



# WESSEX BRANCH

Western Front Association

## *THE DUGOUT*

Registered Charity: 1142787

Branch Patron: The Lord Lieutenant of Dorset - Angus Campbell

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### **CHAIRMAN'S CHAT:**

Welcome to ***THE DUGOUT-ISSUE 22!*** I hope that you all enjoyed reading *The Dugout 21* and it gives me great pleasure to present *The Dugout Issue 22* which I hope you will find equally as interesting as previous issues. At least it will give you what I think is a number of very interesting articles to help in passing the time until we can all meet up again. I remain hopeful that this can happen on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July at Pimperne Village Hall where Mungo Melvin will talk on "Alfred von Schlieffen" – The Man Behind the Plan. Do keep an eye open for updates on branch affairs and meetings from Judy. Meeting Notices or changes to the programme will also be posted the branch website. May I take this opportunity to recommend the WFA online webinars. I have watched several of them and can recommend them to the Great War enthusiast covering a wide variety of topics and include some less well known aspects of the Great War historiography. Do check on the WFA national website where you can register for any that take your fancy! Finally *The Dugout* like any publication needs a steady supply of articles – so if you have been mulling over whether to write that review or that piece of Family History or any other topic related to WW1 please write it up for and send to Sandra at [sandra.twyford@btinternet.com](mailto:sandra.twyford@btinternet.com) , for future issues of *The Dugout*.

## BRITISH ARMY CAP BADGES:

### CAVALRY & YEOMANRY:



#### 17<sup>th</sup> (Duke of Cambridge's Own) Lancers

The 17th Lancers (Duke of Cambridge's Own) was a cavalry regiment of the British Army, raised in 1759 and notable for its participation in the Charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean War and many other campaigns and has a long and distinguished record which continued after its amalgamation. This regiment possesses what is arguably the most distinctive cap badge (known as the 'Motto' to its soldiers – as it is today with the modern Queens Royal Lancers). A white metal skull crossed bones and a draped banner bearing the motto 'Or Glory'. Chosen to commemorate the defeat of the French at Quebec in 1759. A brass version was issued in 1916.

The regiment, which was based in Sialkot in India at the start of the First World War, landed in France as part of the 2nd (Sialkot) Cavalry Brigade in the 1st Indian Cavalry Division in November 1914 for service on the Western Front. The regiment fought in its conventional cavalry role at the Battle of Cambrai in November 1917. The regiment was transferred to the 7th Cavalry Brigade, part of the 3rd Cavalry Division in February 1918 and was used as mobile infantry, plugging gaps whenever the need arose, both as cavalry and as infantry during the last-gasp German Spring Offensive. After the signing of the Armistice on 11 November 1918, the regiment remained in continental Europe, joining the British Army of the Rhine in Cologne, Germany. The regiment then served in County Cork, Ireland, where it operated against the Irish Republican Army during the War of Independence.

In 1921, the title of the regiment was altered to the 17th Lancers (Duke of Cambridge's Own). There followed a series of amalgamations being amalgamated with the 21<sup>st</sup> Lancers in 1922. The regiment served with distinction up to 1993 when it was amalgamated with the 16<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Queens Royal Lancers to become the Queens Royal Lancers and after a further amalgamation on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2015 with the 9<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales's) continues as the Royal Lancers (Queen Elizabeth's Own) (since 2017).



#### Sources:

- *British Army Cap Badges of the First World War* – P. Doyle & C. Foster
- Website: [The Queen's Royal Lancers History – The Royal Lancers \(Queen Elizabeths' Own\) Association](#)

**MARTIN WILLOUGHBY**

## BRITISH ARMY CAP BADGES: INFANTRY:



### The Northumberland Fusiliers

This regiment was raised for the Dutch service in 1674 as “Clare’s Irish Regiment” joining the English establishment in 1685. It became 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot in 1751 and was linked with Northumberland from 1782. The regiment saw extensive service in the Peninsula War. In 1836 it was renamed 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot (Northumberland Fusiliers). During the Indian Mutiny it was part of the relieving force for Lucknow. Active service in Afghanistan and the Sudan followed. In 1881 all infantry regiments lost the numbered part of their title, and the regiment simply became the Northumberland Fusiliers.

The all brass badge worn in 1914 was the traditional fusilier flaming grenade with a depiction of St George and the Dragon inside a circle bearing the title. Some 52 battalions of the regiment were raised during the First World War of which 25 saw active service. Five soldiers were awarded the Victoria Cross. A total of 65 battle honours were granted to the regiment for actions from 1914 to 1918 including Mons, Le Cateau, Marne 1914, Aisne 1914, Ypres 1914 ‘15 ‘17 ‘18, Loos, Somme 1916 ‘18, Arras 1917 ‘18, Hindenburg Line, Vittorio Veneto, Macedonia 1915-18, Suvla, Scimitar Hill and Egypt. Estimated casualties (died): 17,005 – an average of 667 for each active battalion.

In 1935 the regiment became the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers and the badge changed to bi-metal: St George and the Dragon in white metal within a band, also white metal, bearing the motto ‘*Quo fata vocant*’ (Whither the Fates summon), all on a restyled brass grenade.



### Sources:

- *British Army Cap Badges of the First World War* – Peter Doyle & Chris Foster
- *Discovering English County Regiments* – Ian Beckett
- *English & Welsh Infantry Regiments* – Ray Westlake
- *Military Badge Collecting* – Jon Gaylor
- *Regiments and Corps of the British Army* – J.M. Brereton
- *Your Country Needs You* – Martin Middlebrook

**ROD ARNOLD**

## **PRIVATE JAMES BAKER, 435415, (REAL NAME BRIDGES BAKER) 50<sup>th</sup> (CALGARY) BATTALION, CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.**

James – (Bridges) – Baker was born at Oare, near Faversham, Kent on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 1875 the son of Bridges and Caroline Baker of 22 Ivy Street, Rainham, Kent. The 1881 Census recorded that the household members were Bridge's senior, a bricklayer aged 36, Caroline aged 32, sons Charles aged 11, Bridges junior, aged 7, daughters Margaret, Louisa, Minnie aged 9, 5 and 3 years respectively and Alice aged 1 year. Bridges, senior was born at Faversham, Caroline at Littlebourne, Charles, Margaret, Minnie, Louisa at Oare and Alice at Blean near Canterbury. The family were still living at 22 Ivy Street in 1891 but Margaret and Louisa were not recorded on the census of that year. Bridges and his brother Charles were employed as bricklayers. Charles and Minnie, presumably having left the family home do not appear on the 1901 census. By 1911, Caroline at the age of 70 was a widow and was living with her daughter Alice, a dressmaker and a 7-year-old grandson William who was born at Rainham and attending the local school.

As many had before him, James left England in 1903 and emigrated to Canada. Interestingly, the census returns for 1881, 1891 and 1901 record the second son of the family, as Bridges. There is no mention of a James. Perhaps when Bridges went to Canada, he adopted the Christian name James. After the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Bridges enlisted into the Canadian Army at Calgary, Alberta on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1915 as 435415 Private James Baker and was posted to the 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Infantry. The battalion had been raised at Calgary on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 1914 for overseas service. On his attestation papers James nominated his mother Mrs Caroline Baker of Ivy Street, Rainham, Kent his next-of-kin. He had no previous military or militia experience and gave his trade as that of a labourer. James asserted that he was prepared to serve overseas and was willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated and inoculated. The latter procedure was carried out on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 1915 followed by a booster on the 17<sup>th</sup> and he was vaccinated on the 9<sup>th</sup> October. All the procedures were administered by the medical officer Captain A.C.C. Johnston.

James was described, as being aged 40 years and 9 months, height 5ft 10ins, with fair hair, blue eyes and a fair complexion. His general physical condition was good. His chest measured 32-inches, and expanded 37 inches, was not married, and gave his religious denomination as Church of England. He had no distinguishing scars but had two marks on his left arm as a result of childhood vaccinations. On completion of his medical examination the medical officer pronounced James Baker 'fit for overseas service' with the Canadian Expeditionary Force on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1915. On the same day, he swore an oath before a magistrate at Calgary that he understood the attestation questions and had answered them truthfully. The Commanding Officer of the 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion, C.E.F., at Calgary confirmed the details of James' attestation on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 1915.

The battalion left Canada for overseas deployment, embarking on the S.S. Orduna at Halifax on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1915. The transport ship arrived at Plymouth on the 4<sup>th</sup> November where the troops disembarked and were transported to the Canadian camp at Bramshott. James was admitted to Bramshott Military Hospital on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 1915 for a hernia operation. The surgery was performed by Lieutenant J. Cowrie R.A.M.C. His recovery from the operation was satisfactory and healing well but he had difficulty in walking. He remained in hospital until the

11<sup>th</sup> January 1916 and was then transferred to the Canadian Convalescent Hospital at Bear Wood, Wokingham. After a month's convalescence he was discharged as 'fit for duty' by Captain W.H. Brothers and returned to Bramshott on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1916. On the 11<sup>th</sup> July 1916, James was given a T.A.B.<sup>1</sup> injection and on the 10<sup>th</sup> August he was informed that his battalion was to be sent to France. The battalion left Bramshott and embarked for France on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 1916 and disembarked at Le Harve the following day. After a further period of training to familiarize the troops in trench warfare the battalion was deployed on the Western Front.

The 50<sup>th</sup> (Calgary) Battalion, Canadian Infantry were part of the 10<sup>th</sup> Canadian Brigade in the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division commanded by Major-General D. Watson. The battalion's and Canada's first involvement in the battles of the Somme was at the Ancre Heights in October 1916 where they sustained heavy casualties. They left the Somme in November 1916 and moved northward to the Artois sector where they remained throughout the winter months in preparation for the Vimy offensive in April 1917. From January to March the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division's artillery were engaged in shelling German positions prior to the attack on Vimy Ridge.

James sustained a gunshot wound to his back on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1917 and was admitted to No.18 Casualty Clearing Station from the field three days later. By the 8<sup>th</sup> February despite a slight improvement he became dangerously ill and was evacuated to the United Kingdom. He was transported across the English Channel, on the Hospital Ship West Australia, which docked at Hastings on the 12<sup>th</sup>. James was then taken to the Countess of Lytton's Hospital at 37 Charles Street, Berkley Square, London being admitted at 1700 hours and after being examined his temperature and pulse were notated as being normal. However, the following day his temperature had risen to 103 and he was semi-conscious with distinct trismus<sup>2</sup>, some head retraction and quivering of the muscles in his back and scapular region. Any muscle that



Rainham War Memorial Kent

was touched on his back or neck immediately contracted. There were no spasms, he was able to swallow fluids and was slightly incontinent. Although the gunshot wound was not deep the erector spinal muscles were exposed and a small piece of skin at the margins were cut away causing some bleeding and required three blood vessels to be ligatured. James was given anti-tetanus injections and spinal injections into his back. By the 14<sup>th</sup> February his condition had improved slightly and he was able to speak to the medical staff. It was noted that he had turned over in his bed of his own initiative, the head however was still retracted, and his temperature was 101. Further injections were administered but his condition worsened during the afternoon and he became unconscious. The following day at 0600 hours Private James Baker died, aged 42



years. His death being due to a gunshot wound and tetanus. Private James Baker's body was brought from London to Rainham, Kent and interred in St Margaret's Churchyard.

As a private soldier in the Canadian Army, James received \$1 per day and when on active service in the Field received an additional 10 cents Field Allowance. He had assigned \$15 dollars a month to his mother Mrs Caroline Baker. She received no special pension bonus or gratuity as a result, of her son's death. However, she received James' assigned payments until April 1917 when they were stopped. She died aged 77 years in 1917. Any further communication from the Canadian Army concerning James were forwarded to his sister Mrs Minnie Crowther of 25 Gadwood Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, who had become his next-of-kin. She received her brother's Bronze Memorial Plaque, Memorial Scroll, Canadian Memorial Cross, the British War Medal 1914-1920 and Allied Victory Medal 1914-1919.



Buried in St Margaret's Churchyard, at Rainham, Kent are 29 war casualties. Private James Baker has his name inscribed on Page 195 in The Canadian Books of Remembrance, which are kept in the Memorial Chamber located in the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill, Ottawa. Listed in the books are the names of 66,651 Canadians who died in the First World War. There are four names inscribed on the Rainham War Memorial with the surname Baker. It is not clear if James or Bridges has his name inscribed on the memorial. There is however, a B.J. Baker, which might be James. Perhaps there were no close family representative's living in Rainham when the names for the memorial were initially listed. His next-of-kin was living in Canada and maybe due to time and distance both initials were included. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone in the churchyard is inscribed B. Baker.

<sup>1</sup>T.A.B. ~ T.A.B. Vaccine is a combined vaccine used to produce immunity against the diseases, typhoid, paratyphoid A and paratyphoid B.

<sup>2</sup>Trismus ~ Sometimes called Lockjaw, is a painful condition in which the chewing muscles of jaw become contracted and sometimes inflamed preventing the mouth from fully opening.

### Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Web-Site ~ [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

The National Archives of Canada Web-Site ~ [www.archives.ca](http://www.archives.ca)

Veterans Affairs of Canada Web-Site ~ [www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca)

Service Record of 435415 Private James Baker 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion, C.E.F.

Wikipedia Web-Site ~ [www.wikepeida.org](http://www.wikepeida.org) – 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion CEF

Encyclopaedia Web-Site ~ [www.encyclopedia.com](http://www.encyclopedia.com)

**ROGER COLEMAN**

**Photographs ~ ©Roger Coleman**

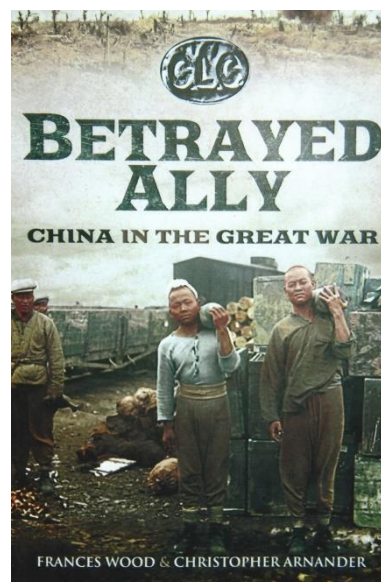
## BOOK REVIEW:

### **BETRAYED ALLY – CHINA IN THE GREAT WAR**

**Frances Wood & Christopher Arnander**

**Published 2016 by Pen & Sword Military. ISBN 978 147387 5012. Price: £19-99.**

The authors have produced a fascinating book about China, before and during the First World War. It also highlights the attitudes of Western governments towards their Far Eastern ally. There was an undercurrent of fear amongst the Allied nations that by allowing China to contribute militarily in the war it would seriously disrupt the balance of power in the Far East and encourage the growth of nationalism in the region. China had been under Imperial rule for two millennia and had been reluctantly forced to open its doors to the Portuguese, Dutch and British seeking to exploit opportunities in trade and commerce during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Opium wars of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and its outcome displeased the Chinese and made them wary of the motives of foreigners. Inter-governmental negotiations were made difficult by the intermittent outbreaks of rebellion and internal crises in parts of China. Chinese



relations deteriorated further after the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 when China was forced to pay large indemnities to foreign governments. However, along with other European countries including Russia, Great Britain recognised the formation of the Republic of China on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1913. America and some Central American countries had already done so.

In August 1914 China declared herself neutral when the First World War broke out with the exception that she wanted to recover the German held colony of Tsingtao in Shandong province. Japan had declared war on Germany on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1914. A few days later on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September they landed over 20,000 troops, north of Tsingtao to drive out the Germans and claim the Chinese territory for themselves. Although Britain had an Alliance with Japan, she arbitrarily took the decision to take Tsingtao without informing the British government. A battalion of the South Wales Borderers (later supplemented by the 36<sup>th</sup> Sikhs) landed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September to support the Japanese. The Germans surrendered on the 7<sup>th</sup> November but the Japanese had no intention of giving Tsingtao back to China. Japan did not want any British presence there either. As the battlefield casualties of the western allies mounted in Europe, China proposed in 1915 to send over 300,000 military labourers, one-third of them armed, as a gesture of friendship to the allies and that China would be prepared to fight. Russia accepted 200,000 Chinese labourers, France wanted more time for consideration and Great Britain initially rejected the offer. The term 'military labour' implied troops whose first duty was to fight and not work as labourers. A compromise term 'Labour Corps' was adopted. Lloyd George had proposed to call them 'the Auxiliary Corps' rather than 'Labour Corps'. By using the term 'Labour Corps' it was hoped that it would not provoke the German military leadership and would clearly demonstrate to them that they were civilian workers and not soldiers. France accepted 35,000 Chinese labourers in

November 1916 and drew up better terms of employment in their written contracts for them than Great Britain did. The journey from China to Europe was long, tedious and not hazard free. When the transport ship Athos was torpedoed in the Mediterranean carrying labourers to France in February 1917 over 500 Chinese were drowned and forgotten for many years. The Germans seized the opportunity to spread inflammatory propaganda in China about the exploitation of labourers on the Western Front by France and Great Britain and that those who died would never be buried in their ancestral homeland, which was of cultural importance to the Chinese.

Britain had initiated secret negotiations with the Chinese authorities for the recruitment of labour in November 1916. Between January 1917 and March 1918 approximately 100,000 Chinese labourers were recruited by Great Britain. In August 1917 China declared war on Germany and the Austro-Hungarians. A month later she offered to the Allied governments warships for deployment in Far Eastern waters, the Mediterranean and the Baltic. Vacillation between France and Great Britain resulted in a blunt refusal for the warships. The Chinese were only really good for labouring!

China had expected to be treated fairly as any of the other Allied nations by the 'Big Four', America, France, Great Britain and Italy at the Versailles peace conference. The 'Big Four' however, had taken the view that China had not fought with the Allies to defeat the Central Powers and therefore did not warrant the same status as those who had. China was unaware that in 1917 a secret treaty between Great Britain and Japan gave assurances that the latter would be supported over any territorial claims presented at the peace conference after the war. Other countries had similar agreements which were to the detriment of China. Some of these secret agreements were probably unknown to President Wilson when he drew up his '14 Points' for the basis of peace. Each of the 'Big Four' had their own agendas which not only side-lined China but undermined negotiations at Versailles. Two delegations representing northern and southern China attended the peace conference. They returned to China bitterly disillusioned and firmly convinced never to trust the west.

This is an excellent book about China and brings into sharp focus the political intriguing of the allies as the war was being fought. Amongst the many personalities mentioned are those who would lead China to become a dominant world power by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Brief biographies about these personalities are given in the appendices. The author's research is very rewarding for the reader to further expand their knowledge and understanding about this little known aspect of the First World War.

**ROGER COLEMAN**



## GREAT WAR MEDALS

### ALBANIA - ROYAL ORDER OF THE BLACK EAGLE (BRONZE) – 1914:

The large circular bronze medal has a loop for ribbon suspension. On the obverse is a double-headed Albanian eagle, with lightning bolts in its claws, a five-pointed star above and circumscribed 'BESE E BASHKIM' (Fidelity and Unity). The reverse has the princely crown topped by a five-pointed star above the monogram 'W', and circumscribed with the date 'ME 26 TE MARSIT 1914' (26 March 1914).

The order was founded by William, Prince of Wied on the 26<sup>th</sup> March, 1914, soon after his ascent of the throne of Albania, in five classes and three medals, to reward meritorious service, both military and civil, to Albania. After just five months the Order became obsolete as a consequence of civil unrest and the outbreak of the First World War.

Albania came into existence as an independent country on the 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1912 freeing itself from the Ottoman Empire. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece all occupied and claimed regions of Albania. The Great European Powers, Austro-Hungary, Great Britain, France, Imperial Germany, Russia and Italy held the view that the governance of the country required a firm and preferably aristocratic ruler. At the suggestion of Queen Elisabeth of Romania her prime minister persuaded the Great Powers that her nephew Prince William of Wied would be a suitable candidate. The Great Powers agreed, but initially Prince William rejected the proposal. Pressure exerted by Austro-Hungary urged him to reconsider. With his agreement and that of the provisional Albanian government, it was officially announced in February 1914 that Prince William of Wied would become King of Albania. Curiously, he was still called Prince William outside of Albania.



Wilhelm Friedrich Heinrich Prinz zu Wied was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> March, 1876 in Neuwied Castle near Koblenz in Germany, the third son of the fifth Prince of Wied (brother of the Queen Elisabeth of Romania) and his wife Princess Marie of the Netherlands. Later, as a young man he became an officer in the Prussian cavalry, and served on the German General Staff in 1911. On the 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1906 he married Princess Sophie of Schönburg-Waldenburg at Waldenburg, Saxony. Subsequently they had two children, a son and daughter.

King William wasted no time in appointing Turhan Pasha Përmeti to form the first Albanian cabinet which was dominated by princely aristocrats. These appointments caused friction amongst the various Albanian ethnic groups. A Muslim uprising in central Albania erupted over foreigners in the cabinet who were not Turkish. The Greeks backed a separatist government for the north of the country and also occupied parts of the southern Albania. Prince Essad Pasha Toptani, who as defence and foreign affairs minister, was bribed by the Italians to foment a

revolt against new King of Albania. Essad was arrested for treason and sentenced to death. An appeal by the Italian government saved his life and he was exiled to Italy.

The outbreak of the First World War plunged Albania into anarchy as the ethnic minorities rose up against the government. Seizing the opportunity to protect the small Greek communities, Greece took over control of areas in the north and south of Albania. As a response Italy sent troops and Serbia and Montenegro also intervened. Facing a deteriorating situation King William announced that, "... he deemed it necessary to absent himself temporarily" and left Albania for Italy on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1914.

He returned to Germany and re-joined the German army under the alias of "Count of Kruja." Any hope that he could return faded when the Austro-Hungarians invaded Serbia and occupied most of Albania. At the Paris Peace Conference having fought against them the Great Powers were not minded to restore William as monarch of Albania. Some of the ethnic groups were in favour of his return. Although progress was difficult and slow central control of the country was established in 1924 and at the end of January 1925 Albania became a Republic, ending King William's reign. However, monarchy did reassert itself when President Ahmet Zog became king. William always contended that since September 1914 he was the Albanian head of state claimed it for himself and his heirs. Prince William of Wied died on the 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1945 his wife having predeceased him in 1936. They were buried in the Lutheran Church in Bucharest.

## **ROGER COLEMAN**

### **Sources:**

Wikipedia Website [www.wikipedia.co.uk](http://www.wikipedia.co.uk)

Medal-Medaille Website [www.medal-medaille.co.uk](http://www.medal-medaille.co.uk)

## **MEMORIALS**

### **THE IMPERIAL CAMEL CORPS:**

Situated in the Victoria Embankment Gardens, London is a memorial commemorating the Imperial Camel Corps. The memorial was sculpted by Major Cecil Hew Brown (1868-1926). Born in Scotland he was educated at Harrow and Exeter College, Oxford. He pursued a career as a painter after studying art in London and Paris. During the 1890's he became interested in sculpture. As a keen horseman, he concentrated in particular on equestrian sculpture. In 1913, he designed a medal for the London Medical Congress of that year. He served during the First World War in the Middlesex Yeomanry and because of his knowledge of horses was transferred to the Army Service Corps, serving in the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in Egypt and Palestine. After the war he was art master at Bedford School and was commissioned to sculpt a memorial to commemorate the Imperial Camel Corps.

The bronze memorial has a relatively small statue of a man riding a camel, atop a Portland stone pedestal and inset on each of its four sides with bronze panels. Two list the names of the 346 men who died whilst serving with the Imperial Camel Corps in Egypt, Sinai and Palestine between 1916 and 1918.



These plaques are inscribed with the names of 191 men from Australia, 106 from the United Kingdom, 41 from New Zealand and 9 from India. Depicted on the south facing panel are two soldiers running and, on the north facing panel two officers standing next to a camel. The bronze work was cast by A.B. Burton. The foundry was founded in Thames Ditton by Cox and Sons in 1874, later it became Drew and Co., in 1880, then Moore & Co., and was taken over by Arthur John Hollinshead and Arthur Bryan Burton in 1897. When Hollinshead died in 1902 the foundry became known as A.B. Burton until his death in 1933. The business was closed in 1939 and was later again used as a foundry until 1972 when the site was acquired by the District Council and demolished in 1976. The memorial inscription on the stone plinth beneath, the south facing bronze

panel reads:

**To The Glorious And Immortal Memory  
Of The Officers N.C.O.'s And Men Of Imperial Camel Corps  
British, Australian, New Zealand, India Who Fell In Action Or Died Of Wounds  
And Disease In Egypt, Sinai And Palestine, 1916, 1917, 1918.**

Inscribed on the stone plinth beneath the north facing panel are listed the Corps battles and engagements:

**1916 Romani, Baharia, Mazar, Dakhla, Maghara, El Arish, Maghdaba.  
1917 Rafa, Hassana, Gaza 1, Gaza 2, Sana Redoubt, Beersheba, Bir Khu Weilfe, Hill 265.  
1918 Amman, Jordan Valley, Mudawar (Hedjaz).**

The Somaliland Camel Corps had been formed by the British Army in 1912. After the outbreak of the First World War the Camel Transport Corps (CTC) was raised at the latter end of 1915. It was a Regular Army British unit of locally recruited Egyptian camel handlers, subject to military discipline and commanded by British Officers and N.C.O.'s. The CTC was not used as a fighting unit.

The Imperial Camel Corps was established in January 1916 primarily to assist with the fighting against the Senussi, an Islamist movement supported by Arab and Berber tribes of the Libyan-Egyptian border region. After two months of training at the Camel Training Depot at Abbassia, near Cairo the first four companies were deployed patrolling the Libyan Desert re-asserting British control of the border. By the end of March 1916 the rebellious tribes had been virtually suppressed. The Egyptian Expeditionary Force was created under the command of General Sir Archibald Murray, in March 1916 from units who had been evacuated at the end of the Gallipoli campaign in December 1915 and January 1916. They had been sent to Egypt for rest and re-equipping before being sent to the Western Front. Four infantry divisions, one cavalry division and other infantry and cavalry brigades were retained and designated the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. Initially four company-size units were formed as the basis of the Imperial Camel Corps. In

March 1916 six additional companies were raised from British yeomanry regiments and in June four Australian companies were formed from reinforcements for the Australian Light Horse regiments. Similarly, two companies from the New Zealand Mounted Rifles were raised in August and December.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> December 1916 the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade was formed under the command of Brigadier-General Clement Leslie Smith V.C. Originally the Brigade was made up of three battalions 1<sup>st</sup> Australian, 2<sup>nd</sup> British and 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian with supporting units. Each of the battalions, divided into four companies was comprised of 770 men, 922 camels and a Headquarters Company. The 4<sup>th</sup> Anzac Battalion was formed in May 1917 allowing the brigade to rotate one battalion through the Camel Brigade's Training Depot at Abbassia for rest and refitting leaving three battalions in the field. Other units which completed the Brigade's formation were the 265<sup>th</sup> (Camel) Machine-Gun Squadron, the Hong Kong and Singapore (Mountain) Battery (formed from men of the Indian Army), Royal Engineers (10<sup>th</sup> Camel Field Troop), a Signal Section, Australian (Camel) Field Ambulance and 97<sup>th</sup> Australian Dental Unit. There was also a veterinary section, Imperial Camel Corps Brigade Ammunition Train and Imperial Camel Corps Brigade Train with five days of rations and supplies. When at full strength the Brigade required approximately 4,000 camels, supported by a Camel Remount Depot at Abbassia. The soldiers were known as Cameliers and rode to the scene of battle and fought dismounted.

The Egyptian Expeditionary Force had launched an offensive in the Sinai Desert in August 1916 and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December in support of further operations the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade fought in the Battle of Maghdaba a few days after its formation. Throughout 1917 the Cameliers participated in operations with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force including the Battle of Rafa, capture of the Turkish force at Bir el Hassan, setbacks and failure during the First Battle of Gaza in March and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April an attack on the Sana Redoubt in August. Rested and refitted they took part in the victories gained at the Battle of Beersheba, Third Battle of Gaza, Battle of Maghara Ridge in October and November. By the end of the year they had crossed the Sinai and continued their advance into Palestine.

The Imperial Camel Corps Brigade moved into the Jordan Valley in early 1918 and participated in the Spring campaign against the Turks. After three days of battle at Amman the British were unable to penetrate the Turkish defences around the city and withdrew. In the second Trans-Jordan attack on Shunet Nimrin and Es Salt the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade were deployed to the western defence of the Jordan River ford at Umm esh Shert to support the left flank of the 4<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Brigade. Attacked themselves on their left the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade had to withdraw. The change in the terrain and topographical features encountered by the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade as the Egyptian Expeditionary Force advanced from Sinai into Palestine gradually led to its disbandment. In June 1918 Brigadier General Claude Stuart Rome assumed command of the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade as Brigadier-General Smith V.C., was transferred to command the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 10<sup>th</sup> Division. Also during June the Australians reverted to form the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiments and the New Zealand troops were formed into the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Horse Mounted Machine Gun Squadron. The three units formed the 5<sup>th</sup> Light

Horse Brigade. The British companies of Imperial Camel Corps Brigade were retained and took part in the Arab Revolt and sabotaging operations in July 1918 along the Hejaz railway line. The six companies were reduced to two and in May 1919 the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade was disbanded. The Imperial Camel Corps Memorial is a Grade II listed monument and was refurbished in 1999 by Westminster City Council.

### **Sources:**

Wikipedia Web-Site ~ [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com) – *The Imperial Camel Corps; The Egyptian Expeditionary Force FWW; Brigadier-General Clement Leslie Smith V.C.*

*Mapping the Practice & Profession Of Sculpture In Britain & Ireland* ~ [www.npg.org.uk](http://www.npg.org.uk)  
*History of The Great War – Military Operations Egypt & Palestine Compiled by Lieutenant-General Sir G. MacMunn KCB KCSI DSO RA & Captain Cyril Falls. First Published in 1928. Published in 1996 by The Imperial War Museum (UK) & The Battery Press (USA)*

**ROGER COLEMAN**

**Photographs © Roger Coleman**

## **NAVAL AFFAIRS**

### **DUMMY DREADNOUGHTS:**

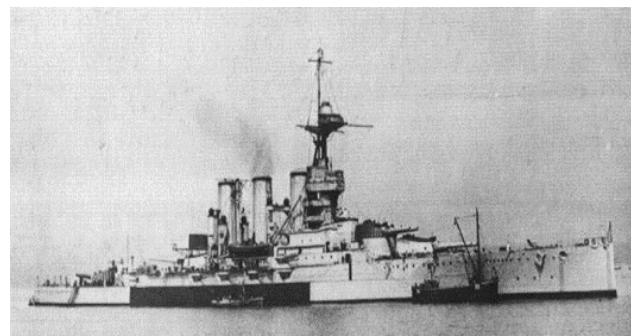


On the evening of Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May 1915 off the Dardanelles Kapitänleutnant Ernst von Voigt peered through the periscope of the German submarine UB-8. He saw the distinctive outline of the Royal Navy's latest battlecruiser, *HMS Tiger*.

Earlier that week another submarine, U-21, had torpedoed and sunk two old British pre-dreadnought battleships, *HMS Triumph* and *Majestic*, which had been supporting the Allied

landings on the Gallipoli peninsula. One of the Royal Navy's latest battleships, *HMS Queen Elizabeth*, was known to be operating in the area, so the presence of the *Tiger* was not impossible and a great prize for UB-8!

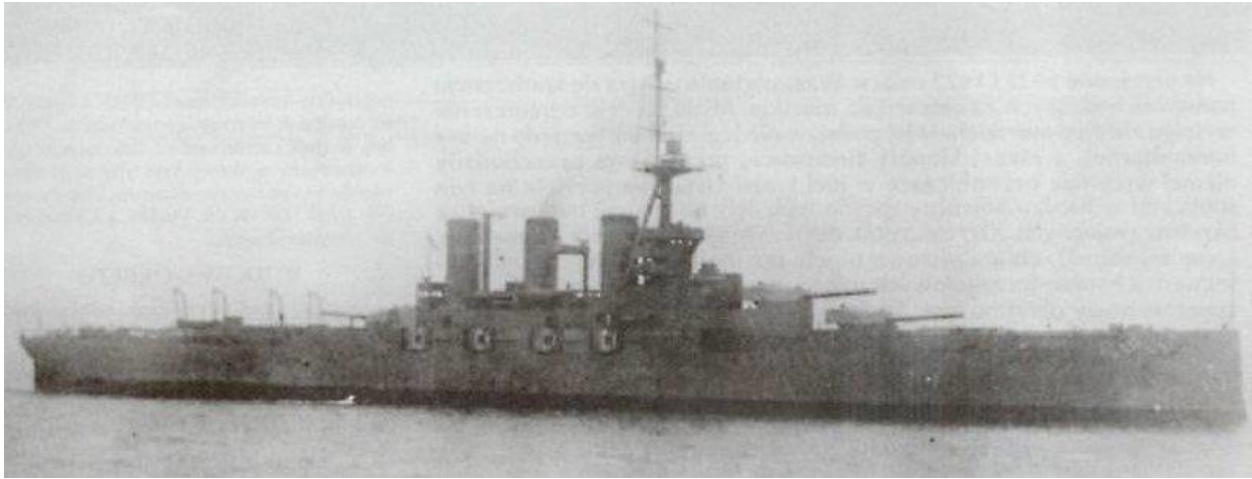
Voigt took the boat within range and launched a torpedo before going deep and steering away from the launch point. This was standard procedure for a submarine after making an attack. After the torpedo detonated, UB-8 returned to periscope depth to view the results of the attack. The target was clearly sinking, but to Voigt's amazement, parts of the ship's



*The real HMS TIGER*



superstructure and gun turrets weighing hundreds of tons and encased in armour were floating on the surface! The “*Tiger*” was in fact the merchant ship *SS Merion* in disguise.



***The SS Merion aka HMS TIGER***

The *Merion* was one of fourteen merchantmen which had been mocked-up to resemble individual Grand Fleet capital ships at the instigation of the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill. In the early months of the war, the Royal Navy’s numerical superiority in battleships was marginal. Losses such as the mining of the new battleship *HMS Audacious* in October 1914 could tip the balance.

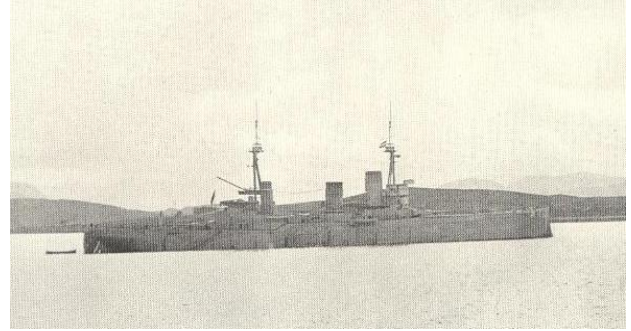
Churchill argued that the creation of a fleet of dummy battleships and battlecruisers would at the very least confuse the enemy because an individual “warship” might be reported as in two places at once.

Although merchant ships were much smaller than the ships they would be representing, Churchill pointed out that “it is notoriously difficult to judge the size of vessels at sea, bearing in mind particularly aerial and periscope observation where deception is much easier.” The conversions would take place in secrecy, but Churchill said that “even when the enemy knows that we have such a fleet, its presence will tend to mystify and confuse his plans...he will always be in doubt as to which is the real fleet and which the dummy.” The fourteen conversions were carried out at Harland and Wolff’s Belfast shipyard. One of the ships used was a German vessel seized in British waters on the outbreak of war. One was disguised to represent the mined *Audacious*.

Wood, canvas and paint were used to recreate the principal recognition features of the selected warships – funnels, superstructure, masts and main gun turrets. Ballasting made the dummy warships lie lower in the water and suggest greater length. Most of the dummies were unarmed; three each carried a single 3pdr gun.

The conversion programme was completed by March 1915. The merchant ships and their “doppelgangers” were as follows:

***Cevic [White Star Line] - battlecruiser "Queen Mary"***  
***City of Oxford [Ellerman] - battleship "St. Vincent"***  
***Kronprinzessen Cecilie [Hamburg-America Line] - battleship "Ajax"***  
***Manipur [Brocklebank] – battlecruiser "Indomitable"***



**SS MANIPUR (LEFT)**

**HMS INDOMITABLE (RIGHT)**

***Merion [American Line] – battlecruiser "Tiger"***  
***Michigan [Warren Line] – battleship "Collingwood"***  
***Montcalm [Canadian Pacific] – battleship "Audacious"***  
***Montezuma [Canadian Pacific] – battleship "Iron Duke"***  
***Mount Royal [Canadian Pacific] - battleship "Marlborough"***  
***Oruba [Orient Line] – battleship "Orion"***  
***Patrician [Hansa Line] – battlecruiser "Invincible"***  
***Perthshire [Federal SN] – battleship "Vanguard"***  
***Ruthenia [Canadian Pacific] – battleship "King George V"***  
***Tyrolia (ex-Lake Erie) [Canadian Pacific] – battleship "Centurion"***



The ships were grouped into a Special Service Squadron under the command of Commodore Herbert Haddock RNR. Haddock had been the captain of the White Star liner *RMS Olympic* (sister ship of the *Titanic*) when the liner was present at the sinking of the *Audacious*. Each of the dummy warships was crewed by around 100 officers and men from the Mercantile Marine. The officers were given Royal Naval Reserve commissions.

Eleven of the conversions served in Home waters based at Scapa Flow or Loch Ewe on Atlantic patrols. The remaining three went to the Aegean. *Merion* was the only one of the fourteen lost to enemy action. Their use as dummy warships did not long survive Churchill's departure from the Admiralty. All thirteen surviving ships were paid off by October 1915.

Subsequently the *Kronprinzessen Cecile*, which had been renamed *Princess* on capture, was converted to an armed merchant cruiser and served as *HMS Princess* in the East Indies. The *Michigan* and *Oruba* were both expended as artificial breakwaters at Mudros.

The rest were used in a variety of auxiliary roles until the end of the war and beyond. Eight became Admiralty oilers and one operated kite balloons. *Manipur* survived as the naval repair ship *HMS Sandhurst* until 1947.

There was at least one link with Churchill's "dummy fleet" during the Second World War. The *Tyrolia*'s doppelganger, the Grand Fleet battleship

*HMS Centurion*, survived the wholesale scrapping that followed the end of the First World War as a disarmed gunnery target ship and was still in existence in 1939. The *Centurion* was disguised as the new battleship *HMS Anson* in 1941 and sailed to Bombay. A later proposal to disguise her as the battleship *HMS Malaya* did not go ahead and she went to the Mediterranean. Fitted with light anti-aircraft guns, *Centurion* escorted Malta convoys and later became a floating AA battery at Suez. On 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 she was scuttled off Normandy as a breakwater to protect the Mulberry harbour.



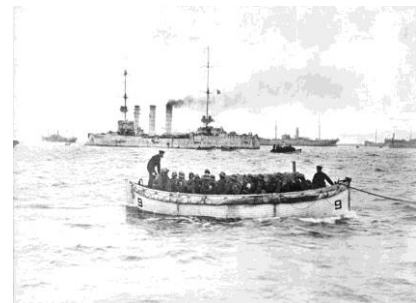
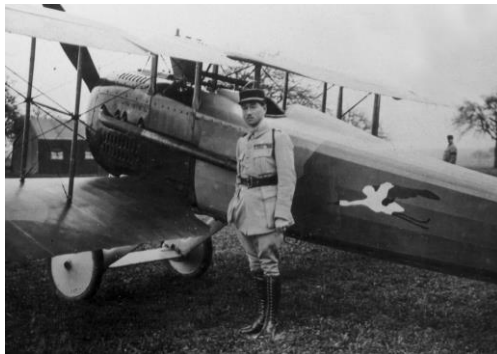
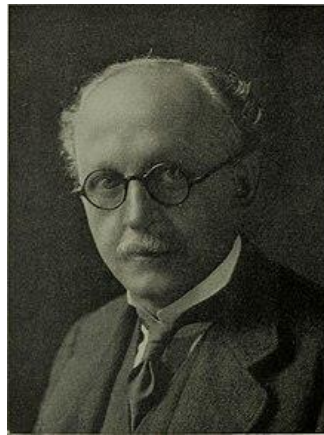
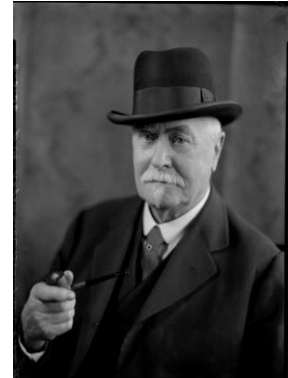
*Oruba at Mudros*

### **Sources:**

- *British Battleships – Randolph Pears*
- *British Battleships - Dr. Oscar Parkes*
- *Captain Courageous RN – Graham Caldwell*
- *Masquerade Battle Fleet – Cliff McMullen*
- *The World Crisis – Winston Churchill*
- [www.naval-history.net](http://www.naval-history.net)

**ROD ARNOLD**

## GREAT WAR QUIZ No.9 (Thanks Rod!)





1. Who were the main three architects of CWGC Great War memorials and cemeteries?
2. The Great War's most successful fighter ace was Manfred von Richthofen (1892–1918) credited with 80 “kills”. Who was the Allies most successful fighter pilot?
3. Who were the “Hello Girls”?
4. What made its debut in France on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1918?
5. What was Operation Albion?
6. Which post Paris Peace Conference treaty stripped Hungary of over 60% of its pre-war population and territory?
7. What happened at Aerschot in Belgium on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1914?
8. Which nation declared war on Austria–Hungary in May 1915, but did not enter the war against Germany until August 1916?
9. Who succeeded Sir David Henderson as the RFC field commander in France and Flanders on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1915?
10. Two British divisional commanders lost their lives in the Battle of Loos in September 1915. Who were they?

## **ANSWERS**

*[1] Sir Edwin Lutens, Sir Herbert Baker and Sir Reginald Blomfield; [2] René Fonck (1894–1953) – 75 “kills”; [3] American women who served as telephone operators for the US Army in Europe – the survivors were not given war medals and veterans benefits until 1979; [4] British “Whippet” tanks; [5] A German amphibious assault on the Russian Baltic islands of Osel and Moon in October 1917; [6] Treaty of Trianon, signed 4/6/1920; [7] German troops shot and killed 150 civilians; [8] Italy; [9] Hugh Trenchard; [10] George Thesiger (GOC 9th Divn) & Sir Thompson Capper (GOC 7th Div).*

## **AND FINALLY**





***Some light at the end of the Tunnel?***

***Image courtesy La Boisselle Project***

## ***AND IF YOU ARE STILL AT A LOOSE END ?***

***Time to write up that article?? All contributions gratefully received!***

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## ***Important Information***

***Meetings are held at:***

***Pimperne Village Hall,***

***Newfield Road, Pimperne,***

***Blandford Forum Dorset DT11 8UZ***



## ***NEXT MEETING: to be announced!***

### ***Branch Executive Committee and Trustees***

***Martin Willoughby Chairman /Trustee***

***Rod Arnold Vice-Chairman /Trustee***

***Judy Willoughby Secretary /Trustee***

***Marc Thompson Treasurer /Trustee***

***Sandra Twyford Newsletter Editor/Trustee***



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