



The Dugout

Newsletter of the Dorset and South Wiltshire Branch of the
Western Front Association

Parish Notes

Chairman:

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Diary Dates 2009

Meetings:

Saturday, 16 May

Ian Cull: The Last Cruise of the Emden

Saturday, 20 June

Bill Fulron: Albert Ball VC

Saturday, 15 August

Peter Starling: Mistaken Gallantry

Saturday, 26 September

Prof Chris Bellamy: The Eastern Front

Saturday, 17 October

Martin White: Edith Cavell

Saturday, 14 November

Fred Hoskins: The Royal Flying Corps

Saturday, 5 December (AGM)

Kevin Patience: The East Africa Campaign

At Pimperne Village Hall, Blandford -
2pm for 2.30pm start.

Further details on WFA website
www.westernfrontassociation.com

Field Trips:

Spring day trip - Saturday, 25 April
- **Firepower: The Royal Artillery
Museum, Woolwich**

Friday, 4 - Monday, 7 September -
The 1915 Battles

Further details from the Secretary,
Judy Willoughby, or the Chairman

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Newsletter Editor:  
Helen Kerridge:  
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## From the Editor

Welcome to the second edition of  
'The Dugout'.

My thanks to all who have sent  
items for publication; yet again  
there is a wide variety of subjects,  
something for every taste I hope.  
Please do keep the articles coming  
on whatever subject is of interest  
to you.

I also welcome feedback; this is  
still a very much a 'work in  
progress' and will evolve and  
adapt with time.

The Committee is keen to build up  
a list of those in the branch who  
have a field of expertise and who  
would be willing to share it with  
other members in some form or  
other. If you are able to help  
please contact me or the Chair-  
man, Martin.



## In this issue:

- Aubers Ridge
- William Stone - Obituary
- With a Camera to the Wirral
- Victor George Merrifield
- The Dorset Village Lad
- William Jesse Young
- Book Reviews
- 64th Brigade Memorial
- Captain Cecil Francis Har-  
vey Twining

## Chairman's Chat

### Branch Battlefield Tour

I am currently finalising the itiner-  
ary for the forthcoming branch bat-  
tlefield tour, 4 to 7 September, to  
look at **The 1915 Battles**: Neuve  
Chappelle, Aubers Ridge,  
Fromelles, Festubert, Givenchy,  
Loos, Vimy Ridge Tunnel Tour and  
much more. We will be staying at  
Hotel Mercure in Arras on bed and  
breakfast basis; cost per head per  
couple sharing £220, per head sin-  
gle £279, inclusive of single sup-  
plement. Contact Branch  
Chairman for further details 01929  
553060 or [cambrai@eastcote.go-plus.net](mailto:cambrai@eastcote.go-plus.net).

I feel happy that this tour will be  
covering these Forgotten Battles  
of 1915 on the 94th anniversary.

The branch secretary and I will be  
travelling to Fromelles for a memo-  
rial service on 9th May commemo-  
rating the men mentioned in the  
following passage. I can only urge  
members to attend if at all possible  
and if you are able to do so please  
contact Victoria Burbidge on  
[victoria.burbidge@ntlworld.com](mailto:victoria.burbidge@ntlworld.com). I  
hope I will see some of you there.



### Aubers Ridge

By October 1914, the Aubers  
Ridge is firmly in German hands  
and the Allied front line has settled  
into the lower ground some short  
distance away to the north and  
west. French Commander-in-  
Chief, General Joffre, has ap-  
proached Haig to suggest a joint  
French/British attack. This sector

of the Western Front offers one of the best opportunities of an advance towards Lille.

The French will attack the heights of Notre Dame de Lorette, then push forward onto the Douai plain in order to cut the German supply network. The British attack, in support, will take the form of a pincer movement; a northern and southern attack designed to close in on the Ridge and take the enemy-held villages at its base. The agreed date for the joint attack is 7<sup>th</sup> May, but bad weather and limited visibility necessitate a delay of two days. Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May dawns bright and clear.

The terrain in this area is extremely flat and is intersected by drainage ditches, many of which are too wide to cross on foot. There is very little natural cover and what little there is will offer the men very limited protection from enemy fire. For both British attacks, zero hour will be 5.00 am., commencing with a forty-minute artillery bombardment.

The southern attack (consisting of the 1st and 47th (2nd London) Divisions and 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions) begins, but is met by a barrage of machine-gun fire, men becoming casualties whilst attempting to mount the parapet prior to going over the top. The Indian Division are prevented as a whole from moving beyond their own parapet. By late afternoon, the only men to have reached the German front line have been either captured or killed.

Further north, the three brigades of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division await their turn, the 7<sup>th</sup> Division sitting in reserve. The attack will focus on the Rouges-Bancs area of Fromelles.

As the artillery bombardment commences, severe casualties from "friendly fire" are sustained in the advanced sap, faulty shells and worn gun barrels later being cited as the cause. Two huge mines (larger than anything ever before attempted) have been laid under the first and second German lines. There is an anxious moment prior to their detonation as their resultant effect is an unknown quantity. On the stroke of 5.40 am., the mines are detonated and explode, taking with them forty-eight men of the 16<sup>th</sup> Bavarian RIR.

The artillery bombardment is lifted and the infantry begins its advance. At its narrowest point, No-Man's-Land is only 100 yards wide, but the men are met with a hail of machine-gun and rifle fire and are mown down in great swathes. Survivors will later speak of having to clamber across the bodies of their dead comrades. The all too brief artillery bombardment has failed to cut the enemy wire in all but three places. These gaps are breached by a small number of men of the 13/London Regiment

(otherwise known as the Kensingtons), the 2/Rifle Brigade (with a handful of 1/Royal Irish Rifles) and the 2/East Lancashire Regiment. They attempt to consolidate their respective positions, but are unable to link up and are forced to barricade sections of enemy trench. The 2/Rifle Brigade pushes on to its objective, the village of Fromelles, but units sent as reinforcements are unable to cross No-Man's-Land and the riflemen are forced back to the captured trench.

The enemy attacks repeatedly and by early evening the men of the 2/East Lancashire Regiment have been forced back to the British front line. By 3.00 am. on 10<sup>th</sup> May, it is all over. Under cover of darkness the enemy has forced its advantage, heavily bombing the remaining two sections of captured trench. The Kensingtons have been forced back through the mine crater and the men of the 2/Rifle Brigade, with just one officer and a captured machine gun to hold the enemy at bay, make a desperate dash for the British line, many falling victim to the following enemy machine-gun fire.

The casualties are horrendous. The British trenches are blocked with the dead and dying and it will take at least three days to move the wounded through to the field ambulances. The total British casualty figures for the day exceed 11,000. The worst-hit unit went into action with a combat strength of nearly 900 officers and men. By 5.00 am. on 10<sup>th</sup> May, just two officers and 195 men march back to their billets.

Of those killed in the northern attack, nearly 1,300 are posted as missing and will remain missing for evermore. With no known grave, their names will be listed one after the other on the various memorials to the missing. No other memorial will be erected to mark this engagement.

Despite the awarding of no less than four Victoria Crosses, the Battle of Aubers Ridge will become one of the "Forgotten Battles of 1915".



**MoD Saddened at Death of WW1 Veteran  
William Stone  
12 January 2009**

It is with great sadness that the family of William 'Bill' Stone have announced his passing away at his care home on Saturday aged 108. Mr Stone was one of the three remaining British veterans of the First World War, who took part in the 90th Anniversary of the Great War Armistice in London in November 2008.

He was born in Ledstone, Kingsbridge, South Devon on 23 September 1900, one of a family of 14 children. He joined the Royal Navy on his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and followed his three older brothers by serving as a Stoker. From 1922 - 1924 he served in HMS Hood and took part in the round-the-world 'Empire Cruise' visiting the Colonies during an eleven month voyage. During the Second World War as Chief Stoker of HMS Salamander, Mr Stone took part in the evacuation of Dunkirk, making five trips to pick up troops from the beaches. Mr Stone also served in the Sicily landings of 1943 with HMS Newfoundland and was 'mentioned in despatches' after a torpedo attack en route back to their base in Malta.

Mr Stone married his wife Lily in 1938 and their daughter Anne was born the following year. Lily passed away in 1995. William's daughter, Anne Davidson, said: "William had a remarkable, long, healthy and happy life. He thoroughly enjoyed going to events, meeting people and, whenever possible, regaling those around him with his fund of Naval stories and jokes. He loved singing, knew most hymns by heart and had an amazing repertoire of old-time songs - often with alternative words! He was a very determined character both in his Naval career and in civilian life and, no doubt, this contributed greatly to his longevity. He was a man of great faith and his recipe for long life was: "Clean Living, Contented Mind and Trust in God". His Motto - "Keep Going". "William will be sadly missed by his family and many friends".

Veterans Minister Kevan Jones said: "I am saddened to learn of the death of William Stone who was the UK's last surviving veteran from both the First and Second World Wars. We owe a great deal to the men and women who served this country with such distinction during those wars to protect our liberty. William was a man who represented the courage, spirit and determination of his generation. He was an inspiration to us all." The funeral will be held at St Leonard's Church of England in Watlington, Oxfordshire, towards the end of January.  
***This article courtesy of the Ministry of Defence***

**William Frederick 'Bill' Stone** (1900 - 2009) was the last known veteran, living in the UK, to have served in both WWI and WWII. He was born in Ledstone, Kingsbridge, South Devon on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1900, one of a family of 14 children. At the age of 15 he went to join the Royal Navy but his father refused to sign the necessary papers as he already had three older sons in the Great War. On his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday William did join the Royal Navy at Devonport as an Ordinary Seaman but transferred to Stoker on the insistence of his brothers who were already serving Stokers; his first ship was HMS Tiger, a coal-fired battle cruiser.

From 1922-1924 he served in HMS Hood and took part in the round-the-world "Empire Cruise" visiting the Colonies during an eleven month voyage. He also became the ship's barber, complete with barber's shop, during his off-duty time. William served in a number of different types of ship during the inter-war years eventually joining the minesweeper, HMS Salamander as Chief Stoker in 1937.

He married his wife, Lily, in 1938 and in 1939, one week before the start of WW2, their only child, Anne, was born. In 1940 HMS Salamander took part in the Dunkirk evacuation, making five trips to pick up troops from the beaches and surviving submarine and air attacks. Salamander was then sent on convoy escort and minesweeping duty to Archangel, Russia. In 1941 he was drafted, as part of the advance party, to the light cruiser HMS Newfoundland, under construction at Newcastle upon Tyne. After launch the ship joined the Home Fleet and in 1943 was sent to the Mediterranean to participate in "Operation Husky" - the Sicily landings. Whilst returning to its base in Malta the ship was damaged by a torpedo and subsequently had to go to Boston, USA, for repairs. Following this attack, William was "mentioned in despatches".

On return to England William served the remainder of the war based at Plymouth where in September 1945 he ended his service after 27 years. In civilian life he opened a Tobacconist's and Hairdresser's in Paignton, Devon, putting to use the haircutting skills acquired during his time in the Navy. Having retired in 1968 he and his wife moved to Watlington, Oxfordshire to be closer to their daughter and family. Following Lily's death in 1995, William continued to live in his own home until he reached 106 years of age. During this time he was an active member of the Royal British Legion, the Dunkirk Veterans, Royal Naval, HMS Hood, HMS Newfoundland and Malta George Cross Island Associations. He was also made an honorary life member of the Western Front Association. In February 2007 he moved into a Masonic Care Home at Sindlesham near Wokingham, Berkshire. He had been a Freemason since 1933.



## **With a Camera to the Wirral**

**(With acknowledgements to "With a Machine Gun to Cambrai")**

Back in 1999 I was a subscriber to a short-lived magazine called "Battlefields Review". One particular issue included an item about the Old Comrades Association of the Machine Gun Corps [MGC] and a proposal to write a history of the Corps. A request

was made for information and photographs to assist the project.

I was researching the army service of my wife's grandfather at the time: James Cooper served with the Motor Machine Gun Service [MMGS] from 1915-1918. I made a note of the request and put it on one side meaning to get in touch and offer the project the photographs that the family had of Jim and his unit.

Naturally I forgot all about the request! When I was searching through my papers to prepare the talk I delivered about Jim Cooper at January Branch Meeting, I came across my note. Expecting to be told that I had "missed the boat", I emailed the given contact point in June 2008. I discovered that the history project was still progressing "although quite far from finishing", and that Jim's photographs would be welcome!

My contact was able to provide me with additional information on the MMGS, and more specifically, Jim's unit. He also told me about a group of people in the MGC Old Comrades Association who had set out to visit and photograph every MGC headstone and memorial in the world.

MGC personnel are buried in more than 30 countries around the world, the vast majority naturally being in France and Belgium. Over 16,000 MGC officers and men died during the Great War. About 9,500 are buried or commemorated in France, 3,500 in Belgium, 200 in Germany, 1,200 in the UK and more than 20 in Eire. Of the remainder, the largest concentrations are in Egypt, Greece, India, Iraq, Israel and Italy. Small numbers are located in 23 other countries.

By June 2008, the total number of MGC graves visited across the world had reached over 9,300 – more than half the total. In France and Belgium the total is almost 100%, in Greece 87%, Italy 75% and the UK 70%.



As a token of appreciation for the information I had been given, I offered to take some photos for the project. My first thought had been to see if there were any on the "most wanted" list in the areas to be visited on our Branch Field Trip. Learning that the graves remaining to be photographed in France were off the usual Western Front circuit, I

looked at the UK areas still requiring visits.

One of our daughters and both of our grandchildren live near Chester and I discovered that there were some graves yet to be photographed in Cheshire.

From the list the Photographic Project Team supplied, I identified five graves that were within reach of our usual route to and from Chester, and I undertook to photograph these.

The Photographic Project Team were able to give me grave plot references at the four civilian cemeteries involved, and I wrote to the cemetery authorities to obtain the whereabouts of the plots within each site. One grave was located at St. Wilfrid's Parish Church in Davenham. They not only provided me with very precise directions to the grave, but also offered to take the photograph for me! This left me with four graves to find in three cemeteries.

So it was in November that my wife and I were driving up the Wirral Peninsula in pouring rain to Wallasey and Rake Lane Cemetery. We arrived at the cemetery and the rain stopped. I found the two graves that I was seeking quite easily and took photographs. Both headstones appeared to be of CWGC design, but seemed to be cut from sandstone.



We next travelled to Flaybrick Cemetery at Birkenhead, and found our way down very narrow tracks to the area where the grave I sought was supposed to be located. The area was much overgrown. Although a couple of CWGC headstones were visible, neither marked the grave I was seeking. Then I noticed within the plot a memorial wall bearing the names of several Great War casualties including my man. After I had photographed the memorial we pressed on to the final cemetery on our itinerary.

Bebington Cemetery is very well ordered, but here again I was unable to locate an individual headstone. As I found at Flaybrick, the name I sought appeared on a memorial with other Great War casualties. With my last photograph taken, we started our journey home.

The manager of the Photo Project Team has since told me that there are many instances in the north of England and in the Birmingham area, where casualties are buried in what amounts to a communal grave, with their name recorded on a nearby "screen wall" or memorial. He did not know why this should be so, but suggested that space restrictions may have had something to do with it. He indicated that my experience at Birkenhead and Bebington came as no real surprise – "a photograph of the memorial with the name thereon is the best we can achieve."

At the time of writing there are still a number of graves to be photographed in England – but none south of Leicestershire so I am told.

Rod Arnold.



*Bev and Alan Leeson have been carrying out research regarding the four Merrifield brothers who lived in their village, Fontmell Magna. North Dorset. Here are two articles connected to that family*

### Victor George Merrifield

When Henry Merrifield (55) or his wife Annie (50) answered a knock at the door sometime in October 1915, it would have confirmed their worst fears, that one of their son's had been killed in action in some far off land, their home at 37 South Street, Fontmell Magna would like so many others echo with the sound of their grief. Henry and Annie had five children; 4 sons and 1 daughter, all their sons served in the Great War.

Victor George Merrifield was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1892, he had signed up for 3 years or for the duration of the war; attested in Dorchester on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 1914 at the age of 22, a gardener by profession, he like thousands of others saw his chance to "see the world" and have the chance of adventure. He was a lithe, strong chap with a dark complexion, 5 foot 9 and half inches tall and a little under 10 stone in weight, no doubt used to hard work and the other hardships of his time.

Victor officially joined the army on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1914 as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion Dorset Regiment and after his training both he and his brother Reginald went to Liverpool and embarked on the RMS Aquitania for Lemnos, Balkans, their journey took them nine days, but Victor unlike Reginald, would not return. He was killed in action somewhere between Aire Kayak and Susak Kuyu, Suvla on the

21<sup>st</sup> August 1915 age 23. His body was never found and he is commemorated on the Helles Memorial.

Victor's medal's etc were sent to his family home between 1920-1921 and sometime over the past 80 years came out of their possession, like so many other medal's, reasons and circumstances unknown.



Victor's medals have recently come into our possession, so wherever they have been, they have now truly come home and have taken (rightly) pride of place on a sideboard, 300 yards from where they originally were all those years ago.

Victor and his brother's, and other men, who fought in the First World War are remembered on a hand written scroll, hanging on the wall in St Andrew's Church, those who died are remembered in the church and on the Memorial Cross in Fontmell Magna Village.



### The Dorset Village Lad

By the late Captain J.P. Merrifield

Written to the Dorset Regimental Newsletter in Oct 1978.

*(The editor wrote: Sadly Captain Merrifield died shortly after writing this article)*

Reminiscence of a Dorset lad from Fontmell Magna on joining the Dorsetshire Regiment at the age of 15 in April 1915 with other older lads from the village.

I mention the following to emphasise the change in village life to the present time. Nearly all the village boys joined the B.P Boy Scouts about 1910. Love for King and country having been instilled in us from our earliest days. The Fontmell Magna troop was started by Mr. Springfield, owner of the factory at Springhead. Our training was on military lines by ex-guards drill instructor, recently retired, working as gardener to the squire who strongly supported the Troop, providing a Drill Hall and modern rifle range. We on our part worked hard to raise enough cash to form a Bugle Band, 8 bugles and 4 large side drums.

Our Scout Masters were Frank Whittle (later killed in action) who owned a Douglas motorbike and Dr. Appleyard who owned a Le-Francis motorbike. We were all keen to pass out on Scout craft wearing a badge on our arm for each pass. Signalling. Morse code, perhaps the most interesting, Flags and Heliograph by day and lamps across the hills by night. It was a great thrill to ride pillion on the motorbikes. Competition with other Troops formed an interesting part of our training. Old scouts will remember the tough work we did on bridge building with our staffs and toggle ropes. I recall, on one occasion when crossing a river above what is known as "Rolling Bay" a toggle rope slipped and the main rope parted when a lad was halfway across, he was quickly pulled to the bank, after a severe ducking. The two patrol leaders had not properly tested the bridge; this was a lesson we learnt.

Our training gave us a great overall advantage when later we joined the Army and became keen soldiers, with pride in our Dorsetshire Regiment.

#### August 1914

War with Germany declared our forces mobilised. Lord Kitchener called for the first 100,000 volunteers to enlist for the duration of the war. Young men the cream of the country immediately answered the call. The second 100,000 met the same response. They were known as "Kitcheners Army".

My brothers aged 20 and 24 were among the first to volunteer from the village, early in August, and were ordered to report at the Dorsetshire Regiment Depot at Dorchester. There they were given uniform and kit, and in a day or two sent to Grantham where the 5<sup>th</sup> Bn was being formed and after-training there, formed part of the Expeditionary Force to the Dardanelles. Many of these fine men were lost including two of my brothers; the youngest killed in action and one died of wounds.

I still have the last letter from my youngest brother, strongly advising me not to join until I was 19, as I was too young to withstand the hard training. I remember replying that any training would be "child's play" to what I was now doing at home. Three years previously on my own account I started a book and paper round, in the local six villages, this entailed collecting the papers each morning from Shillingstone station, six miles away on a large iron bicycle, wet or fine and by 1914, due to increased sales, the weight was 1 ½ cwt, taking me all day to deliver. Hence the reason for saying Army training would be "child's play".

On coming out of the station with my load of papers one day, I had to pass several divisions of the Royal Naval Division who were stationed at their mobilisation Depot at Blandford Camp in 1914, I sold all my papers to the troops and then enjoyed watching manoeuvres under Hambledon and Ham Hills, returning home and explaining that no papers had arrived (this sometimes did happen). Financially I did well that day, bearing in mind that 7/6d was the average rate per week for a lad of my age.

Early in January 1915, I with other lads from Fontmell Magna, walked to Shaftesbury (5 miles north) and applied to Sgt Moseley permanent recruiting Sgt, to join the Dorsetshire Regiment, most of the lads were accepted subject to medical pass the following week. The Sgt told me to come back again on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1915 on which date I told him I should be 18 years old. Actually I was only 16 on that day. I again saw the recruiting Sgt on 18<sup>th</sup> April and was accepted for the duration of the war in the Dorsetshire Regiment. I passed my medical, was given a railway warrant from Semley Station with instructions to report at the Depot at Dorchester. My parents saw me off telling me it was not too late to withdraw, but I was determined to go and quite excited at the prospect. We arrived by pony and trap at the station well in advance of time; this was to be my first trip on a train. A young country lad leaving home for the first time, I recall this as a thrilling experience.

I arrived at the Dorchester Depot about 4 hours later and was given a bed with about 30 others on the second storey of a barrack block called "Marabout". The Squad Sgt gave us details of barrack procedure with final orders to fall in on the barrack square at 7.a.m. for P.T. instructions. I spent the remainder of the day looking around the barracks and town before "lights out".

#### Day 2

As instructed, I went to the large gym at 7 am. where about 50 others were gathered, the instructor arrived dressed in white with crossed swords on his arm and shouted P.T. "Formation Fall In". We exercised for about three quarters of an hour, then were dismissed with the words "next parade at 9.am." I wasn't aware this was for another party, so duly arrived and went through the same session again, followed by instructions "next parade 11a.m." I duly appeared on parade again, but this time the instructor spotted me as being there before. I said, "this is the third time", then the sparks flew!! It ended in laughter, but I was never allowed to forget this incident.

Squad paraded to draw uniform and kit, being issued with a large sheet of brown paper and string with which to pack our clothes and boots to be sent home. Having had mine on my bed all ready for tying up, I left the barrack room for three minutes, on my return my boots were missing, A group of about 30 recruits from London had been posted to our barrack room that morning, one occupying the bed next to mine, I suspected him and my suspicions were confirmed by looks from some of our other chaps who had been present. I questioned him but he denied having taken them, I asked him to turn out a box I saw under his bed, he would not, so I did it for him and out came the boots. He looked a very rough customer, but being a country born Dorset chap, I gave him the hardest punch I could and when he had recovered I gave him a second one. The lesson I learnt from that was "the best form of Defence is Attack".

### Day 3

This was spent in the usual procedure of barrack room cleaning (dry scrubbing etc.), followed by arms drill and training for guard duties. Guard turnout having to be very smart indeed. That day I heard that the first German P.O.W's were coming in, as a prisoner of war camp (cage) had been built just outside the Keep. Being interested I walked boldly out of the Keep, turned left and sat on the bank watching proceeding for two hours; I then went back to the Depot to find I was too late for supper! Another case of "live and learn", we heard that day we should soon be sent to 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn at Wyke Regis, making room for more intake at the Depot.

### Day 4

This is my fourth day in the Army. I find everything most interesting particularly as today we prepare kit bags and packs in correct military style in readiness for our march tomorrow. This is not as easy as it sounds, as the weight is quite considerable. We are told we parade at 8:30a.m. Next day ready to march off.

### Day 5

Leave Depot 9 am. - draft 150 strong. As we proudly marched through the centre of Dorchester, we were met by the band of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion who played us into Wyke Regis, a distance of 3 miles, quite a tough march for recruits.

This, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn, was commanded by Lt Col Castleman Smith. Our draft was posted to "S" Company commanded by Capt Reggie Tuck a regular from the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. Training now began in earnest. I served for the duration of the war returning to England

1919, having seen service in Palestine, Egypt and Mesopotamia.

My respect for the Army compelled me to join in the Second World War 1939-45. I was commissioned General List Infantry, attached to the Gloucester Regiment.

At the age of 79 the happy memories of my early days with the Dorsetshire Regiment remain. Good luck to the amalgamated Devonshire and Dorset Regiment.



*In the previous issue I published a photograph requesting help to identify the uniform being worn by Corporal Benjamin Prior, 8 Bedfordshire Regiment. Thanks to those who responded; we have confirmed our initial belief that he was in 'Kitchener Blues'. Following is an article sent by Mike Limbrick, also about early issue uniform*

## **Benjamin John Prior and William Jesse Young Notes on Uniform and Equipment**

I read with interest the article about Benjamin John Prior and his uniform in the January issue. What caught my eye was his unit, the 8<sup>th</sup> Beds. My uncle William Jesse Young was enlisted into the 7<sup>th</sup> Beds on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1914. He served in France and survived to return to his home in Sarratt near Watford.

I visited the Luton Museum in 2002 and was interested to see a military section. In conversation I mentioned my uncle which led to an investigation into his war service via records which had survived. The following is an extract from the archivist's response to my enquiry including a comment about his uniform on joining since my mother can remember he wore a red jacket:



"The shortage of uniforms in 1914/15 meant that some men were serving in civilian clothes, all the obsolete uniforms were issued as a means of at

least showing that the men were soldiers. They were always issued the correct uniform before active service.

The description in detail of my uncle's uniform and equipment I find interesting:

He is holding an early Short Magazine Lee Enfield rifle with standard sword bayonet. I suspect the picture was taken in England before he went to France as his gaiters have been wrapped around his legs in a non regulation diamond pattern and it appears his leather hat band (above the peak) has been plaited. Both were commonly done by soldiers in England to add a bit of individuality to their appearance. By the time they were in the war zone they were less concerned with their appearance. The collar of his tunic has been altered for a better fit by a tailor, possibly the trousers as well, both fairly common modifications.

The hat is the early issue type. He is wearing standard 1907 pattern web equipment, the small pouches above the belt were for ammunition. The bag under his arm contained a gas mask (early issue type) this type replaced by the box respirator in 1916. The inverted chevron on his left sleeve is a long service /good conduct stripe, one stripe indicates 2 years service. If as I suspect this picture was taken early in the war he must have been a pre war soldier, probably a territorial. Above the stripe is a small round badge which may confirm your information that he was a Lewis Gunner."

I wonder if William and Benjamin ever met? They were in the same regiment at about the same time. My uncle died in 1980 having survived the trenches and a gas attack



### **World War One Website**

This maybe old news to some but I have just found this website, which on initial exploration looks quite good:

**[www.aftermathww1.com](http://www.aftermathww1.com)**

## **Book Review**



### **Tommy's War - British Military Memorabilia 1914 -1918**

Peter Doyle  
ISBN 978 1 86126 996 6 (hb)  
Crowood Press 2008

Peter Doyle the noted scientist, military historian and lifelong collector of military memorabilia gives us this superb follow up to his work on WWII memorabilia.

As he says, "This book is intended to illustrate the average life of the British Soldier of the Great War.....". Thus it is very pleasing to say this exactly what he gives us through an exploration of surviving artefacts as diverse as bully beef tins and trench periscopes. This book is not about battles and grand strategy, through an extremely comprehensive and exhaustive range of surviving objects and artefacts it tells the story of what it was like to serve as an infantryman in the Great War and it does this very successfully. Well illustrated, with well written supporting information this volume makes a worthy addition to the library of anyone interested in the period. Will be of immense use to the researcher and collector.



### **Forgotten Soldiers of the First World War**

David R Woodward  
ISBN 978 0 7524 4307 2 (sb)  
Tempus Publishing 2007

As I started to write this review the Israelis had just declared a ceasefire in Gaza thus terminating its most recent action against its perceived enemies. As this action started, some 92 years ago General Allenby and his Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) was on the cusp of victory in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Gaza. This particular battle being considered by some a quite masterful operation against the Ottoman Empire. One cannot help but reflect on the resonances of conflict in this area over the millennia.

This book tells the story of the Palestine Campaign, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Gaza precipitating the withdrawal of Turkish Forces to the North, although it must be said

not without a fight. However Allenby's final offensive was virtually over within a week. With Turkish forces either captured in substantial numbers or in headlong retreat the final city to fall, Aleppo was captured on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1918 and an armistice with the Turks taking effect 5 days later on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1918.

The book has a useful and comprehensive bibliography with usable notes and index. My only niggle is the inadequacy of the maps. Despite this minor failing this is a well paced narrative on a tough campaign fought in the main by Territorials including Yeomanry units. The 74th Yeomanry Division (Divisional sign, the Broken Spur) played a significant part in this campaign and most of the major battles. Sadly the part played by Territorial Force units has been quite forgotten. If you, dear reader, think that this campaign was won by Lawrence of Arabia or the Australian Light Horse then you need to read this book. Considered in certain circles as a sideshow it most certainly wasn't to those who were there and was as hard fought as any other campaign in any other theatre of WW1.

In conclusion I will let the casualty figures for the EEF speak for themselves:

|                         |                    |       |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Territorial Force units | Killed and Wounded | 32724 |
| Regular Army units      | “ “ “              | 12683 |
| Indian & Native units   | “ “ “              | 9980  |
| Australian units        | “ “ “              | 4725  |
| New Zealand units       | “ “ “              | 1684  |

I recommend this book as a pacy and interesting counterpoint to the Western Front.



### In Memoriam: Remembering the Great War

To commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of the Armistice, Imperial War Museum London is mounting a major exhibition that will look at the personal stories of those who lived, fought and died during the First World War, both overseas and on the home front. Featuring fascinating and previously unseen material, this exhibition will use the experiences of over 90 individual men, women, servicemen and civilians to illustrate the different aspects and key events of the Great War and its aftermath.

Their stories will be told through personal objects which include the wreath tossed into the car carrying Prime Minister David Lloyd George after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the smashed aircraft windscreen of British flying ace James McCudden and a rosebud from the wreath that lay on the coffin of the Unknown Warrior

### 64th Brigade Memorial Cojeul British Cemetery, St. Martin-Sur-Cojeul

Started in April 1917 by the 21st Division's burial officer, Cojeul British cemetery has 349 burials and commemorations of the First World War. Thirty five of the burials are unidentified and thirty one graves destroyed by shell fire are represented by special memorials. At some point after this date a wooden cross was raised by the 64th Brigade in memorial to the men who had fallen and placed on Henin Hill, a position fought over in the opening days of the Arras battle by elements of 21st Division and 64th Brigade.



In July 1931 in a ceremony presided over by none less than a former commander of the brigade, Andrew Jameson McCulloch, the wooden cross was replaced by a stone one and the wooden one was removed to safe keeping at Beverley Minster, East Riding of Yorkshire, in the north-east chapel in the transept.



When the Motorway was built the current cross was moved to the cemetery and rests there today, apparently cared for by the CWGC.

The inscription on the main tablet reads

*'To the honoured memory of the officers and men of the 64th infantry brigade who fell on April 9th 1917 in capturing the part of the Hindenburg line close to this place.'*





## Personalities of the Hampshire Regiment

*In the run up to the 94th anniversary of the Second Battle of Ypres, we focus on Captain Cecil Twining, a member of the Twinings tea family and his connection with banking and cricket.*

### **Captain Cecil Francis Harvey Twining** **3rd (Reserve) attached 1st Battalion,** **Hampshire Regiment**

A peculiarly melancholy incident connected with the death of Captain Cecil Francis Harvey Twining was



CAPTAIN CECIL FRANCIS HARVEY TWINING,  
Hants Regiment.

that the sad news was received by his family on the very morning of the marriage of his younger brother, Captain Richard Haynes Twining, thus proving how always "in the midst of life we are in death," and changing a day which ought to have been entirely one of rejoicing into one over-shadowed with sorrow.

Captain Cecil Twining was a great-great-grandson of Richard Twining, an old Etonian who went to Eton in 1760 and was afterwards the East India Director. He was the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Haynes Twining, of 48, Ennismore Gardens, S.W., and was born at 7, Stanhope Street, Hyde Park, on 2nd August, 1885. He was educated at Hazelwood, Limpsfield, and Eton.

In cricket Cecil excelled, and was a member of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), the Free Foresters, the Eton Ramblers, and the Hampshire Hogs. He was also a member of the Conservatives and Prince's Clubs, and of the Stoke Poges and East Brighton Golf Clubs.

Cecil was gazetted to the 3rd Hampshire Regiment (Special Reserve) on the 30th April, 1904, promoted Lieutenant on the 20th January, 1909, and became Captain the 10th September, 1914.

In August 1909, he entered Lloyds Bank Ltd at 222, Strand; he was also a Trustee of the London Penitentiary, Highgate and a Member of the Amicable

Society of St. Clement Danes.

On the 6th April, 1910, Cecil married Dorothy Elizabeth, only child of Charles E. N. Charrington, Esq. of Frensham Hill, Surrey.

On the outbreak of war, in August, 1914, Captain Twining was stationed at Parkhurst Barracks, Isle of Wight, and at the beginning of September he took out a reinforcing draft of 163 men to join the 1st Battalion, Hampshire Regiment (the old 37th), then at the Aisne.

From the Aisne, in October, the Battalion had some hard fighting for five days and nights on their march to Flanders, particularly so in night attacks. On one particular night, Captain Twining was selected and sent out to get some information, which he was fortunate enough to be able to do, and for which he was thanked by his Brigadier through the Colonel.

On another occasion he was ordered to advance up a railway line where the Germans had a Maxim gun, which swept down the line. Eventually, however, they successfully charged the enemy's barricade across it.

In a night attack at Messines, on Sunday, 1st November, he was twice hit before falling into a pit on the top of a German sniper, and was invalided home, but rejoined his Battalion in March, 1915.

The gallant young officer fell on the 3rd May, 1915, in the second battle of Ypres, at Grafenstal Ridge, about a mile from Zonnebeke.

A brother officer wrote of him: "*His death was a great shock to all of us in the company, as he was loved by officers and men alike. The men of his company (A) were very fond of him and would have followed him anywhere; his thought was always for their safety, and I don't think he paid attention to his own.*"

By a sad coincidence, Captain Twining's great friend, Captain George Sandeman, was killed in the same engagement, on the 26th April. Captain Twining was buried with four other officers and many men



Captain G. A. C. Sandeman.

*"They all lie in a very pretty field behind a farm house with crosses, but we only had time to mark Cecil's grave with a bottle, and his name and regiment inside it..."*

The Eton College Chronicle, referring to his death, says:-

*"He was in every respect a fine officer, never sparing himself, and so one more name has to be added to the gallant list of old Etonians who have laid down their lives in the service of their King and Country."*

Referring to Captain Twining and his great friend, Captain Sandeman, the Hampshire Regimental Journal for June 1915 has the following:-



Captain C. F. H. Twining.

#### IN MEMORIAM

Captain G. A. C. Sandeman and C. F. H. Twining, killed in action in Flanders.

*"They were lovely and pleasant in their lives,  
and in death they were not divided.*

*They have lived, as they died, with one passionate  
thought,*

*Just to play the right game for their side,  
Not to know when you're beat, not to think of de-  
feat,*

*That's an Englishman's honour and pride.*

*There let them lie on an allied soil,*

*Two of the Empire's best,*

*Cricketers, sportsmen, lovable friends, God take  
them to His rest."*

#### End Note

The 1st Battalion, Hampshire Regiment had spent a week on the Grafenstal Ridge (26th April to 3rd May 1915), a week under the concentrated fury of the German guns, directed on it from three points of the compass. Its position, at the extremity of the attenuated Ypres salient, deprived the Battalion of the support of such limited artillery as the British possessed in those days, and intensified the ordeal to which the men were subjected.

Although the Second Battle of Ypres was to continue spasmodically for another two months and to provide further tests for the 1st Battalion, the week on Grafenstal Ridge, was probably the most trying experience of all. The casualties suffered by the Battalion totalled 5 officers and 108 other ranks killed or missing and 5 officers and 208 other ranks wounded. All but a handful of those killed or missing have no known grave and are commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial.

#### Twinings Bank

Originally founded for business among the Twining family and their tea business connections, Twinings bank started in a small room adjoining the tea business warehouse in Devereux Court, The Strand, London; a safe, desk and one clerk constituted the bank.

The bank grew rapidly so that in 1835 they commenced building a more commodious banking house at 215, The Strand close to the original location. There was an inside connecting door between the bank and the warehouse shop. Cashiers were often called upon to change cheques, partly in cash or notes and the balance in tea or coffee. In 1892, Twinings Bank was amalgamated with Lloyds Bank, and was then known as Lloyds Bank, Twinings Branch, 215 The Strand. In 1895, it moved to 222, The Strand and is now merged with Lloyds Bank, Law Courts Branch.

Herbert Haynes Twining entered the business in 1869; became a partner in 1876 and was joint manager of Lloyds Bank, Law Courts Branch. His eldest son, Cecil Francis Harvey Twining, entered the Law Courts Branch in 1909. With Cecil's death in action on 3rd May 1915 the Twinings connection with banking ended when his father retired in 1917.

Herbert Twining's second son, Richard Hayes Twining, whose marriage had been over-shadowed with the news of the death of his brother, became Vice-Chairman of the Stock Exchange in 1956 and was on the Committee of the MCC and President of the Middlesex County Cricket Club.

His brother is commemorated on the First World War Roll of Honour at the MCC, Lord's.

*Marc Thompson*

