



# THE DUGOUT

Branch Patron: *The  
Lord Lieutenant of  
Dorset -  
Angus Campbell*

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESSEX BRANCH OF THE WESTERN  
FRONT ASSOCIATION

Your Local WW1 Historical Society

(Registered Charity : 1142787)

[www.wessexwfa.org.uk](http://www.wessexwfa.org.uk)

## Chairman:

Martin Willoughby

Telephone:

01929 553060

[cambrai@eastcote.go-plus.net](mailto:cambrai@eastcote.go-plus.net)

## MEETINGS 2016

At  
Pimperne Village Hall,  
Newfield Road,  
Pimperne Nr Blandford  
Forum. DT11 8UZ- 2pm for  
2.30pm start

**11th June** -  
Meeting the Enemy  
- Richard Van Emden

**JULY - NO MEETING**

**8th August** -  
Up the Arras RFC 1917 -  
Peter Hart

**10th September** -  
Flers Courlette -  
David Fletcher

**8th October** -  
The Legacy of the  
Titanic in the Great War  
- Andy Tonge

**5th November** -  
Railwaymen of the  
Great War -  
Barry Kitchener

**3rd December** -  
Members Exhibits and  
Social

## FIELD TRIPS:

TBC

## BATTLEFIELD TOURS:

**VERDUN** -  
15th Sept-19th Sept

ISSUE 15

MAY 2016

## Chairman's Chat

Welcome to Issue 15 of 'The Dugout'. Many of you will be aware that the WFA has just held its Annual General Meeting at the Fleet Air Arm Museum Yeovilton. After much 'lobbying' to have an AGM in the South it was very pleasing to hear from the WFA secretary that the attendance was the highest it has been for a long time with 119 members attending and even more pleasing that over 20% of the attendance were Wessex Branch members. I thank all of you who were able to attend, it has further enhanced the branches reputation as the 'can do' organisation of the WFA!

I was very surprised and pleased it must be said to receive an award for outstanding services to the WFA, your branch secretary had managed to keep this from me very effectively! I know not where the recommendation came from but after some 3 years as vice chairman and 10 years as chairman someone obviously thought it was time! Taking a certain liberty with Bertolt Brecht's 1935 poem "Fragen eines Lesenden Arbeiters" in which Brecht imagines a young German worker beginning to read a lot of history and being puzzled that they are chiefly histories of great men he wondered;



Alexander conquered India. On his own? Caesar defeated the Gauls. Did he not even have a cook with him? In short I have not done this on my own, without the strong support of the branch trustees and committee, without the strong support of Tom, Roger, Catherine (catering) and many others past and present we would not be as effective a branch as we are. Most importantly without the strong support of you who come to our meetings, to those who support our tours and trips and those who bring guests and friends all would be for nought. Inadequate as it sounds my thanks to you all for your long standing and hopefully continuing support.

Newsletter Editor: **SANDRA TWYFORD**  
Email: [sandra.twyford@btinternet.com](mailto:sandra.twyford@btinternet.com)

20% of the attendance at the National AGM were Wessex Branch members

...pleased to receive an award for outstanding services to the WFA

## Chairman's Chat continued....

I am very pleased to announce that the revised branch website has gone live and in general the feedback so far has been quite positive. Yes, there are some gremlins to sort out and these are being worked on so we should have a fully refreshed branch website soon. Please continue to visit our branch website as meeting notices are refreshed frequently and there is a wealth of interesting content which is still accessible including meeting details at [www.wessexwfa.org.uk/events/branchmeetings](http://www.wessexwfa.org.uk/events/branchmeetings). Meeting details are also displayed on the notice board at Pimperne Village Hall and also on the WFA national website [www.westernfrontassociation.com](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com). We are also working to include a 'Breaking News' item on our home page the purpose of which will be to notify of any major happenings concerning the branch for example the (unlikely) cancellation of meetings.

Judy and I completed the reconnaissance for the September 2016 Battlefield Tour to Verdun. The draft itinerary is now with our guides to aid in developing the tour handout and will be issued very soon. I can once again assure our "tourists" that despite the distances the tour will be exceptional in covering ground many have not visited before and I can say that the whole area is a definitive counterpoint to the Somme and Ypres Salient and will enrich the perspectives of any student of WW1.

As we approach the half way point in the year we have had a successful return trip to Bletchley Park and speakers of the highest quality to arouse our interest in a wide range of facets of the Great War and this is set to continue for the remainder of the year with the like of Richard van Emden, Peter Hart, David Fletcher, Andy Tonge and Barry Kitchener to enlighten us on their particular topics. Some members are also looking forward to the branch Gallipoli Battlefield tour starting on 20<sup>th</sup> May.

There is of course no time to rest on our laurels and planning for 2017 has already started with Judy's unending search for quality speakers and initial planning for our tours and trips. Meanwhile having just returned from the Trentino lets go "Avanti Tutta", full speed ahead for the rest of an interesting and exciting year.



**Martin Willoughby  
Chairman**

# LA TOMBE DU SOLDAT INCONNU

The original idea of returning the body of an unknown British soldier to the United Kingdom after the end of the First World War is widely credited to Revd. David Railton. Whilst serving as a chaplain on the Western Front near Armentieres he was moved by the sight of a rough wooden cross marked "An Unknown British Soldier of the Black Watch".

He later explained how "that grave caused me to think, what can I do to ease the pain of father, mother, brother, sister, sweetheart, wife and friend?" Gradually a possible answer came to him..."Let this body, this symbol of him, be carried reverently over the sea to his native land."

After the war, Railton became vicar of St. John the Baptist Church in Margate and pursued his vision; his efforts led to the interment of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1920.

Railton was not alone in thinking of the symbolic burial of an unknown soldier to give national recognition to individual loss.

At the same time as the concept was being progressed in the United Kingdom, parallel moves were being made in France.

Towards the end of Around November 1916 a ceremony took place in the French city of Rennes to honour citizens who were missing and could not be traced. After the war ended it was suggested that there should be some national recognition of French missing soldiers. The campaign gathered momentum until the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau formally approved the idea in December 1919.

At first it was proposed that the tomb should be installed in the

Pantheon, the burial place in Paris for France's major historical figures. However veterans' organizations pressed for the Unknown Soldier's burial place to be in a prestigious location reserved for him alone. They favoured the Arc de Triomphe and their arguments won the day.

The process for selecting the body to be interred in Paris followed similar lines to that used for choosing the British Unknown Warrior.

To allow each bereaved French family to consider that the honoured soldier might be theirs, one unidentified body was exhumed from each of eight areas of major conflict involving the French Army during the war. Every precaution was taken to ensure the body selected was indeed a French soldier. The original intention was to exhume bodies in nine areas, but in one it was thought that the national identity of an unidentified body could not be established with any certainty.



The Selection - Citadelle, Tableau



Verdun Departure



Ceremony 1920



Ceremony 11.11.20





The ninth area has never been officially named, but it is generally accepted that it was Verdun.

The exhumations began on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1920 and by the following day eight bodies had been selected, placed in oak caskets and transported to an underground chamber in the Citadelle at Verdun. En route placement of the caskets was changed frequently so that on arrival, it was virtually impossible to tell from which area a particular body came.

The choice of the coffin to be taken to Paris was to be made by a Verdun stationed soldier considered to have a good war record. However on the day appointed for the selection, 10<sup>th</sup> November, the nominated soldier fell ill. With just four hours notice, a replacement was despatched from the same unit.

August Thien, aged 21, was considered to meet the criterion of having a good record because he had seen action and had been gassed on the battlefield. His father had been killed during the war.

Issued with a new and pressed uniform and steel helmet, Thien was taken into the Citadelle to make his historic choice. The eight caskets were lined up in two rows of four. Andre Maginot, the Minister of Pensions, was present and he gave Thin a bouquet of red and white violets. To muted bugles and muffled drums, Thin walked once around the flag-draped coffins and then on a slower circuit placed the bouquet on the sixth of the eight caskets.

The Unknown Soldier had been chosen.

From the Citadelle in Verdun, his casket was taken on a horse-drawn gun carriage to the railway station with a military escort that included Thien. Travelling with the chosen casket on the special train was Andre Maginot with five war widows, five permanently maimed soldiers, five other soldiers and five veterans of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

Arriving in Paris on 11th November, the casket was again placed on a gun carriage and taken through the streets to the Pantheon where then President Raymond Poincare made a speech before a massive crowd of spectators. The cortege then moved along the Boulevard St. Germain and the Champs Elysee for another ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe.

At the same moment, back in Verdun, Thien's regiment were involved in another ceremony – the burial of the caskets holding the seven soldiers not selected in Faubourg Pave French National Cemetery. Today the seven graves are grouped around a special memorial cross in the cemetery.



Three months later, Thien left the army and returned to his job as a baker. He later explained that he had chosen the sixth casket because that was the sum of the three numbers of his unit – 132<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment.

Le Soldat Inconnu lay in state in a chamber at the Arc de Triomphe until 28<sup>th</sup> January 1921, when he was finally laid to rest in the specially prepared vault under the arch. The French Minister of War Louis Barthou made a speech and Lloyd George and the United States ambassador laid wreaths. The casket was then lowered into the ground.

Spectators crowded around the grave. Many placed flowers; others, former soldiers, dropped their medals in to the grave. Minister Barthou then shouted “Vive la France” – a cry taken up by thousands of voices. The crowd slowly departed.

A granite covering stone was fitted with the simple inscription –

**“ICI  
REPOSE  
UN SOLDAT FRANCAIS  
MORT  
POUR LA PATRIE  
1914-1918”**

In 1922 the French Parliament declared the eleventh day of November in each year to be a national holiday. The following year, on the suggestion of the journalist and poet Gabriel Broissy, it was decided to install an eternal flame at the tomb. The torch was designed by Henri Favier and made by Edgar Brandt, a craftsman in wrought iron. On 11<sup>th</sup> November 1923 Andre Maginot, by now Minister for War, lit the Flame of Remembrance for the first time. It has never been extinguished, even during the occupation of World War 2. The flame is rekindled each evening at twilight by French veterans’ organizations.

Since the end of World War 1, the idea of a symbolic Tomb of the Unknown Soldier has spread across the world from Argentina to Zimbabwe where nations wish to recognize citizens who fell in a wide range of conflicts. In Chile and Ukraine, second 'unknown tombs' have been unveiled to commemorate the Unknown Sailor.



**Rod Arnold**

*Author's Note – In addition to providing the last resting place for the seven soldiers not selected, the Faubourg Pave French National Cemetery at Verdun also has a display of German artillery pieces from World War 1.*

# TANK MEN: THE STORY OF THE FIRST CREWS

## New Exhibition at the Tank Museum Opened On 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016

The Tank Museum is marking the centenary of the first tank attack in history with a new exhibition focusing on pioneering tank soldiers.



*Tank Men: The Story of the First Crews*, focuses on the stories of eight men who crewed the first tanks during the First World War.

The new exhibition tells the stories of eight British tank soldiers who were among the pioneers of armoured warfare. These individuals were carefully chosen following extensive research in the Museums archives, drawing upon previously unseen materials – documents, images and supporting collections - to assemble their service histories.

The exhibition features Elliot Hotblack, Cyril Coles, Sydney Hadley, Archie Smith, Basil Henriques, Walter Ratcliffe, Charles Baker and Clement Arnold – examining their wartime exploits and the impact the conflict had on their lives.

To the wider public these aren't household names – they were just ordinary soldiers but have their place in the pantheon of regimental history and are well known to many 'Tank Men'. Chosen because their experiences illustrate dramatic and moving stories that have stood the test of time and continue to have a powerful and emotional impact today.



Researchers traced surviving relatives of the featured soldiers, who were approached to provide a personal insight into the men. This adds another dimension to the way in which the men could be brought to life. The relatives all spoke with a freshness of affection and pride that belies the passing of 100 years.

Alongside the personal stories, the Museum is redisplaying what is finest collection of First World War tanks in the world – including the world's only surviving example of the Mark I tank that first saw action 100 years ago.

It was with great pleasure that I was able to attend the opening of the new Tank Men exhibition at the Tank Museum, Bovington on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016. Representing the Western Front Association on behalf of David Tattersfield, WFA Development Trustee and recognising the link between Wessex Branch and the museum it was perhaps appropriate as Chairman of Wessex Branch and a former Tank man to be able to attend.

The event was well planned and organised and being a former member of the Royal Tank Regiment there was an element of 'reunion' about the event enabling old acquaintances to be refreshed and being updated about the regiment through the new generation of Tank Men currently serving in the Royal Tank Regiment.

For those reasonably familiar with regimental history it was fascinating to be able to talk with relatives of those 8 early tank men. The survival of Walter Ratcliffes uniform jacket donated by the family is surely unique in the true sense of the word. Talking to such as Sir Matthew Pinsent and his Uncle Euan about George Macpherson and Basil Henriques was very enervating having closely followed their story from a range of previous works by the likes of Trevor Pidgeon, as was conversation with the relative of Elliot Hotblack, a legend of the Tank Corps. All managed to remind me as a young 'tank man' of my meeting with a Tank Corps Gunner who was present at the Battle of Cambrai.



*Wessex Branch Chairman (right) and Branch Member Ray Parrot*

The Princess Royal proved very knowledgeable in her address to the assembled audience and clearly understood the importance of the early pioneers of tank warfare in the development of the art of armoured warfare.



The Tank Museum is to be congratulated on the Tank Men Exhibition. The depth of research and the quality of the exhibits is self-evident and the general ambience contributes to a great understanding of the human stories of these 8, representing as they do all those early tank pioneers and the technical aspects of their new 'chariots of war'.

**Martin Willoughby**



*The Princess Royal meets men of the Royal Tank Regiment during the opening of the Exhibition*



# GREAT WAR MEDALS

## Yser Medal & Yser Cross ~ Belgium

On the 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1914 German troops of the III Reserve Corps under the command of General von Beseler attacked Belgian positions along the eastern side of the River Yser. Facing a determined and fierce Belgian resistance in defending the opposite side of the river further enemy reserve units were deployed. By the end of October the Belgians had effectively halted the German advance. The bitter struggle between the Germans and Belgian forces in this part of Belgium later became known as the Battle of the Yser. In their stoic defence along the River Yser the Belgians sustained over 60,000 casualties.

### Yser Medal

Four years later on the 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1918 a Royal Decree instituted the Medaille d'Yser – the Yser Medal – to commemorate the courage and sacrifice displayed by the Belgian troops who fought in the Battle of the Yser. The 35mm diameter, patinated bronze medal is surmounted by a smaller enamelled medallion.

On the obverse is a naked helmeted man holding a lance – indicating the halting of the German advance. To the man's right a relief inscription in three lines reads: "17-31/OCT/1914" and to the left is the signature of the Belgian artist and engraver Emile Vloors.

The enamelled medallion is inscribed "YSER". The reverse has an image of a roaring lion sitting on the bank of the River Yser with an arrow in its left shoulder and below in the exergue is the word "YSER". Above in the centre of the green enamelled medallion is the Belgian royal crown over the letter "A", the monogram of King Albert.

Suspension is by means of a ring through a loop and the 37mm wide ribbon is black with a 15mm red centre stripe – the red representing spilled blood and the black mourning.

The medal could be awarded to foreign nationals, members of allied military forces who participated in the Battle of the Yser and also awarded posthumously.

### Yser Cross

A Royal Decree of the 5<sup>th</sup> February, 1934 changed the title of the Yser Medal to the Yser Cross, with no





change in its design. However, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August an additional Decree instituted a new cross 42.5mm wide, in patinated bronze, with the 35mm Yser Medal superimposed upon it.

The short ends of the arms of the cross patée are visible, the upper medallion obscures most of the top arm of the cross. The ribbon remained unchanged but many Flemish recipients chose an unofficial black and yellow ribbon denoting them as Dutch speaking Belgians.

The Yser Cross was issued as a replacement for the Yser Medal. Veterans could apply for the cross, with the appropriate payment but very few chose to exchange their Yser Medal. The regulations did not allow the wearing of the Yser Medal and Yser Cross together.

[Source: The Medals Decorations & Orders Of The Great War 1914-18 by Alex C. Purves. Second & Revised Edition published in 1989 by J.B. Hayward & Son. ISBN 0 903754 38 X

Medal-Medaille Web-Site ~ [www.medal-medaille.com.uk](http://www.medal-medaille.com.uk)

Wikipedia Web-Site ~ [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

**R.G. Coleman**



## **VC SNIPPETS**

### **Norman Douglas Holbrook V.C., R.N.**

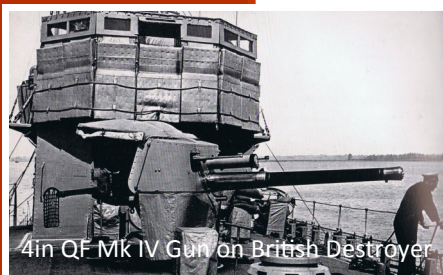
A memorial paving stone to Norman Holbrook V.C., Royal Navy was placed outside Southsea Library in Palmerston Road on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2014. He was the first submariner to receive Britain's highest gallantry award for torpedoing the Turkish battleship Medusdiye in the Dardanelles on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1914.

The centennial ceremony was attended by family descendants including a 92-year-old niece, representatives of the Royal Navy and members of the local community. Norman Holbrook who was born at Southsea in 1888 died at Midhurst, Sussex in 1976 and was buried in St James' Old Churchyard, Stedham, West Sussex.



## The First Shot

The identity of the gunlayer who fired the first British shot in the Great War is unknown, but the gun, a naval 4" QF Mk.IV, is on show at the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth.



4in QF Mk IV Gun on British Destroyer

It was one of three such weapons carried by the destroyer *HMS Lance*.

The target was the German minelayer *Konigin Luise*. A ship, originally built to carry holiday makers between Hamburg and Heligoland.

The war had started officially at 23.00 hours on 4<sup>th</sup> August. By that time *Konigin Luise* was already making her way down the North Sea from her base at Emden to lay 200 mines in the Thames estuary.

In just 12 hours, the former excursion steamer had been converted into a minelayer. The speedy conversion had left no time for the intended main armament – 2 x 3.4" guns – to be mounted. When she sailed the ship's promenade deck still had its enclosed glass windows.

However, there had been time for a repainting job. With two raked funnels and two raked masts the *Konigin Luise* resembled the Great Eastern Railway steamers that plied between Harwich and the Hook of Holland. The German ship had therefore been disguised in Great Eastern Railway steamer colours – black hull, buff superstructure and yellow funnels with black tops – before she sailed.



HMS Lance (L Class Destroyer)

The *Konigin Luise* had begun laying her mines under the cover of a rain squall some 20 miles of the English coast when she was spotted by a British fishing boat.

Unfortunately for the German ship the next vessels the fishing boat encountered were two Royal Navy destroyers – *Lance* and *Landrail*. The fishermen reported that they had seen "an unknown steamer throwing things overboard" and the destroyers immediately sped off to investigate.

The *Lance* and *Landrail* were part of a strong force of British destroyers, led by the cruiser *Amphion*, which had sailed from Harwich at dawn on 5<sup>th</sup> August. It was as they swept north towards German waters they met the fishing boat.

The *Konigin Luise* was still "throwing things overboard" when she was sighted by the British destroyers.

The *Lance* opened fire at once followed by the *Landrail*.

The German ship turned to run for home, but she was slower than the destroyers, and the only armament she had been able to mount before sailing – a pair of pom-poms – was no match for the 6 – 4" guns carried by the two destroyers. The *Konigin Luise's* captain, Commander Biermann, decided to scuttle the ship.



SMS Konigin Luise

The destroyers continued their sweep and very soon spotted another ship resembling the *Konigin Luise* flying a huge German flag.

They deployed to open fire but the cruiser *Amphion* fouled the range. Captain Cecil H. Fox of the *Amphion* had recognised the ship as a genuine Great Eastern Railway steamer – the *St. Petersburg*. The destroyers failed to see his signals not to attack and Fox had been forced to take his ship between the destroyers and their intended target.

The German Ambassador to Britain (Prince Karl Lichnowski) was on board the steamer en route back to Germany – hence the German flag.

After 24 hours on patrol, the British force headed back towards Harwich early on 6<sup>th</sup> August. At 0630 hours the *Amphion* struck a mine – probably laid by the *Konigin Luise* the previous day.

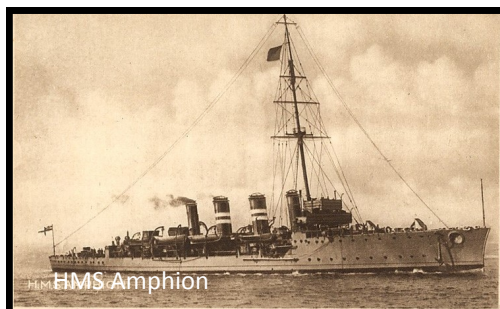
Captain Fox was knocked unconscious and many others on the bridge were badly burned. There was only one survivor from the crews of the two forecastle 4 inch guns. Many of the hands were at breakfast and were killed or suffocated in the forward mess decks.

Fox recovered and finding the ship still underway ran to the engine room to stop the engines. The forepart of the ship was now on fire and it was impossible to reach the bridge or to flood the forward magazine. The ship's back appeared to be broken and she was already settling by the bows.

Escorting destroyers closed in and took off members of the *Amphion*'s crew still alive, and the rescued German survivors; the last boatload being taken off at 0700 hours. The doomed ship drifted back into the minefield and at 07:03 she struck another mine.

The forward magazine exploded giving off smoke of a ghastly lemon colour – possibly the ship's lyddite. Debris struck the rescue boats and destroyers. One of *Amphion*'s shells burst on the deck of the destroyer *Lark*, killing three sailors – two British and one German – just rescued from the cruiser. Within 15 minutes of the magazine explosion the ship had disappeared beneath the waves.

Some 148 British sailors died from *Amphion*'s crew of just over 320 – they were amongst the first British casualties of the war. Eighteen German prisoners picked up from the scuttled enemy minelayer also died.



**Rod Arnold**



## THREE IN A ROW



Reginald Stanley Judson  
VC DCM MM

It is not a common occurrence for a British or Commonwealth soldier to be awarded the Military Medal, the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and the Victoria Cross. It is quite exceptional, in my limited experience, for a recipient of this combination of gallantry medals to have earned the individual awards over a period of just four weeks; this was the achievement of New Zealander Reginald Judson in the summer of 1918.

Reginald Stanley Judson was born on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1881 at Wharehine north of Auckland. His father was a farmer, but Reginald became an engineering apprentice and worked as a boilermaker and engineer. He married in 1905 and the couple had four children before they divorced in 1920.

In October 1915 Reginald Judson enlisted in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF). For some reason he gave his occupation as bootmaker. Perhaps he had taken up this trade due to a shortage of mechanical engineering opportunities.

He was first posted to the New Zealand Rifle Brigade and embarked for the Middle East in January 1916. Later he was transferred to 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. Auckland Regiment and was promoted to corporal.

The original NZEF had served at Gallipoli as a brigade within the ANZAC and was withdrawn to Egypt at the end of 1915. Here in January 1916, the New Zealand Division (NZD) was formed mainly from recently arrived reinforcements but also incorporating the remnants of the Gallipoli force. The NZD left Egypt for England in April 1916.



KIWI Emblem cut out of Chalk by the N.Z. Forces to commemorate their occupation of Sling Camp, Bulford, during the Great War. The Body covers an area of 11 acres, Height 420 ft., length of Bill 150 ft. Height of letters N.Z. 65 ft. Total area enclosed 41 acres. The Emblem has been registered as a Military Encroachment by the Imperial Authorities and on behalf of the N.Z. Forces, its maintenance has been undertaken by the KIWI POLISH CO., Pty. Ltd., London.

A training base was established at Sling Camp near Bulford in Wiltshire with various depots in southern England. The NZEF No.1 General Hospital was established at Brockenhurst, Hampshire.

On moving to France, the NZD was initially attached to British Second Army. Stationed around Armentieres, they began an extensive programme of training to prepare them for combat on the Western Front.

The NZD saw frontline service on the Lys sector, but their first major action was on the Somme at Flers on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1916. With the support of four tanks – making their debut on the battlefield – the NZD took all of their objectives for the day although casualties were heavy and included Reginald Judson. He was evacuated to England and spent nearly two years recovering from his injuries.

In June 1918 Judson, now a sergeant, returned to his unit which was again in the Somme sector. Towards the end of July near Hebuterne, he rescued six comrades threatened by a German counterattack. For this action he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM).

During the 'Hundred Days Offensive' from August to November 1918 the NZD was almost constantly in action. On 16<sup>th</sup> August, Judson led a bayonet charge at Bucquoy that earned him the Military Medal (MM).

Ten days later, Judson's unit was involved in the Second Battle of Bapaume where his actions led to the award of the Victoria Cross (VC).

His VC citation reads as follows:

*"For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when, in an attack on enemy positions, he led a small bombing party under heavy fire and captured an enemy machine-gun. He then proceeded up the sap alone, bombing three machine-gun crews before him. Jumping out of the trench he ran ahead of the enemy. Then, standing on the parapet, he ordered the party, consisting of two officers and about ten men, to surrender. They instantly fired on him, but he threw a bomb and jumped down amongst them, killed two, and put the rest to flight, and so captured two machine-guns. This prompt and gallant action not only saved many lives, but also enabled the advance to be continued unopposed."*

*[The London Gazette, No. 30982, 30 October 1918]*

The citation was published in the same edition of the London Gazette as the citation for his DCM.

In September, Judson was gassed and was returned to England to recover. Here he was recommended for officer training and he was commissioned as a second lieutenant.

Judson was discharged in January 1919 but decided to follow a military career in the New Zealand Staff Corps. His war wounds (eight fragments of shrapnel remained in his chest and abdomen) and the after effects of his gassing meant that his health was not good, and he had periods of extended sick leave in 1924 and 1934. He was considered a reliable and conscientious officer, but with limited promotion opportunities he had only reached the rank of captain when he retired in 1937.



New Zealanders in newly captured Bapaume 4.18



Auckland Bn Flanders Sept 16 1918

Eight years after his divorce, Reginald Judson married again in 1928 and became a father for the fifth time. His second wife was a war widow.

Judson's health prevented him from returning to an engineering career, but he found employment as a secretary at a school in Auckland. He was elected as a member of Auckland City Council and served for nine years. He also stood as a candidate for the New Zealand Parliament but was unsuccessful.

During the Second World War Judson commanded a battalion tasked with guarding vital sites in Auckland. One son served as a chaplain with the New Zealand 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion and won the Military Cross in the Italian Campaign. Reginald Stanley Judson finally retired from the military in September 1946 with the rank of major.

After the war he took up farming but also served as a justice of the peace and as a coroner. Reginald Stanley Judson VC, DCM, MM died in Auckland on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1972. He was buried in Waikumete Cemetery, Auckland.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2007, Judson's VC was one of nine VCs amongst a hundred medals stolen from the Army Memorial Museum at Waiouru in New Zealand. Michael Ashcroft and Tom Sturgess offered a NZ\$300,000 reward for their return and on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2008 it was announced that all of the medals had been recovered.



## Rod Arnold



## VC SNIPPETS

### Eric Gascoigne Robinson V.C., O.B.E., R.N.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2015 a memorial paving stone was laid outside the Robinson family home in Diamond Terrace, Greenwich. Lieutenant-Commander Robinson was awarded the Victoria Cross for his conspicuous gallantry in the Dardanelles at Kum Kale on the 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1915. The unveiling ceremony was attended by family descendants, representatives from the Royal Borough of Greenwich, and Royal Naval personnel.

Eric Robinson who was born at Greenwich in 1882 retired as a Rear Admiral in 1933, and was recalled to serve in the Second World War. He died in 1965 at Haslar Naval Hospital and was buried in St John's Churchyard, Langrish, Hampshire.





# Mark Huntington's War 1914 - 1915

## The Beginning and up till February 1915

My Dad, Mark Huntington was Private 2172 and he was in the 5<sup>th</sup> Leicesters Battalion. This was a Territorial Regiment in other words part-time soldiers. Territorial soldiers were intended for the defence of the home land and were not expected to serve abroad. A great many members would have seen it as a way of getting away for a bit of fun and adventure. It was also a way of getting a bit of holiday once a year. At the time of the outbreak of war the Leicesters were at camp. On the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1914 they were back in Loughborough and for the next few days were basically sorting themselves out.



They moved to Duffield in Derbyshire to start their training and then on the 15<sup>th</sup> August they marched to Derby station a distance of 6 miles. From there they were taken by train to Luton a distance of just over 90 miles. They had to arrange not only themselves but also all of their kit including the guns so although they were supposed to leave at 11.00 a.m. in practice it was very much later. They arrived at Luton at 2.00 p.m. on the 16<sup>th</sup> August, so it was a slow journey, the first of many to come.

Interestingly you can still take a train from Derby Station to Luton but you have to change at Luton Airport Parkway Station and then to Luton Station. The first stage takes 1h 35 minutes and the second stage takes 4 minutes. A one way ticket costs £87 these days without any discounts.

An interesting cost comparison was that in Luton the soldiers were billeted in Belmont Street which still exists today. The battalion paid rent at an average rate of 9d per man per day. There were normally 4 men to a house and the occupiers were paid 21 shillings a week (this was seen as a good rate because the average weekly rent for those houses would have been around 12 shillings). In very simple terms the single ticket at £87 would have covered the cost of 330 men's weekly rent. So much for inflation.

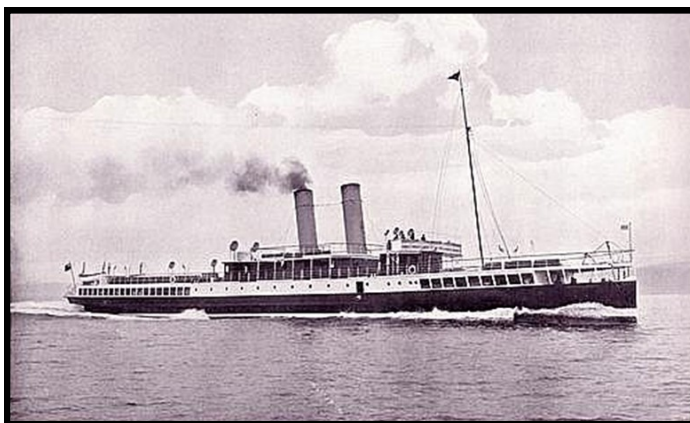
By the 19<sup>th</sup> August 1914 the battalion were asked if they would volunteer to extend their terms of service to go overseas and over 90% said yes.

During all this time they were also joined with the 4<sup>th</sup> Leicesters. The 4ths were the town (city) Battalion and the 5ths were the country Battalion. In training the 5ths were always at an

advantage on night exercises, this was because they could always find their way in the dark, there were no street lights in the countryside in those days.

The photograph on the previous page was taken some time in Luton during training, a meal in the garden in Belmont Street. I am reasonably certain that my dad is the one on the left of the four. The training carried on for the rest of 1914. In February 1915 they were ordered overseas and were transported to Southampton by train. Another journey of approximately 100 miles

My dad would have been on a train before not very often, but he had never been on a boat before, so I think it reasonable to think that he and many of his mates would have been a little apprehensive. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Battalions then crossed over to France in February 1915. My Dad was in the right half of the Battalion and they eventually boarded the Duchess of Argyll. After waiting around all day in the docks at Southampton, at 9.00 p.m. on the 26<sup>th</sup> February the Duchess led the little flotilla out in to the channel.



**The Duchess of  
Argyll**

The SS Duchess of Argyll was launched in 1906 as a River Clyde ferry, although it had been plated at the front for occasional use on the Stranraer to Larne service, but it was not designed for rough seas. She was only 580 tonnes gross, 250 feet long, 30 feet breadth and a draught of 7 foot 4 inches.

She was requisitioned by the Admiralty on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1915 so this must have been one of her first trips across the channel. On the night of the 26<sup>th</sup> the weather was terrible and the rest of the flotilla turned back, the Duchess kept going and after a terrible crossing arrived at Le Harve in the early hours of morning of the 27<sup>th</sup> February.

Dad never spoke much about his service but luckily this was one of the things he did talk about. His boat was the only one to cross that night, the rest of the flotilla turned back, there had been an order from one of the escorting warships but there was a bit of confusion, Sergeant Diggle a signaller in the Battalion was ordered to assist with signals, the member of crew he was assisting was a Swede and the signal that came was 'No go' according to Diggle and 'No no' according to the member of crew, the Captain John McNaughton (the peacetime Caledonian master who stayed with his

The rest of the Battalion didn't have a better time. After an equally terrible voyage they arrived back in the very early hours of the morning into harbour. When they went on deck to 'get their first look at France', they realised that the harbour was Southampton they were back where they had started. After another day hanging around the docks they crossed the next night, the weather a little better and this time the Battalion was re-united on the 28<sup>th</sup> February in the Le Harve railway station.

One good thing that happened at the station, they were issued with sheepskin coats and extra socks. The socks were a present from the Queen and were much appreciated. Do you think that an extra pair of socks even if they came from the Queen would be thought of as an appreciated and welcome present by today's 20 year olds?

Mark's four years of War was just really beginning. He remained a private and he was in France and Belgium for over four years. He was injured by shrapnel in the leg but when and where this happened I am still trying to research.

As a postscript regarding the Duchess of Argyll. She carried on in service for four and a quarter years, she made 655 trips across the Channel, she carried 326,608 men and steamed 71,624 miles under the white ensign.

In September 1915 she went to the rescue of Captain John Williamson's paddle steamer Queen Empress which had been in a collision with a destroyer.

In February 1918 she assisted another troop transport ship, the Archangel which had also been in collision with a British destroyer. Over 1600 men were transferred before the vessel sank.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> April 1919 she returned to the river Clyde and Caledonian service one month later. During the Second World War she remained on the Clyde on passenger services and as a troopship tender. In 1951 she was withdrawn from service, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 1952 she was bought by the Admiralty and in 1954 she was converted into a floating laboratory at Chatham Dockyard. She was towed to Portland Harbour to join the Underwater Detection Establishment. Here she stayed until in 1969 she was sold by the Ministry of Defence for scrap, then in 1970 she was towed to Newhaven where she was broken up. 64 years of a very full and active working life.

My Dad, Mark managed to live longer than the little ship that took him safely to France in 1915, he died in 1970 so he luckily managed 78 mainly active years

**Mike Huntington**





# Posthumously Honoured



During our 2015 Branch battlefield tour members visited the Somme American Cemetery at Bony, Aisne, France. The cemetery contains 1,844 casualties of which 138 are unidentified. Each grave is marked by a white marble Latin cross, those of the Jewish faith by the Star of David. Three of the American casualties – First Lieutenant William B. Turner, Corporal Thomas O'Shea and Private Robert L. Blackwell – were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honour and their crosses are inscribed with gold lettering.

Instigated in 1861 by the American Navy as the 'Medal of Valour', the Army in 1862 named it as the Medal of Honour. Each branch of the American military, the Army, Navy and Air Force has their own version of the medal, which basically is a five-pointed star. They also have their own rules and regulations governing the Medal of Honour award. The particular act of conspicuous bravery has to be witnessed by two or more persons. Their testimony has to demonstrate that the deed was exceptional and undertaken at great personal risk. The United States Congress can also instigate the award of the medal under special powers. For example they were instrumental in conferring the Medal of Honour on the British, French, American, Italian, Belgian and Rumanian Unknown Warriors.

It is usual for the President of the United States in the name of Congress to bestow the medal upon the recipient at a ceremony held at the White House. Hence the medal is also known as the Congressional Medal of Honour. Posthumous awards are presented to the recipient's next-of-kin. Currently, a recipient of the medal receives a pension of \$1,194 and an increase in pay. They also receive other less informal benefits as do their families. All living recipients are invited to the Presidential inauguration ceremony and celebrations. Since 2002 each recipient receives a Medal of Honour Flag as did those still living prior to that date. At the time of writing 3,469 medals have been awarded, 621 of them posthumously and 19 have been double awards. The latest award at the time of writing was made on the 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

## First Lieutenant William Bradford Turner

William Turner was born in 1892 at Boston, Massachusetts and later resided in Garden City, New York, where he was educated. He graduated from Williams College in 1914. A year later he joined the American army and served in France during the First World War. William was serving with the 105<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 27<sup>th</sup> Division in September 1918 as a First Lieutenant. On the 27<sup>th</sup> near Ronssoy leading 'M' company, he and some of his men became separated during a night attack on enemy positions. He continued to move forward with the men under severe shell and machine-gun fire. William personally charged machine gun emplacements and was wounded three times. Despite his wounds he continued to lead his men towards the enemy and cleared and captured three trenches.

After gaining their objective the fourth line, the Germans launched a counter attack and William was killed. He was 26 years of age. On the 26th June, 1919 it was announced by the War Department that First Lieutenant William B. Turner had been posthumously awarded the Medal of Honour . In addition to the Medal of Honor William also received the Italian Croce al Merito di Guerra and the Portuguese Cruz de Guerra.

The citation stated:-

*'He led a small group of men to the attack, under terrific artillery and machine-gun fire, after they had become separated from the rest of their company in the darkness. Single-handed he rushed an enemy machine-gun which had suddenly opened fire on his group and killed the crew with his pistol. He then pressed forward to another machine-gun post 25 yards away and had killed one gunner himself and by the time the remainder of his detachment arrived and put the gun out of action. With the utmost bravery he continued to lead his men over three lines of hostile trenches, cleaning up each one as they advanced, regardless of the fact that he had been wounded three times and killed several of the enemy in hand-to-hand encounters. After his pistol ammunition was exhausted, this gallant officer seized the rifle of a dead soldier, bayoneted several members of a machine-gun crew, and shot the other. Upon reaching the fourth-line trench, which was his objective, First Lieutenant Turner captured it with the nine remaining in his group and resisted a hostile counter attack until he was finally surrounded and killed'.*

First Lieutenant William Bradford Turner lies buried in the American Somme Cemetery, Bony ~ Plot B, Row 13, Grave No.1.

## Corporal Thomas E. O'Shea

Thomas O'Shea was born on the 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1895 in New York City. He enlisted into the American Army as a Private at Summit, New Jersey and later became a Corporal serving with the 107<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Machine Gun Corps, 27<sup>th</sup> Division in France. Near Le Catelet on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 1918 he and two other soldiers moving forward to the German lines lost contact with their platoon and became disorientated by an enemy smoke barrage. They sought shelter in a shell hole and heard shouts of distress from an American tank which had been hit and put out of action. The tank was approximately 30 to 40 yards distant from them. Although subjected to heavy machine and trench mortar fire O'Shea and his two companions left their shelter and made their way toward the stricken tank. Under the withering fire from the enemy Private O'Shea was struck and mortally wounded. He died shortly after aged 23 years. On the 30<sup>th</sup> January, 1919 the War Department announced the posthumous award of the Medal of Honour to Thomas O'Shea.



The citation states:-

*'Becoming separated from their platoon by a smoke barrage, Corporal O'Shea with two other soldiers, took cover in a shell hole well within the enemy's lines. Upon hearing a call for help from a American tank, which had become disabled 30 yards from them, the three soldiers left their shelter and started toward the tank under heavy fire from German machine-guns and trench mortars. In crossing the fire-swept area Corporal O'Shea was mortally wounded and died of his wounds shortly afterwards'.*

Thomas was also awarded the French Croix de Guerre, the Portuguese Cruz du Guerra and the Italian Croce al Merito di Guerra.

Corporal Thomas E. O'Shea lies buried in the American Somme Cemetery, Bony ~ Plot B, Row 16, Grave No.14.

## Private Robert Lester Blackwell

Robert Blackwell was born at Hurdle Mills, Person County, North Carolina on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1895 the son of James and Eugenia Blackwell. His father had fought on the Confederate side during the American Civil War and his mother died when Robert was a young boy. He grew up on the family's farm and joined the American Army as a Private at Hurdle Mills. Robert was posted to 'K' Company, 119<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 30<sup>th</sup> Division and served in France during the First World War. On the 11<sup>th</sup> October, 1918 near St Souplet his platoon was cut off and virtually surrounded by the enemy. His platoon commander called for volunteers to take a message to HQ requesting reinforcements. Robert, who was aware of the risk to life and limb, volunteered. Under concentrated heavy enemy fire he tried to penetrate the German line and was shot down and killed aged 23 years. The War Department announced on the 18<sup>th</sup> January, 1919 that Private Robert Blackwell had been posthumously awarded the Medal of Honour.

The citation stated:

*'When his platoon was almost surrounded by the enemy and his platoon commander asked for volunteers to carry a message calling for reinforcements, Private Blackwell volunteered for this mission, well knowing the extreme danger connected with it. In attempting to get through the heavy shell and machine-gun fire this gallant soldier was killed.'*

At a ceremony held in the North Carolina State Capitol Robert's father received his son's medal from the Governor, Thomas Bickett. Robert was also awarded the Italian Croce al Merito di Guerra and the Portuguese Cruz de Guerra. His family later donated Robert's medals to the North Carolina Museum of History. After the First World War a Robert Lester Blackwell American Legion Post No.138 was erected on Highway 49 and a statue of him placed in the town square of Roxboro, North Carolina.

Private Robert Lester Blackwell lies buried in the American Somme Cemetery, Bony ~ Plot D, Row 20, Grave No.2.



**R.G. Coleman**

### Sources

Wikipedia Web-Site ~ [www.wikipedia.co.uk](http://www.wikipedia.co.uk)

Medal of Honor ~ [www.edition.cnn.com](http://www.edition.cnn.com)

[United States Of America's Congressional Medal Of Honor Recipients & Their Official Citations.](#) econd Edition Published in 1998 by Mitch DeMars & R.J. Proft.



# Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-1929

Now available to consult online at [Ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) is the National Army Museum's collection of soldiers' effects ledgers. These records contain invaluable information about soldiers' careers, deaths and next of kin.

## Soldiers' effects

Soldiers' effects ledgers were created by the War Office to record the monies owing to soldiers who died while serving in the British Army. A small percentage of soldiers who were discharged as 'insane' are also listed here. The National Army Museum holds the records from 1901 to 1960, covering the latter stages of the Boer War and, of course, both World Wars. The records from 1901 to 1929 are available to consult online.

## Family history

Although these documents are no substitute for an individual's service record, they do contain pertinent information that can be particularly valuable for family and social historians.

The ledgers list a soldier's name, rank, regiment, date (and sometimes place) of death, but perhaps most importantly they give you the name of the deceased's next of kin. Family historians can often be faced with trying to research several men with the same name in order to work out which is their ancestor.

By providing the name of the next of kin, the soldiers' effects records can sometimes provide the only existing evidence of this crucial family link.

## Army payments

The sheer number of volumes alone provides a stark reminder of just how many men were lost during this devastating period in world history. The Ancestry online database contains 872,395 records.

The monies awarded to a soldier's next of kin consisted of his balance of pay, plus a gratuity that was paid out after the war.

Payments would be awarded to a soldier's widow first, and if he was not married, to one of his parents. Some are even split between several siblings or other relatives, all individually named. A significant majority of the First World War payments however go to soldiers' mothers. This not only points to how many widows there were in Britain at the time (as the money would usually be awarded to a soldier's father first if he was alive) but also perhaps to the general youth of the British Army, with so many going to war never having married.

## Trade on enlistment

One of the interesting things is that the earliest records from 1901 to 1913 list a soldier's trade on enlistment, providing a fascinating glimpse into the history of early 20th-century employment.

|            |                     |          |         |
|------------|---------------------|----------|---------|
| Harrington | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Bn. | 8.6.15   | Exeter  |
| William    | Haute Rept-         |          | 7/15    |
|            | Pte                 | Wounds   |         |
|            | 14852               | Netley   |         |
|            |                     | Hospital |         |
|            |                     |          | Exeter, |
|            |                     |          | 11/15   |

*W. W. W. W. W.*  
-8 MAY 1919

Buried in Romsey (Botley Road) Cemetery the detail from the First World War Soldiers' effect ledger for William Harrington states that he died of 'Wounds Netley Hospital' on 8 June, 1915.

|        |           |          |         |
|--------|-----------|----------|---------|
| Finch  | 1st Bn.   | 26.4.15  | Exeter. |
| James. | Hampshire |          | 6/15.   |
|        | Regt.     | Inaction |         |
|        | Pte.      |          |         |
|        | 10458.    |          |         |

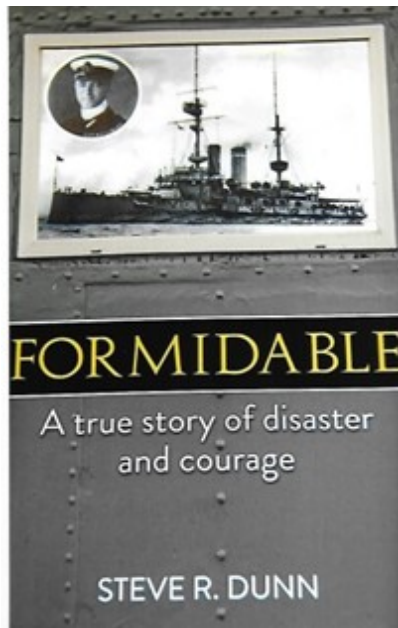
WAR GRATUITY  
1919/20  
Transfer 14026  
Regd. Paper 1967  
Serial No. 1488

|           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| Mo. Emily | Vanderplank |
| Mo. Emily | Vanderplank |

The entry for James Finch states that his Mother, Emily, is next of kin and in turn confirms genealogical research that she married a John Vanderplank in 1897 who was James' stepfather.

**Marc Thompson**

The above article is courtesy of the National Army Museum website



# Book Review

## Formidable ~ A True Story Of Disaster & Courage

by Steve R. Dunn. Paperback £12-99p.

Published in 2015 by The Book Guild Limited,  
The Werks, 45 Church Road, Hove BN3 2BE.

ISBN 978 1 910508 15 2

Steve Dunn has written an interesting account of this tragic incident in maritime naval history. He has not confined himself to the loss of HMS Formidable exclusively but has explored the wider consequences of its affects upon the wider community in time of war. The circumstances surrounding the torpedoing of the 1897 battleship HMS Formidable on New Year's Day 1915 has provoked comments both official and unofficial that the incident should never have happened. The chronology and facts of this affair are carefully set out for the reader in which 583 men lost their lives. 197 were very fortunate to have survived the sinking in the gale force weather conditions.

The author's describes the Royal Navy at the outbreak of the First World War as 'Vicwardian.' It is a navy which belonged to the age of Nelson whose characteristic's spilled over into the Edwardian period. For naval officers it was essentially an exclusive club whose members were from the upper classes. In the 'Vicwardian' navy promotion for officers was not necessarily based on ability but very dependent upon the sponsorship of a senior officer under which the aspiring officer had served. A technological revolution had catapulted the Royal Navy into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and very few officers, especially those of flag rank understood or had come to terms with it consequences. Their hidebound attitude was based on discipline, a smart ship – was an efficient ship – and if it did not move 'paint it.' Lack of initiative and innovation made them unfit for modern industrial warfare. Admiral's orders were followed by their sub-ordinates to the letter and never questioned. Many dismissed the emergence of submarines and were unable to comprehend the destruction they were to unleash on warships and merchant vessels during the First World War and in later conflicts.

The opening months of the war were not auspicious for the Royal Navy. A significant number of ships were lost and questions were raised inside and outside of the navy about the competence of the Admiralty under the First Lord, Winston Churchill and his seagoing commanders. Vice-Admiral Lewis Bayley commanded the Fifth Battle Squadron which included HMS Formidable and he was severely reprimanded for its loss. Bayley had a good relationship with the First Lord although he fell out of favour for a short period after the Formidable incident. Bayley angered by his reprimand, demanded a court-martial. The Admiralty demurred fearing adverse publicity. They had prosecuted Rear-Admiral Troubridge for his actions in the Goeben affair and he was found not guilty although his career was curtailed.

The author examines the consequences of death on active service for those families affected and the financial implications on the upper, middle and working classes. Limitations on pension and compensation payments made to the bereaved and to service personal are brought to the reader's attention. In coming to terms with the horrendous death toll incurred during the war the author explores the wide spread need for remembrance in the form of public and private memorials. Two dogs feature in the loss of HMS Formidable. Bruce, an Airedale terrier was drowned with his master the captain of the Formidable and Lassie, a Collie, revived John Cowan in the Pilot Boat Inn at Lyme Regis. Steve Dunn devotes a section of his book on the role of dogs and their training for carrying messages on the battlefield in the First World War. The high demand made upon the male population during the war gave an opportunity for women and ignited a change in social attitude towards them which is still on-going today.

Those who fought during the war had hoped that they would return to a 'land fit for heroes' – many were to be disappointed. Unemployment, health issues arising from the war shortened many lives. Numerous aspects appertaining to the First World War are highlighted in Steve Dunn's book. He has forthright views about the 'Vicwardian' Royal Navy, and the sinking of HMS Formidable. He also gives his opinion as to who was ultimately to blame for this naval disaster.

**Roger Coleman**



## John McCrae's funeral procession 1918



John McCrae's funeral procession on 29 January 1918, with his horse, Bonfire, playing the rôle of "The riderless horse", and following the caisson. The inclusion of the riderless, caparisoned horse with boots reversed in a military or state funeral symbolizes a fallen leader looking back on his troops for the last time; or fallen soldiers: in Australia for example, it is traditional for a riderless horse known as the 'Lone Charger' to lead the annual Anzac Day marches.





The custom is believed to date back to the time of Genghis Khan, when a horse was sacrificed to serve the fallen warrior in the next world; and later, the horse came to symbolize a warrior who would ride no more.

John McCrae was a poet, artist and physician. He was appointed Commanding Officer of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian General Hospital at Boulogne, and died of pneumonia on 28 January 1918, aged 45, at the No. 14 British General Hospital for Officers at Boulogne; and was buried with full military honours at Wimereux in the Pas-de-Calais. He composed the poem "In Flanders Fields" in honour of his friend, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Canadian Field Artillery, who was killed in action on 2 May 1915 aged 22, at the Second Battle of Ypres. It was first published in "Punch" on 8 December 1915; and in 1918 John Philip Sousa published a musical accompaniment to it:-



### **"In Flanders Fields" by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae (1872-1918)**

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row  
That mark our place: and in the sky  
The larks still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The Torch: be yours to hold it high!  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields*

John McCrae's poem was directly responsible for the adoption of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. On 9 November 1918, Moina Michael was working at the YMCA Overseas War Secretaries' Headquarters in New York when she read it in the "Ladies Home Journal"; and worked tirelessly to persuade many organisations to adopt the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. Finally, the National American League adopted it on 29 September 1920 as the United States's emblem of remembrance at their conference at Cleveland, Ohio. A delegate at that conference, Anna Guerin of the French YMCA Secretariat, was the founder of the American and French Children's League; and this organisation manufactured artificial poppies to be sold in aid of the restoration of the war-torn regions of France. The American and French Children's League sent representatives to Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada in 1921; and lobbied, successfully, for the adoption of the poppy as a national symbol of remembrance in those countries.



# Great War Quiz



1. What percentage of death sentences imposed by British courts martial on the Western Front did Haig commute?
2. Who was "Desperate Frankie"?
3. Name the South African politician and soldier who held a post in Lloyd George's War Cabinet.
4. On the Western Front, British Army monthly casualties in October 1917 were the third highest of the war. In which two months were they higher?
5. Who was the youngest British general of the twentieth century?
6. What post did Brigadier General Hugh Jamieson Elles hold from 1916-1919?
7. Who were "Ally Slopers Cavalry"?
8. What was dichlorodiethylsulphate more commonly known as on the Western Front?
9. What was the first commodity to be rationed in Britain in 1918?
10. What links HM Ships Bulwark, Natal and Vanguard in the Great War?



(Answers on back cover)



# BRITISH ARMY CAP BADGES

## The Royal Scots (East Lothian Regiment)

The badge was a white metal star from the Order of the Thistle with a voided brass centre showing St. Andrew and his cross and the title 'The Royal Scots' below. An all brass war economy version was also issued.

Some 33 battalions of the regiment served during the war and six soldiers were awarded the Victoria Cross.

A total of 71 battle honours were granted to the regiment including Mons, Le Cateau, La Bassée 1914, Aubers, Festubert 1915, Somme 1916, Flers-Courcelette, Scarpe 1917, Polygon Wood, Drocourt-Queant, Krithia, Palestine 1917-1918.

Estimated casualties (died): 11,160.



## What In The Sam Hill ...?

Whilst checking my photos taken at the Somme American Cemetery during the 2015 Wessex Branch Battlefield Tour I came across Rifleman Samuel Douthitt Hill.

One of the casualties buried there, Rifleman Samuel Douthitt Hill of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade was born in America. When the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917 Samuel was a Secretary at the American Consular Office in Auckland New Zealand and enlisted there into the NZRB. If anyone wants to follow his story there is an article in



Stand To! No.66 of January 2003 by Paul Guthrie –  
What In The Sam Hill ...?

This casualty was buried three times! Also his name is correctly spelt, but the US war graves people didn't and eventually had to correct it on his memorial cross.

On some web-sites they have also spelt his Christian name wrongly.

**R.G. Coleman**



# GALLERY

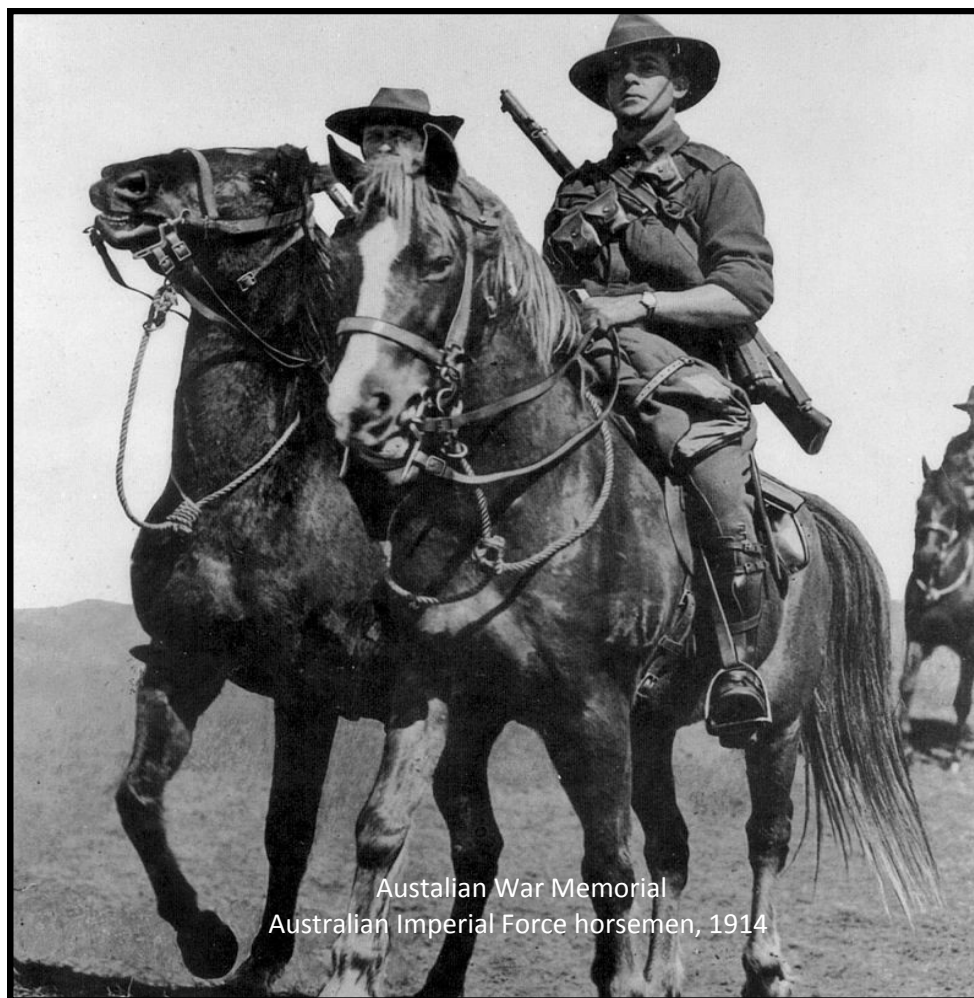


A group of wounded British and Indian troops after the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, 10-13 March 1915



[No. 2 Company Mountain Battery Royal Garrison Artillery](#). While some Mountain Batteries served in India some spent time in France before moving on to either Salonika and/or Egypt. No. 2 Coy was sent to France with III Corps in December 1914 and attached to the 4th Division in March 1915. They moved to Salonika in 1916 and then to India in 1919.





Austalian War Memorial  
Australian Imperial Force horsemen, 1914



Unidentified members of the Australian 5th Division near Mametz, December  
1916

# Important Information

Meetings are held at:

**Pimperne Village  
Hall,  
Newfield Road,  
Pimperne  
Blandford Forum  
Dorset  
DT11 8UZ**



## Branch Executive Committee and Trustees

**Martin Willoughby**  
Chairman /Trustee

**Rod Arnold**  
Vice-Chairman /Trustee

**Judy Willoughby**  
Secretary /Trustee

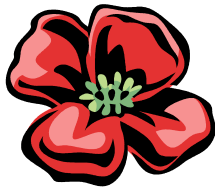
**Marc Thompson**  
Treasurer /Trustee

**David Seymour**  
Branch Education Officer/Trustee

**Katherine Seymour**  
Branch Memorials Officer/Trustee

**Sandra Twyford**  
Newsletter Editor/Trustee

**Angela Tozer**  
Trustee



## And finally.... (Quiz Answers)

[1] 89%; [2] French General Louis Franchet D'Esperey; [3] Jan Christian Smuts; [4] July 1916 (Somme) and April 1917 (Arras); [5] Brigadier General Roland Boys Bradford, GOC 186 Bde, killed in action aged 25 in 1917; [6] GOC Tank Corps; [7] The Army Service Corps; [8] Mustard Gas; [9] Sugar; [10] They were all destroyed by internal explosion when anchored.

Illustrations courtesy of Tim Fox-Godden

