

BETWEEN THE LINES

Newsletter of the East Kent Branch of The Western Front Association

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Founded by John Giles
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Articles, etc for *Between the Lines* should be sent to me in M/S Word with accompanying images attached as JPGs. The deadline for contributions (articles, letters, queries, etc) for the next issue of *Between the Lines* is Sunday, 31st March 2024. □

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

James Brazier, WFA East Kent Branch Newsletter Editor



As your Newsletter Editor enters his second year in the post, he felt that the time had come for the Newsletter to contain an Editorial. The early issues of the Newsletter in 2023 did contain very brief introductions which could have been considered to be Editorials but later issues of the Newsletter in 2023 contained a 'Contents' feature which precluded the inclusion of an Editorial on the front page.

Long-term members of the WFA might recognise the line-drawing at the top of this page for your Editor introduced that same line-drawing into the WFA Bulletin during his term as WFA Bulletin Editor (1993-2001). The line-drawing originates from the former 58th (London) Division's trench journal *The Direct Hit* thus proving, once again, that 'what goes around, comes around'.

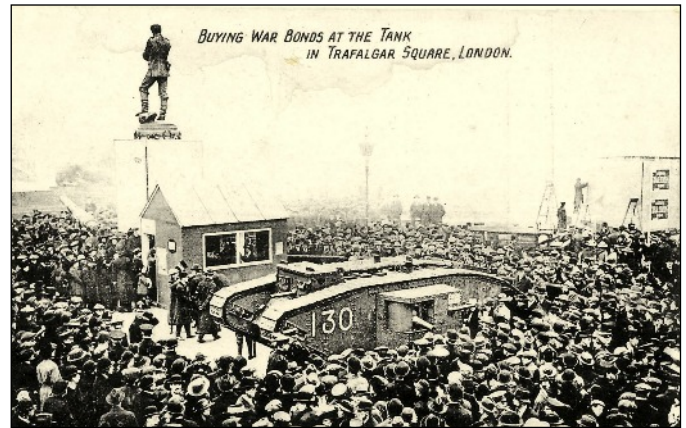
As the year 2023 advanced, so did the number of contributions of articles received from Branch members for inclusion in our Newsletter culminating in a total of seven contributions received from members, other than yours truly, for the last Newsletter (No. 77). We start off the year 2024 with three contributions from other members. In addition, yours truly has once again put together a selection of articles for this issue which, it is hoped, will be of interest to our readers. But more contributions are required from Branch members for future issues, so please do 'put pen to paper' and send in your contribution(s).

The Canterbury Tank has already featured in the Newsletter but it prompted the question as to which other towns in Kent were also each presented with a Tank in the months immediately following the end of the Great War. So, the opportunity has been taken to include a number of articles on Presentation Tanks and of Tank souvenirs. Preliminary research reveals that Faversham, Folkestone and Hythe were also scheduled to have received Tanks. Clearly, there is scope here for further research by other members.

I do hope that these articles will inspire other Branch members to put 'pen to paper'. We live in a most interesting part of the country and the choice of subjects to write about concerning aspects of the Great War is virtually unlimited.

Sadly, two of our Branch members - John Herbert and Geoff Orton - passed away recently. Obituaries for each are shown on page 23. □

James Brazier
Newsletter Editor



This postcard shows the Tank Bank in Trafalgar Square - circa October 1918. The Tank - known as 'Nelson' - is a Mark VI Male Tank and is numbered 130. Note the queue of civilians lining up to enter the small temporary office to purchase War Bonds in support of the war effort



The Mayor of Tunbridge Wells receiving the gift of a Tank at its 'final resting place' in Vale Road, Tunbridge Wells (adjacent to the town's Post Office) on Wednesday, 30th July 1919. (Note the number of the Tank - 131). It is believed to be a Mark VI Male Tank. As was usual with these Presentation Tanks, the guns were removed before the Tanks were handed over to the civic authorities



Postcard promoting the purchase of War Bonds

A ceramic Tank money-box dating from the Great War. Many of these models were broken in order to gain access to the money that had been inserted into them! This model has remained intact - perhaps because it is empty and was never used as a money-box!



Tuberculosis and a Canadian Soldier in Lenham Cemetery

Lenham Cemetery, on the A20 between Charing and Harrietsham, has 87 CWGC graves. Forty-six are men from the REME, killed by a German V1 rocket on the morning of 24th June 1944. Thirty-three are men from Canadian units of the First World War, their graves dating between 1917 and 1919. With the exception of one staff member, all were patients at the Canadian Army Medical Corps Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Lenham. Much of what has been written about military medicine in the First World War focuses on the treatment of the wounded, the traumatised, victims of Spanish Flu and the ever-popular venereal disease. Perhaps because they represent a tiny percentage of the total mortality of the war, there is a tendency to overlook the chronic, lethal illnesses that travelled to France with infected men. But they were there and, in 1917, the CAMC took over a sanatorium on the southern slopes of the Downs above Lenham to provide treatment for Canadian troops diagnosed with TB.

In 1900, tuberculosis - along with pneumonia - was the leading cause of death in the general population. TB is caused by the airborne *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacterium (MT). There are three phases to the disease. Exposure, in which a person is infected with MT through contact with people with active TB symptoms. The second phase is referred to as Latent TB. The length of this phase depends on the health and environment of the carrier. The immune system will try to wall off the MT and prevent it from spreading. This attempt is likely to fail if the person is already in poor health, or they are living in an environment that undermines their immune system. Crowded, damp and insanitary conditions, with poor diet, little fresh air and potentially high levels of stress and trauma are optimal. The third phase, known as TB Disease, is triggered when the latency period breaks down. Those men in Lenham Cemetery were either in the Latent TB phase at the time of enlistment or were exposed to TB after that time. In either case, conditions on the Western Front were ideal for its transmission and development. In the active phase, symptoms would have been: overall malaise, weakness, unaccountable weight loss, persistent coughing with bloody phlegm and a fluctuating body temperature.

When a man in such a condition presented sick, the Medical Officer would probably diagnose him with Trench Fever. MOs were under considerable pressure to keep men on duty by putting them on light duties, which depending on the illness, could make matters worse. Even if the doctor suspected



Pte George Coming-Singer - image from the Virtual War Memorial on the Canadian Veterans Affairs Website

something more than Trench Fever, the only tests available were in base hospitals with laboratories and X-ray facilities, so he was likely to wait for further developments. When the patient failed to improve, the MO would refer him to hospital up on the Channel Coast and, in the case of TB, the man would be shipped over to Britain for treatment; after November 1917, this was provided at Lenham.

In the first half of the 20th Century, Tuberculosis was not curable, the only treatment was to get the disease back into latency, by restoring the body's immune system: sanatoria like Lenham provided a clean environment, peace and quiet, bed-rest, fresh air, a good diet and time. The importance of diet is reflected in the notes of one patient who, the day before he died, was being given protein, salt and fluid in the form of beef-tea every two hours. If a man in Lenham recovered - and many did - he would not be discharged until a large enough party was ready to be transferred to the Canadian Embarkation Hospital in Liverpool. Once there, he would have to wait until a hospital ship with space and, in the case of TB patients, adequate isolation facilities was available to take him home to Canada: the Liverpool diary shows as many as 500 discharges in a day when such a vessel docked.

The only patients at Lenham that I have been able to identify are those who died. Among those, I was immediately struck by the story of Private George Coming-Singer. It opened up areas about which I had known little or nothing: illness in the military, the network of Canadian hospitals in Britain and ethnicities in Canada and its army. I was intrigued and, at the end, deeply touched by it. It is a story I believe to be worth telling.

George was an Indigenous Canadian, specifically of the Kainai people, born on the Blood Reserve, Macleod, Alberta in 1894. His parents are identified on his CWGC record as “Coming Singer [sic] and his wife”. They died when he was young and he was brought up by Mrs Chief-Owl, identified variously in his records as “foster-mother”, “mother” and “aunt”. George attested on 6th September 1916, describing himself as a farmer; he was 6 feet 2 inches tall with a 36-inch chest; the Medical Officer found him fit. His signatures on the paper suggest that he had never had much call for writing.

In 1915, the Government Agent at Blood Reserve reported a heavy death toll from TB among adults, and from pneumonia among children. He noted that 20% of the people were engaged in farming. He remarked that the men’s enthusiasm to enlist would “shame many white communities”. His 1916 report claimed that farming was now the main occupation on the Reserve and that death rates were dropping. He makes no reference to enlistment.

After attestation, George was sent to the 21st Reserve Battalion for basic training, during which time he was hospitalised for four days in December 1916 with flu-like symptoms. This could have been an emergence of TB but, equally, could have been something else. At the end of March 1917, George was shipped to Britain, spending 11 days at sea before arriving in Liverpool. Further training then took place before, on 27th June, he was sent to France to join the 50th Battalion as an infantryman. He saw action at Passchendaele in 1917 and, in August 1918, he fought in the Battle of Amiens. On August 10th, George was shot in the ankle. He fell into water, contaminated with mustard gas, causing burns on his right arm. He was evacuated to the Canadian Hospital, Mill Lane, Manchester, arriving on the 18th August.

When his wounds healed, George was transferred to a Canadian convalescent hospital in Epsom on November 26th. It was here that TB began to emerge. His notes from mid-December show that his heartbeat and respiration were rapid and that he had a persistent cough and chest pains and, on Boxing Day, he was moved to Basingstoke Hospital for tests. There a doctor noted George’s emaciation, describing him as a “gaunt-looking young Indian lying quietly in bed – making no complaint – understands English but expresses himself with difficulty and very slowly. In no distress. Coughs slightly from time to time – coughs nothing up – has no energy – is very weak”. He was put into isolation and various tests were made, including a chest X-ray on 1st January 1919. This showed extensive TB, primarily in the left lung; a diagnosis that was



French TB poster

confirmed when the laboratory reported MT in his sputum.

It was not until 10th January that George reached Lenham. Two days later, his temperature was 103° F but with no other symptoms. On the 13th, just before noon, he haemorrhaged nearly half a pint of blood presumably through his mouth from his lungs. He spoke of chest pains, and was sweating. He was “Put on D. I. List” – Dangerously Ill.

It is likely that George had seen people dying from tuberculosis on the Blood Reserve, perhaps his own parents, and knew what was coming to him. On January 14th at about two in the afternoon, he cut his throat with a razor. At this point his case notes become curiously garbled:

“Died at (2pm) 14.00 o’clock [sic] 14.1.19 on account of [Doctor’s initials] shock and haemorrhage from razor wound [Doctor’s signature] (self inflicted) of throat.”

The doctor, Captain Wilkes, described the wound, noting that the razor had penetrated George’s windpipe but missed the major blood vessels and that there was relatively little bleeding: a statement at odds with his reference to haemorrhage as a cause of death.

Captain Wilkes wrote that George had “showed no mental symptoms & appeared quite rational when last seen a few minutes before death, which followed a few minutes of wound”. It is probable that George could not speak after he had cut himself, so Captain Wilkes’ assessment of rationality probably means that George showed no signs of agitation. George’s quiet demeanour and lack of complaint was noted throughout his hospital records. This could indicate that he had withdrawn mentally into a depression. Alternatively, it could reflect a personal stoic style that he had exhibited all his life. Another possibility is that, what people saw, was the response of a sick Indigenous Canadian, whose first language was not English and who was entirely dependent upon white people. It was probably bad enough for George when he understood that he had TB, but vomiting blood seems like the last straw. I am left wondering if there was a rational component in his mind which, together with entirely understandable despair and terror, motivated him to get upstream of a horrible death.

Captain Wilkes seems to have been distracted when he wrote George’s notes. What was the purpose of interrupting sentences with random signatures? There is also something curious about his description of George’s last moments. The wound was severe but, for a healthy man, not necessarily fatal. It may be, as the notes record, that shock was sufficient to kill a man already near death. But I wonder if the doctor, recognising the futility of keeping George alive, and maybe understanding his motives, was moved to help him on his way.

The Lenham Hospital diary records that on 14th January “Pte Coming-Singer G., 50th Btn died (patient)”. On the 16th it reports that at “15.00 Dr Harris held an inquest on the body of late Pte Coming-Singer G., No. 895373 50th Btn and gave a verdict to the effect that death was due to shock and haemorrhage from self-inflicted wound, when in a dangerously-ill condition owing to Tubercle[?] of the lung”. Finally it notes, on January 17th, “Pte Coming-Singer, G. 50th Btn interred in Lenham Cemetery with full military honours”.

Notwithstanding the Indian Agent’s assertion that TB was in decline, it is probable that TB would have caught up with George at some point in his life; his military service simply speeded up the process. Millions of people died as a result of the war. It would be surprising if many, in their final moments, had not experienced similar feelings to George and, at least, wished for death. The difference between him and many of these others was that, as an invalid, his progress towards death and the actual event, were documented in some detail, even if it is sometimes perplexing. Today, his final moments are far less



Pte George Coming-Singer's headstone. The headstone shows that he was 23 years old when he died on 14th January 1919 yet his attestation form shows his date of birth as 10th August 1894. If his attestation form shows the correct date, he would have been 24 years old when he died (Note: the CWGC do not use a hyphen in George Coming-Singer's name in either their records or on his headstone)



The personal inscription on George's headstone. It is the motto or maxim of the Kainai, and translates as "Be Wise and Persevere"

anonymous than those of some poor soul, breathing his last in a shell-hole.

If you have comments or questions, I can be reached at [REDACTED] □

John Drouot



Medal awarded by the French National Committee against Tuberculosis c. 1920

The Folkestone Golf Club War Memorial

I was playing golf at Sene Valley Golf Club some years ago when I noticed the War Memorial of the old Folkestone Golf Club in a rather dark corner of the clubhouse. Folkestone Golf Club was founded in 1888 and was built on land belonging to Lord Radnor close to the northern edge of the town. In 1965, the club ceased to exist when the land was developed for housing. The Radnor Estate then purchased land on the site of the old Hythe Golf Course which did not reopen after the Second World War and Sene Valley Golf Course, designed by the great English golfer, Henry Cotton, was opened in 1966. Fortunately, the war memorial had been saved and was erected in the new clubhouse. On examining the war memorial, I was surprised to see the name of a French soldier at the top of the list who had been awarded the Croix de Guerre.

I did some research and found that Gaston Emile Bernheim had been born in London on the 4th September 1894 where his father was a diamond merchant for some thirty years. He had been an undergraduate at Exeter College, Oxford in 1912 and it would appear that he didn't really study hard unfortunately as he was not allowed to continue in the Michaelmas term in 1913. Further research showed that he was a gunner in the 2ème Regiment d'Artillerie Lourde (2nd Heavy Artillery Regiment) and that he had, in addition, been awarded the Croix de Guerre and been Mentioned in Despatches. He was killed on 5th October 1915 at Perthes-lès-Hurlus in the Marne Département, aged 21, during the Second Battle of Champagne. I haven't yet found where he was buried or commemorated. The village of Perthes-lès-Hurlus was destroyed in the actions of 25th September 1915. It was one of five villages that were never rebuilt and are now situated in the Military Camp of Suippes, the other four being Le Mesnil, Hurlu, Tahure and Ripont.

I have a document that is the official record of Bernheim's service which was sent to the Département where he died. It gives details of where he was born, his military service, his regiment, and his date of death stating that he was killed in action (*tué à l'ennemi*). The document is dated July 1920.



The names on the Folkestone Golf Club War Memorial tablet now relocated to the Sene Valley Golf Clubhouse

The next two names on the memorial (W Eric Burridge and C W Blackall) proved equally interesting as both were poets with Blackall being better known. Charles Walter Blackall was born in St Albans in 1876. The family lived in Elham in 1881. He had two brothers. He joined the Army - The Buffs Regiment - in 1903 (3rd Battalion) and served during the Boer War. In 1904, he was promoted to the rank of Captain. In 1910, Charles married Alice Evelyn Feutrell Briscoe in Chelsea. They lived in Bouverie Road, Folkestone and in Co Longford, Ireland and had two children. Charles retired from the Army in 1911. Charles and his wife were actors and travelled to New York in 1912 to perform *The Whip* in the Manhattan Opera House. Charles re-enlisted in 1914. He joined the 1st Battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers on 4th December 1914, during a period when Officers from several different regiments were posted to make up for battle casualties. From October, he served with the 11th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment.



*Lt-Col C W Blackall,
The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)*

Promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel in 1915, Charles was sent to command the 6th Bn, South Staffordshire Regiment at Lagnicourt on 11th December 1918. The German Spring offensive opened on 21st March 1918 and the Battalion marched to Frémicourt, near Bapaume. The Battalion War Diary records: *4pm, 24th March. Took up position in trench west of Bapaume-Arras Road.* He was killed the next morning and is commemorated on the Arras Memorial. He was twice Mentioned in Despatches.

Early in 1915, whilst with Welch Fusiliers attached to The Buffs, his poems in *Songs from the Trenches* (published in 1915 by Bodley Head, London) describe some of the discomforts and hardships suffered by the troops in the winter of 1914-15. In his preface, Blackall said "I may mention that all the incidents described in this little volume are either facts or founded on facts." He was a published poet though not one of the well-known war poets.

Blackall's poem "W.G.C.G." is dedicated to former Prime Minister William Gladstone's grandson, William Glynne Charles Gladstone, who was killed in action on 13th April 1915 whilst serving with the Royal Welch Fusiliers.

W.G.C.G.

Possessor of an honoured name.

Right nobly he upheld the same.

Now on the Roll of England's fame

His name is writ.

Among his gifts the magic wand

Of influence he had command,

Yet scorned its use, and served his land

With British grit.

His stay with us was all too brief,

Too quickly came his "next relief",

Yet One above, who knows our grief,

Had thought it best.

Though sadly short his life's brief span.

Of this we truly sure we can:

A very gallant gentleman

Now takes his rest.

The following poem is easy to understand and I find it quite impressive:

Attack!

You are standing watch in hand,

All waiting the command,

While your guns have got their trenches fairly set.

When they lengthen up the range,
You feel a little strange

As you clamber up the sand-bag parapet.

It's a case of do or die -

Still, you rather wonder why

Your mate drops down beside you with a screech;

But you're very soon aware,

When a bullet parts your hair,

That He's not the only pebble on the beach.

It's each man for himself,

For your captain's on the shelf,

And you don't know if he's wounded or dead.

So never count the cost,

Of your comrades who are lost,

But keep the line on forging straight ahead.

The high explosive shell

Has blown their wire to hell,

And their trench is left a muddy, bloody drain.

They are bolting left and right.

And the few that stay to fight -

Well, not many see their fatherland again!

But there's one cove that you've missed,

And he cops you in the wrist,

As you're stooping down to help a wounded chum.

Though you're feeling mighty faint,

And you're not a blooming saint.

You blow his blasted brains to kingdom come.

You've done your little job.

And you drop down with a sob,

For you're feeling half a man and half a wreck.

And you say a little prayer -

Which for you is rather rare -

For you got it in the arm, and not the neck.

When the evening shadows fall,

You do your best to drawl,

Till the stretcher-bearers find you in a creek.

Then you feel as right as rain,

And forget the aching pain,

For you'll see England's shores within a week.

William Eric Berridge was less well known than Charles Walter Blackall though his collection of WW1 poems, *Verses*, was published in 1916, the year he was killed at the age of 22. He was the younger son of Mr and Mrs D W Berridge who lived at Radnor Park West in Folkestone. He was educated at Eton and New College, Oxford. He joined the Oxford

OTC in October 1914, was commissioned in the Somerset Light Infantry two months later and joined the 6th Battalion in the front-line trenches at Achicourt-Agny in March 1916. His arrival prompted the following poem:

March 1916

As we wallowed in mud-stricken trenches,
And hark to the sound of the rain,
Our thoughts fly away
To localities gay,
We wish we were back there again;
And we sigh for the frolicsome wenches,
Who soothed our afflictions of old,
As we sit in the mire
And we long for a fire,
For our feet are infernally cold.

We've watched through the summer and winter
That most inconsiderate Bosch.
And again in the spring
It's the very same thing-
And I'd give a blank cheque for a wash;
But, Chloe and fair Amarinta,
And Lalage, don't be afraid:
Very shortly the Hun
Will be seen on the run,
And the end will not be long delayed.

For I think very shortly the Kaiser
Will know what we mean by a strafe;
And he'll notice with pain
That he cannot explain
His disposition to laugh:
Then at last he'll be sadder and wiser,
When dawns the all-glorious day;
And the work will be done
And we know that we've won,
And we'll go back to England - to play.

Berridge wrote home in a letter on 5th June 1916:
"As I wandered round the kitchen this morning about 7am, I was presented by the Cook with a large cup of tea and the information that it was his forty-eighth birthday - hence the enclosed. They call him "Primus" because he uses a Primus stove."

A la Santé du Chef

As through the maze of trenches
We, war-worn, weary, trudge.
With appetite, expectant we
Remember Private Rudge.

To see him at his labours
No-one would ever judge
That eight and forty summers have
Been seen by Private Rudge.
Last night they strafed the kitchen, but
He didn't care a fudge;
Until the cheese was toasted well,
He simply wouldn't budge.

His labours are unceasing, and
He never bears a grudge;
So one and all unite in praise
Of Private Primus Rudge.



2/Lt W Eric Berridge, Somerset Light Infantry

On the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the 6th Battalion held front-line trenches in the Blangy area east of Arras, which was a quiet sector. At the beginning of August, the Battalion moved to the Somme area and camped on a hill overlooking Albert about five or six miles from the firing line.

On the 12th August 1916, the 6th Battalion was sent to relieve the Lancashire Fusiliers in the front-line trenches in Delville Wood which were then held partly by the British and partly by the Germans. The "Devil's Wood" before it was attacked four weeks

previously had been thick with leafy trees and dense undergrowth. "As the Battle progressed, the wood was totally ravaged and became littered with broken branches and tangled masses of bushes. The whole area was pock-marked with shell-holes, which both sides had turned as far as possible into posts and machine-gun nests, intersected here and there by trenches and what had been roads through the wood. It was a terrible place over which to fight."

The History of the Somerset Light Infantry recorded:

...The stench from the decaying dead was awful, gas fumes hung about the shell holes and clung to the undergrowth, weird and ghostly in the semi-darkness where the gaunt long arms of the torn off blasted trees, or all that remained of them. The uncertainty of the whereabouts of the German trenches kept the nerves of both officers and men at high tension...

During the night of 12th/13th August, the Battalion sent out patrols into the wood to discover the enemy's position. The Somersets had the best of two encounters with German patrols. The Battalion was relieved on the evening of 14th and returned to support trenches in front of Montauban Alley. However, on the nights of the 15th/16th August, the Battalion still had to provide working parties of 250 men to dig in the wood all night.

On the 18th August, all four companies of the 6th Battalion moved from Montauban to assembly positions in the south-east corner of Delville Wood with orders to attack the German line along the north-east edge, and the German trenches to the east of Delville Wood.

At 6am on the 19th, the preliminary bombardment opened on Beer Trench and Hop Alley and continued all morning. At 2.45pm, the attacking troops advanced across No Man's Land following the creeping barrage and into the German trenches bayonetting or shooting down all those who refused to surrender.

Eric Berridge was commanding "C" Company, and their objective was to capture Hop Alley - the most difficult of all that day. The bombers established a post at the junction of the Alley with Beer Trench, but at the western end of the Alley where it joined with Delville Wood, there were two German machine-guns in a sap. "C" Company eventually broke through the heavy trench-mortar barrage and Berridge was the first to reach the enemy trench, where he was grievously wounded by a sniper; he died the following day at the Casualty Clearing

Station at Heilly. He is buried at Heilly Station Cemetery Mericourt L'Abbe which is situated south-east of Albert.

During the bombardment before the attack, Berridge wrote in a letter home:

"I am writing this in the midst of a din which you can and probably hear on the Leas [*in Folkestone*] ...I enclose my most recent spasm, only half-an-hour old, which you had better revise and set to music. I fear the whole idea of it is very hackneyed and wants some careful working out."

Hymn

God, wheresoe'r thou art Thou may'st be found
And Whosoe'r Thou art,
Grant in the Scheme of Things that we
May play a worthy part.
And give, to help us on our way,
An all-enduring heart.
We know Thou watchest from above
This fantasy of woe;
And wheresoever pain or loss
We here may undergo,
Let us in this be comforted -
None from Thy sight can go.

Sometimes in folly we upon
Thy name profoundly call,
And grumble at our destiny
Because our minds are small.
And so we cannot understand
The Mind that ruleth all.

Grant us to see and learn and know
The greatness of Thy Will,
That each one his allotted task
May grapple with, until
We hear at last Thy perfect voice
Bidding us "Peace, be still."

At the bottom of the war memorial, the names of the three Ames brothers listed emphasises the tragedy suffered by one Folkestone family. □

(I am indebted to Hilary Tolputt (Folkestone Historical Society), the website 'Forgotten Poets of the First World War' and Anne Powell's 'A Deep Cry' for some of the poems and information on both Charles Walter Blackall and William Eric Berridge.)

Richard Young

Lt-Col Charles Walter Blackall - Addendum to Richard Young's article on the Folkestone Golf Club War Memorial (*see page 6*)

By chance, your Editor came across the reference opposite to C. W. Blackall in *Historical Records of The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) 3rd Foot 1914-1919* by R. S. H. Moody (1922).



Lt-Col C. W. Blackall has no known grave and is commemorated by the CWGC on the Arras Memorial. He was aged 42 and had twice been Mentioned in Despatches. □

JB

Of course, the long, dull and dreary trench warfare was not entirely without incident. A poem by Captain C. W. Blackall¹ describes in graphic verse how one of the ration carriers being a little late in slipping into the safety of the trench was bowled over by the enemy and was at first supposed to be dead, but he managed after a while to crawl in somehow and in spite of his agony he brought in his sack of bacon with him. That is the sort of spirit which, when it animates everyone in an army, renders that force absolutely unconquerable. It has often been the same. On the Indian frontier once a Buff soldier was apparently killed. Someone bent over him to take any possible last message. The man was in agony and shot in the stomach, but he could just speak. "Where's my bloody rifle?" was all he said.

¹ Captain Blackall, an old Militia and Special Reserve officer, was killed on the 24th March, 1918, whilst attached to the 4th South Staffordshire Regiment.

A selection of wooden Trench Art Tank Money-Boxes from the Great War

All measurements approximate



Length 8½ inches



Length 9 inches



Length 7½ inches



Length 5½ inches



Length 8½ inches



Length 7¼ inches



Length 9 inches

Returning to the Western Front, January 1921

In February 2023, Professor Mark Connelly gave a talk to the Branch on the subject of battlefield tourism and pilgrimages. Following this, I began browsing post-war copies of *The Dragon* to see what Buffs had gone back to the places they served during the First World War; a number had, and left accounts in the paper. I am writing about one such journey made, in January 1921, by two men identified only as M & R, whom I believe were members of the 1st Battalion in 1914. Their report appears in the May edition. Their travels can be considered a pilgrimage; in this article, I want to explain why.

The account begins at the village of Vailly where, on 21st September 1914, the 1st Buffs had crossed a temporary footbridge over the River Aisne, relieved a battalion of Northumbrian Fusiliers and made their entry into the war. The authors recall the impact of seeing those “black faced warriors” of the BEF, who had been fighting and retreating since mid-August. By the time the battalion reached the Aisne, the battle was nine days old and had become a trench-bound stalemate; the Allied and German armies were now trying to get round each other’s northern flank. The Buffs would stay on the Aisne until 12th October before being moved north to Bois-Grenier, east of Armentieres. To get there, they marched for a day to Fismes (west of Reims); then boarded trains to Cassel (north of Hazebrouk): travelling via Paris, Amiens and Etaples; the process taking nearly 60 hours.

In 1921, M & R journeyed from Vailly to Flanders, describing their journey as “almost as quick” as in 1914. Their destination was Ypres, where they saw the ruined Ypres Cloth Hall, as “a lasting memorial to the crushed ambitions of a once mighty nation”. They described how it had been strengthened with concrete and protected with iron railings. They also observed buildings of “wood and tin rising up among the ruins” and brick houses being built just beyond the walls but, beyond there, they saw that the landscape was “as the war left it”.

From Ypres, M & R visited St Julien, “where so many of our brave comrades rest”, reporting that “the Buffs cemetery was found in good repair”. This is a puzzle because, according to the 2023 CWGC database, there is no “Buffs cemetery” and I can find no evidence that there ever was. There is a Buffs Road Cemetery, on the Hogezeikenweg, between Wieltje and St Julien but not a single identified Buff is buried there: so what are M & R talking about? The Hogezeikenweg appears as “Buffs Road” on some trench maps, the earliest I can find being dated July 1915 (using WFA Trench Mapper). Given this date, the name probably comes from the part played by the 2nd Battalion in shoring up the line after the German’s gas attack on Canadian and



Buffs Road Cemetery

French troops around St Julien on 22nd April 1915. The battalion took up a position with its right at the point where “Buffs Road” joins the road to St Julien and its left flank vulnerably exposed. In the ensuing fighting, 190 Buffs were killed; B Company, on the left, was surrounded and those men not killed were taken prisoner. Most of the dead from this action have no known grave. I believe that M & R omitted “Road” because to them, personally, “Buffs” was more important. In 1937, another Buff, Brigadier McDouall, visited Ypres where *The Dragon* reports him visiting “Buffs Road Cemetery”. The significance *The Dragon*, McDouall and M & R give to the location, was as a site of regimental honour rather than of specific burials.

On another occasion, the two men crossed the French border to Armentieres where the 1st Battalion, fresh from the Aisne, were stationed from mid-October 1914 to the end of May 1915. The authors took a detour to Bailleul. In the article, they remark on the pleasantness of the billets they occupied there, for two days, in early June 1915. Here’s another puzzle: why did the memory of those days remain so strong six years later? Mark Connelly, in *Postcards from the Western Front*, says of Bailleul that, for most of the war, it was comfortably behind the lines, providing good billets and places of entertainment, as well as having large supply dumps, with the communications to support them. In the German Georgette Offensive of April 1918, Bailleul was destroyed by Allied artillery, denying its facilities to the advancing enemy. A place of comfort and safety for countless men, disappeared in a matter of days: a loss that, I think, remained with M & R.

Following their arrival at Bois-Grenier, in mid-October 1914, the 1st Buffs were in trenches for over four weeks without relief. This is an indication of the pressure on the BEF at that time as, less than 20 miles north of the Buffs, the Germans were trying to break through to the key strategic location of Ypres. It was

*Bailleul - pre-war**Bailleul - post-war*

the end of November before things settled and the battalion was moved into billets near Armentieres. Of that town, M & R report that it “was much as we left it in May 1915”: making, perhaps, an unvoiced contrast with Bailleul. Remembering their time in Armentieres, they say: “Enquiries for Josephine met with disappointment and no news of Vaseline or Glycerine, of 4th Division Follies fame, could be obtained”, focusing on the diversions of the town - female company and soldiers’ shows, with their inevitable drag acts.

The authors visited Bois-Grenier, remarking on the Battalion’s epic stint in the line. They note that “Many of the old Regimental names can be found on the tiny crosses dotted around” and, making a touching link between the land and remembrance of the dead, they ask: “Will not the mothers of Kent wish to know that once again the scarred ground flourishes and that the green grass and waving cornfields form a coverlet for their dear departed ones [?]”.

What did M & R think they were doing, running around the wasteland of the post-war Western Front in the middle of winter? The time of year reduces the likelihood that this was a jolly and, anyway, they make

no mention of accommodation, food, drink or social events. They were not tourists: there was no account of their travels before Vially, nor after Flanders. Furthermore, when travelling between Ypres and Armentieres, Bailleul is a detour that tourists would not make to see a ruin that was unknown to anyone save the troops who had been succoured there. They may have been on a sentimental journey, although any sentiment involved is rich and complex: the detour to Bailleul is to grieve for destroyed contentment; whilst Armentieres offers a nostalgic glimpse of happy times, juxtaposed with grief and pride around Bois-Grenier.

It is important to stress that I am inferring much about M & R’s emotional responses: their article gives little away. It is almost as if they are not addressing readers who were not among the surviving Buffs from France and Flanders, September 1914 - June 1915. They make little effort to explain what the men of Vailly and Bois-Grenier would have understood implicitly. Their comparison between the time it took them to travel from the Aisne to Ypres, and the time it had taken the 1st Battalion to get up to Armentieres, had little meaning for me without reference to the battalion diary. Whilst that tells me how long the 1914 journey took, I still know nothing about what it was like to take it. When it came to the reference to Bailleul, the diary was of no help and I was left speculating about what triggered M & R to remember those two days in 1915. It is generally accepted that old soldiers prefer to offer the true depth of their experiences to those who had shared them; as much as comradeship, this is about the disquiet of being alone with sacred memories. The emotional complexity that may surround M & R’s memories, together with their tendency to imply rather than explain, leads me to think about their journey in terms of pilgrimage: not necessarily in a traditional religious sense, but definitely an otherworldly, or spiritual one.

Returning to old battlefields and places of refuge can trigger memories so vivid that what is, rationally, understood to be from the past is experienced, viscerally, as if happening in the present. Today, we

*Men of the 1st Battalion. The Buffs at Bois-Grenier - winter 1914¹*

understand this as symptomatic of Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) overlooking that one man's PTS may be another man's spiritual experience. David Lloyd in *Battlefield Tourism* notes how, from early on in the fighting, people were thinking of the battlefields as sacred places. He notes too how this sacredness served to separate those who survived a specific event from those who came later. In the 1917 poem, "*Beaucourt Revisited*" A. P. Herbert deals with his traumatic, or spiritual, memories by expressing them in verse. In November 1916, he was on the Somme, in the Hawke Battalion Royal Naval Division, when it stormed and took the town of

Beaucourt-sur-Ancre, at a terrible cost in lives. The reformed battalion was posted back there a year later; the poem reflects how Herbert's memories of time, place and people, created an unbridgeable gap between him and the drafts that came later.

Without better evidence, it would be a mistake to project the intensity of Herbert's response on to M & R's prose but, as with him, the places they write about have a personal significance. Their agenda is different: Herbert is seeking to tell those who were not at Beaucourt, about how his experience separates them from him. M & R, on the other hand, have little to say to outsiders. Their article is a series of snap-shots of remembrance to trigger memories among old comrades.

Beaucourt Revisited

Here, at the head of Peche Street, 'twas death to show your face,
To me it seemed like magic to linger in the place;
For me how many spirits hung around the Kentish Caves,
But the new men see no spirits - they only see the graves.

...

I crossed the blood red ribbon, that once was no-man's land,
I saw a misty daybreak and a creeping minute-hand;
And here the lads went over, and there was Harmsworth shot,
And here was William lying - but the new men know them not.

...

And I said, "There is still the river, and still the stiff, stark trees,
To treasure here our story, but there are only these";
But under the white wood crosses the dead men answered low,
The new men know not Beaucourt, but we are here - we know.

They list the hallowed places of their pilgrimage: the Bailleul that had been lost; the Bois-Grenier to which the old battalion gave so much blood and endurance; Armentieres of the good old days; the road and cemetery north of Ypres, that commemorate where and when The Buffs held the line. The "new men", whoever they may be, may want to understand, may want to travel with them, but never really can.

If you have comments or questions, I can be reached at [REDACTED] □

John Drouot

Notes:

¹ <https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/specialcollections/2018/10/17/kent-its-regiments-and-the-first-world-war/>

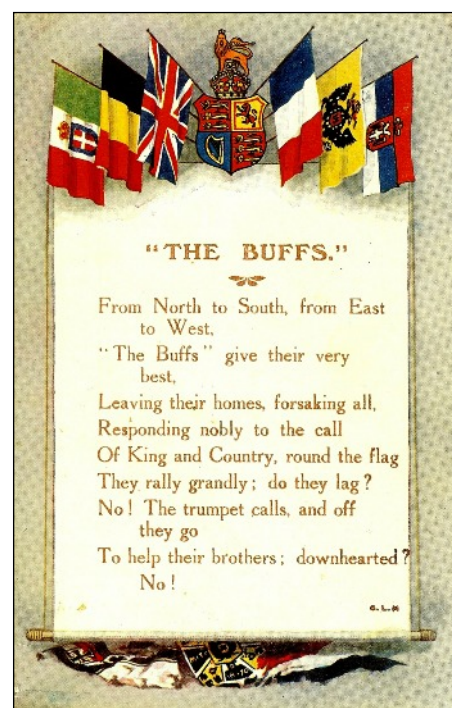
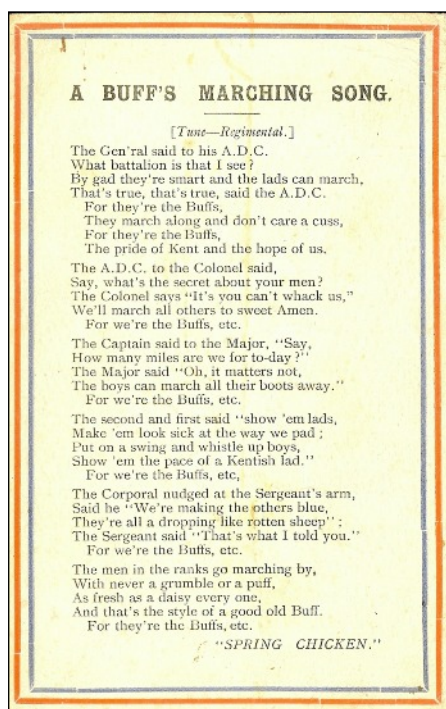


Another photo from the archive:

The Harvey Pals have featured in *Between the Lines* in a number of occasions. Sadly, Bill Westall died on 6th November 2023 (see his obituary in issue No. 77) and John Herbert died on 4th January 2024 (see his obituary on page 23 of this issue). This photo shows the Harvey Pals together at Christmas 2008

L-R: John Botting, Barbara Herbert, Richard Young, John Herbert and Bill Westall

Trench Art - 'The Buffs' postcards and decorated shellcase



These three postcards are typical examples of the patriotic postcards that were produced during the Great War



Seven views of a German 77mm shellcase decorated with The Buffs badge. Whether this example of trench art was created during the Great War or in the years immediately following is a matter of conjecture



The markings on the base of the above German 77mm shellcase show that it was manufactured by Polte Magdeburg in December 1908; that the casing was strengthened (St = Stark [strong]); and that it was inspected (11) before it left the manufacturers

Close-up view of the finely executed design of The Buffs dragon on the above shellcase



Mementoes of the Mills Hand-Grenade



Inkstand on square ceramic base



*'Model of Tommy throwing Hand Grenade'
Arcadian China*



Inkstand on circular ceramic base



REGD No 651542. 1915

Design registered number shown on the back of each of the inkstands



*'The Bomb Thrower'
Grafton China*



Selection of WWI Crested China models of the Mills hand-grenade - crests (LtoR): Sittingbourne, Penshurst, Epsom, Dursley and Margate



Back of Sittingbourne model



Back of Penshurst model showing metal pin

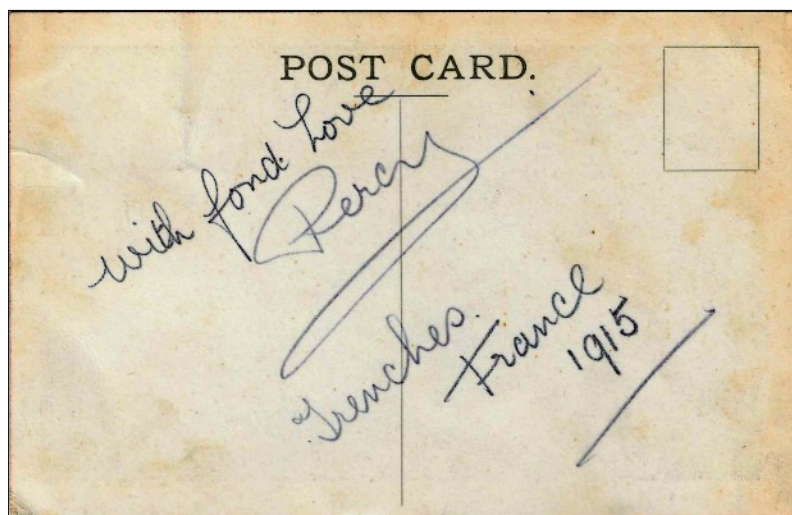
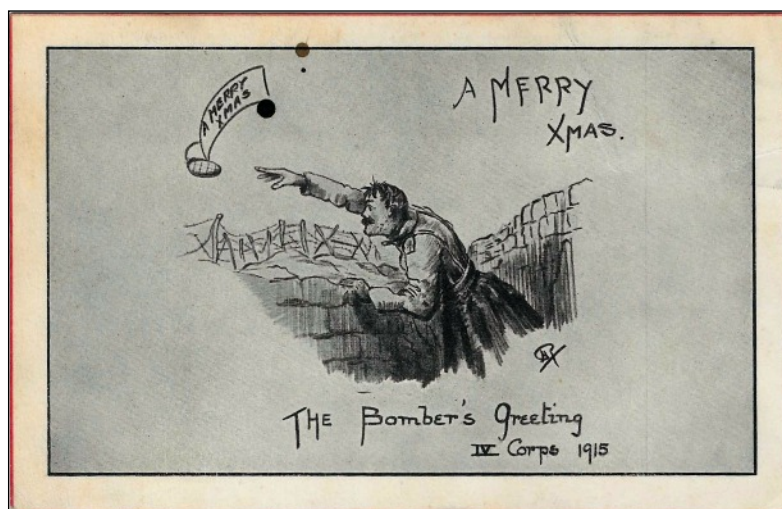
More hand-grenade mementoes



This postcard is one of a series of 'Out for Victory' designs drawn by the Punch illustrator Leonard Raven-Hill



'Keeping his hand in'
Bairnsfatherware tea-plate
Grimwades China



Succinct message written on the 1915 IV Corps Christmas card shown above

The presentation of the Canterbury Tank on Saturday, 19th July 1919

CANTERBURY—TANK PRESENTED TO CITY.

There was a full round of festivities at Canterbury on Peace Day, the programme commencing with the presentation in the Ancient Moat of a female tank, by Major-General Sir Colin Mackenzie, on behalf of the National War Savings Committee. The Mayor and Corporation, the Dean and Mrs. Wace, Colonel Ryder and officers from the Garrison attended, and the interesting ceremony was witnessed by thousands of citizens, most of whom assembled in the Upper Dane John Terrace immediately overlooking the Moat. The General heartily congratulated the city on the large sums of money it had raised for the various War Loans and on the splendid record of service it had shown during the war. The Mayor, in receiving the tank, mentioned that many Canterbury families had had six, seven and more sons serving in the war, besides daughters who were married to men in the forces. An officer and fifty men of "The Buffs" provided a guard of Honour to receive the General on his arrival and a contingent from the 5th (Royal Irish) Lancers were also present.

In the afternoon the Mayor and Corporation, Magistrates, Fire Brigades, Comrades of the Great War, and representatives of the Friendly Societies, marched in procession to the Recreation Ground, where the Union Jack was unfurled by the Mayor, and saluted by the City school children. The National Anthem was then whole-heartedly sung by the great crowds assembled. Subsequently five oak-trees (grown from acorns in 1914) were planted in commemoration of "The Day," by the Mayor and Mayoress, Sheriff Pentecost, the Dean and Dr. Frank Wacher (Medical Officer). The school children were entertained to tea, and an attractive programme of sports was held during the afternoon. On "The Buffs" Green at the barracks, and mounted displays given by officers and men of the 5th Lancers. A dance afterwards took place on the Green, and a display of fireworks in the Old Park. The day's events culminated with the lighting of the vivid "Dover flares" on two of the highest points in the City, and thousands of citizens made their way to the surrounding hills to witness the wonderful chain of beacons formed by the bonfires and flares in the adjoining towns and villages.

This report from the Kent Messenger dated 26th July 1919 is courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

Another ceramic money-box dating from the Great War. This one features an 'Old Bill'-type character asking the question on the side of the Tank: "Where's that blinking Kaiser?"



The above photo shows quite clearly where the Canterbury Tank was located in the Moat outside the city walls



This image from Google Street View shows the same location today. The width of the Moat has been much reduced to accommodate the dual carriageway of which this stretch between Riding Gate and Pin Hill is known as Rhodaus Town

For technical details of the Canterbury Tank, see the letter received from David Fletcher in 1996 reproduced on the following page.



The Canterbury Tank

This photo of the Canterbury Tank has already featured in our Newsletter. In 1996, I sent a copy of the photo to David Fletcher at the Tank Museum asking if he could kindly identify it for me. I recently came across his reply which I thought would be of much interest to our members. David was - and no doubt still is - a fountain of knowledge about tanks generally having written numerous books and articles about them. David is now long retired, but fondly remembered by many. □

JB



Our Ref: KC/5000-LIB

May 14, 1996

See
photo
below

THE TANK MUSEUM



BOVINGTON, DORSET. BH20 6JG - TEL 01929 405 070: FAX 01929 405 360

James Brazier Esq.,
34 High View Road,
Guildford,
Surrey GU2 5RT

Dear



Close-up showing rivets at back of cab

This box has been laid over David Fletcher's letter. The arrows locate the two pairs of rivets identifying the Tank as being a Mark III

Thanks for your letter of the 22nd, and the enclosed copy of the postcard of the Canterbury tank.

No doubt at all it was a Mark III, although the clue is obscure enough. If you look at the strip of rivets, running along the top of the back of the cab you will notice that at each end there are two sited close together. This resulted from a modification to make the cab narrower, which was typical only of the interim designs Marks II and III. On the Mark IV, which was to some extent a new design, this was evened out. Of the two interim marks only female Mark IIIs are ever known to have carried the smaller Lewis gun sponsons which would in theory rule out its being a Mark II. Hair splitting stuff but that is how it is with these things.

The number 16 is a training number and a very early one. Most of the training machines, which were mark IVs, had three digits. It is a pity we cannot see the tank's own number but that was often painted out. Nobody has yet found a registry of training numbers but one assumes they were issued in chronological order while they were at Bovington and it makes sense that a Mark III would be low down the list. Indeed it raises an interesting point that I will have to give more thought to.

They built 50 each, Marks II and III, each split again into 25 male and 25 female. Twenty six Mark IIs went to France for the Arras battle and five were put aside for experimental work, leaving 19. One also supposes that there were a few Mark I tanks that never went to France which should have been included with the training machines. Even if they were not it would make sense that the lowest training number to be found on a Mark III in theory would be 20, and the highest 70 so number 16 (if it was the lowest Mark III) suggests either that four more Mark IIs are unaccounted for or that the tanks arrived out of sequence or, which I suspect is most likely, that they did not hit upon the idea of numbering training tanks until sometime in 1917 and just marked them more or less at random. Maybe we shall never know for sure.

Yours sincerely

David Fletcher - Librarian

The arrival of the Tonbridge Tank on Tuesday, 29th July 1919

THE TONBRIDGE TANK.

THE RECEPTION CEREMONY.

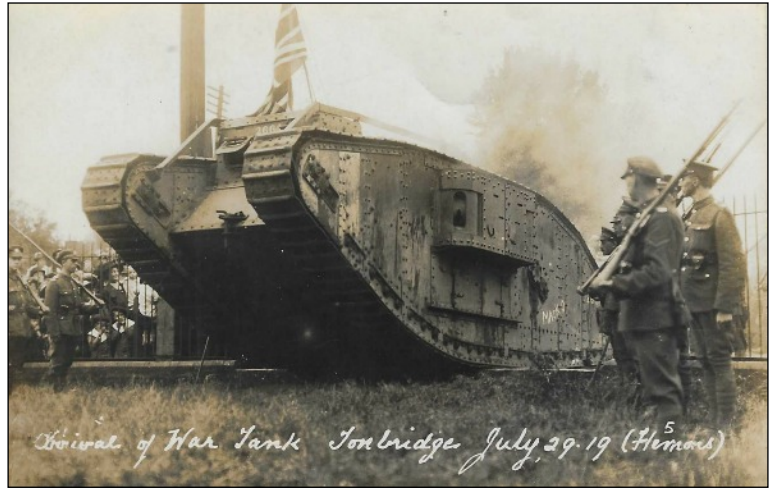
RECOGNITION OF FINE WORK ACCOMPLISHED.

All Tonbridge and the district around turned out on Tuesday evening, for rarely, if ever before, has such a crowd been witnessed in the town. It was the occasion of the arrival of the Tank, presented in recognition of the fine work accomplished in connection with the War Savings Association, and everybody was out to witness its career from the Railway Station to its resting place in the Castle Grounds.

A procession was formed in the Castle Grounds and proceeded to the Railway Station to escort the Tank back, and consisted of Police, Band of the 1st Battalion Middlesex Regiment, Local War Savings Committee, Secretaries of Local War Savings Associations, Royal Army Service Corps, representatives of the Chamber of Trade and Ratepayers' Association, National Federation of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers, Comrades of the Great War, St. John Ambulance Brigade, etc. The Tank was met at the Slade entrance to the Castle Grounds by the Chairman and members of the Urban District Council, and it then made its way into the Castle Playground, surmounting all difficulties in its way, and eventually coming to a standstill at the spot arranged, and where the ceremony of handing over took place.

Councillor Donald Clark, J.P. (Chairman of the Urban District Council), Mr. F. O. Streeten, J.P., C.C. (Chairman of the Tonbridge and District War Savings Association), and Mr. B. L. Hougham (Secretary), and

The COMMANDER, in handing over the Tank, said they had seen a little of what one could do, but unfortunately only a very small part. He much regretted parting with it, not because it was presented to Tonbridge, but on account of the fact that it had been a friend to him. There had been a lot of criticism about them being life-takers, but he could assure them such was not the case. Anyone who had been inside and heard the Bosch's bullets rattling outside knew what it was like. The Tanks were of two types, the male and the female, and he regretted parting with this one, because it was one of his lady friends. It was being presented to them in recognition of the good work accomplished in respect to the War Loans, and he had great pleasure in formally handing it over to Mr. Streeten on behalf of the National Committee.



This postcard shows the arrival of the Tonbridge Tank at its site in the grounds of Tonbridge Castle

The accompanying newspaper cutting from the Tonbridge Courier dated 1st August 1919 is courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive. It is an extract of the much fuller report. Alongside the report in the Tonbridge Courier for that date is a report on the arrival of the Tunbridge Wells Tank on Wednesday, 30th July 1919.

It would therefore appear that the Tanks were presented to the Kent towns over a two-week period in 1919:

Canterbury Tank	Saturday, 19th July
Tonbridge Tank	Tuesday 29th July
Tunbridge Wells Tank	Wednesday, 30th July
Ashford Tank	Friday, 1st August
Deal & Walmer Tank	Saturday, 2nd August

In 1994, yours truly wrote an article listing all of the 265 towns and cities that were presented with Tanks immediately after the Great War: that article was published in Dr Alf Peacock's *Gun Fire*. The towns and cities that were awarded tanks were not chosen on the basis of their size but on the amount of money that their citizens' achievement in raising money through National War Bonds and War Savings Certificates. Each of the Tanks was expected to be regarded as a permanent memorial of the place's financial effort during the war. However, one by one, the tanks were scrapped until only one - the Ashford Tank - remained throughout the whole of the country, and that only survived because it was used as an electricity sub-station for many years.

It is believed that the Ashford Tank underwent a major restoration with a protective canopy being erected over it some 30 years ago. However, it has recently been reported that the Tank is in an unstable condition and that it is considered to be 'at risk' unless a complete overhaul is carried out within the next 15-20 years.

Let us hope that finance will become available to carry out whatever work is necessary to ensure that it survives for another hundred years. □

The arrival of Ashford's Presentation Tank in August 1919

This report on the arrival of Ashford's Tank is extracted from the *Kent Messenger* dated 9 August 1919. It is not clear whether the Tank arrived on Friday 1 August or Friday 8 August. I suspect that it was probably the earlier date. The extract is only approximately one-third of the full report.

The two photographs below showing the arrival of the Tank in St George's Square capture the atmosphere of the occasion. Towards the end of the second paragraph of the newspaper report, reference is made to "everybody got in in everybody else's way" and that is clearly evident from the two photos.



This shows Tank 245 arriving in St George's Square under its own power with a puff of smoke from its exhaust clearly visible. Indeed, looking at the photo, one can almost hear the "chunk-chunks" as the Tank crawled along and smell the "gale of petrol aromas" that surrounded the Tank



This shows Tank 245 having arrived at its designated spot with distinguished guests standing on top of it before making speeches to the assembled crowd. It is believed that the officer standing on the front of the Tank is Captain Walter Frederick Farrar of the Army Council who presented the Tank to Ashford in recognition of the splendid response to the National Savings Appeals. The tank was delivered to Ashford West Railway Station and driven to St George's Square.

Captain Farrar was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry during the British offensive at Cambrai whilst serving in "F" Battalion of the Tank Corps which he had joined in May 1917. ("F" Battalion was part of 36th Brigade of 12th (Eastern) Division). The award was gazetted on 18 February 1918 and Captain Farrar was decorated on 25 November 1920

(With grateful thanks to Richard Farrar [who lives in Toronto, Canada] for information on Captain Walter Farrar MC (who was his father's first cousin) and to the British Newspaper Archive for their assistance with this article.)

JB

ASHFORD RECEIVES HER TANK.

A Great Event.

With quite an extraordinary facility, on Friday, Ashford threw off its penitential garb, and flocked, en masse to greet its Tank. Such a crowd has rarely been seen before in Ashford. It filled the Station Yard, it thronged Station Road and the High Street, and positively surged round St. George's Square, where an unlovely dab of concrete marked the Tank's last resting place.

At 6.30 promptly the Tank got a move on. It crawled along delightfully, starting with ferocious "chunk-chunks," a puff of smoke, and a gale of petrol aromas. The children screamed delightedly. Boy Scouts and Wolf Cubs took on a more military bearing—it was easy to see that they regarded the proceedings as their show. The totem of the Wolf Cubs reared proudly, the band played its loudest, everybody got in everybody else's way—and so the procession wended its onward progress.

St. George's Square was packed with people, and the police were there in force—and what a lot of coloured ribbons our constables wear now. The police worked tremendously hard at keeping the crowd back. It was weary waiting, but the crowd possessed that stolid patience only to be found in England. Presently Supt. Paramour drove up in a motor car—like the third scene in *Florodora*. This was taken to indicate that the Tank was well on its way, and, sure enough, a few minutes later, the monster placidly crawled round Castle Street. For a while the giant meandered round the Square, and after a pretty bit of steering by the intrepid driver, mounted its pedestal, where Mr. Kither, amidst intense silence, turned off the switch. An intrepid band of ladies and gentlemen mounted the monster's scaly sides and delivered speeches from the top. We offer our sincere congratulations to Mrs. Watts, Miss Brake, Miss Davey and Miss Deuchars, who so successfully scaled Avernus.

The speeches were lengthy, but patriotic, and the fact that 87 war savings certificates were subsequently purchased is a striking tribute to British endurance and pluck. Small wonder is it that we defeated the Boche.

Afterwards the Band played "God save the King." As soon as the music dawned on the multitude, every cap was removed, the soldiers stood at 'ehun, and the great crowd arrived at an impressive silence. And afterwards we fared sumptuously in the Parish Hall. The dinner was more than good—it was excellent. Mr. Pace more ought to have been called in and toasted, but, unfortunately, the Stuart period has long since gone west.

Deal & Walmer's Presentation Tank

DEAL, WALMER, AND SANDWICH MERCURY, SATURDAY, AUGUST 2nd, 1919.

WAR SAVINGS COMMITTEE.

THE TANK.

The "TANK" which the Army Council has allotted to
DEAL AND WALMER.

in commemoration of their patriotic achievement, and the proud position they have gained in financing the War to the large extent of over £400,000, and as a lasting testimony to the important part played therein by the Deal and Walmer War Savings Associations, will be publicly presented to the Local Authorities by—

THE RT. HON. LORD GEORGE HAMILTON,

on Saturday, the 2nd August, 1919, at 3 p.m., on the site in front of
DEAL CASTLE.

The attendance of the Public on the occasion is solicited, as a mark of their appreciation of this special recognition of the voluntary efforts of the several War Savings Associations, resulting in the gift of a Tank to one of the smallest areas so honoured.

W. H. REDSULL, J.P.,
Mayor, Chairman.

GEORGE D. ROE,
Hon. Sec.,
Deal and Walmer War Savings Committee.

Note.—The Route will be from the Station Yard via West Street, Stanhope Road, Victoria Road, and Castle Road, to the Site.

The accompanying two newspaper reports on the Deal & Walmer Tank are courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive - a wonderful resource for information on almost anything. The above report announced the expected arrival of the Tank on Saturday, 2nd August 1919 whilst the second report is an extract from a much longer report on the actual arrival of the Tank.

It is interesting to note that the detachment of the Tank Corps that delivered the Deal & Walmer tank was under the charge of Capt Walter Frederick Farrar MC - the same officer who oversaw the arrival of the Ashford Tank a day or two earlier (see page 20).

JB



A rare Tank silver 'sweetheart brooch' with the Birmingham assay mark for 1917 at rear



This postcard view shows the Deal & Walmer Tank outside the former South Eastern Hotel. Behind the Tank appears to be what looks like a field-gun. It is though probable that the field-gun was one captured by the British during the Great War. To the left of the Tank is Deal Castle. The hotel has long gone and the site of it is now a block of apartments

DEAL, WALMER, AND SANDWICH MERCURY,
SATURDAY, AUGUST 9th, 1919.

THE TANK.

**PRESENTED BY LORD GEORGE
HAMILTON.**

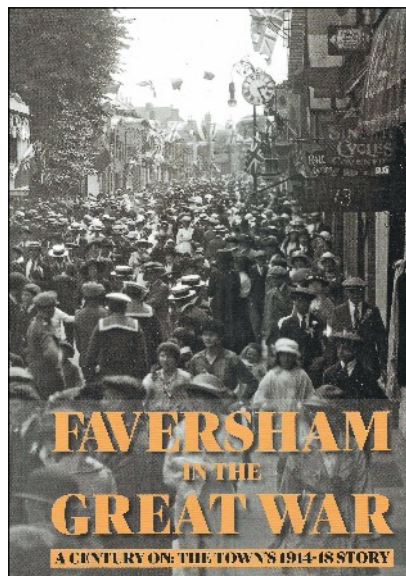
**DEAL AND WALMER'S £432,567 FOR
WAR FINANCE.**

A battle-worn monster made its last journey along the streets of old Deal last Saturday. It had played its part in France, notably in Bourlon Wood, in November, 1917, and now it rests, a strange-shaped mass of iron, as a war trophy on the sea-front at Deal—a monument at once to British resourcefulness in devising means for overcoming apparently insurmountable difficulties, and to the achievement of Deal and Walmer in raising the sum above indicated in aid of war finance.

Headed by Inspr. Russell and constables of the K.C.C., the Tank moved its great 28-ton mass slowly along the road from the railway station where it had been standing for some weeks, by way of West Street, Stanhope Road, High Street, Victoria Road, and Castle Road. The Tank moved under its own power in the charge of a detachment of the Tank Corps under the command of Capt. Farrar, M.C. The interest of the juvenile part of the community in the great mass of machinery was apparent throughout its progress on its last journey, and they formed an unofficial escort.

Gathered round the prepared site on the north-east side of Deal Castle, was a great assembly of residents and visitors, amongst whom the school children were much in evidence, as they had the right to be in view of the creditable part they had played in the war savings movement. From the Castle battlements Lady George Hamilton and the house party watched the proceedings. The band of the Royal Marines, under Band-Sergt. Vernon, played till the monster came in sight and, dexterously manœuvred, for so big and unwieldy a machine, was brought to its position on the concrete stand, exactly on the lines marked out for it. Naturally, with so heavy a mass the Tank left its impress on the roads, particularly at the corners.

For the Bookshelf



Faversham in the Great War edited by Christine Rayner and Stephen Rayner. Published by Faversham Town Council in 1918 on the centenary of the end of the Great War. Copies of this superb 72pp A4 book in softback that was published to tell the story of Faversham during 1914-18, are still

available from the Faversham Town Council Office, 12 Market Place, Faversham at £5.00 a copy.

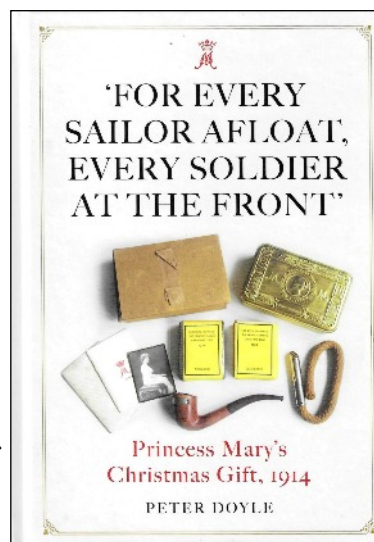
I came across this book, by chance, in a charity bookshop in Margate last November. Although the book was published over five years ago, I was not previously even aware of its existence. Indeed, when I attended the November Branch meeting, I spoke briefly about the book and told everyone how impressed I was by it. One or two members indicated that they were aware of it but I got the impression that the publication of the book had passed by most of the Branch members. At only £5.00 a copy, the book is simply fantastic and great value for money. It is printed on high-quality glossy paper and the reproduction of the photographs alone is worth £5. Clearly, the publication of the book was subsidised. Do get yourself a copy from the Faversham Town Council Office; I guarantee that you will not be disappointed.

However, you might find that copies are only available to purchase in person. If that requires you to make a visit to Faversham, do take the opportunity to visit the town's War Memorial on the corner of Roman Road and Stone Street - just a few hundred yards from the Town Council Office. Also take a look at the adjacent War Memorial Garden in Stone Street to see the tablets erected in 2018 on which are listed the names of all the servicemen from Faversham who lost their lives in the two World Wars.

Faversham is such an interesting town where there is so much to see in it - including the mass grave of the Faversham Munitions Explosion victims in the cemetery in Love Lane - that one could easily spend a whole day in the town. But don't leave it too long as copies of the book might well sell out soon. □

'For every Sailor afloat and every Soldier at the Front' - Princess Mary's Christmas Gift, 1914 by Peter Doyle.

This is another book which passed me by. It was published in 2021 by Unicorn Publishing Group. It contains 318 pages full of fascinating information on Princess Mary's brass gift



box. Everyone interested in the Great War will be familiar with these brass boxes that were, by the end of the war, gifted to virtually every person who served their 'King and Country' during the Great War but the author, through meticulous research, tells the story of how these brass boxes and the logistics of eventually producing and distributing over two-and-a-half million of them. The book is very highly recommended; copies of it are available from Amazon and all good booksellers. □ **JB**

Tributes

Michael Barker (1939-2023) and Sir Frank Sanderson Bt (1934-2023)

Although not a member of our Branch, Michael Barker was a leading architectural historian who is best known today for his consultancy work, on behalf of the Lutyens Trust, on the creation of the Visitor Centre at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing which members of the Branch visited on their Branch Tour in 2019. Michael Barker's death last August was followed in November by the death of Sir Frank Sanderson Bt at the age of 89. Sir Frank was instrumental in securing funding for the construction of the Visitor Centre at Thiepval.

I remember Sir Frank Sanderson addressing a meeting of the WFA held at the National Army Museum over 20 years ago when the Thiepval Visitor Centre was a distant vision. There was, however, no question that he was going to succeed in his mission!

The passing of both Michael Barker and Sir Frank Sanderson - the two leading figures behind the Visitor Centre - within a three-month period is very sad but they left behind a legacy building at Thiepval of which they were both extremely proud. □

JB

Obituaries

John Herbert (1930-2024)

John joined the WFA in its early days and regularly attended meetings held at the National Army Museum and the meetings organised by Julian Sykes at Ashford. When the East Kent Branch was formed, he attended the first and many subsequent meetings until the Covid-19 epidemic prevented his further attendance at Branch meetings.



John Herbert - photo taken during the 2015 Branch Battlefield Trip to the Ypres Salient

Born in Pulborough, his family moved to Canterbury in 1937. He was educated at St Stephen's Primary School, Canterbury; the Canterbury Cathedral Choir School where he was Head Chorister; and Simon Langton Boys' School, Canterbury.

He did his National Service 1950-1951, serving first in The Buffs and then in the Middlesex Regiment who were sent to Hong Kong after the Korean War started. John served in the cold inhospitable climate of Korea and remembered, with appreciation, the American K-rations whilst there.

After demobilisation, he went to the Worcester Teachers' Training College from 1951-53 and the Cardiff Teachers' Training College from 1954-55 to specialise in PE. After a short spell teaching in Hitchin, where he played for Letchworth RFC, he was appointed in 1959 to the PE Department of the Harvey Grammar School, Folkestone where he taught PE and Geography for 30 years. There he ran the school athletics, gymnastics and basketball. Whilst at the Harvey Grammar School, with staff colleagues John Botting, Bill Westall and Richard Young and John's wife Barbara, also a teacher, he became a member of a group of WW1 enthusiasts who called themselves The Harvey Pals. For more than 35 years they visited the battlefields of the Salient and the Somme and ventured further afield visiting Gallipoli in 1983 and 1985 when there were few visitors, and the Vosges, interspersed with WW2 visits to Normandy, Dieppe and the Ardennes.

Away from school, John and Barbara walked in Snowdonia, the Lake District and Scotland, visited the Shetlands, the Orkneys, New Zealand and the USA. In retirement, they went on Holts' Battlefields Tours to South Africa in 1995 (Anglo-Zulu War) and

in 1997 (Boer War), Italy, Berlin, Norway, Prague and Crete.

John was responsible for founding the Canterbury Judo Club - he himself was a black belt - and he played rugby for many years for Canterbury RFC. He was interested in wildflowers - particularly the rare orchids of east Kent - and was a keen birdwatcher.

Having two new hips restricted his walking somewhat so he took up cycling and rode around east Kent looking at WW2 fortifications - blockhouses, dragon's teeth, etc. and could be seen riding his bike all over Canterbury and John became known as "the man on the bike".

In 2013, he had a heart operation which slowed him down somewhat and, in February 2023, he went into hospital and was seriously ill. When he came out, in March 2023, he was housebound and died peacefully at home on 4th January leaving Barbara and son, William, also a long-standing member of the WFA. □

Richard Young

Geoff Orton (1946-2023)



Geoff Orton carrying the Town Mace at the Margate Clock Tower event organised by Margate Civic Society to mark the restoration of the Time Ball atop the Clock Tower in April 2014. He stood in as Acting Town Sergeant on that occasion and carried off the role with real aplomb!

Although a relatively new member of our Branch, Geoff was a regular attendee at our meetings and was a keen visitor to the battlefields before Covid-19 struck the world. Geoff was proud to be a member of the WFA.

Before he retired to Westgate-on-Sea, Geoff had worked in the publishing world and for the Ministry of Justice for many years. Geoff then involved himself in a variety of organisations. In

addition to the WFA, Geoff was actively involved in Margate Civic Society, Thanet Archaeological Society, The Margate School (of Art), Monkton Nature Reserve and countless other local organisations and causes. Geoff died peacefully at home on 5 December 2023 after a long illness - surrounded by hundreds of books. Geoff is sorely missed by his many friends and acquaintances. □

James Brazier

Future meetings:

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

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

2024

6 February

William Franklin: 'Remembering 'Bungo' (Field-Marshal Julian Byng)'

5 March

Greg Baughen: 'An independent RAF - inspiration or aberration?'

2 April

Tom Greenshields: 'Leaders - the British Army NCO in the Great War - a reappraisal'

7 May

Tony Bolton: 'Mobilisation. The 18 days - 5-22 August 1914'

4 June

Meghan Kelleher: 'The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's enquiries' files'

2 July

Marietta Crichton Stewart: 'The Welsh Walter Mitty - life and adventures of a lieutenant, 6th Welsh'

August - no meeting

3 September

Phil Sutcliffe: 'The Somme: April - September 1916 through the eyes of a foot soldier'

1 October

Peter Hodgkinson: 'The 4th Army in the Battle of the Selle, 17-31 October 1918'

5 November

Viv Newman: 'Regina Diana - seductress, singer & spy'

3 December

Mark Connelly: 'Not so silent nights: the 1914 Christmas Truce'

All are welcome

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

For further details, please contact:

Hazel Basford

