

Spring 2017

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DESPATCHES

the magazine of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides



IN THIS ISSUE:

Genesis of Battlefield Touring

In the Footsteps of Herbie Hawkins

Long Distance Gaining the Badge

PLUS

Guild Partner - view from
the front seat

AND

Guiding on the High Seas

FIELD*guides*

Our cover image: Remembrance; students on a Galloway's tour pay their respects.



A photograph of Fort Cherle in September 1916. It is an Austrian First World War Fort, which is situated in the Italian Dolomites on the pre First World War Austrian-Italian border. Chris Preston

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Material for publication in the Summer edition of Despatches must be with the Editor no later than 15 July 2017.

This is a deadline and submissions should be sent as far in advance as possible.

All material should be sent via Guild Secretary Tony Smith at:
secretary@gbg-international.com

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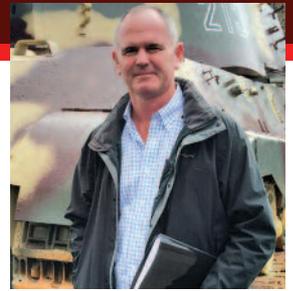
Oman



Stunning view of the final stand on BEERCAN during the Jebel Akhdar War (Oman) overlooking the ridgeline where Tprs Bembridge and Carter were hit. See pages 9-15 to find out more.

OPENINGshot:

THE CHAIRMAN'S VIEW



Welcome fellow Members and Guild Partners to the Spring 2017 edition of *Despatches*, the House Magazine of our Guild. We go to press at the start of what is already shaping up to be a very busy season for the Guild and for the Battlefield Tour Industry in general. It is encouraging to see that the FWW Centenary is still maintaining its momentum in what is now the third year of commemorations. One of the many benefits of the centenary has been the opportunities it has presented for many members to break into the world of Battlefield Touring and begin a career as a Guide. There has also been an increase in the number of new 'Tour Operators', not all have been reputable, properly resourced or correctly insured – a disturbing trend that we must all guard against. A second, positive trend has been the recent re-emergence from the shadow of the FWW Centenary of the remaining World War 2 veterans and their anniversaries. Let's hope this trend continues both in the media and in our own industry – that way there will be life after the Centenary.

Spring is a time of change and renewal, this is certainly true of our organisation this year. One of our big changes involves '*Despatches*' itself, this is the first edition of our magazine since I handed over the mantle of Editor to Cliff Lloyd. I wish Cliff all the best and ask you all to support him with battlefield guiding related articles and pictures of the battlefields that you work on. The most common comment I hear about '*Despatches*' from members is that they aren't in it – there is a simple answer to that...send Cliff your articles and pictures please.

There have been several other personality changes since the AGM, our long-standing Membership Secretary Jo Hook has handed over her key post to John Harris. I am sure, like me, you will want to pass on your thanks to Jo for her efforts and wish John all the best as he settles into his new role. There has been a changeover in

another key post, we have a new Director of Validation, Chris Finn has taken over from Tim Saunders, again I publicly thank Tim for his contribution to the Guild and the Validation Team. On the Events front, Mike Scott has stepped forward to take on the duties of Guild Events Coordinator, Mike has already produced a comprehensive Events Programme that stretches out until the end of 2018. If you haven't been to a Guild Event I urge you to try one this year, our events programme is at the core of what the Guild is about and they are the best way to meet other members. On that subject I must thank John Cotterill for running an excellent Overseas Weekend in Gibraltar – setting the tone for what promises to be a very positive year for the Guild.

All of that said – a fresh set of problems face the Battlefield Guide and the Tour Operators that serve our industry. The ongoing security situation affects us all worldwide, and for our European Members there are the current uncertainties generated by Brexit. Those UK members who work freelance in the military market are also grappling with a new set of MoD regulations that are being applied to the employment and payment of consultants and freelancers such as Battlefield Guides that support Battlefield Studies and Staff Rides. One of the many strengths of the Guild is the collective experience of our membership (amounting to thousands of years) and our unrivalled network of communications. Please don't hold back. If you have knowledge or experience of any of these issues please share what you know via our Secretary, Tony Smith.

Enough from me, I hope that you are enjoying being a Battlefield Guide. Look out for fellow members and say 'hello' to them, after all, sharing our knowledge, experience and enthusiasm with each other is what our Guild is all about.

Mike Peters

FROM THE EDITOR...

Welcome to the spring edition of *Despatches* magazine.

First, let me thank those of you who have kindly contributed to the magazine with some fascinating, enjoyable and helpful topics. It is not an exaggeration to say that without your support we wouldn't have a magazine. Keep those articles coming guys !!!

The content in this edition covers a lot of ground but its general theme examines the early beginnings of guiding, the role of the guide, an example of guiding in practice and a discussion on the development of a team approach between the coach driver and the

guide. Aussie guide, Dave Wilson, also reflects on being the first guide/victim (delete as appropriate) to undertake the validation process using Skype.

I would like to continue the 'themed' approach for the next edition by examining the role and use of technology within the guiding industry. Software, hardware, apps, etc; if you use them I want to know about it, warts and all.



Cliff Lloyd

THE GENESIS OF MODERN BATTLEFIELD TOURING THE BEGINNING

Tonie & Valmai Holt

“Passeports s’il vous plait”

200 cigarettes in a nice cellophane pack, placed strategically on the coach driver’s shelf just at the top of the coach steps, could often magically speed the way through formalities at Calais. The careful examination of 50 passports one by one down the length of the coach would be replaced by a smile and a cheery ‘Bon!’ – sometimes even a salute, almost a guaranteed event if the official concerned learned that we were going to visit les Champs de Bataille de la Premiere Guerre Mondial. Such a thing was a very rare event.



Outside the old Salient Museum with, left to right ‘Pierre’, Albert Beke, Museum curator, V & T. 1981.

Envisage a time when there were hardly any autoroutes in France and Belgium; very few museums (one of them being the very old one on the ground floor of the Cloth Hall); few hotels; when there was no Wikipedia, no Google, no mobile phones, no Facebook – indeed no home computers. Not even a WFA, and the CWGC was virtually unknown. Oh - and no battlefield guides.

The 1970s

It was when reliable military history information was had only by visiting the IWM and National Army archives and libraries, Regimental Museums, the British Library, local libraries, Public Records at Kew; by reading Official and Regimental histories, diaries, contemporary newspapers, military histories and

Predating the formation of Major & Mrs Holt's Battlefield Tours, c.1978, cartoonist David Langdon portrays 'Old Bill' guiding some fellow WW1 Veterans.



"And 'ere's the actual 'ole where I was asked if I knew of a better one."
(With apologies to Bruce Bairnsfather.)



WW1 Veterans Charlie Whiteborne and Bill Muir at Langemark German Cemetery. 11 November 1980

biographies by such as John Keegan, David Chandler, A.J.P. Taylor.... perhaps most vividly by interviewing veterans and recording their memories. Well, we were just lucky that we could do that and we quote many of them in our books.

It was a time when there were no publicly available organised visits to the battlefields other than a few RBL Pilgrimages, some Military Training 'Rides' and rare intermittent and nostalgic Regimental Reunion trips.

It was then that we had suggested to Purnells Military Book Club (who had featured for one of their main choices our 1977 book, *'Till the Boys Come Home'*; *The Picture Postcards of the First World War*) that we could organise a battlefield tour as a benefit for their readers. Purnells agreed and so began our careers as Battlefield Tour Operators and Guides.

Risky

It seemed a risky choice of us as tour organisers and leaders. Our only credentials were that Tonie was a graduate of RMC Sandhurst, the Technical Staff College at Shrivenham and the General Staff College at Camberley. During the latter he had gone on what the wives scathingly called a 'Battlefield Tour' to the D-Day Landing Beaches. Valmai's degree was in French and Spanish (to come in extremely useful in years to come) and she had taught history. But we had **ABSOLUTELY NO EXPERIENCE IN TOURISM**. That ignorance was to prove a blessing.

Naive

In retrospect our very naivety and ignorance were our greatest assets though both of us had a touch of the 'amdrams'. We had no preconceptions, we learned 'on the job', often from our enthusiastic travellers, many of whom were veterans (including many WW1 veterans - one who, when he disagreed with what Tonie was saying in his commentary, would reach forward and hit Tonie on the head with his walking stick while loudly proclaiming 'Rubbish' - an effective teaching method) or family members who had done much research.

Thus our early travellers were mainly people who had personal knowledge of the combats whose battlefields we were going to visit, or who had read a great deal or had a particular interest, such as military medals. We learned so much from them - in particular what they wanted to see and to know. Also that there will always be people on a tour that know more than you do.

Three Principles

As we did everything ourselves and there was no-one to copy, we created our own modus operandi, based on three principals:

1. Comfort.

This meant a clean, reasonably modern coach, with loo and cold drinks available, a good sound system and a smartly dressed driver, all (readers may be astonished to hear) quite unusual at the time. We developed the concept of a time capsule/mobile theatre

Interviewing WW1 Veteran Dick Collick, CWGC worker who retired in Ypres and taught the Last Post buglers how to blow the call 'in the English style'. During a recce c1977.



where passengers would be time-travelled back to the period being studied. We played the music and radio broadcasts of the era. We passed around daily newspapers which might be of 2 July 1916 or 7 June 1944 and found actors of the correct nationality to record despatches, letters, diary extracts and played them on board.

We chose the best hotels (few and far between were suitable for a British group) and did a detailed personal recce of each route. An early lesson was to choose the dinner menu at each hotel. As French and Belgian hotels considered that chicken and chips was the only thing the ignorant rosbifs would eat, we had it, at every hotel for four nights on our first tour.

It meant timing every inch of the itinerary and it was set out, (originally entirely for our own benefit), in a minute by minute 'tour book' which later would form the foundation of our Guide Books as well as for teaching manuals for new guides as we began to need them. These recorded the distance between the chosen stops, how long to stay there, where we would take a lunch break, what commentaries should be given ... Tonie covered the ground and military situation and Valmai the practical tour instructions and what was happening on the home front, the personalities, the poetry... We did the lot. No tour managers. And ladies were welcome. Hence Major and Mrs ... Incidentally travellers never had to carry their suitcases from the coach – the old soldiers loved seeing 'the Major' doing it.

Finally it meant that we would include EVERYTHING in the tour price. Once on board our travellers would need money only for lunch. Comfortable!

2. Learning

We wanted everyone to feel that they had learnt something, thus, as the people who travelled with us progressively morphed from veterans to descendants to the general public, our on-board 'homilies' had to be adjusted.

Each day would start with a summary of what had gone before and what there was to come. Thus, for the 'general tour', whose range of prior knowledge was very mixed (from virtually nothing beyond perhaps knowing that a member of the family had taken part in the campaign, to a deep but narrow knowledge of, say, weapons, fortifications, a certain poet...) things were carefully structured to be clear, fairly simple and short. They set the contemporary historical and military scene for what could be further explored on the ground where the events being studied took place. We asked our travellers to pre-request special visits to the grave or memorial where a comrade or relative was commemorated. This took us to many little-visited cemeteries and vastly extended our knowledge

of the area as we actively encouraged our passengers to share their knowledge with us and the rest of the tour. Every tour was separately designed.

After dinner there would be another short summary and a briefing on the day to come and some further talks on various topics of relevant interest. Often travellers would contribute to these short lectures which were strictly limited to 10 minutes.

One of the most pleasing bits of conversation to be overheard during dinner after a day's touring was one passenger telling another, with great authority, a fact we had told them on the coach, or on the ground. Success!

3. Involvement

From the moment that we met each group we set out to learn everyone's name and to find out why they had come. Anyone who knew things of relevant interest we persuaded to use the mike at an appropriate point but, first of all, we gave them a good tee-up, thus encouraging others to do the same. A two-way exchange between guides and group is essential if a real connection is to be made. And eye contact and a sense of humour too. And we never sat together at dinner or breakfast, or beside the same people twice. A good group camaraderie adds another dimension to the travellers' experience.

What we were conducting was a BATTLEFIELD tour. We did not deal with the heavy details of the academic historians (at least one of those we knew had never visited the battlefields that he wrote about) that stuff was for the classroom or back at home. We were on the battlefields and we talked about the men who fought on it and what it was like for them. 'Shut your eyes and try to imagine that you are there – or an 18 years old relative' we would suggest.

Ironically we certainly owed a great deal of that success to our initial lack of deep historical information and an adherence to the KISS principle ('Keep it Simple Stupid') i.e. never let your audience get bored by the length of your presentations. Over recent years as we have travelled over various battlefields writing and updating our guide-books, we have overheard guides totally overwhelming their group with long and complicated explanations, to the extent that a glazed look flits across their faces and a great deal of fidgeting takes place.

The object should not be to show how knowledgeable you are but to make your audience get involved in, and to understand, the message. Never say "I know".

We had assumed that there would be only one tour but to our surprise our travellers wanted more. So there was more to come...!

JEBEL AKHDAR WAR OMAN WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JOHN 'HERBIE' HAWKINS

Adam Williams

As a Battlefield Tour Guide, you do get sporadic emails and numerous requests. Some develop into fruition but many just end up being tentative queries and nothing more than that. However, in early 2016, I was delighted to get an email from Dr John Greenacre asking if I could take the sons of Herbie Hawkins back to the Jebel Akhdar so that they could see where their father fought. What a pleasure that would be. After establishing comms with Martin Hawkins, we set the date for November 2016 and I started planning.

Naturally, to stand up in front of relatives and explain where and when their father fought in the late 1950s takes a fair amount of study. I have written about the Jebel Akhdar War (Oman) in a previous article so I won't go into the politics behind the War and the rationale behind it again.

I had several months to plan for this trip – and any pilgrimage has to be both accurate and personal. I have read many books on the action on the Jebel and there is some very informative material within the personal accounts. My research did focus very heavily on Lofty Larges' book '*One Man's SAS*' as Herbie and Lofty were in 16 Troop at the time. I had also heard that notes made by Maj-Gen Anthony Deane-Drummond (CO 22 SAS during the War) were located in the archives at King's College London and were available to the public.

As many of you are aware, the military love using nicknames for their Objectives. The Jebel Akhdar was no exception with Sabrina, Middle Wallop, Beercan and Cassino being some of the more prominent ones. I had located most of them with help along the way but was stuck on one or two so hopefully the trip to King's College would be fruitful.

And fruitful it was too. It offered up a treasure trove of information to the researcher in the form of reports and, more importantly, labelled photographs. Bingo, now I could get stuck in.

Martin and Duncan arrived safely after their overnight trip to Muscat Airport in Oman. We had a quick brew at the airport and then started the two hour drive to the Jebel. Along the route we discussed how different it would have been back then – with all the known tracks heavily mined and the fact that all the lads would have been crammed in the back of open trucks.

D Squadron had only just arrived from Malaya where the fighting was much different with visibility down to just metres – now the visibility was endless and altitude much higher. In early November 1958, the lads arrived at Bait Al Falaj – spent a few days shaking out and then moved to the Jebel. 16 and 17 Troop moved to the North and 18 and 19 Troop moved to the South. 16 and 17 Troop had a miserable climb ahead of them. They were assisted by some donkeys for the heavy kit but, after the jungle, it was fair to say that the climb up the 7000ft mountain was a tad harsh.

Once both troops reached the top, Objective Cassino had to be secured. 16 Troop stayed at the top whilst 17 Troop went back down to collect their packs. Both Troops combined only gave about 21 men in total. Once 17 Troop returned, it was then 16 Troops turn to enjoy more exercise. Once both Troops were firm on the top of Cassino, the active patrolling started. The news that Duke Swindells had been killed on the southern side of the mountain was a bitter blow to the lads.

Martin and Duncan arrived at the hotel on the Saiq Plateau and after a quick brew, were keen to get going and learn about the war and in particular, their father's part in it. So utilising the hotel towels and a few rocks, we soon had our own Jebel Akhdar model that even the Instructors at Brecon would be proud of.

As the mountain sits at about 6000ft and we'd be walking up to 7000ft in places, the first day was going to be a famil of the villages surrounding Sayq just to get used to the altitude and slightly warmer temperatures than UK!

After our village recce, we briefed for the next day as it would require a very early start and a healthy amount of walking.



D Sqn position on 'MIDDLE WALLOP' with views to 'SABRINA'

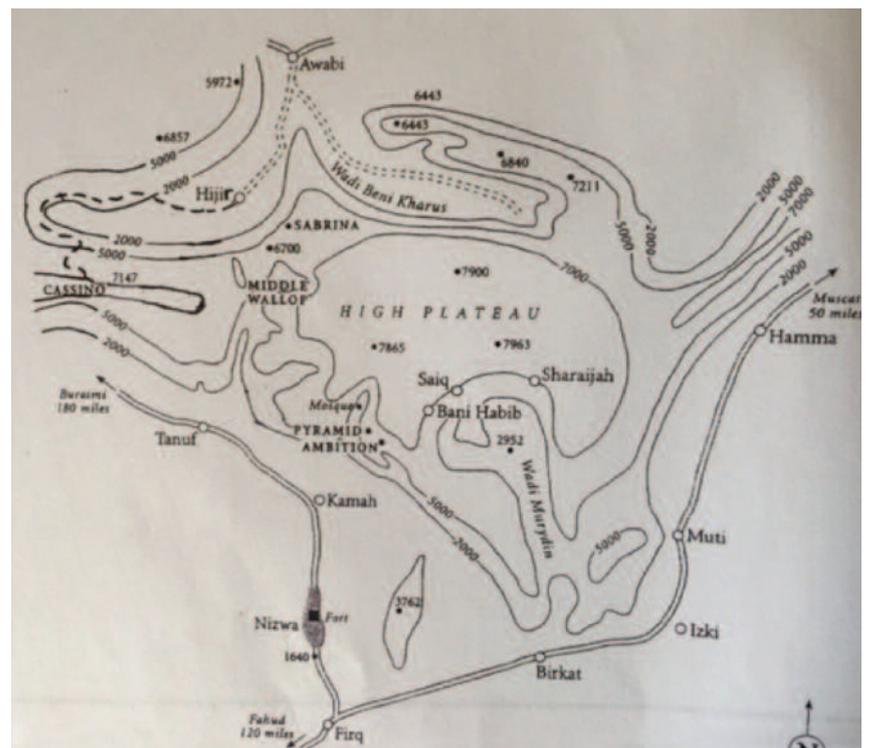
It was soon identified that SABRINA, named after a suitably well-endowed TV celebrity of the time, was a rebel stronghold. It consisted of two large peaks and was riddled with caves. It was a fantastic position for the rebels in that it gave excellent views towards the west – where 16 and 17 Troop would advance from. It was also the only route onto the Sayq plateau from the north.

To the south, near the Tanuf Slab, 18 and 19 Troop had identified a cave complex which housed some of the rebel headshed. Whilst they were getting into position to assault, members of 16 Troop – under Herbie (Troop Sgt) were pushing east towards MIDDLE WALLOP. This was a natural ridgeline that ran from northwest to southeast and again, gave excellent views towards the rebel stronghold of SABRINA.

Herbie had a great view of SABRINA but in the way was a large hump that was about 30-50ft high with a sheer face facing towards him. But it was very difficult to see over the top of it as there was a gentle slope that progressed downwards and away from him towards the east. Not ideal. So he gathered his colleagues and moved into a better position to cover the rear slope.

It meant that he had to get into position very early morning under the cover of darkness and lie up all day. He knew it would only be a matter of time before the rebels had a go....

We had a quick breakfast, made up a packed lunch and then left the hotel nice and early for the long drive. It is much easier if you follow the battle in a logical order, so to that end, we were going to be dropped off quite close to CASSINO. This meant driving off the mountain, past Tanuf and halfway up the side of CASSINO.



Map of Jebel Akhdar with listed Objectives

There is much to see at CASSINO. All the positions are still in situ, with sangars easily to spot everywhere. The amount of battlefield archeology left over from the war is staggering. Ammunition containers, hexi block Tommy Cookers and old tins of food can be found in most positions. We walked to the forward position of CASSINO and started our first stand.

There are no clear footpaths per se over the mountain. All routes are hard going. The rocks are incredibly unforgiving and are as sharp as ever. Typically, 20 minutes per stand was planned as it was important to stick to those timings as the sun set about 5pm. The plan being to walk from their Dads first position on top of CASSINO, through MIDDLE WALLOP and then to the assault on the rebel stronghold of SABRINA. This involved climbing and descending the whole route with the associated altitude changes along with it. We all travelled light with about 3 litres of fluid each and with the requisite scoff.

After our stand on CASSINO, we moved on towards the ridge of MIDDLE WALLOP. This first



Sangar on Cassino

meant descending before the steep climb. It was reassuring to see that Martin and Duncan were both physically fit. There were no roads on the route and so any casevac would have to be by Heli. We got onto the ridge in good time and moved down towards where Herbie and his patrol were lying up for the day.

Herbie was positioned on the rocky outcrop to the right centre of the below picture. As you can see, the



D Sqn position with views towards SABRINA (left) and Herbies Hump (right)

'hump' is difficult to see over and the reverse slope is out of view.

Herbie and his patrol got into this position early in the morning and stayed there all day. Any movement would have given their position away. The sun was very welcome and made the long wait more pleasurable than the early morning cold temperatures. At about 1700 hours, the first rebels appeared in twos and threes. Fire discipline was absolutely vital and Herbie had to wait until the rebels were uncomfortably close. Slowly but surely, more and more rebels appeared. Eventually, about 30 to 40 rebels were moving up the slope towards them. Herbie and his patrol knew they were grossly outnumbered.

When they were about 150 -200 yards away, the

patrol opened up. The LMG tore into the rebels as they wondered what hit them. Immediately, the rebels started to drop but then they started to return fire once they got organized. Rounds were bouncing off the rocks and whizzing over the top of the patrols position. As the light faded, the patrol withdrew down the hill under the covering fire of fellow 16 Troop positions to the rear. Between 9 and 12 rebels had been killed in the action. Herbie's coolness had paid off and he was later awarded the DCM for his part in the action.

We reached the position in good time and took our day sacks off to grab our breath and eat lunch. After a break, we covered the battle in detail.

After I explained the battle to Martin and Duncan,



Martin, Duncan and I on top of Herbie's Hump with CASSINO in the background

we raised a glass to Herbie in the form of some Port. Port with cheese and salad cream sarnies always goes down well.

In fine military tradition, they wanted to leave something for their Dad. So we found the most suitable position so they could leave a tin of beer for him. In one of those odd unexplained moments, the lads put the unopened tin of beer down within a sangar, along with a cross, and it immediately started fizzing out all over the place!

Again, there are signs of battle all over the place with sangars dotted around at the crest of the hump. Once Herbie had his contact and then withdrew

down the hill immediately behind the hump, 16 Troop were keen to take the position again first thing the next day. They returned at dawn expecting some resistance but the rebels had had enough. The position was taken and then secured by both Troops.

The rebels could still be seen on SABRINA and planning began into launching an attack on the cave complex. There was sporadic mortar fire from the rebels and the odd sniping attack. There were simply not enough troops to seize and hold SABRINA so a raid was planned for late December.

To the south of the mountain, 18 and 19 Troop had a very successful assault onto the rebel cave near



Herbies two boys at the 'Hump' with SABRINA in the background

Tanuf but again, they were suffering with sporadic mortar fire and sniping attacks too. Although it was all being contained, it was decided to bring A Sqn in from Malaya and launch an assault onto the main rebel stronghold on the Sayq Plateau.

On 24th December 1958, both 16 and 17 Troop moved out under the cover of darkness from MIDDLE WALLOP and then into a position where they could assault SABRINA. 17 Troop would give diversionary fire onto the left 'peak' and 16 Troop would try to climb the cliffs on the right 'peak'. On the 27th, all troops were in position and again, had to lie up all day waiting for the cover of darkness. They got into a position about 600m short of SABRINA.

At about 1715 hours, the diversionary attack from 17 Troop went in and 16 Troop began a quick move up the 600m steep slope to the base of the cliffs. It soon became apparent that climbing the vertical rock face was not an option and Capt 'Red Rory' Walker had to be assisted down.



Members of 16 and 17 Troop 28th December 1958



Rebel position on SABRINA with views towards MIDDLE WALLOP and CASSINO

The route selected by 16 Troop can be seen in the picture above – essentially the base of the saddle. By this time it was very dark so movement was easier but seeing the rebels wasn't! As they moved up the crease in the rocks the rebels opened up. This had the advantage of giving their position away – so a phosphorous grenade was thrown up into the area where the firing was coming from, it lit up a cave entrance when it exploded.

Lofty Large: *“We stood about six feet apart, firing back at every gun flash. Most of the fire was coming from above us. Although feeling sure I'll be hit, there was no time for the luxury of fear, anger or other straightforward sensations, we were far too busy. A shot came out from a cave to my left, so I tossed a grenade over the wall at the front of it, fired a few more rounds at nothing in particular, then heard Herbie calling us off.*

Good old Herbie, he was always on the ball. He always knew where everyone was, even in the midst of chaos. Four of us had been in the middle of that lot, and I didn't even know what was going on”.

The raid was a huge success and 9 rebels were killed. There were no SAS casualties. It is interesting to read that on the way back to MIDDLE WALLOP after the assault, the lads even stopped for a group photo as the sun rose.

We walked along the same route as 16 Troop and paused at the 600m point for a breather. The slope is quite steep up towards SABRINA and we had a few 'photo stops' enroute. I must confess that at one stage, I did think my spleen was about to emerge out of my lungs – top marks to the lads who fought up the hill in 58!

Once we got to the top of the hill and explained the battle in detail, we then had a half an hour to explore the formidable fortress from the rebel side. The caves were dotted around everywhere and the rebels took every opportunity to use every nook and cranny available to defend themselves. All around the position were bullet strike marks and signs of battle on the rocks. Mortar fishtails were dotted all over the place alongside splinters of old shells.

We eventually got to the village of Ar Ruus for the pick up before it was too late. We had a quick washup of the Regiment's activities to the north of the area over dinner and turned in early ...ish.

The next day was an easy down-day to enjoy the local views and see the local villages at the base of the mountain. We visited the ruins of Tanuf where 18 and 19 Troop were located. They based themselves out of the Tanuf area as it was ideally located at the base of the Tanuf Slab which gave access to the mountain. After Tanuf we visited Nizwa with its immaculate fort. Sure there are some tat shops but it adds to the cultural experience. Interestingly enough, you could buy an old Martini Henry Rifle for about £1000!

In January 1959, A Sqn arrived from Malaya. After a few days near Muscat, they joined half of D Sqn on top of CASSINO so that D Sqn could go and get a few days well-earned R&R on the coast. Only after four days on the Jebel, A Sqn launched an attack on SABRINA on 24th January. This time though, one of the Troops (4 Troop) was left holding SABRINA whilst the remainder joined D Sqn for the main push onto the Sayq Plateau.



D Sqn water well near Tanuf



On 26th January, all of D Sqn and the three Troops of A Sqn received their orders at the village of Kamah before beginning their long climb up the side of the mountain. The route would involve a very steep climb, with kit, up a 45° slope with many false horizons. The climb began at 2030hrs and it soon became apparent that it was going to be very hard-going.

Intelligence was leaked to the Donkey Handlers that the main SAS assault would be coming from the area of SABRINA and TANUF, so fortunately the route was relatively free of rebels. That said, closing towards the area of PYRAMID, a lucky shot by a sniper hit a grenade in Tpr Carters kit, causing it to explode – killing him and Tpr Bembridge behind him. It was a bitter blow to morale. The only rebel activity other than this was when one of the D sqn Troops found a lookout post with two guards fast asleep in a cave.

The false intelligence worked a treat and although there was a bit of a panic to get to the top in daylight, BEERCAN was secured by 0630 on the 27th. Although the Sayq Plateau was the main rebel stronghold, there was very little activity. As part of the plan, there would be a large air drop of various equipment on top of BEERCAN. It may be that the senior rebel leaders thought this was an Airborne Assault as on reaching Sayq some days later, all the rebel headsheds had done a runner.

Both Sqns moved forward and took the village of Bani Habib first before moving on to the Sayq town itself. Caves were located and much intelligence gained but no signs of the rebel leaders whatsoever. Aggressive patrolling continued over the next months but, by March, the Regiments work was complete and they returned to UK.

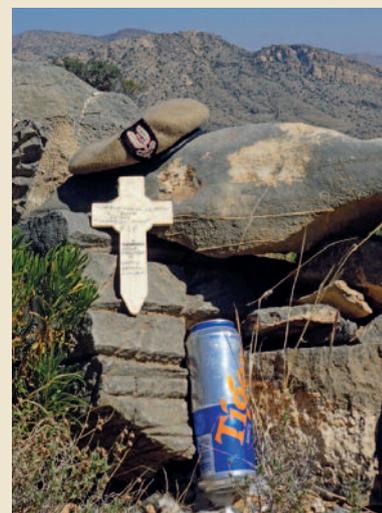
The three rebel leaders, Talib, Ghalib and Suleiman had departed for Saudi Arabia. The Imamate subsequently collapsed.

Our last day on the mountain included the walk from Bani Habib to BEERCAN. It's about a 12 mile round trip I guess in and out the wadis with again, steep climbs and descents.

It was an absolute delight to escort Martin and Duncan over the various routes their father fought on. Some of the tales they have on their father are priceless.

I only live up the road in Dubai, if any members wish to visit the Jebel and need any help planning – give me a shout via mradam.williams@virgin.net

P.S. Many thanks John, owe you a curry!



GAINING THE BADGE FROM DOWN UNDER *or* HOW SKYPE RESOLVED THE TYRANNY OF A DISTANCE PROBLEM

David Wilson

I have been asked to write a few notes on how it was possible to achieve the prestigious gold badge from the other side of the world. Thank you firstly to all those members who sent through congratulatory emails. A common theme among these messages was an acknowledgement that three key assignments had been completed through the medium of the Skype communications application. Normally Assignments 1, 5 and 6 are completed either in the field or in a tutorial situation with a live audience.

Just as a bit of background, I have been guiding regularly since 2006 and my first contact with the Guild was in 2011. I was aware that a couple of Australians had already completed the validation package to become fully badged members, but they had been required to come to the UK in order to complete Assignments 1, 5 and 6 face to face with the validation team. At that time, the use of Skype was being investigated, but it had not yet been implemented.

I then made contact with badged Australian member, Dennis Weatherall, aka 'Weathers' and we exchanged email addresses. We agreed that the requirement to validate in the UK was a challenge in terms of timings and costs, but he had managed to combine his own assignment presentations with other business visits. For me, this was impractical and unaffordable at that point, so I held off joining and put the objective on the back burner.

In early 2016 I again contacted Weathers who told me that Skype



David Wilson (left) with Turkish historian & battlefield guide, Kenan Celik on the Gallipoli Peninsula 2012

sessions were now a viable part of the accreditation process and that I should jump on board to begin the process. So in May 2016 I became an associate member. About two weeks later, the information package and the Guild's silver badge arrived in the mail. It was a good incentive to enter the validation program. I sent off my introductory letter to the Validation Team and was accepted in mid-June. Tim Stoneman and I agreed by email that Skype would be a good pathway for me and that I should observe someone else's Module 1 assessment before attempting my own. The first available opportunity to do this would occur on 4 July when they would be assessing a new candidate in New Delhi, India. This was the first of four Skypes in which I was involved, consisting of one observation and three assessment sessions.

On the due date and time I logged into the call, but it was here that we encountered one of the basic problems with Skype – not enough bandwidth in certain countries to support multiple users. In the end I had to drop off the call after about 15 minutes to allow the validators to proceed with varying levels of sound and vision. This candidate passed his module, but I was satisfied I had seen enough of the process to know what was required. A subsequent Skype conversation with Tim and Chris Finn revealed that there were no more upcoming Skype sessions scheduled for me to observe. So I proposed to bite the proverbial bullet and give my Module 1 presentation when I was ready and the validation team could re-convene.

This presentation on the battle of The Maze (November 1916) occurred on 8 August 2016 in front of a full panel of validators: Tim Stoneman, Chris Finn, Paul Oldfield and Tim Saunders who became the regular crew for my Skype sessions. We had no technical difficulties on that occasion, being mid-morning in the UK and early evening for me in Australia. The procedure was for everyone to log in about 20 minutes before the nominated time, the Chief Validator gave an introductory brief; I then gave my 20-25 minute presentation and took questions from the team. When this was completed, I dropped out of the call while the team conferred. The Chief Validator then re-called me for a summary and debrief. This became our basic SOP.

Before the Skype session began, it was my responsibility to ensure the whole team had received all the relevant maps and notes, preferably in PowerPoint and /or Word format so they could follow the sequence of events being presented. One of the validators acted as time-keeper so the presentation could be resumed at a known point if there were technical issues. That was my second Skype experience and my first assessment. It worked very well for all concerned, especially as it was a Pass.

My next assessed Skype was Assignment 5 –

'Problems you may encounter on tour' and conducted in a Q&A or tutorial style over about 30 minutes. This was an interesting one to prepare for. I had little to fall back on but my own experiences on tours of Gallipoli and the Western Front, so I consulted with a couple of Australian battlefield guide colleagues for a few of their ideas. One of them is a regular guide on the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea. His version of "What could possibly go wrong on tour?" involved several jaw-dropping horror stories of severe weather events, multiple casualty evacuations and tricky 'local' issues. These seemed at complete odds to our relatively comfortable coach-bound tours in northern Europe. I took several pages of notes and then typed them up under various key headings to prepare for the session.

Tim Stoneman rounded up the Usual Suspects and we ran that session on 17 November 2016 with similar timings to earlier calls. There were some Skype drop-out problems on this occasion, but everyone managed to get back on line to complete the assessment. I know my answers were a bit long-winded in providing perhaps too many examples, so the clue here is to keep your responses short, but have a specific example ready to illustrate your point if necessary. I am pleased to say I had all of their scenarios covered in my notes, so the preparation methodology worked for me.

An interesting finish to this particular assignment: when Tim came back on line to tell me it was a Pass, he added almost casually, "Oh, and by the way, David, we should tell you that you were the guinea pig for Assignment 5. We've never done a 5 by Skype before, so you were the first..." Thanks, gents!

Because of work commitments, I decided to leave my final Skype, Assignment No 6 until the very last. This one deals with resources used in preparing for a tour. Because there are various types of resources and only 20-odd minutes to discuss them, it is probably best to identify, say, three types of sources and identify their pros and cons with respect to the scenario you have chosen. You need to provide the selected source pages, highlighted as required for the team to follow. In addition, I made sure the validation team had some background notes and maps on my chosen battle, in this case the opening phase of the Battle of Mont St Quentin.

With the usual validation team gathered, I was ready to go on 6 March 2017. This time we had some difficulties in setting up the call, but once established, it all held together until the end of my presentation. When they came back on line to give me the good news of the assignment Pass and achieving the Badge, I knew it had certainly been worth all the effort! And yes, you guessed it - David was the guinea pig again for Assignment 6 by Skype, which I did not know about until it was all over.

You might now ask would I change anything? In broad terms it took me eight months in total, including two Referrals, to complete the nine assignments. There was never any choice of doing Assignments 1, 5 and 6 other than by Skype. I think the Validation Team now have a very workable SOP to conduct these remote assessments. The procedures can always be refined and we all live in hope that both the technology and the bandwidth to carry the signal to all parts of the world will improve as time goes on. I am happy to have participated as an innovator in the development of these procedures. I hope it encourages others to take the same pathway to the Badge.

Some final thoughts on Skype presentations. Apart from some of the technical issues mentioned above, there is really only one piece of advice I can offer in preparing for Skype and that is: Rehearsal. Rehearsal. Rehearsal. I do a lot of public speaking, but I found that my delivery pattern slowed down for addressing only a few people at the end of a computer screen. I must have done a dozen rehearsals for each of Assignments 1 and 6 and found I had to constantly edit my text word count downwards. I think that about 1800 words maximum for a 20-22 minute presentation is adequate. This leaves a couple of minutes spare for the occasional glitch or the need to refer the validators to maps or documents which you have sent them previously.

The validators will question you on the detail, so there is no need to overload on the volume of material you deliver. Arrange your text into small, workable blocks under major headings. Rehearse in front of a mirror while sitting at your desk (quite different to a standing delivery technique), or find a willing local victim to be your Skype audience. You will soon find your own rhythm of delivery and adjust your text accordingly. Remember, you are on a strict time limit for Assignments 1 and 6 in particular and apart from your demonstration of knowledge and expertise, adherence to the time limit will be a major factor in passing. I also found that for Assignment 5 preparing written notes and reading them aloud helps with memorising answers. Best of luck with all this!

While there are several battlefield tour companies and quite a number of guides here in Australia and New Zealand, we are sorely under-represented in the Guild, so I look forward to helping recruit more members. I also look forward to getting to the UK as soon as practicable to participate in some of your Guild events. Even better, I hope to see some of you 'in the field' on tours in Europe. Please let me know if any of you are ever visiting Sydney and I'll take you on a guided tour of The Rocks, a key area in the defence of the new colony.

EVENT*guide* 2017

4 Aug - Badged Guides Dinner

18 Aug - Golf Day

16 Sep - Validation - UK Day - Thundersley

13-15 Oct - Whiskey & War Scotland - UK

27-29 Oct - London Event with Validation - UK

TBC Nov - Operation Michael - CPD/Recce Tour

TBC Dec - Christmas Lunch UJC London - Location tbc

FIELDguides



Italian Associate Member Francesco Do Cintio explaining the complexities of the Italian Civil War in April 1945. (Picture Staff Ride Ltd)

Poperinghe Death Cells early this year - Look no notes!! (above) and Poperinghe Square - Military unit (below) Bob Darby



GUILD PARTNER VIEW FROM THE FRONT SEAT

In a new series of articles, experienced drivers from Guild Partner, Galloway Coach Travel, will provide an insight in to the life of a coach driver and reveal ways in which driver and guide can work together to create a unique experience for your group.



Galloway

Mark Rogers, a Galloway driver with over 30 years' tour driving experience and a regular battlefield tour driver, explains how the knowledge and experience of both driver and guide can prove symbiotic.

“I have been driving battlefield tours for more years than I care to remember and no two are ever the same. We take the same schools, same teacher to the same accommodation, with the same itinerary year after year yet it's impossible to predict how a tour will pan out. Children's characters, the weather, traffic conditions and the attitude of the staff all play a part in creating the atmosphere on tour. As a driver, I have to be aware of everything going on around me and react to ensure a successful trip.”

“Knowing a guide is working with me to support the group's experience is a huge benefit but it only happens when there is mutual respect and understanding. The majority of drivers working at Galloway on battlefield tours have undergone extensive training in more than simply how to drive a coach. A number of us are trained to some level in guiding and all of us have spent a great deal of time researching local routes, places of interest and the logistics of moving a coach around, quite often, small country

lanes. We share our knowledge between ourselves and ensure it is as up to date as we can make it.

“This level of experience and training means we can help you in planning your itineraries, routes and also – in some cases – we can add to your own knowledge. We’re an asset waiting to be used.”

In practical terms, Mark’s insight suggests it would be wise to take the following measures:

1. If you’re involved in the planning stages, discuss with the tour operator the level of experience you need from your driver. Galloway work closely with the Guild so can match the guide’s experience with their own drivers. A very experienced guide can support a less experienced driver and vice versa. A difficult group leader may require two experienced hands.
2. If possible, talk to your driver before your departure date. Most experienced coach operators will allocate drivers two weeks prior to departure and will be more than happy to provide contact details in advance. Make contact but don’t be surprised if your driver doesn’t contact you until closer to departure to talk in more detail. Often they are away on other tours or may not have a copy of the itinerary until nearer the time.
3. Discuss each of your roles while on tour, preferably prior to departure. Experienced battlefield drivers are used to carrying out all duties – driving, guiding, hosting (dealing with accommodation, attractions and meals) – but would welcome a guide managing some or all of these activities allowing them to concentrate on taking care of the vehicle. Likewise, drivers may be happy to deal with attraction entry allowing you time to organise the group and begin guiding. Understanding each other’s role whilst away can prevent conflict.
4. Every evening while on tour, talk through the itinerary for the following day. Discuss routes, departure times and any comfort stops. Drivers often know local routes, opening times and traffic problems and can spot potential issues in advance.
5. Ensure you discuss the ‘story’ you are looking to tell to your group. Your itinerary may be great at telling a timeline of events but be completely impractical for the driver. Talking it through together will help the driver understand what you are trying to achieve and help you find a compromise.
6. Once both parties are happy with routes and destinations, you will both feel confident about talking this through with any group leader you may have on board. Again, try to do this in advance to avoid conflict through the day. Also, you may agree which one of you will act as the main liaison point with your group leader.
7. Be aware. If you’re joining a long standing group who have used the same driver for many years, it’s easy to feel left out and to feel the need to justify your

- presence. Don’t forget, they have requested a guide for a reason, find out what it is and you’ll fit right in.
8. If conflict does arise between yourself and the driver, be discreet. Keep it away from your group.
 9. Don’t be afraid to learn from each other. Experienced battlefield drivers are in contact with many knowledgeable teachers and guides and will collect useful pieces of information on their travels. They will be keen to learn from you too. Likewise, their understanding of routes and destinations may help you develop future itineraries.
 10. On your return, take the time to catch up with your driver and tour operator. What went well, what lessons could be learnt for next time.

Mark adds, “Every driver has a different view on what to expect from a guide. The key to a successful partnership is to respect each other’s skills and experience. The main objective is to understand the audience and for both driver and guide to deliver a fascinating, thought provoking and memorable tour.”



Galloway was founded in 1965, to provide school group travel to the continent by coach. Initially coaches were hired from operators throughout the country until 1978 when Galloway bought the established coach operating business of A F Braybrooke & Son, based in Mendlesham. The business was renamed Galloway European Coachlines Ltd with its operational base being primarily to provide for the coaching requirements of its own tours.

Following a number of local acquisitions, expansion continued into extended tours, private hire and contracts. Today, the Suffolk-based firm employs over 150 people, manages a fleet of over 50 vehicles and carries well over 30,000 people every year.

Galloway School Tours, the school group division, is the main focus for battlefield tours with up to 200 schools travelling every year. The School Tours team have amassed over 100 years of travel experience and the average length of service is 10 years. Galloway often work with partner coach operators in other areas of the UK, mainly for practical reasons such as fuel economy and driver hours’ limitations.

For more details, please visit www.travel-galloway.com

LEARNING *guides* ROLE OF THE GUIDE

Mike Scott

In order to have any hope of becoming a decent historian, which is what tour guides must be, you must first get a proper understanding of the craft of history and how the process of keeping histories has evolved over the centuries. The whole purpose of being a tour guide is to bring history to modern light, to give new possible views on previously known or unknown events or people. It is not something to be taken lightly or as a side endeavour. As you become more knowledgeable about your subject, you will reflect your intimate understanding of your topic. Historians are respected as being the masters of their topics.

Compile large sources or data, do not use a single source or one single perspective for all your information. Pick up any interesting books you see, no matter the time period or topic, you never know what you might learn. If you rely on one source guests for whom you guide will see through you.

Tour Guides can be wrong at times.

Tour Guides will be wrong at times. They accept this and move on. Tour Guides are willing to look at events in a new way. Consequently they aren't afraid to change their opinion.

The planning for each tour starts with a blank piece of paper. Our first consideration is the requests of our guests. First, acquire a thorough knowledge of the primary sources, supplemented by the insight gained from walking the battlefield to be visited. It may be necessary for us to contact a guest to discuss their needs. We will obtain information from various sources. Gradually we piece together the information. We study the battlefield trench maps, identify the ground and locate the sites we shall visit to prepare our presentations at each stand. At the start of the tour we give you this information pack, of which this is a part. During the tour we explain the battles and the opinions. But this is not an exam, the object of the exercise is to enjoy ourselves.

Talks are illustrated by relevant primary sources especially eye witness accounts. During the tour we encourage questions and discussion.



Mike Scott with a group of school students on WW1

And you may have some interesting facts and opinions to share with the group. Your tour guide doesn't know everything after all!

The tour guide has his history in two roles – the pathfinder and the mentor. Today's tour guide still fulfils those roles. As pathfinder guides show the path to tourists wanting to know more about a battlefield or location and help the visitor through 'a socially defined territory to which they have no access'. In addition, the pathfinder role gives the tourist a sense of security in a strange environment. The key concept in both roles is the exchange of ideas and information. The tour guide as role model and information giver provides the guide with an influential position. Therefore, the role of the tour guide in meeting the tourist's expectation and the delivery of interpretation is critically important.

The mentoring role of the contemporary tour guide is made up of four components.

1. **Selection:** The itinerary of a tour is vital in dictating what is shown and what is not shown. We can therefore give a misleading view by selecting only those examples that we think clients wish to experience, or that we consider to meet a traditional view of history.
2. **Information:** The dissemination of 'correct' information is considered to be at the core of our role. Nettekoven in *'Mechanisms of Cultural Interaction'* (1979, p.142), states that 'professional tour guides are ... the most important informants about ... the destination'. Hughes in *Tourist satisfaction: a guided 'cultural' tour in North Queensland*. (1991, p.166) points out, 'inappropriate commentary content and communication style have been shown to ruin an entire holiday'. Inappropriate can mean a recitation of a list of names and dates rather than

transferring understanding. Again the selection of information is seen to be crucial. For example, a revisionist historian may want to emphasise the new views on the limitations that Haig experienced when choosing battlefield tactics.

3. **Interpretation:** Interpretation of information can give us new insights. Characteristics of package tours in Europe by Quiroga's (1990) reported that 45% of respondents gave 'to broaden their cultural horizons' as their motivation to travel.'
4. **Fabrication:** Fabrication is outright lying as opposed to interpretation.

Cohen in *'The Tourist Guide'* (1985) first saw the role of the guide as having four functions summarised as follows:

1. **The Instrumental Role:** direction giving, navigation, access to the territory and safety;
2. **The Inter-actional Role:** representation of the battlefield;
3. **The Social Role:** tension management, social integration and cohesion using humour and entertainment to maintain and build group morale;
4. **The Communicative Role:** selecting points of interest for the group, dissemination of correct information and the translation of the unfamiliar.

So, the guide comes from a long tradition of those who lead, inform and educate – or at least helps others to have a little understanding. It is a craft as much as a job. It needs training to do it well. It requires continuing professional development to ensure standards are maintained – and even better, improved.

I am proud to be able to call myself a guide. I am prouder still to belong to the Guild of Battlefield Guides having been a teacher for 30 years.



BATTLEFIELD GUIDING ON THE HIGH SEAS

Tony Coutts-Britton



We have all witnessed Assignment 1, at least I hope we have, and however it has gone, once the candidate leaves the room, the Validator asks that time honoured question of the audience: “Well, did you smell the cordite?” Now I suppose for those rare aspirants whose subject precedes cordite or black powder, we could ask “did you hear the thrumming of arrows and the tumult of battle?” Whatever the case, the audience must have been transported to the scene and been significantly stirred by the story.

Of course, here is the magic word; ‘story.’ As guides, we are, or should be, knowledgeable historians, but this is not enough. We are educators, but this too is not enough to service the needs of our clients. We inform, of course we do, but I take you back a few lines to ‘significantly stirred by the story.’ The original BBC Charter defines its founding mission as ‘to inform, educate and entertain’ and that neatly also defines the mission of the battlefield guide. Sometimes and many of us have been there, doing this on a dark, cold and very wet afternoon at Langemarck Cemetery with a bunch of 14 year olds tests the skills. To get through this and indeed any similar situation (perhaps compounded by the lottery of Assignment 5 situations...) the information and the education will have to ride on the back of entertainment. The group must still want to be there. A good deal of the guide’s personality will come

into play, but the chief tool in the box is the story.

My contention therefore is that we take pride, quite rightly, in being gifted story tellers and this takes us a step higher than those who just know lots of stuff. Our profession (it’s not a trade) takes us onto the battlefield. The ground is there, the architecture maybe; handouts and artefacts are available. We move from stand to stand and inexorably, the story builds and at the end of the tour the Group is better informed, has received good education (it arrives stealthily of course) and there should be the glow which results from being well entertained. So how can we as a Guild apply this to our Badge candidates? It was not always so, but the Council decision that Assignment 1 must be passed before moving onto others was a defining one. If a candidate cannot convince his/her peers that he/she can tell a good story, then there is no convincing and demonstrable proof that the historian can blossom into a guide. There is no shame in any referral but especially not for Assignment 1. I have often heard a referred candidate say “I don’t know what went wrong there, I am much more relaxed out on the battlefield”. Well of course you are. Those 18 to 22 minutes are excruciatingly testing. It is claustrophobic in an hotel conference room (get the old hands to describe the huts at Uxbridge... darned luxury these days) and there is no escape. There is no way to divert the gimlet eyed

gaze of a now growing host of Badges and Fellows. Well how about doing it twice over in front of an audience of two to three hundred, all of them sitting comfortably with drinks in hand and expecting excellence, not just competence. This, with others who are styled 'Guest Speaker', is what I do when not guiding a battlefield, but my mission is the same, get them to smell the cordite. Let me tell you about the role of a story teller on a cruise ship.

All of my work (to date) is on the smaller ships, that is to say, fewer than 1,000 passengers. One particular ship hosts only 330 at maximum. On a river cruise, there are no more than 110. What this means is that after the first talk, I become public property; there is no escape in the dining room, the bar, on deck or on tours ashore. But isn't this what happens on tour? At the end of the first stand let alone the first day, the questions and opinions come over coffee, lunch, drinks and dinner (and it doesn't let up on the coach). This reflects success. If you have captured their imagination, you are on top of the job. A silent tour is a disaster. So, I have no ground neither architecture they can see, even artefacts are denied me being up on a stage. Nor are there handouts. So it comes down to the big screen, but this is where a new set of skills must come into play.

I took a great deal of inspiration from television's first celebrity on screen battlefield guide, Lieutenant General Sir Brian Horrocks, the legendary commander of 30 Corps. He was a master story teller. If you google it up, or search in You Tube, you see extracts from these early sixties programmes. By today's standards, the presentational support material is antique in terms of technique and technology, but shining through this is the story. We were transported to the desert, to Italy to Normandy, Arnhem and so on by the story teller. Today, I can tell you that there are cruise ship speakers who are on top of their subject but they are certainly not story tellers. If your subject is stained glass church windows, embroidery or others of a similar vein, then you can get away with a static slide changed every five minutes or so as you reach the logical end of that section of the presentation. How different if your subject is war. Today, the public expects computer generated graphics, embedded videos, sound effects, background music and so on. This has not wholly been wished upon us by Dan Snow, but he and others like him have taken things that way. The comfort is that the tools are there at our disposal to achieve this.

If we need to bring a battle to an audience of hundreds in a theatre without windows and a gentle (sometimes not) background environment of movement and noise, then modern graphics are the key to success and maybe the only answer for true military history story tellers. I say this because there is still a body of speakers on this subject (mercifully diminishing) which hangs on grimly to the swoosh of a slide machine and the comfort of a favourite slide which remains on screen despite the story having

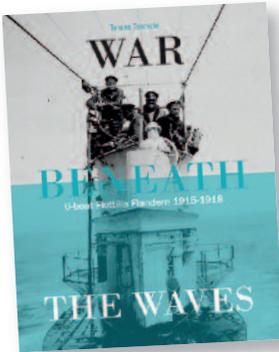
moved on ages ago. Unless we are blessed by actually being on the field of conflict, then the senses must be stimulated by images as well as by the excellence of verbal delivery. Depending on your choice of computer, the ways and means of delivering this will be either PowerPoint or Keynote. It is simply not worth hanging on to whichever of these you first bought, because the rolling introduction of newer versions brings the capability to back up verbal delivery bang up to date. If the audience has paid thousands of pounds to be there and on a Viking cruise for example it is going to be around five grand per head for a couple of weeks, then we cannot short change on PowerPoint 2003. It simply will not compete with modern TV graphics and that is what the punter will expect. Now this may seem to present a burdensome challenge, but it really is not difficult to master the 'animation' capabilities of PowerPoint 2016 and what a pay back we get for our efforts. What could be a dull, static affair comes alive and the audience is swept along as voice is complemented by relevant, informative and fluid images. My fellow speakers who are academic, scientific or political in their disciplines, love written words and they do, to my distress at least, tend to fill the screen with them. There is a golden rule, words are for verbal delivery, the screen is for images.

There is one more thing I would like to share. On board speakers are encouraged to accompany shore excursions as escorts. It is a sort of "comfort" to some passengers in that the prep has been delivered by the relevant talk prior to the tour and the speaker is there to lend a hand on the excursion. Usually, cruise lines engage local guides and this can be where difficulties set in. For example, on a D Day Anniversary cruise, I escorted a beaches shore excursion. The guide's knowledge on local history was good, but in terms of the battle, he was woefully adrift. There was a combination of uncertainty, disinterest and lack of military knowledge. At the Merville Battery, we were decanted from the coach and told "well here we are, be back on the coach in 30 minutes and I will be here (the hut at the entrance) if you have any questions." Terrible stuff. Often, with an eye on customer care, it is common to find the guide striding away up front, not establishing 'way points' and not counting heads. It is on these occasions I feel very proud of our Guild standards. 'Guide authority' must of course be honoured and that is where tact, diplomacy and experience wins (whilst quietly averting the disasters at the back!)

A number of our members participate in cruise speaking to include the President. I was put onto it by our illustrious first Patron. I commend this form of 'guiding' to those who feel they are up to it, but I do caution that it lacks the intimacy of true battlefield touring.

That said, wherever the Guild leaves its mark through contact with its members, that is a better place thereafter.

GUIDEbooks:



WAR BENEATH THE WAVES

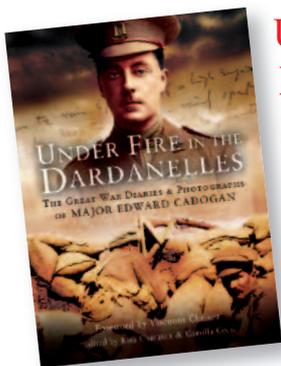
U-boat Flotilla Flanders 1915-1918

By Tomas Termote

A work based upon detailed research, the book divides into thirds. The first part delves into the types of boats and their construction, armaments and technical details. The middle third looks at the Flotilla based in the Belgian ports of Zebrugge, Bruges and Ostend. It examines the officers and men, their lives and the infrastructure put in place to protect and serve the boats. The final third details the career of every boat assigned to the Flotilla.

Lavishly illustrated with relevant contemporary monochrome photography and modern colour underwater wreck imagery. A significant book for those interested in submarine warfare. Compulsory reading for any Guide visiting Zebrugge to examine the Raid of 1918.

Published by Uniform
RRP £30
hardback, pp352



UNDER FIRE IN THE DARDANELLES

The Great War Diaries & Photographs of Major Edward Cadogan

Foreword by Viscount Chelsea

Individual diaries kept by a soldier on campaign are often the best insight into the reality of daily life, they are of course personal, frequently candid and offer an eyewitness commentary on life in the frontline. This account written by an officer of the Suffolk Yeomanry is an outstanding example. The author had a great eye for detail, was also a keen photographer and critically, could tell a story. The result is an exceptional account of pre-war training, mobilization and operations in Egypt, Gallipoli and Palestine. Illustrated with a wealth of previously unpublished photographs.

Published by Pen & Sword Ltd
RRP £19.99
hardback, pp158

THE RECONOGRAPHERS

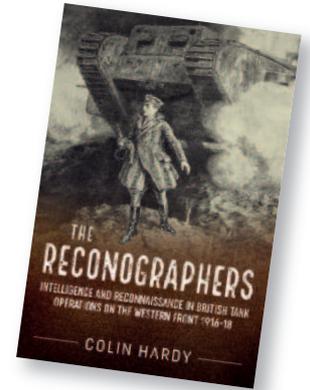
Intelligence and Reconnaissance in British Tank Operations on the Western Front 1916-18

By Colin Hardy

There are fewer books on Great War tanks than one might imagine and that could suggest that the subject has been done to death. Colin Hardy's *The Reconographers* proves that this is most definitely not the case. There are a number of gaps in the wider tank historiography and his book, which tells the story of intelligence and reconnaissance in British tank operations on the Western Front, fills one of those gaps.

The work of ROs was technical, tactical, dangerous, and lonely. To describe these men as an elite would not be misusing the word. Colin's book tells their story on a number of levels based on a considerable amount of deep research. This tankie definitely recommends it.

Published by Helion & Company
RRP £29.95
hardback, pp177



Review by Gareth Davies

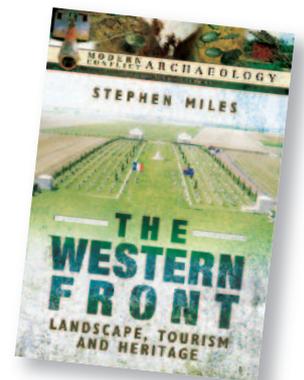
THE WESTERN FRONT

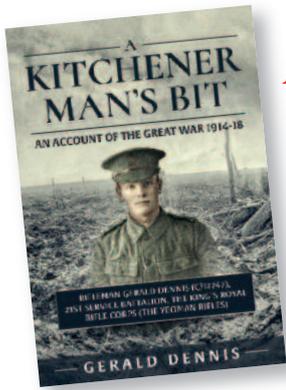
Landscape, Tourism and Heritage

By Stephen Miles

This book is a timely and topical contribution to the debate surrounding the FWW Centenary and the wider subject of Battlefield Tourism. The author uses the strands of physical landscape, tourism and heritage as vehicles to investigate and map the multiple layers of the Western Front where so many Battlefield Guides work. The chapter on the 'rights and wrongs of battlefield touring' caught my attention as did the tourism data for the region. There are numerous other interesting chapters, the result is a very informative and thought provoking book.

Published by Pen & Sword Ltd
RRP £19.99
hardback, pp186





A KITCHENER MAN'S BIT

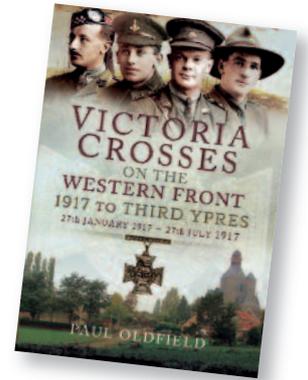
An Account of the Great War 1914-18

By Gerald Dennis

The return of this long out of print memoir is a welcome addition to the mass of Great

War accounts released to feed the demand fuelled by the Centenary. The narrative takes the reader into the volunteer ranks of the 21st (Service) Battalion of the Kings Rifle Corps, the Yeoman Rifles. The author is one of the many intelligent and articulate Kitchener men who committed their experiences to paper. This result is an excellent account of the infantryman's experience during the Battle of the Somme, fighting in the Ypres Salient and then on the Italian Front.

Published by Hellion
RRP £16.95
paperback, pp344



VICTORIA CROSSES ON THE WESTERN FRONT

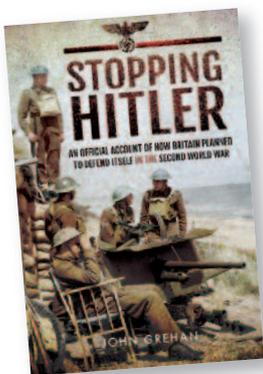
1917 To Third Ypres

27th January 1917 – 27th July 1917

By Paul Oldfield

This is the fourth in what is developing into the definitive source on the men who were awarded the Victoria Cross during the First World War. This volume is a weighty one but it is well worth its price tag. The contents are extremely detailed, a well-crafted balance of citations, maps, pictures and biographic information make this series collectable and the bench mark publication on the subject. An ideal addition to any Battlefield Guide's bookcase – Well Done Paul!

Published by Pen & Sword
RRP £30.00
hardback, pp556



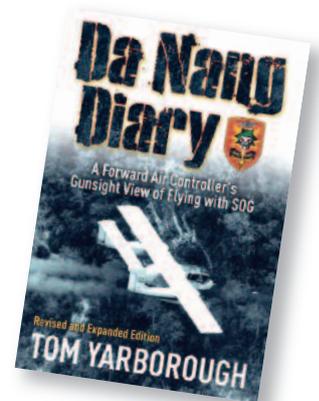
STOPPING HITLER

An Official Account of How Britain Planned to Defend Itself in the Second World War

By John Grehan

If you are looking for a reliable source on the Operational Orders and Plans for the defence of the UK during WW2, this is money well spent. Originally produced by the UK Government Historical Records Section in 1948, this book is a mine of useful information. Divided into four distinct sections, each supported with data and appendices this book follows the evolving defence plans as the British Military adapt to meet the threats posed by Land, Sea and Air from commando raids to invasion, Air Raids to V Weapons. Excellent source material for any UK WW2 tour.

Published by Frontline Books
RRP £25.00
hardback, pp388



DA NANG DIARY A Forward Air Controller's Gunsight View of Flying With SOG

By Tom Yarborough

It is a true of the military as it is of wider society, that every generation thinks they are the first to do stuff. I think this is certainly true in the world of Forward Air Control; Afghanistan dominates our experience and thinking. This gripping book really does take the reader into the cockpit of the airborne FAC over Vietnam and across the borders of Laos and Cambodia. Absolutely gripping and a real insight into the reality of the Vietnam War.

Published by Casemate UK
RRP £12.99
paperback, pp356

10 Questions:

Name: Glenn Stennes

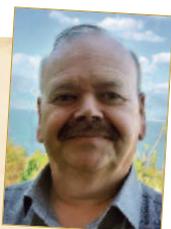
Age: 57

Nationality: Canadian

Home Location: Dojran –
The Republic of Macedonia

Tour Company: Sole Trader/Freelance

Validating: Intending



In each edition of Despatches, we will be introducing a member of the Guild. In this edition, it is Glenn Stennes.

- 1. How long have you been interested in battlefields and what was it that initially attracted your interest?** I served 20 years in the infantry; military history and the study of warfare were part of the profession. Living in the Republic of Macedonia has provided a unique opportunity to immerse myself in the Salonika Campaign. My backyard is literally a battlefield.
- 2. Have any experiences stood out?** Conducting a sunrise ceremony with a group of Officer Cadets on top of the Petit Couronne on the Dojran Battlefield. An early morning march up in the dark, the bugs were unbelievable. The reading of a poem, followed by the *'The Flowers Of The Forest'* on the pipes just as the sun appeared from the behind the Krusha Balkan hills across the lake – then silence as the sun continued to rise. It was a very moving experience for all.
- 3. What do you enjoy the most about battlefield guiding?** As my primary focus is the Salonika Campaign; the opportunity to share a little-known part of WW1 history. Commemorating the sacrifice of those that lay in fields far from home by sharing their stories. I find it a fascinating and humbling experience.
- 4. What is your favourite stand, location or battlefield and why?** The Petit Couronne on the Dojran Battlefield. This was the most fought over piece of ground on the entire battlefield. It provides a good vista and gives people an idea of how difficult it was to attack the Bulgarian positions given the terrain. There are several dugouts, mortar positions and trenches so there is something physical for people to see.
- 5. Which battlefield would you like to visit in the future?** Vimy. I have come close to visiting several times, but something has always come up that has prevented me from going.
- 6. What have you enjoyed the most about being a member of the Guild?** It's great to be around people who share the same passion.
- 7. If there was a fire and you could only save one battlefield-related book or prop, what would you save and why?** A 1920 copy of the *'Song of Tiadatha'* by Captain Owen Rutter. Following the same rhythm as Longfellow's *'Hiawatha'*, it follows the main character – Tiadatha (Tired Arthur) through the Salonika Campaign.
- 8. What type of group do you think is the most challenging to lead on a tour?** I live in a part of the world where nationalism is still alive and well. Leading a group when there is a mix of people from the surrounding countries requires being very careful to not offend someone relating to country names or their perceptions of history. Some facts must be dealt out gently.
- 9. What's the best tip, story or nugget of information you have been given by a fellow battlefield guide?** Know when to stop talking – let your guests enjoy a moment to “be there”.
- 10. What is the funniest or most dramatic thing you have seen on tour?** There was an elderly British lady, well into her 80s, visiting with a group. Very polite and quite proper. During dinner she was served Carp which comes from Lake Dojran. In Macedonian, the word for 'Carp' is 'Krap'. Following dinner and a few glasses of wine, with a sparkle in her eye and a naughty little smile, she stated that she could now tell her family back home that the best Krap she ever had was in Dojran. Then she laughed.

NEWmembers:

New members who have been welcomed to the Guild between Dec 2016 and the date of publication.

John Bailey
Danila Bracaglia
John Carey
Jonathan Cooper
David Croxford

Roel Dekkers
Maurice Head
Michael Hough
Chris Lee-McCloud
Philip McGahan

Ken Parker
Sharon Parks
Marc Raven
Mark Rogers
Brian Sowerby

Rob Taylor
Vaughn Winter