in that all the soldiers who joined in 1908 were not necessarily still in service by 1914. On 4 August 1914, 28 per cent of the pre-war soldiers had less than one year of experience while half of the soldiers had less than two; these would consist mostly of recruits. The 'notional' TF (i.e. those who served fully from 1908 to 1914) accounted for only 14 per cent of the soldiers. In September 899 pre-war TF soldiers along with 474 post-Declaration men went to Chelmsford for war training. Of these 22.4 percent of the post-Declaration and 38.5 per cent of the TF men were returned to the 5 (Reserve) Gloucesters to undergo further basic training; the biggest proportion of the TF men were those with the least experience.[47] However, most militarily important, was the composition of the battalion, now designated the 1/5 Gloucesters, which landed in France in March 1915. This graph showed that 46.5 per cent had no pre-war experience (i.e. were post-Declaration volunteers) while this figure rose to 66.7 per cent if those with less than two years are included (i.e. volunteers and mostly recruits).[48]



The actual number of days (i.e. 'Soldier Days') served by individual soldiers during the period April 1908 and August 1914 based on information derived from service records (Authors).

The pre-war military experience of the battalion in August 1914 can be further highlighted in terms of 'Soldier Days' which represents the actual number of days served in the TF by each individual soldier. This shows that the 5/Gloucesters were not a unit of men militarily trained from April 1908 but were a heterogeneous mixture of soldiers who joined and left the unit. If the Soldier Days are expressed as a percentage of the total number of possible days (i.e. from 1 April 1908 to 4 August 1914 = 2,317 days), then ideally in August 1914 across the whole battalion this figure should be 100 per cent. However, in reality it was only 39.4 per cent which indicated a low level of pre-war military experience even when trained soldiers are taken into account.

The situation was more extreme for the second line unit, the 2/5 Gloucesters which disembarked at Le Havre on 24 May 1916. The overwhelming majority, 91.1 per cent, had either no pre-war experience or less than one year's experience with the pre-war TF and was in effect a battalion based solely on post-Declaration training. Lord Kitchener was not a great enthusiast of the TF based on his previous experience with an equivalent organisation in the French Army during the Franco-Prussian War. Although his view of the TF at the time was possibly correct it was for the wrong, biased reasons. Each soldier in the TF was on his own personal learning curve but in August 1914 there was an emphasis on the lower end of that curve. Regardless, once the 5/Gloucesters acquired the necessary skills for active service at Chelmsford the battalion was arguably as good as any equivalent battalion in the British Army including Kitchener's New Army battalions. Despite the overall lack of experience in the 1/5 Gloucesters in 1915, 34 per cent of the men still had over three years pre-war military experience and represented a core which would have undoubtedly aided the volunteers and the more inexperienced of the TF soldiers.

References:

[1] Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic, 8 August 1914
[2] Gloucester Journal, 4 April 1908
[3] Ibid: 6 February 1909
[4] Army Council: Regulations for the Territorial Force and for County Associations, July 1908 appendix 3
[5] Gloucester Journal, 3 October 1908
[6] Ibid: 6 June 1908
[7] Ibid: 8 August 1908
[8] Ibid: 13 February 1909
[9] Ibid: 1 October 1910
[10] Ibid: 24 December 1910
[11] Army Council, op.cit: para 284
[12] General Staff, War Office: Infantry Training (4-Company Organisation) 1914, p.xvi
[13] Ibid: chapter I, section 1, p,2
[14] Army Council, op.cit: para 273
[15] Army Council, op.cit: para 274
[16] General Staff, War Office, op.cit:, chapter II, sections 10-18, pp.17-26
[17] Army Council, op.cit:, para 288
[18] Ibid: appendix 6, sub-appendix IV
[19] Hansard, 21 March 1907 vol.171 cc841-2
[20] Some employers, particularly the larger ones, made concessions to their employees tp provide full pay at the annual camp. In Gloucestershire this included Cheltenham Town Council, Gloucester Town Council and Gloucestershire County Council (Gloucester Journal, 9 May 1908; Gloucester Journal, 27 March 1909)
[21] Army Council, op.cit.: Ibid: para 290
[22] Ibid: para 299
[23] Ibid: para 308
[24] Ibid: para 304
[25] The camp attendance figures were only reported for four of the years, 1909, 1909, 1911 and 1913 and did not always include the officer numbers.
[26] General Staff, War Office: Musketry Regulations Part I 1909 (reprinted with amendments 1914), appendix IV
[27] Ibid: para 378
[28] Ibid: para 386
[29] Ibid: para 395
[30] Ibid: para 445
[31] Ibid: para 275
[32] Ibid: para 274. Interestingly this paragraph stated that "…in rapid…fire…with a distinct aiming mark within about 1,000 yards a well-trained man should be able to fire from 12 to 15 rounds per minute without serious loss of accuracy"
[33] Ibid: paras 503-571
[34] Gloucester Journal, 29 November 1913
[35] Based on average strength throughout 1913 the expenditure of 17,000 rounds of ammunition equates to 89 rounds per man of E and F Companies.
[36] Gloucester Journal, 27 June 1908
[37] Ibid: 10 October 1908
[38] Ibid: 14 November 1908
[39] Ibid: 16 May 1908
[40] Ibid: 20 March 1909
[41] Army Council, op.cit: para 82
[42] General Staff, War Office: Musketry Regulations Part I 1909 (reprinted with amendments 1914), para 400
[43] Gloucester Journal, 29 November 1913
[44] Citizen, 12 August 1910
[45] Gloucester Journal, 3 September 1910
[46] In 1908 the Establishment Strength had been set at 28 officers and 980 ORs. However, in 1910 this had been revised to 28 officers and 932 ORs but revised again at the end of 1913 to 28 officers and 984 ORs.
[47] Most of these men were returned to the reserve unit as being under age following the change of the minimum enlistment age into the TF from 17 to 18 years in February 1915.
[48] By 4 August 1914 only 6.3 per cent of the Territorials had served before 1 April 1908 in the 2/VBGR which compared with 86.5 per cent in June 1908. However these soldiers represented only 1.9 per cent of the battalion which landed at Boulogne on 29 March 1915.The majority 56.5 per cent survived to the Armistice, 26 per cent terminated their engagement, 8.6 per cent were invalided out with illness, 4 per cent were killed while 4 per cent were transferred to munitions work.

The Gallipoli Association

Invitation to Joint Conference
"Courage without Glory - Gallipoli and the Western Front in 1915"
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The Western Front Association

Confirmed speakers below. We reserve the right to amend if circumstances require.

Sir Hew Strachan:
"The strategic consequences of the Gallipoli campaign."

Clive Harris and Michael Keegan:
"From the Dardanelles to the Dover Patrol, Roger Keyes at Gallipoli and on the Western Front."

Dr. Andrea McKenzie:
"Canadian Nurses: from Lemnos to the Western Front."

Dr. Adam Prime:
"The Indian Army experience in 1915 on Gallipoli and the Western Front."

Professor Gary Sheffield:
"Gallipoli, the Western Front, and the development of modern warfare."

Registration will be from 9.15am in the Foyer. The Conference, cost £60, will run from 10.00 - 17.00.

Following the joint conference, there will be a three course optional Gala dinner at the RAF Club at 19.00 at a cost of £65 per head excluding wine and drinks. There will be a cash bar from 17.30. These two events are open to Non-Members and their Guests.

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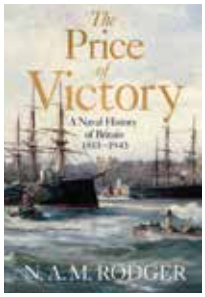
THE PRESIDENT'S REVIEW



AN INSIGHTFUL VOYAGE

NAM RODGER
The Price of Victory: A Naval History of Britain 1815-1914
(London: Allen Lane, 2024) £40.00, xxxix + 934 pp, Hardback
ISBN 978-0-713-99412-4

Many in the Royal Navy felt disappointed at the end of the First World War. Yes, Britain was triumphant; but the Senior Service had not played the starring role that had been envisaged before the war. As NAM Rodger writes in his magnificent new history, the absence of a titanic clash between the Grand Fleet and the German High Seas Fleet in the North Sea affronted both British and German naval officers, who 'had bound up all their identity and sense of purpose in their self-image as men of honour anxious to risk their lives in fight against any odds. Before the war they had convinced themselves that they must have their battle and their victory…'. When the war failed to provide an opportunity for a 'New Trafalgar' in its early days, 'on both sides the admirals were forced to confront devasting doubts as to the purpose and value of the battle fleets…'. The one major clash of the Dreadnoughts, off Jutland on 31 May 1916, appeared to be disappointingly indecisive, and the tactical performance of the Royal Navy gave cause for concern. In a characteristically pithy phrase, Rodger asserts that 'The British reacted to their almost-victory with anguished disappointment'.

As Rodger makes clear, the contemporary British view, not just of Jutland but of the naval war as a whole, was deeply misguided. Strategically, Jutland changed nothing. Since the Royal Navy already had the strategic advantage at sea, this was immensely beneficial for Britain. But to a service and nation brought up on the Nelson tradition, the paucity of sinkings of enemy ships spelled disappointment. But this Victorian/Edwardian view of what the Royal Navy had achieved in the wars against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France was far too narrow, as Rodger has demonstrated in his previous work. Alongside the destruction of enemy fleets at St Vincent, the Nile and Trafalgar, the Navy of Jervis and Nelson carried out long, gruelling blockades of enemy ports; the defence of the home base; and the transport of British armies to distant theatres, and keeping them in supply, which demanded defence of the Sea Lines of Communications. All of this and more was also accomplished by the Royal Navy in the First World War. As I wrote a quarter of a century ago, the absence of a New Trafalgar has masked the magnitude of the victory achieved by the Royal Navy in 1914-18, which as great an achievement as any in its long history.

Rodger's coverage of the First World War is intellectually exciting, sometimes provocative, and always readable. *The Price of Victory: A Naval History of Britain 1815-1945* is the final volume of a trilogy that surveys the subject from the remote past until the end of the Second World War (and the Falklands War of 1982 makes an appearance in the 'Epilogue' of this volume). This book has been long awaited: Professor Rodger wryly mentions serious health problems as the reason for the delay in its publication. A masterly synthesis of modern scholarship topped up by primary sources, it has been well worth waiting for. The subtitle deserves a mention. This is not simply a history of the Royal Navy. Its scope is much wider, covering matters such as broader strategy, government and administration, shipbuilding, and the social lives of sailors. It is a rich brew indeed.

Rodger's trademark is the trenchant phrase, which is one reason why his book is are so enjoyable. On the Q-ships, the much-celebrated merchant ships with disguised guns used against U-boats, he comments 'they caught the British naval imagination and inspired a big effort' but since the Germans rapidly got wise to the subterfuge, 'after the first few weeks their only effect was to increase the danger to merchant seamen'. He also has a telling eye for a quotation. A senior naval staff officer complained in January 1915 'of trying to manage "two stupid old men & one raving lunatic"' – that is Fisher, Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill. But the best of the lot is Rodger's comment that the 'sinking of the Lusitania has given rise to a luxurious growth of conspiracy theories, all well worth ignoring'

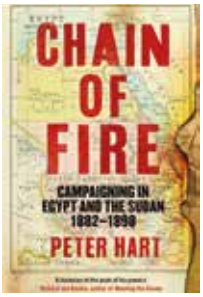
Various topics are given a thoroughly revisionist treatment, building on the work of other historians. One such is the First Battle of the Atlantic, the offensive by German submarines against merchant shipping. In a textbook example of how the views of specialist historians can differ radically from the generally accepted picture, Rodger convincingly argues that the significance of the period of February 1917, when the Germans recommenced unrestricted U-boat warfare, to May 1917, when the Admiralty began to use convoys, has been 'exaggerated'. In fact, the unlimited use of submarines to sink merchant vessels was less efficient than operating under the prize rules (by which targets were warned and their crews given the opportunity to take to their lifeboats), and sinkings increased because more submarines were at sea. Another is the naval economic blockade of the Central

Powers, which was put from in placed in August 1914. Initially this was not aimed at starving civilians but at goading the High Seas Fleet out to give battle, which would give the Royal Navy an opportunity to Trafalgar the enemy.

Given the vast area (thematically, chronologically and geographically) that Rodger is covering, it is not surprising that this book is not the place to look for detailed accounts of individual actions, even one as large and as famous as Jutland. However, it is a little disappointing that he does not pay more attention to the Dardanelles campaign. Here the Royal Navy carried out a joint (in modern terms) campaign with the Army and cooperated closely with the French Navy. He relies heavily on the sadly late Christopher Bell's excellent work on the naval aspects of Dardanelles. Rodger's provocative conclusion was that the Gallipoli/Dardanelles campaign showed that 'naval, or at least amphibious warfare' could bring about 'decisive results – but from the British point of view they were entirely the wrong results'. This is good, challenging stuff, with more than an element of truth, but it poses as many questions as it answers. It is a missed opportunity, not to speculate about 'might have beens', but to engage more deeply with the limitations of maritime power in the First World War.

The Great War is just one theme in a long book and so is treated in a fairly concise way. However, Rodger places naval matters of 1914-18 into the context of the previous 99 years, since Waterloo, and these sections are a 'must read' for anyone with an interest in the First World War. He comments that 'Jacky' Fisher, the First Sea Lord who brought about the Dreadnought revolution that rendered the world's battlefleets (including Britain's) obsolete 'favoured heavy guns for long-range shooting but seems to have had almost no understanding of the problems of fire-control'; as Rodger demonstrates, fire-control epitomises combat at sea 'as the domain of very advanced technology'. The Dreadnought revolution, as with 'all Fisher's projects… started as a series of pithy slogans and moved only part of the way towards a developed strategic plan'. Likewise, the influence of the Great War ran like the lettering in a stick of rock through the naval history of the 1920s and 1930s, and of course also the Second World War. So, preparations for the First World War and its aftermath can fairly be said to be one of the dominating themes in The Price of Victory. This book, and the series of which it is the finale, is a magisterial achievement.

Gary Sheffield



DEATH ON THE NILE

PETER HART

Chain of Fire: Campaigning in Egypt and the Sudan 1882 – 1898

(Profile, 2025), £30, Hardback, 444 pp, 7 maps, 37 photographs.

More than half a century ago the Richard Attenborough film *Young Winston* gripped this reviewer with tales of derring-do by its eponymous hero on behalf an empire on which the sun would never set. It seems strange that there have been so few modern studies of the 1898 battle – Omdurman – which dominated the movie. Peter Zeigler made a fair stab in 1990 and just three years ago Keith Surridge's Onward to Omdurman took a clear-eyed view of the encounter and its build-up.

Plenty of scope therefore for Peter Hart, whose latest project spends at least half the volume painting in Technicolor detail the events which led to this bloody clash, where modern weaponry and tactics overcame weight of numbers, fanatical purpose, and unimaginable bravery. There will be few readers of this journal who do not know Hart, either via his speaking engagements or from his books on the First and Second World Wars. His familiar style, allowing the eyewitnesses to tell their stories first hand, interspersed with clear and entertaining narrative, is once again on display here.

He begins in 1882, setting the scene in which the British government, somewhat reluctantly, became involved in the control of Egypt, a territory of the feeble and collapsing Ottoman Empire. Its value to London was the Suez Canal, the quick and safe route to Britain's 'Jewel in the Crown', India. Anxious to safeguard the waterway from competing powers, and troublesome local warlords, the British found themselves sucked into what became, in many ways, a 'forever war'. One foe was defeated, or at least subdued, only for another to pop up elsewhere. The elsewhere, once Egypt had been pacified, was Sudan, on its southern border. There Mahdist forces besieged Khartoum and at the end of January 1885 the city fell and its governor, General Gordon, was killed. From then on, the next 13 years was, essentially, a story of the British seeking revenge.

While modern historians might have largely ignored Britain's late-Victorian foray into the broiling, insect-ridden heart of the Nile Valley, those in the Great War certainly did not. Here are tales of individual heroism, victory snatched from the jaws of defeat, revenge liberally meted out after humiliation. In the aftermath, colourful memoirs served a British public eager for tales proving the nation's dominance over the noble, and not so noble, 'savage'.

What makes this book so valuable for those of us interested in the Great War is the involvement, particularly in the 1890's and the campaign which ended in massacre and victory at Omdurman, of so many men who led the British effort between 1914-18. Churchill and Kitchener were both in their prime back then, as was Horace Smith-Dorrien, so unfairly treated by Sir John French in the early stages of the Great War. Other characters who also took the field outside Omdurman on that fateful 2 September 1898 included Douglas Haig who took part in a text-book cavalry charge, Henry Rawlinson, Haig's Fourth Army commander on the Somme in 1916, Ian Hamilton of Gallipoli infamy, and even David Beatty, ultimately First Sea Lord but on that day commanding a gunship on the Nile.

It's all stirring stuff, and thoroughly brutal with numerous first-hand accounts of quarter being neither asked nor given. The first half of the story would have benefitted from a location map. Those included are first rate, but an author has little control over such matters. A great read.

John Spencer

UP AND AT'EM

DAVID GRIFFITH

The Guards 1915-17, An Elite Division at War.

£35.00, Helion, Warwick, hardback, 190 pp, illustrations throughout, notes and refs., no index,

ISBN 978-1-804515-32-7.

This book, by another author from the reliable University of Wolverhampton stable, aims to provide a readable narrative account of the Guards Division's development during 1915-17. This is to be within an academic framework; consider if it was truly an elite formation; and judge how

effectively did it adapt to the learning process. It does this through a variety of sources, official and unofficial. While examining the division's performance at major battles, it also explores its background and how it changed.

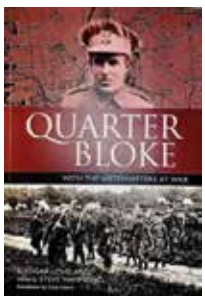
The Guards, with its own distinctive culture, was a socially elitist corps, officered by genuine and would-be aristocrats, with only Guards commanding Guards from top to bottom. The men were subjected to draconian basic training and the strictest discipline. At the beginning of the war, the Foot Guards had a mere nine battalions. The six first sent to France served in two separate line divisions. However, in 1915, Lord Kitchener chose instead, somewhat controversially, to create a separate Guards Division, using only Guards battalions, including some newly raised. This was, apparently, to be an elite formation, for special tactical purposes.

With its formidable esprit de corps, the division could be relied on to attack with the utmost determination. However, it was unfortunate to make its debut under the mismanagement of Haking of XI Corps, and one of its own brigadiers, on the third day of Loos. It suffered substantial losses for no gain. Lord Cavan, the divisional commander, set out to implement learning from experience, and gain the initiative in line holding, through an extensive programme of carefully planned raids.

On the Somme, the Guards were essentially kept for the Flers-Courcelette offensive, instead of being wasted in Rawlinson's piecemeal August attacks. However, on 15 September, with a flank exposed to the Quadrilateral strongpoint, and poorly supported by artillery and tanks, the Guards had disappointing results and heavy casualties: not uncommon for British attacks at this time. Things went somewhat better at Morval on 25 September, in spite of previous casualties being made up with inexperienced replacements.

Lightly engaged in 1917 before Passchendaele, the Guards finally showed their full potential at Pilckem Ridge. Here a canal in front was a major obstacle to the attack. A sudden opportunity on 27 July, to seize advance positions on the far side, was speedily exploited. Aided by solid advances by flanking units, the Guards were able to get forward 2,500 yards on 31 July, albeit at a cost. Good training, good intelligence and meticulous planning had paid off. Useful reference is made to several German units who faced the Guards. It would be interesting to hear what the Germans thought of the division.

The book achieves what it sets out to do and as such is highly recommended. The well-written text can be enjoyed by both academic and general readers, and is accompanied by good clear maps, and illustrations (portraits and modern-day views). The lack of an index is, however, a serious omission. It's a tedious job for author or publisher, but every serious history should have one. The price seems on the high side for the book's size. A further volume, up to the Armistice, is promised, and I look forward to it.
Michael Lucas



A FULL PICTURE

STEVE HAMMOND ed.
Quarter Bloke - With the Westminsters at War
(Privately published, 2024) £25, available from the author direct hammond.steve@btopenworld.com

Steve Hammond's *Quarter Bloke, with the Westminsters at War* offers an intimate and meticulously researched portrait of Edgar Percy Loveland and his comrades in the 1/16th Battalion, the London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles or QWR), during the Great War. This privately published work combines Loveland's diary, retrospective memoirs, photographs, and letters from members of the QWR. Alongside these, Hammond provides insightful commentary on the regiment, giving essential context and background to the events and individuals involved.

Loveland's story begins in February 1912, when he enlisted in the territorials, choosing the QWR based in Victoria, central London. Hammond expertly contextualises these writings, blending Edgar's personal experiences with a broader narrative about the QWR's involvement in significant battles such as Gommecourt on 1 July 1916, at the start of the Battle of the Somme. The book not only details Loveland's progression from a pre-war junior clerk in a tobacco manufacturer to wartime quartermaster in the QWR but also captures the camaraderie, trials, and resilience of the men who served alongside him.

I became particularly interested in this publication after interviewing Hammond on the Western Front Association's podcast, *Mentioned in Dispatches* (Episode 299, May 2023). In the episode, Hammond discussed his research into the Queen's Westminster Rifles, their role in the Great War, and the remarkable archive of materials that forms the basis of this book.

Hammond's connection to the QWR began with local references to the regiment's training in Leverstock Green, Hertfordshire, near where he lives. His initial curiosity grew into an impressive body of research, culminating in this meticulously compiled volume. The inclusion of over 200 images, many with named individuals, adds a rich visual dimension to the narrative, allowing readers to immerse themselves in the world of Loveland and his regiment. Hammond is probably the world's foremost expert on the QWR.

What sets this book apart is its blend of personal and historical perspectives. Loveland's writings vividly depict the day-to-day realities of soldiering. They reveal the complexities of wartime relationships and the emotional toll of conflict. Hammond's thoughtful commentary provides essential background for readers unfamiliar with the regiment. The QWR was a 'class corps' battalion, composed of white-collar professionals and public-school alumni. Members paid a fee and subscription to serve, like the London Scottish. Despite this, their story has been underrepresented in military histories. This book is a significant and welcome addition to the field.

With its limited print run, this book is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the history of the QWR, territorials, the Great War, or the deeply human experiences of those who served. Hammond's work is not only a tribute to Loveland but also a reminder of the importance of preserving and sharing these personal histories.
Tom Thorpe

WARRIOR OR POET?

DUNCAN MARLOR
From War Hero to Peace Promoter: The True Story of Siegfried Sassoon
(Barnsley: Pen & Sword. 2024) £25, Hardback, photographs, notes, index, 224 pp, 156 x 234,
ISBN: 978 1 39905 127 9.

Duncan Marlor is the author of several books in this genre, including those with subjects such as Arthur Ponsonby and Winston Churchill, as well as the edited war diaries

of his own mother. His family has an interesting war record, and this work is dedicated to two great-uncles who served on the Western Front with Siegfried Sassoon.

Marlor introduces the book with a brief review of the life and work of Sassoon and suggests that history is wrong, or perhaps just unfair, to remember him mainly as a war poet and that his other work as well as his protest against the war in 1917 has all been overshadowed as a result. Perhaps there is some truth in that and, if so, then Marlor proceeds over the following 14 chapters to redress the balance. In doing so he relies heavily on several excellent primary sources, and he covers in detail several of Sassoon's personal relationships of various types. He hardly mentions Wilfred Owen and their time together at Craiglockhart, but he goes to great length to blame Robert Graves for contriving to extinguish Sassoon's protest. At the same time, he points out how unlikely it would have been for a young man such as Graves to have had enough influence to shield Sassoon from serious punishment if the powers that be had wished to punish him for expressing his views on the war. Marlor points out that despite dumping his MC ribbon in the Mersey, Sassoon actually sought further decoration, including a potential DSO. Authors such as Niall Ferguson and Gary Sheffield are accused of downplaying the real importance of the war poets by grouping them with the likes of *Oh! What a Lovely War* and *The Donkeys*. Sassoon wrote a trilogy of popular semi-autobiographical books as well as many other prose works in addition to numerous volumes of poetry. He also dabbled in politics to some extent after the war, particularly in supporting (unsuccessfully) Philip Snowden, a Labour candidate, in 'The Coupon Election' of 1918.

The frequent use of quotes sometimes has the effect of the work becoming a smorgasbord of snippets, but the information thus provided does allow the reader to make his or her own interpretations. Slight, but sometimes irritating, errors are presumably the fault of the proofreader. It was perhaps harsh to challenge Robert Harris on the historical accuracy of *Precipice* – it is only a novel - and there does seem to be some confusion as to when the definite article should be italicised in newspaper titles i.e *The Times*. John McCrae's famous poem is also misquoted at the end of its first line. Notwithstanding these relatively minor criticisms, this is a well-researched book which deserves to be read by those interested in the less gory aspects of the war and also by those looking for essay or dissertation material.

Graham Woodall

CORINTHIAN SPIRITS

LLEW WALKER

Fallen, volume one 1914-16

(Birdlives Publishing, 2024) £20, 459 pp,

ISBN 979-8871022436

The subjects of the title are the 123 officers and men of two famous amateur football clubs, Corinthians and Casuals, who died due to the conflict before the end of 1916. This volume runs to a massive 459 pages. Constructing this book must have been a labyrinthine labour of love. Each biography, in chronological order by date of death, has been extensively researched, linking family, background, education, military service, general sporting achievements and those of his siblings, along with detailed summary of games played for each, and sometimes, both clubs. The author has, whenever possible, linked contemporaries through their educational backgrounds, usually a leading public school; as team mates in matches; and with their unit or theatre of war. The result is a detailed, and at times complex, inter-relationship of people, places and fixtures.

The author has attempted to bring depth with obituaries, match reports, letters, newspaper articles and other records to weave together something of the personality and circumstances of each individual and attempt to avoid a dry listing of facts. This makes trying to categorise this book so difficult. It is not a war book about sportsmen any more than it is a sports book commemorating war casualties. There again, is there a need to pigeon-hole such a study?

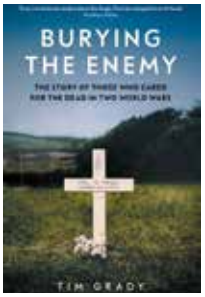
What is complicated, certainly to a fan brought up with the modern footballing pyramid, is how these two amateur teams originated, railed against the tide of professionalism, became ostracised from playing league teams for seven years, before being allowed to play them again on the eve of the Archduke's assassination.

The book might well have dealt with this history, the achievements and internationals, the recruitment of players and number of fixtures in more detail, to provide better context and background, though this would, inevitably, have detracted from the main purpose, those who wore the colours and then paid the ultimate price. Consequently, the matches reported are isolated, not in context of a season, or whether consecutive matches, or how any team was selected.

Had the book attempted to deal with the two clubs under separate titles, the crossover and integration between them would have been lost, though how individuals could play for either or both teams is not fully explained. The two clubs finally merged in 1939, on another eve to another conflict. Unfortunately, the book contains some errors in dates and names, but in a book of this nature, a tribute and recognition of a generation, this is less impactful than it might be with a study of a different subject.

Fallen is certainly a book you can browse, rather than having to read cover to cover. Whether it can appeal to aficionados of either The Great War or 'the beautiful game' is questionable but as a lasting memorial to the players of two significant and ancient footballing teams, it is a detailed and respectful testament.

Peter Emery



BURYING THE HATCHET?

TIM GRADY

Burying the Enemy: The story of these who cared for the dead in two world wars

(Yale University Press, 2025) £25, 364 pp, hardback

ISBN 978-0-300-27397-7

After the two World Wars, the British and German governments and their war graves organisations had a problem. How do you identify and bury soldiers who died on enemy territory? The French and the Americans allowed families to repatriate their sons and husbands, but this was not followed by either the British or the Germans. Pressed by grieving families both nations came up with similar solutions.

After the First World War regardless of nation most of the deceased left abroad were prisoners of war who had died of wounds or during the Spanish Flu pandemic. British bodies were eventually exhumed and buried in half a dozen cemeteries maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission across Germany. Germans in Britain largely remained buried near where they had died.

As well as the deaths of prisoners of war during the Second World War there were also aircrew who died when their aircraft crashed, and, for the British, soldiers who were killed during the

advance into Nazi territory. British and Commonwealth casualties almost all now lie in a dozen CWGC cemeteries mainly in North-West Germany. In turn the German war dead in the United Kingdom, regardless of war or where they died, rest in just one cemetery – Cannock Chase in the West Midlands.

This book explains how this came about. Initially men – British and German – were buried more or where they died in a POW camp or perhaps near where their aircraft had crashed. In Britain, enemy graves were often adopted by individuals or local communities who empathised with the grief that the deceased's family must have felt. Less frequently the same happened in Germany.

But neither the IWGC/CWGC, nor its German equivalent the VDK, liked the scattering of graves and small cemeteries, which were expensive to maintain and could result in what the authorities regarded as being inappropriate commemoration. The Imperial War Graves Commission raged against the placing of flowers in milk bottles by a mother and daughter on the graves of fifteen soldiers who were buried at a cemetery in Bishop's Stortford.

The author laments that the concentration of graves at Cannock Chase broke the links which had built up between families and communities, particularly in Britain, which allowed people to forget the sacrifices made by all side. Professor Grady graphically describes the process of exhuming and reburying the dead perhaps several hundred miles away, and the mistakes that were often made in locating and identifying bodies. One of the most interesting chapters describe how the Nazis attempted to subvert the British war cemeteries for propaganda purposes and the surprisingly muted British reactions.

Unfortunately, the author rather loses his way towards the end of the book into a discussion about the contemporary meanings of the war cemeteries and the continuing British obsession with the Second World War. Even so this is an interesting and well-written book using a wide range of British and German archives to describe a forgotten aspect of the two world wars and how the graves of the fallen hundreds of miles away from home helped bring reconciliation between the two nations.

Simon Fowler

DIGGING DEEPER

MYLES SANDERSON

Tunnelling Commander on the Western Front

(Pen & Sword, 2024) £25.00, 256 pp, hardback

ISBN 978-1399088879

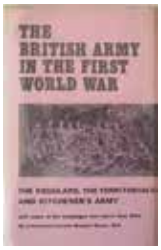
As a member of the Durand Group, for over 25 years we have discovered and explored tunnelling systems under the front lines of the Western Front. One of the great joys of working in First World War tunnels is the excitement of walking in a newly discovered tunnel, the first people to do so for over a hundred years (apart from persistent evidence that intrepid French teenagers were there before us, often decades before!), to turn a corner and discover amazing things - perhaps simple artefacts like a shovel leaning against a wall as if the tunneller had walked away only yesterday, or a surprising and unexpected side tunnel not shown on any map. But best of all is finding graffiti left by tunnellers or soldiers. A supreme delight is to trace the present-day relatives of those who left their names written on a chalk wall and take them to the very spot their relative stood to leave his mark. Of all these family reunions we have organised, one that stands out above all others is the privilege of taking Myles Sanderson and family into the tunnels where his grandfather, Major Alexander Sanderson DSO, MC & BAR, commanded 3 Australian Tunnelling Company defending the front line just west of Hulluch.

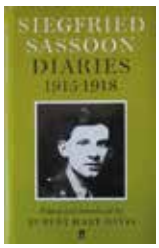
Myles has recorded the life of his grandfather in this book, *Tunnelling Commander on the Western Front*, benefitting greatly from a wealth of documentation that has survived, detailing the life of a truly great man, from his early years in the Western Australia goldfields to his time on the Western Front, and even beyond into controlling bomb damage repairs to London's Underground system during the Second World War. The list of engineering projects he managed not just in Australia and the UK but also in India is truly breathtaking. What a relative to be proud of for Myles' children and all the Sanderson family.

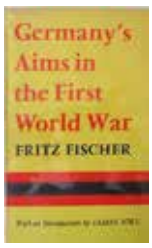
Major Sanderson was the stuff of Empire, the sort of hero we grew up to admire in the Baby Boomer years. Although born in New Zealand of Scottish heritage, his loyalty was to the British Crown and Empire throughout his life, happy to travel and live in Empire countries and to end his days here in England.

Recruited as an engineering specialist Alexander was a natural leader of men. He would not hesitate to lead his company out into No Man's Land on trench raids and to venture into the deepest, least accessible mine shafts, listening for the enemy miners and setting camouflets to blow in their tunnels. He assumed command of the company when his CO was killed during a night-time raid where he won his second MC, and a second wound stripe. I recommend this book to all interested in First World War tunnelling.

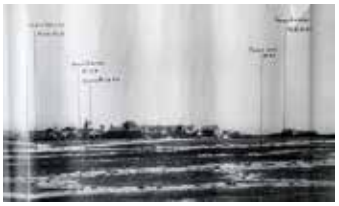
David Hedges

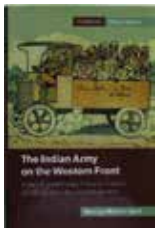


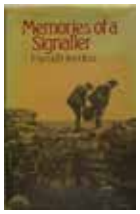


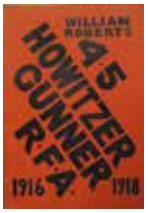


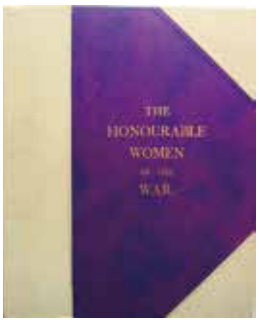


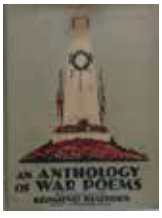


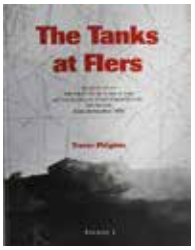


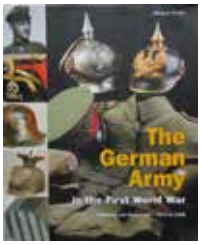









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