

Summer 2017

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# DESPATCHES

the magazine of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides



## IN THIS ISSUE:

IR35 and You

Medieval Towton

Albert Glover and the Zulu War

## PLUS

Air Traffic Mayhem - over Rome

## AND

Goodbye to all that

# FIELDguides

Our cover image: Middleham Castle viewed from the old motte and bailey. This gives a great opportunity to assess the development of medieval fortifications and generally tends to please any Ricardians in the group.

## Australian GBG Dinner 28 June 2017



Guests at the table in the Adam Room for our inaugural GBG Dinner 'Down Under'.

*On the evening of Wednesday 28 June, three of the four Australian members of the Guild held their inaugural black tie dinner in the elegant surroundings of the Adams Room of the NSW Masonic Club, Sydney. We took this opportunity to gather a number of military history and battlefield tour enthusiasts to promote membership of the Guild, with 16 attendees at the dinner. Two of the guests had been on a South African safari with Dennis earlier in February and another had recently returned from a US Civil War battlefield tour. We also took the opportunity to have Dennis Weatherall present David Wilson with his gold badge, which he qualified for in May of this year. It is hoped that we can now find other speaking-type opportunities to promote the Guild along with an annual dinner to kick off an Antipodean tradition.*



Dennis Weatherall (#34) presenting David Wilson with Badge #81.



Guild Members from left: Dennis Weatherall (#34); David Wilson (#81) and Associate Member Ron Lyons.



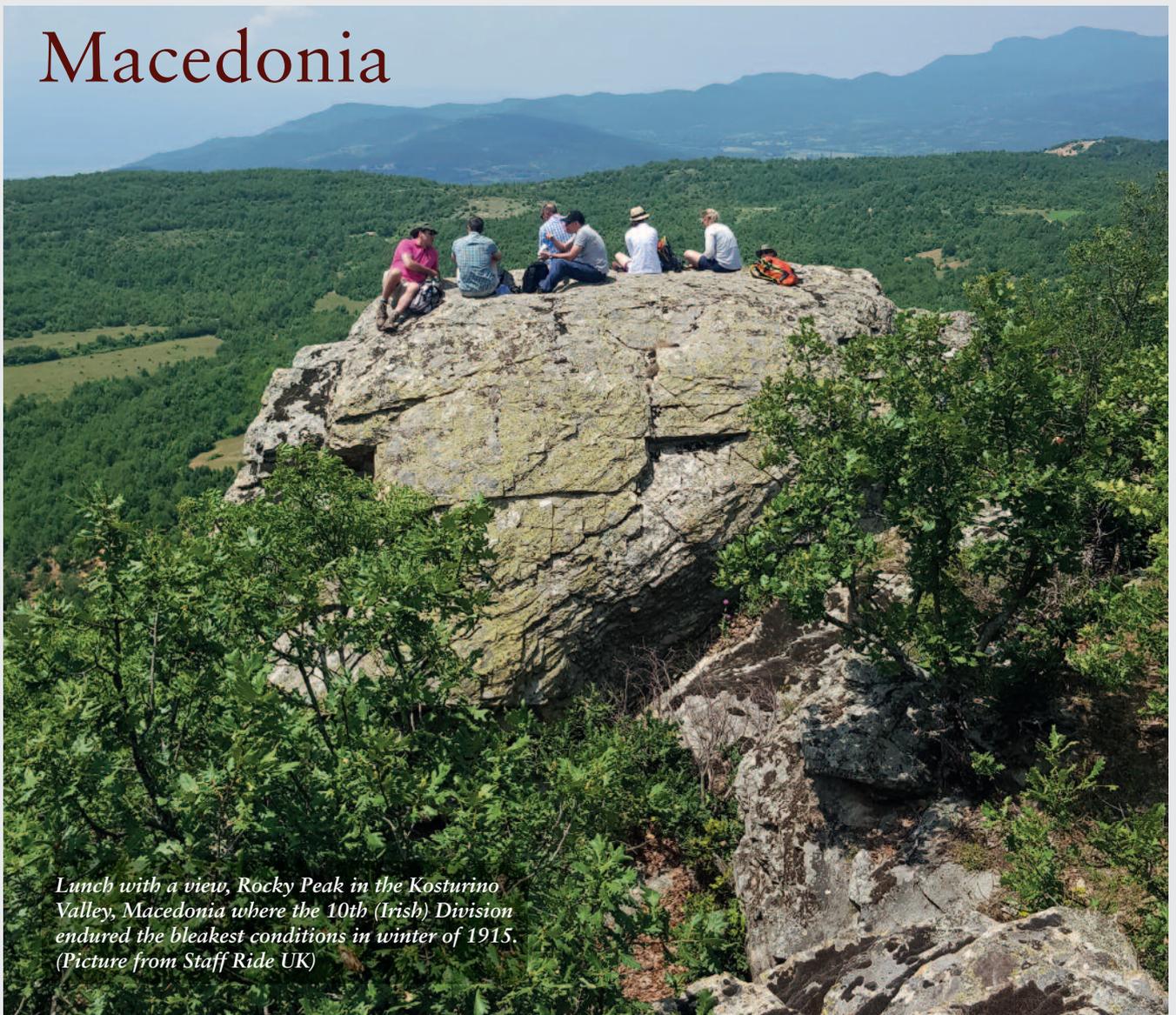
Old Sea Dog 'Weathers' congratulating David Wilson on his award.

# Contents



P2	FIELD <i>guides</i>	P20-23	WHEN IN ROME <i>Italian Campaigns</i>
P5-6	CHANGES TO IR35	P23	EVENT <i>guide</i> 2017
P7-13	TALES OF TOWTON <i>A Modernist's Medieval World View</i>	P24-25	GOODBYE TO ALL THAT <i>A Personal Farewell</i>
P14-19	THE ZULU WAR <i>In the footsteps of Albert Glover</i>	P26-27	GUIDE <i>books</i>

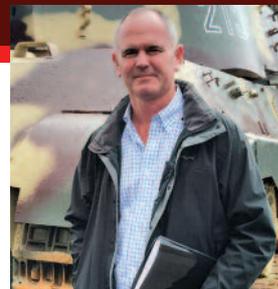
## Macedonia



*Lunch with a view, Rocky Peak in the Kosturino Valley, Macedonia where the 10th (Irish) Division endured the bleakest conditions in winter of 1915. (Picture from Staff Ride UK)*

# OPENINGshot:

## THE CHAIRMAN'S VIEW



Welcome fellow members and Guild Partners to the Summer edition of Despatches, the House Magazine of the Guild. We go to print just after the commemorations of 'Passchendaele 100' and a couple of weeks after the release of 'Dunkirk' at the cinema. Both subjects generated fierce debate on the historical accuracy of their content, how far a Spitfire could glide and such trivial questions as why we marked the anniversary of an October battle in the month of July sparked lively exchanges. Whatever our individual and collective frustrations are, no matter how jaded we may feel after three years of jostling under the Menin Gate, we must all remember that despite the Great War passing beyond living memory, more people are now aware of the events of 1914-18 than ever. The same can also be said of Dunkirk 75, the recent Christopher Nolan film stimulated debate and interest on an international scale. All of this sparked new interest in military history and critically for all of us, generated a desire to visit those beaches and battlefields.

The trick is now to make the most of the opportunities presented to give our clients a balanced, accurate and informed view of history in your chosen area of interest. I know many Guides are experiencing centenary fatigue and are feeling jaded, however as a profession we must guard against this, maintain our enthusiasm and above all our professional standards. It is too easy to look down our noses at lazy journalism, blatantly flawed history and the recurring myths that many battlefield visitors carry as historical baggage when they come on our tours. We should steer our clients in the right direction in the same way that we direct them away from poor restaurants, tacky souvenir shops and sub-standard museums. If we can all do that and continue to deliver an engaging, stimulating and rewarding battlefield tour experience, visitor numbers will not fall off a cliff edge at the end of the centenary commemorations and we will all have work beyond 2018. In military terms, this is a multi-domain battle, as historians we do not just function on the battlefields, we can also get our message across using Radio, TV, Social Media, lectures and book writing. If you can do any of that and mention the Guild in the process, then so much the better. As a Guild we also have the advantage of viewing these challenges from an international perspective...

Far away from the increasingly well-trodden battlefields of Europe membership of our Australian branch has continued to grow and prosper. We recently announced that we have another Antipodean Accredited Guide, congratulations to David Wilson who has

successfully completed validation and was awarded badge number 81 on 28 Jun 17. David was formally presented with his badge when the fledgling Australian Branch held its first formal gathering on NSW Masonic Club, Sydney. The Aussie gathering is a significant milestone and we hope to hear about more events down under as the branch grows. Nearer to home our Italian membership is also growing and there are signs of a friendly rivalry developing between our flourishing Mediterranean outpost and our biggest branch outside UK in the Netherlands. All of this is very positive and we continue to look for opportunities to showcase the Guild beyond the shores of Blighty. On that note, I turn to what is traditionally the biggest event in our calendar...

Hopefully you are now all be aware of the date and location of the Guild Annual Conference in Mons, taking place over the weekend of 1-4 February 2018. With the assistance of Associate Member Phillipe Maree of the Belgian Tourist Office we have secured an excellent deal for the Guild at a conference hotel in Mons. We also have the support of Guild Partners, Galloway Travel who will provide coaches from the UK and P&O for the Ferry Crossing. More details will be circulated via the weekly bulletin and through our social media channels. The weekend will include the traditional elements of Quiz Night, Battlefield Tour, Validation Opportunities, the AGM and our Awards Night and dinner which will take place in the Mons Town Hall. We are looking to make our first Annual Conference a memorable one, I hope you will make the most of this unique opportunity to enjoy a long weekend in Belgium at what is now established as the biggest gathering of Battlefield Guides in Europe. If you are close to achieving accreditation, then receiving your badge in the Mons Town Hall will be a once in a lifetime experience – something to aim for?

Well, I think you have heard enough from me, I will let you get on with enjoying the latest issue of Despatches. Since the Spring issue I have covered a lot of ground and bumped into lots of members, I am pleased to say that morale in the Guild is high and the feedback is overwhelmingly positive. I hope that you are all enjoying your guiding wherever you are in the world, please look out for each other and share your experiences, skills and knowledge – that is what the Guild is all about. If you know someone who would benefit from membership and would add value to our organisation please encourage them to join us, we are an inclusive and welcoming organisation that is open to all.

Stay safe and above all enjoy your Battlefield Guiding!

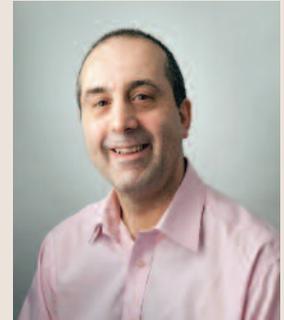
**Mike Peters**

# CHANGES TO IR35

Mahmood Reza

**If you are a freelancer or contractor providing services to a public sector body via an intermediary, such as a limited company or a partnership, a change in personal service company (or intermediaries) legislation, commonly known as IR35, may affect you. IR35 basically means that income is taxed at source via PAYE.**

*Mahmood Reza is Director of Pro Active Resolutions, a company specialising in independent tax and financial management. [www.proactiveresolutions.com](http://www.proactiveresolutions.com)*



## Status assessment

Before 6 April this year, freelancers (or ‘workers’ - the term used in the legislation) were responsible for evaluating the ‘status’ of their own working relationships with their clients.

The status of the relationship between a worker and their client is not based on how the respective parties wish to describe it, but on certain realities. For example, a freelance worker has the right to send someone else to do the work in their place, and the right to decline to perform certain work. The level of financial risk is being borne by the worker, and whether the worker takes responsibility for rectifying work in their own time and at their own expense, are also relevant to the evaluation.

If a status assessment found that a worker’s relationship with their client was one of genuine self-employment, IR35 didn’t apply, but if the worker was deemed an employee of the client, IR35 did apply.

Since April 6, the responsibility will fall to the public sector body to carry out this status assessment. So either the freelancer’s public sector client will make the judgment, or an agency. (Though an agency is likely to pass that responsibility back to the public sector body.)

## Assessment tool

HMRC has released an online Employment Status Service tool to help public sector organisations decide whether workers fall under IR35 tax legislation. The online tool has come in for a lot of criticism from many who have questioned its reliability and accuracy, with some of the outcomes being in conflict with established legal cases, as well as delivering ‘unknown’ results.

The categories of worker included in the assessment include employment by spouse, entertainer, media industry and the catch-all category of ‘other’. If you are within the category of entertainer or media industry,

the tool will normally direct you to HMRC film and production, and TV and broadcasting units instead.

The tool’s conclusion is wholly dependent on what boxes are ticked by the user. The areas the tool looks at are substitution, control over how and where the work is done, level of worker’s financial risk, and business structure.

There is no real reference to what employment lawyers call ‘mutuality of obligation’, which is one of the key tenets in determining employment status. Mutuality refers to the legal obligation of an employer to provide work and pay for it, together with the obligation of the employee to personally do the work.

I have put varying scenarios into the tool and a significant number generate an unknown answer, saying that “The worker’s employment status cannot be determined by this system...”, and then adding “It is important that the correct employment status is established without delay. An opinion on status will have to be provided by a member of the HMRC Status Customer Service Team.”

## Implications

If your public sector client makes the decision that IR35 applies to you, your income will be taxed at source via PAYE as though you are an employee. You will be taxed as an employee but will have none of the rights or benefits of an employee, such as holiday pay, sick pay or a work-based pension.

If you disagree with the assessment you can ask them to re-evaluate it, but whether they will or not depends on their policy and approach.

On the positive side, if IR35 does apply to you, you will end up with a smaller business tax bill, and your National Insurance contributions potentially allow you access to a wider range of state benefits.

There is a real possibility that the law of unintended consequences will come into play. Public sector bodies

are likely to be risk-averse and to take a cautious view of a worker's status. If a worker is assessed as a 'deemed employee', the cost to the client will dramatically increase due to additional employer's National Insurance, payroll and administrative costs. Workers will have less net income due to taxation and the inclusion of employee's National Insurance, and may want to negotiate for fee increases to compensate for the reduction in take home pay .

As public sector funding is squeezed, an undesirable consequence of this change in legislation is that some workers may stop working within the public sector, with their skills and expertise being lost.

## Possible solutions

It is possible for a worker operating through an intermediary to avoid the impact of IR35 by making changes to their business and working practices. This could include negotiating a fixed fee with a client for carrying out a project, diversifying and widening their client base, ensuring that they sign the visitor's book when they work on the client's premises, advertising their services, and rewording any current contracts.

It's worth taking advice: the fuller impact of this change is yet to be seen, and it is likely to be later this year that the fallout and difficulties will be known.

*This article, first published on the website [www.artsprofessional.co.uk](http://www.artsprofessional.co.uk), has been reprinted here with the kind permission of the author, Mahmood Reza.*

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Material for publication in the Winter edition of Despatches must be with the Editor no later than 2 October 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](mailto:secretary@gbg-international.com)

## NEWmembers:

New members who have been welcomed to the Guild between April 2017 and the date of publication.

Dave Allen  
Mark Allen

Derek Armitage  
Cressida Hollands

Carl Liversage  
Chris Netherclift

Andy Smith

## FROM THE EDITOR...

Welcome to the summer edition of 'Despatches'.

My aim with the magazine is to offer as diverse a range of subjects, time periods and themes as possible and I'm confident that this edition will not disappoint. For your delectation we have; IR35, the War of the Roses, the Zulu War, an air travel catastrophe, a Guild members finale in South Africa and the 'Recollections of Rifleman Preston.' As in the advertisement for Ferraro Roche, some of you may

venture that 'with this edition you are spoiling us', my retort 'you're worth it'.

Please keep the articles, book reviews and ideas coming or else I am in deep 'doo doo' and many thanks to those stalwarts that extracted me from it this time.



Cliff LLoyd

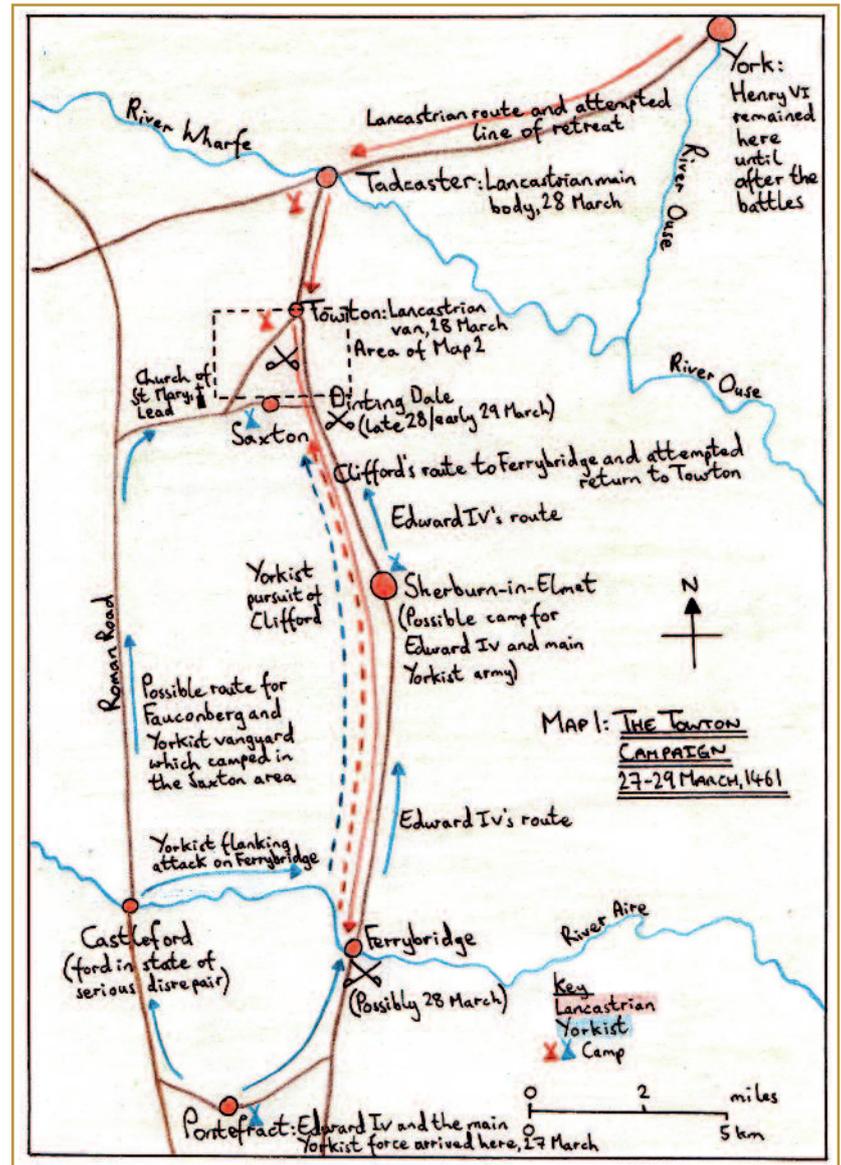
# TALES OF TOWTON c1461

## A MODERNIST'S MEDIEVAL WORLD VIEW

Dr Peter Edwards

Standing early on a clear morning on Towton Field, watching the red kites circle overhead and dimly aware of the hum of distant farm machinery, it is chilling to remember that this tranquil corner of the Vale of York was once the scene of England's reputedly bloodiest battle. On Palm Sunday, 29 March, 1461, in the early years of the Wars of the Roses, approximately 25,000 Lancastrians and 20,000 Yorkists fought a twelve-hour battle on a plateau to the south of Towton village. As the violence subsided, supposedly 28,000 men lay dead. As a modern historian, immersed in the vicious excess of the twentieth century, I was not particularly shaken by the death toll. However, the purported 62% fatality rate really piqued my interest.

It is perhaps a little disingenuous to present myself as a modern historian drawn to the wonders of the medieval world by tales of a battle only thirty miles from my home. As an undergraduate I was as likely to be found reading Glyn Jones' 'A History of the Viking's as Paul Kennedy's 'The War Plans of the Great Power's. Indeed, my first ever attempt at guiding students



around a battlefield involved fighting a keen east wind and snow flurries whilst exploring the 1066 Battle of Fulford. Yet years of focusing primarily on modern History had allowed me to adopt some of the modernist's prejudices. I paid too much attention to medievalists who proclaimed a love of "simple" history, of kings and queens, great men and women and two-sided conflicts in a clearly ordered society, uncluttered by political ideology, industrial economics and complex social theory. This was a world that never existed. A full-blooded return to medieval history in recent years has reacquainted me with societies riven

by ethnic strife and class tension that all too often erupted into violence and rebellion, as well as fascinating and varied economic structures. Above all, military action contains all the elements familiar to modern historians and a few more besides: problems of recruitment and training, logistics and pay, retention of troops, domination of vital ground, deployment of forces, surprise, exploitation of enemy weaknesses, reconnaissance and pursuit. The conundrums of suppression of newly-acquired subject societies and exploitation and fortification of freshly-won territories are also present. The events surrounding Towton dive deeply into all of these areas and possess one huge advantage over the modern sites I have studied; Towton is only 45 minutes' drive from my home. For sure, 550 years has witnessed the erosion or destruction of much physical and documentary evidence, but this makes the challenge of deciphering the events of 27-30 March 1461 all the more exciting.

Towton also occupies a special historical and cultural place – and not just for those who live in Yorkshire or choose to study the medieval world. The battle was the central action in a series of three closely-related engagements; Ferrybridge, Dinting Dale and Towton. The immediate result of the battle was to secure the throne for Edward IV and to put Henry VI to flight. It was a classic Wars of the Roses battle, being fought primarily on foot by hastily-gathered forces, but the historical and archaeological legacy of Towton Field should provoke more careful thought about the darker and more unpalatable complexities of the history of the British Isles.

## Historical Context

The Wars of the Roses lasted from the Battle of St Albans in 1455 until the end of the Perkin Warbeck rebellion in 1497. The main protagonists were the Yorkist and Lancastrian branches of the royal House of Plantagenet. This was not a war between the two greatest counties of England. It was an English civil war between Yorkists whose power was primarily concentrated in the south of England and Lancastrians who drew their strength from the North and Wales. As with most civil wars, rivalries were exceptionally bitter, with conflict between aristocratic families taking on the character very reminiscent of Norse blood feuds. Regional differences in fifteenth century England were also vast, encompassing language, dress, diet, farming and trade patterns and building styles. The Kentish soldier fighting at Towton in 1461 truly believed himself to be in a hostile, foreign land.

Kentishmen found themselves on Towton Field because the Yorkist Edward Earl of March, having declared himself Edward IV, needed to rapidly assert possession of the throne through a decisive military

defeat of the Lancastrian Henry VI. The ailing Lancastrian monarch had escaped Yorkist custody in February 1461 and headed north. Enconced behind the safety of York's walls, Henry VI and his wife, Margaret of Anjou, the real power driving the Lancastrian faction, directed the Duke of Somerset to meet the military threat of Edward IV, a man who increasingly seemed to embody the martial values of medieval kingship. Edward IV had marched north to Pontefract castle in West Yorkshire by 27 March and now only the rivers Aire and Wharfe stood between the two kings. If Edward IV crossed the Wharfe, the road to York and nominal control of the North lay open. Towton Field, a plateau between the Aire and Wharfe, was the most favourable ground on which the Duke of Somerset – Henry VI's commander – could hope to meet and destroy the Yorkist threat.

## Three Battles - One Name

The Paston Letters – an invaluable, if somewhat weighted, collection of eye-witness accounts of life in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – give the death toll at Towton as 20,000. In the Milanese state archive, letters to the Papal Legate, Coppini, written by Englishmen within days of Towton, all place the casualty figure at 28,000 dead. That so many could perish on Towton field seems almost inconceivable – the area of the battlefield simply isn't large enough to hold this many dead, especially when compared with what is known of the logistics of processing heavy casualties in areas such as the Somme, Ypres and Verdun. However, a number of key engagements took place between 28 and 30 March 1461. First, at the Battle of Ferrybridge, a crossing of the Aire had to be forced. Some time later, a large-scale ambush at Dinting Dale annihilated the Lancastrian force that had blocked Edward IV at Ferrybridge. The main engagement occurred on Towton Field, which then turned into a catastrophic rout, with thousands crushed and drowned in Cock Beck whilst fleeing the Yorkist horse. Lancastrians then made a stand in Towton and Tadcaster, where many more drowned attempting to swim the Wharfe. Large numbers of men were also cut down en route between Tadcaster and York. Taking these engagements as a whole and considering the order to give no quarter to the enemy, a death toll of around 20,000 becomes realistic. Indeed, when considering the flow of action from Ferrybridge to York, the events at Towton make more sense.

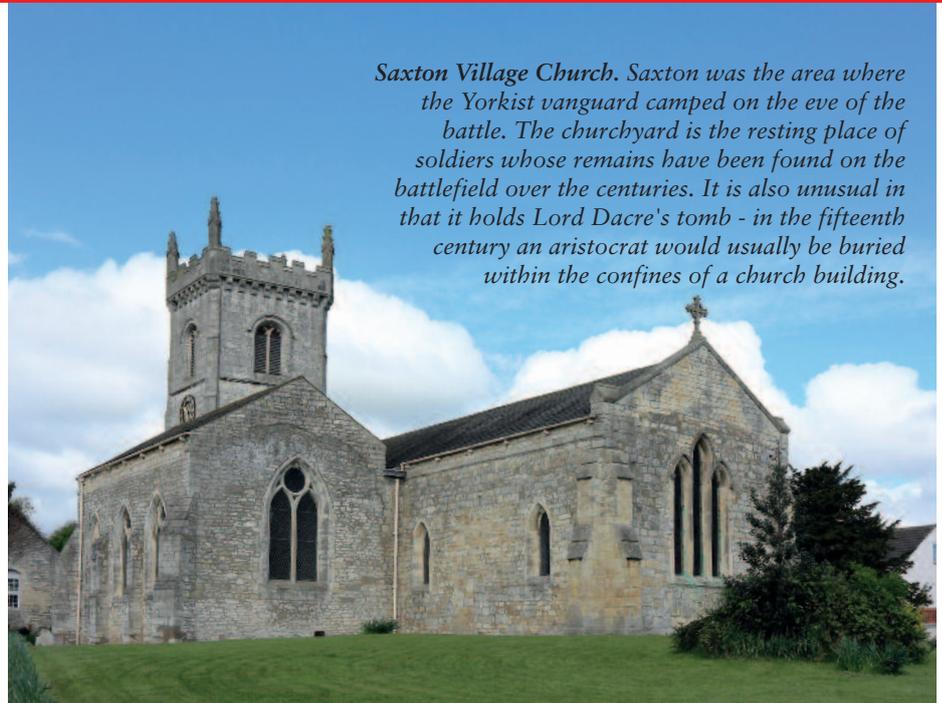
## The Element of Luck

Towton is all the more interesting as a battle because the Lancastrians should have won. They outnumbered the Yorkists, were fighting in their native heath and held the strategic vital ground. Furthermore, the action at Ferrybridge had imposed

significant delay and inflicted heavy casualties on Edward IV's forces – unfortunately much of the archaeology here has been obliterated by a nineteenth century bridge, a power station and the A1. How, then, did Edward IV come to triumph at Towton and what does the ground tell us today?

The Lancastrian vanguard camped just south of Towton village and was joined by the main force arriving from Tadcaster on the morning of the battle, having destroyed the bridge to protect the road to York. Somerset then moved his 25,000 men to a defensive position on a plateau above the Yorkists in Saxton village and bounded to the east by marshes and to the west by the steep drop to the wooded, marshy valley of Cock Beck. He also deployed a force of “mounted spears” in nearby Castle Hill Wood to launch a surprise rear or flanking attack on the Yorkists. Edward IV's army was therefore forced to advance uphill from Saxton where the Yorkist van, under Fauconberg, the likely architect of the ambush at Dinting Dale, had made camp. Outnumbered, the Yorkists made their peace and began the grim march uphill towards Towton, no doubt also wary of the darkening leaden sky above them.

Jean de Bueil, the fifteenth century “plague of the English”, wrote that “a formation on foot should never march forward, but should always hold steady and await its enemies... A force which marches before another force is defeated unless God grants it grace.” God's grace was certainly not with the Lancastrians on Palm Sunday 1461. However, to take de Bueil's assertion at face value is the medieval equivalent of propagating lion and donkey myths about the Great War. Certainly, the basic ingredient for success in a medieval pitched battle was to break the enemy formation, but achievement of this required tactical sophistication and demanded the ability to move huge bodies of



*Saxton Village Church. Saxton was the area where the Yorkist vanguard camped on the eve of the battle. The churchyard is the resting place of soldiers whose remains have been found on the battlefield over the centuries. It is also unusual in that it holds Lord Dacre's tomb - in the fifteenth century an aristocrat would usually be buried within the confines of a church building.*

sometimes poorly-trained, indifferently-equipped, uneducated, pressed men. Medieval field command was no soft option. Somerset's position was solid and secure – he had chosen well, as even a cursory stroll over the ground today demonstrates. His downfall was the result of the uncontrollable critical factor in warfare – luck.

As the armies drew up, snow and sleet storms blew in on an uncharacteristic south-easterly wind. This was to be the undoing of the Lancastrians. The wind added velocity and distance to Yorkist arrows, whilst Lancastrian shafts mostly fell short. The longbow barrage was intended to break an enemy formation and Somerset's ranks were now filled with enraged men who had left scarcely a mark on their foe. Lancastrian bowmen were also blinded by the sleet and snow driven into their faces. Somerset had to commit in order to save the situation. Taking advantage of the gradient, the Lancastrians drove down onto the Yorkists and the infantry clashed. Initially carried by their momentum, Edward IV's men gave ground and part of his left flank took to flight; these men being pursued along the Castleford Road by the “mounted spears” hidden in Castle Hill Wood.



*The memorial to the dead of Towton*



*Lord Dacre's Tomb*



*The view south from the cross in the direction of Lancastrian forces looking towards Saxton village and the Yorkist camp. The Aire Valley power stations in the distance mark the site of Ferrybridge.*



*The view north towards Tadcaster and the River Wharfe. Yorkists would only have made out this view after the collapse of the Lancastrian left flank, assuming there was enough daylight by that stage of the battle.*

At this point, Edward IV demonstrated his mastery of one of the key elements of medieval kingship – martial leadership by example. Prominent due to his height, armour and standard, Edward, fighting on foot, threw himself into the thick of the *mêlée* wherever the Yorkist line weakened. Yorkist troops definitely rallied to the physical presence of their monarch. At the same time, the Lancastrians lost Northumberland and Dacre – able commanders. Dacre was killed by an arrow through the neck, having removed his helmet and gorget to take a drink. Northumberland was to die of his wounds after the battle, but his incapacitation was instrumental in the collapse of the Lancastrian left,

which was also being battered by Norfolk's division, newly arrived from Ferrybridge and possibly including firearms. The collapse of the Lancastrian left was the critical moment of the battle. As Lancastrians began to quit the field, localised flight turned to general rout and the Lancastrian line wheeled as men began to pour from the battlefield into the valley of Cock Beck. Here, marshy ground, churned by thousands of feet and hooves and saturated by sleet and snow, became a killing field. Worse followed as panic-stricken men attempted to ford the swollen Cock Beck; a sodden medieval padded jack and steel skillet would easily drag a tired man beneath the deep, fast-flowing, freezing water,

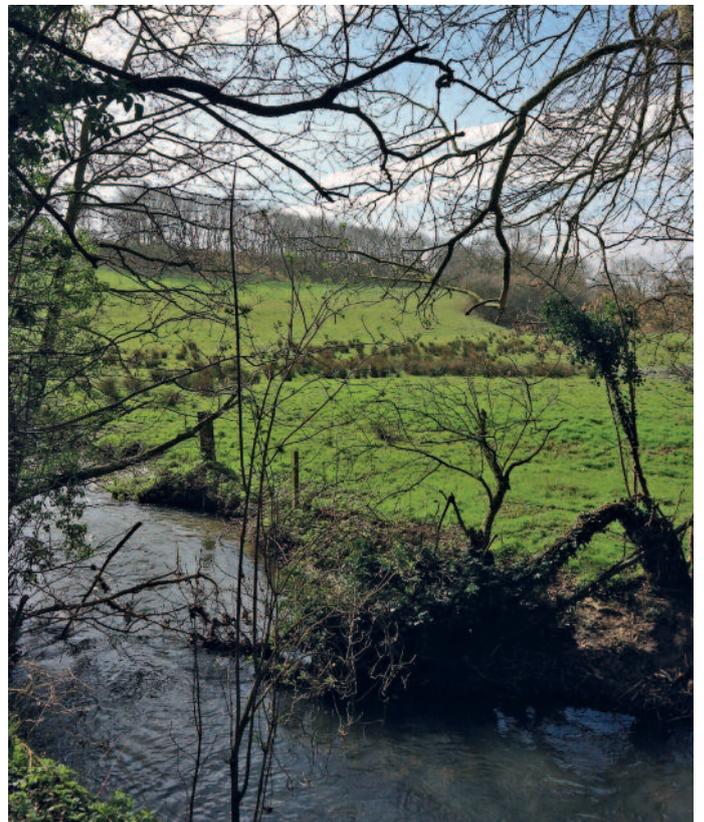


*The Bridge over Cock Beck. This tranquil beck was deeper and swollen with winter rain and snow on the day of the battle. The footpath to the beck is steep and nearly always muddy and gives some sense of the difficulties encountered by soldiers in flight and indeed horses in pursuit. There was no bridge in 1461, simply a ford. This is the reputed site of the “Bridge of Bodies” and links into the Old London Road.*

yet to abandon armour increased vulnerability to blows from the pursuing Yorkist horse. Lurid accounts claim that Cock Beck could be crossed simply by walking on the bodies of the dead. The pursuit continued along the road to Tadcaster and then north of the Wharfe on routes to York. As the ragged dawn broke on 30 March, it was clear that the Lancastrians had suffered a catastrophic defeat.

## **Towton Today** – a precious window on the past

Towton Field itself retains all the key geographical features of the fifteenth century – the topography has changed little. The plateau south of Towton remains under the plough, although now stripped of coppices; even the Aire Valley power stations form convenient reference points for the crossing at Ferrybridge to the south. The dry re-entrant, partly bisecting the field of battle, forms a natural corridor down to Cock Beck, and hardly any imagination is required to create a mental image of the chaotic press of men making headlong for the perceived safety of the western bank of Cock Beck. The beck itself follows a similar course, although in the fifteenth century it was deeper, and on the day of the battle also swollen by winter rain and snow. Even the Old London Road – the quickest means of retreat to Tadcaster – still exists as a bridle path. A



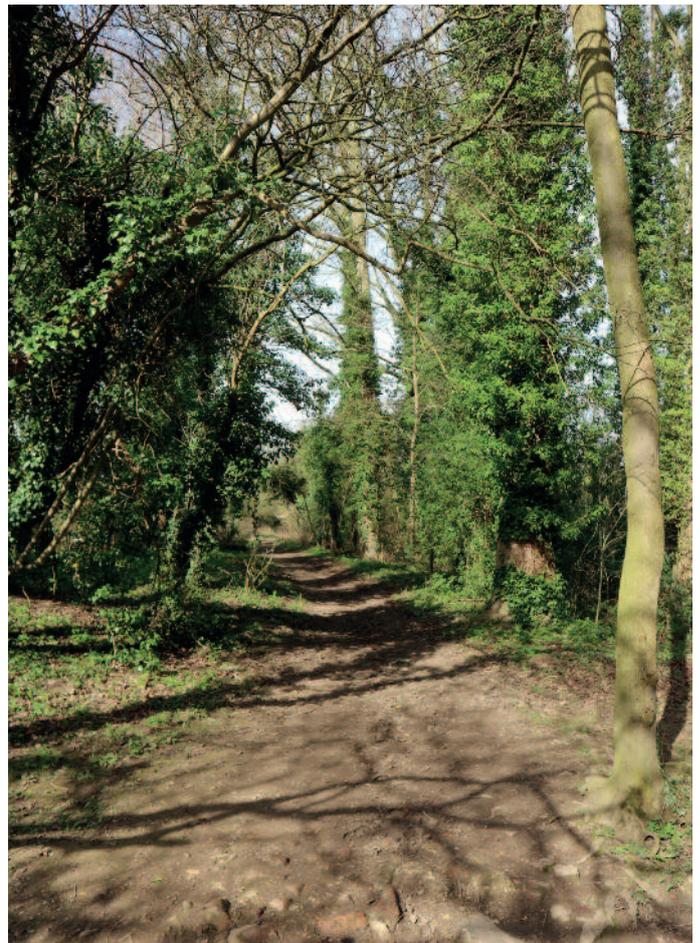
*The escarpment rising from Cock Beck to the plateau of Towton Field. The camera lens takes much of the gradient out of this view. The slope is actually very steep and some sense of the marshy valley floor can be gained.*

medieval stone cross marks the nominal centre of the battlefield and is also the starting point of an excellent sign-boarded walking tour. The Towton Battlefield Society has done sterling work in raising the profile of Towton Field, highlighting the need to preserve a site of exceptional historical and archaeological importance.

Indeed, it is comparatively recent archaeological revelations that have transformed the study of Towton and energised any field-walking. As with most medieval battlefields, the dead were stripped of re-useable clothing, equipment or valuables and their corpses were heaved into mass graves. At Towton, however, the sheer volume of bodies caused foul odours to rise from the ground and Richard of Gloucester – the future Richard III, who built his own northern powerbase after Towton – gave orders for a mass-exhumation of the Lancastrian dead and their re-burial in consecrated ground. He was doubtless seeking to curry favour with local Lancastrian sympathisers. Some mass graves escaped exhumation, and in 1996 a pit containing 51 skeletons was excavated. The discovery led to a reassessment of some aspects of medieval warfare. First, the soldiers themselves challenged stereotypes. The average height of the men was 5'8" – hardly malnourished or stunted. One skull revealed a serious facial injury that had clearly been treated and healed well before the battle, challenging assumptions about medieval field medicine. The skeletons, however, also reveal evidence of significant "overkill" – several wounds were inflicted after the deathblow and there is evidence of mutilation, knife marks showing the removal of noses and ears. To an extent, the savage wounds can be explained as the actions of soldiers whose "blood was still up" after twelve hours of desperate hand-to-hand fighting, but the injuries also sound a more sinister note. Both sides had resolved to give no quarter and the bitterness of the aristocratic feuds set the tone for the treatment of a defeated enemy, whose political allegiance as well as language, dress and diet clearly identified them as "alien". It can be argued that the savagery of the injuries inflicted at Towton reflect the deep-rooted hatreds familiar to modern generations in the civil wars in former Yugoslavia. Archaeologists have allowed a reassessment of the rather trite view that the Wars of the Roses can be neatly confined to a squabble between aristocratic factions that left the majority of the British Isles largely untouched.

## Beyond the Battlefield

A range of sites across Yorkshire are also intimately related to Towton and can further enhance understanding of the main battle itself. Lead Chapel is part of the Towton legend, and is also opposite the Crooked Billet pub, which provides welcome respite



*The Old London Road still gives an impression of what medieval roadways were like, especially away from the main arteries and old Roman roads.*

for groups on cold winter days. A visit to Lead Chapel allows an exercise in landscape interpretation as the remnants of a manor house, village and watercourse emerge from modern pasture. Ferrybridge itself is worth a visit purely to consider the demands of a medieval forced crossing of the Aire. Perhaps far more productive are excursions to Sandall castle – linked to the Battle of Wakefield – and Sheriff Hutton castle, which became the seat of the Council of the North after Towton. Equally impressive, especially for Ricardians, is Middleham Castle, the erstwhile home of Richard III. Middleham is especially valuable in considering the changing nature of medieval fortification, since the best vantage point to view Richard III's castle is a fantastically well-preserved Norman motte and bailey overlooking the town. There are great opportunities for unpicking the story the landscape has to tell in all these sites. Finally, mention should also be made of the Royal Armouries in Leeds – a great free venue that can either absorb several hours or simply allow focus on exhibits from a specific era to suit a single site in the field. All this without even venturing within the city walls of York, itself a veritable military historical treasure house.



*Lead Chapel provides great opportunities for landscape interpretation, being the site of a village and manor house that disappeared as a result of Tudor enclosures. Folklore claims the Yorkist aristocracy sought absolution here on the eve of Towton, but there is no evidence to suggest this. The chapel itself is architecturally very interesting - it was once a much larger building, but the interior nevertheless holds a wealth of historical information. It has also become a focal point for Towton remembrance services.*

## What did Towton teach me?

Above all, visits to Towton and reading around the subject have confirmed my view that historians should be far less partisan about their own areas of interest. I doubt I will ever lose the habit of reading a good book on late imperial Russia with the feeling that I am meeting an old friend, but this does not, however, mean that I should be dismissive of other periods. True, the personal details available through diaries, published memoirs and collections of private papers, or the tactical minutiae that can be gleaned from regimental histories and War Office papers are beyond the scope of medievalists studying Towton. However, the challenges facing the historian attempting to portray the human experience of the battle makes for interesting work. Some archival material is available and the efforts of traditional field and modern forensic archaeologists have hugely enhanced current knowledge of medieval life and death. Experimental archaeologists, meanwhile, have carried out a fantastic range of practicals relating to medieval warfare that challenge all kinds of stereotypes and misconceptions. For all that a Guide cannot draw on letters home from an infantryman on campaign in Yorkshire in 1461, enough verifiable material is available to paint an extremely vivid picture of events on Towton Field. Furthermore, the story of Towton is far from static – it is modified and reassessed in the light of new archaeological evidence



*The Cross marking the nominal centre of the battlefield. The signed walk begins here and takes in most of the key areas of the main battle.*

and revised interpretations of the medieval world. Opportunities exist here for giving clients the chance to clearly witness a multi-disciplinary approach to History to build a credible picture of events that took place nearly 600 years ago. Studying Towton has provided a continually-developing field for clients and demonstrates the wealth of trustworthy material upon which to build a medieval tour, but perhaps more significantly, it emphasises the enormous potential of British battlefield venues away from the South East. Looking physically closer to home, whilst also moving away from more familiar academic territory, has been both enlightening and invigorating and has encouraged me to at last revisit the site of the 1643 Battle of Adwalton Moor – only four miles from my home, but shamefully less-frequently visited by me than Verdun or Warsaw. I have much to learn about my own backyard...

### Further Reading

*There is no shortage of literature on the Wars of the Roses, but good general historical overviews are provided by Pollard, A.J. 'The Wars of the Roses', Palgrave 2001 and Carpenter, C. 'The Wars of the Roses. Politics and the Constitution of England c.1437-1509', Cambridge University Press 1997. Military aspects of the conflict are dealt with admirably by Goodman, A. 'The wars of the Roses. Military Activity and English Society, 1452-97', Routledge 1981 and Haigh, P.A. 'The Military Campaigns of the Wars of the Roses', Alan Sutton 1995. The battle of Towton is very effectively set within the broader context of the Wars of the Roses in Goodwin, G. 'Fatal Colours. Towton, 1461, England's Most Brutal Battle', Weidenfeld and Nicolson 2011, whilst an excellent guidebook comes in the form of Haigh, P.A. 'From Wakefield to Towton. The Wars of the Roses', Pen and Sword 2002. The contents of these volumes and the relevant OS maps guarantee days of fruitful exploration of superb Yorkshire historical sites. Any modernist wanting to learn about medieval warfare would struggle to find a better starting point than Keen, M. 'Medieval Warfare, A History', Oxford University Press, 1999.*

# THE ZULU WAR WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ALBERT GLOVER



Adam Williams



I expect we have all been subjected to old war stories from our grandparents, when we were kids and couldn't wait to escape and go and play outside. I vaguely remember hearing that my great-grandfather, Albert Glover, fought against the Zulus ("fousands of 'em") but never really took any great notice until later on in life.

In 2006, I left the Army and went to live in Cornwall. My research started there, I guess. I managed to find his grave hidden away amongst the long grass of a very neglected Bodmin cemetery. I duly cleaned up the grave but even then, got so wrapped up being busy that I never researched his history further.

That all changed with the loss of family and the family home. One inherits all sorts of 'junk' during the inevitable house clearance, and it is astonishing what lovely little gems are hidden away. It was only when going through all these bits and pieces did I start researching Albert with enthusiasm.

Albert was born in Peckham, Middlesex in 1864. Life in Victorian Britain in the mid-1800s was hard going, and employment was difficult to come by. Albert, like many young boys, enlisted into the Army in 1878, when he was just 14 years old. He joined the 99th (Lanarkshire) Regiment of Foot, and it didn't take long for his adventures to start.

Keen to expand her influence in South Africa and with news that diamonds had been located near Natal, the British Government sent thousands of troops there in December 1878/January 1879. The British High Commissioner for South Africa, Sir Henry Bartle Frere, sought to confederate South Africa the same way that Canada had been; he felt this could not be achieved whilst a powerful and independent state remained in situ. On the 11th December 1878, King Cetshwayo Ka Mpande, the King of the Zulu Nation, was given several ultimatums; the key one was to disband his army or face the consequences. He was given a month to decide, but as he considered such ultimatums so unreasonable, unrealistic and unachievable, he simply ignored them<sup>1</sup>.

Lord Chelmsford, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces South Africa, prepared for battle. He

planned to use three large independent columns; Col Glyn's Central Column which was the main attacking column, the Northern Column under Col Wood VC and Col Pearson's Coastal Column.

The exploits of Col Glyn's Central Column are well known and have been covered in depth in previous articles. However, the Coastal Column tends to be forgotten about. I think great-grandfather Albert would be chuffed to bits to see that his story is now being told!

The SS American set sail from Southampton on the 4th December 1878, with Albert, and his fellow G Company chums on board. They landed at Durban on the 4th January 1879. Something I hadn't really appreciated, but when troops were deployed abroad back then, their families went with them. So when Albert turned right and began the long 7 day trek up to the Kwa-Zulu Natal border, all the regimental families turned left to set up home in the relative safety of Cape Town. I can't quite imagine that my wife would have followed me to Bessbrook Mill, when I was in the Army!

On the 11th January, 1879, the fresh-faced Albert, now aged 15, arrived at Fort Pearson on the south

<sup>1</sup> I know this is a rather generalized statement on the cause of the Zulu War but to provide a full explanation would require a separate article



bank of the Lower Tugela River. Tents were erected along the ridgeline and it didn't take too long to establish a huge campsite. A further Fort, Fort Tenedos, was created across the river with the 99th Foot occupying the right side of that campsite. That day was a key date; the expiry of the ultimatum to King Cetshwayo to disband his army. He failed to do so, and war was declared despite a clear mandate from the British Government. Establishing troops at Fort Tenedos was the first significant step for the British Army to enter Zululand.

Young Albert's unit was warned to move forward with the Coastal Column to take Eshowe in the heart of Zululand. Sadly, alcoholism was an issue and the first 99th loss was due to a young soldier of the unit drinking too much homemade brew purchased in Durban.

On 19th January 1879, his unit descended from Fort Pearson and sailed across the Tugela River towards Fort Tenedos. Morale was high and the soldiers felt reasonably confident. They were armed with the latest weapon, the Martini Henri Rifle, and fighting against a Zulu armed only with a spear and shield should be easy. Little did they know that just under two thousand of their colleagues from the Central Column would be dead some three days later.

The going soon became hard and it is fair to assume that most of the soldiers struggled with the heat in their uncomfortable and heavy tunics. The wagons soon became bogged down and it took an almighty effort to push them out of boggy areas. Still, the Band were there to raise the spirits of the men and they happily rattled off some fine tunes along the way.

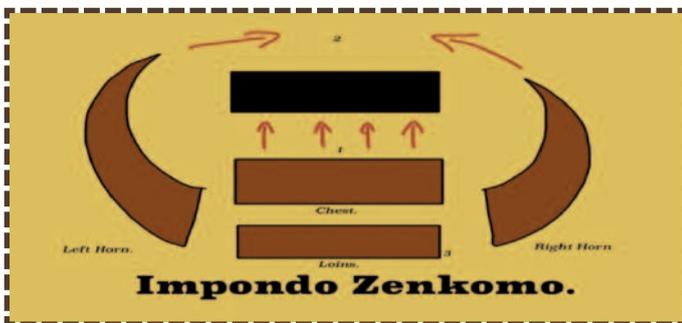
On 22nd January, they were approaching the



*Fort Pearson at the top of the hill*

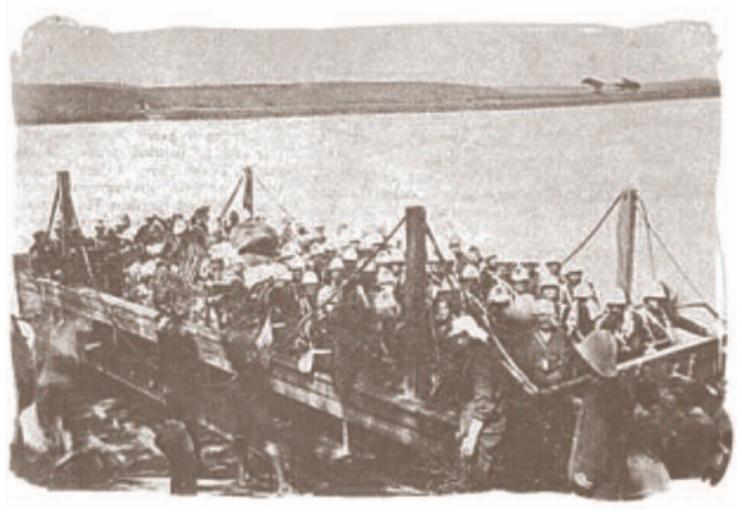
village of Inyezane, when they had their first contact with the Zulus. Inyezane sits at the mouth of a valley/re-entrant and is surrounded by high ground. Over 6000 Zulus had waited patiently on the top of the hill and watched the troops of the Coastal Column progress forward towards the re-entrant.

As part of the preparation for battle, the Zulus would get their soldiers into the 'Impondo Zenkomo', the Horns of the Buffalo formation.



The Zulus would crawl amongst the long grass, hidden from their enemy, and the two horns would encircle their target whilst the chest moved into position. Generally, the fitter, younger Zulus would have this delight whilst the elderly warriors remained in the chest position. When the horns were in the correct position, a war cry would be broadcasted and the Zulus would charge towards the enemy whilst the chest and loins moved forward.

Col Pearson moved his column steadily towards the mouth of the re-entrant and Wombane Hill. It was classic ambush country. Pearson had sent forward a Company of his Natal Native Contingent (NNC) as scouts to flush out any enemy. As the NNC started their climb up Wombane Hill, they spotted a small Zulu party at the top of the hill. They disappeared into the bush only to re-appear on the right side of the hill. The NNC, led by Capt Fitzroy Hart, moved his men to where the Zulus re-



*Members of the 99th of Foot crossing the Tugela*

appeared. As they moved closer towards them, the Zulu war cry "uSuthu" rang out amongst the tall grass slopes of Wombane Hill. About 300 Zulu warriors stood up and charged towards them. The story goes that one of the NNC officers shouted "Baleka" at the top of his voice to his men, believing it to mean "charge". Sadly, it meant "run" and he soon found himself quite alone!

The NNC made a quick retreat but several members were killed. As for the Zulus, once they gathered up the rifles of the fallen NNC members, they gathered momentum and ran towards the rest of Pearson's men who, at this stage, were frantically getting into position to fight back.

To Pearson's relief, the Zulus had not quite got themselves into the classic 'Impondo Zenkomo' position and after several hours of fighting, the attack failed. Over 600 Zulus had been killed with many more injured. By midday 22nd January 1897, after the mopping up and a short break, Pearson was keen to move on. He did not want the Zulus to think that the column had been affected by the Zulu attack.

This was Albert's first taste of action, at the tender age of 15. Although he was not in the thick of the fighting by any means (the 99th were bringing up the rear of the column), it must have been quite a frightening experience, nevertheless.

On arrival at the Eshowe Mission Station mid-morning of the 23rd January, they were pleasantly surprised at how beautiful and peaceful it looked. The area was about 120 x 80 yards and consisted of a church, several buildings and a selection of orange, lime and peach trees. It was vastly different than the terrain they had just marched over. However, there was slightly higher ground around the immediate area and also a deep valley hidden by undergrowth, which was assessed as potentially giving the Zulus excellent cover. As soon as the men had eaten, the task of clearing the undergrowth commenced.

Colonel Pearson had great reason to be pleased with himself; he had arrived at Eshowe on time, reasonably intact and having engaged a Zulu force of 6000 strong. After assessing the situation at Eshowe, he decided to send a number of wagons back for re-supplies. Amongst other troops, he decided to send Albert along with the rest of G Coy, 99th Regiment, back to Lower Tugela for the re-supply with 48 wagons in tow.

G Coy left on the 25th January after a very short stop at Eshowe. The going was a lot easier now that the wagons were empty of weight. But enroute, they passed through the battlefield of Inyezane. The stench of the numerous rotting corpses was overwhelming and was a very grim sight. They made good speed with the empty wagons and as dusk was approaching, they parked the wagons up in a laager and settled in for a long night. The wagons had no freight whatsoever in order to expedite the re-supply. Therefore there were no tents and not a great deal of cover. Unfortunately, the heavens opened up and they all got soaked to the skin. After a wet night and no sleep, they set off about 9am towards Fort Tenedos.

Just after they departed, they met Lt Col Ely with his convoy heading up towards Eshowe. Much of the day was spent waiting for this convoy to pass. A heavily laden convoy moves very slowly and of course, there was very little room. It must be remembered that the Engineers would only make one

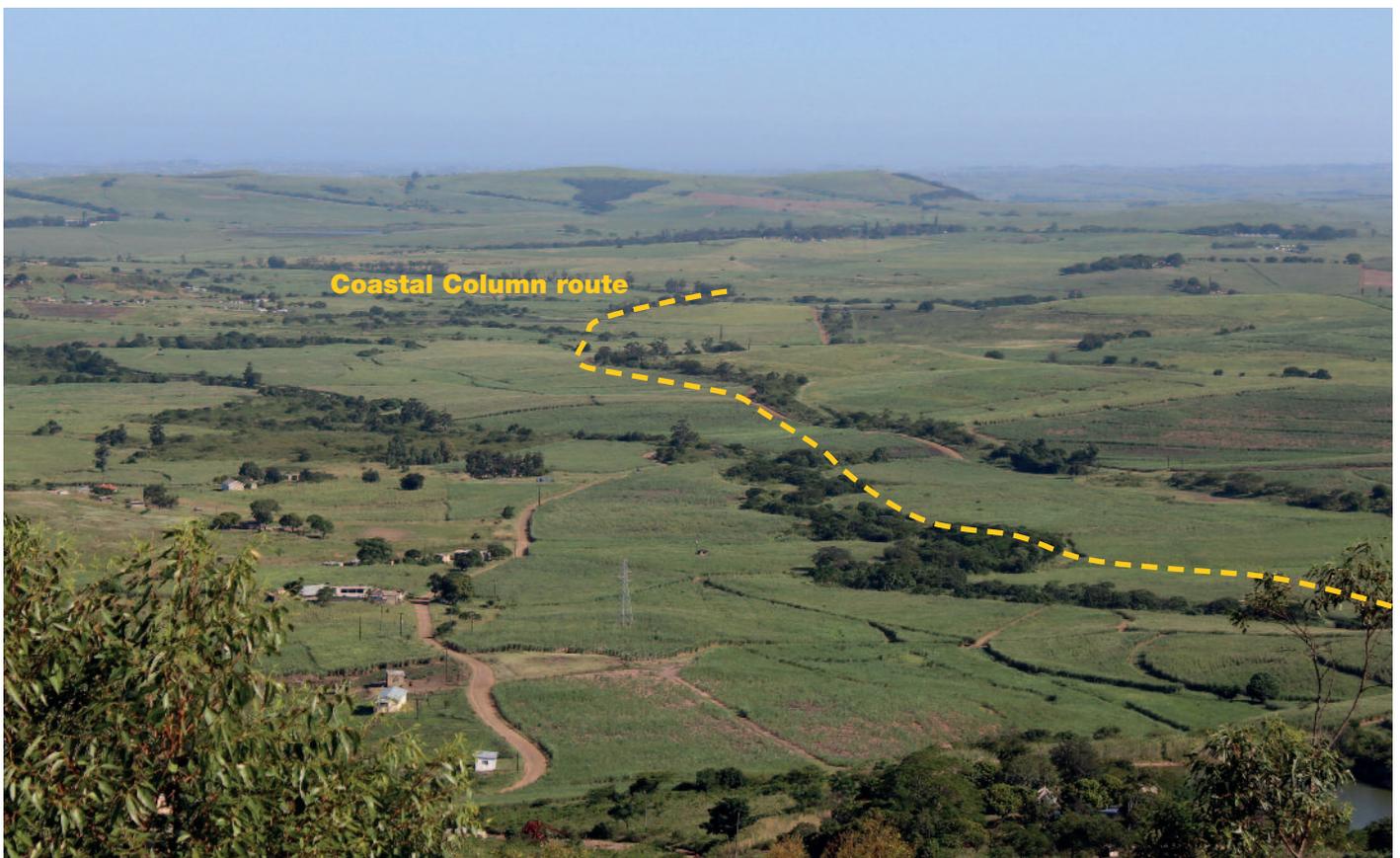
track over the rough terrain ahead of the convoy. As this convoy went past, news of the horrors at Isandlwana crept out along with the news that Lt Col Durnford had died. This was not good for morale.

Albert eventually arrived back at Fort Tenedos on the 26th January at about 5pm. Fortunately for him, life would be a lot easier than at Eshowe.

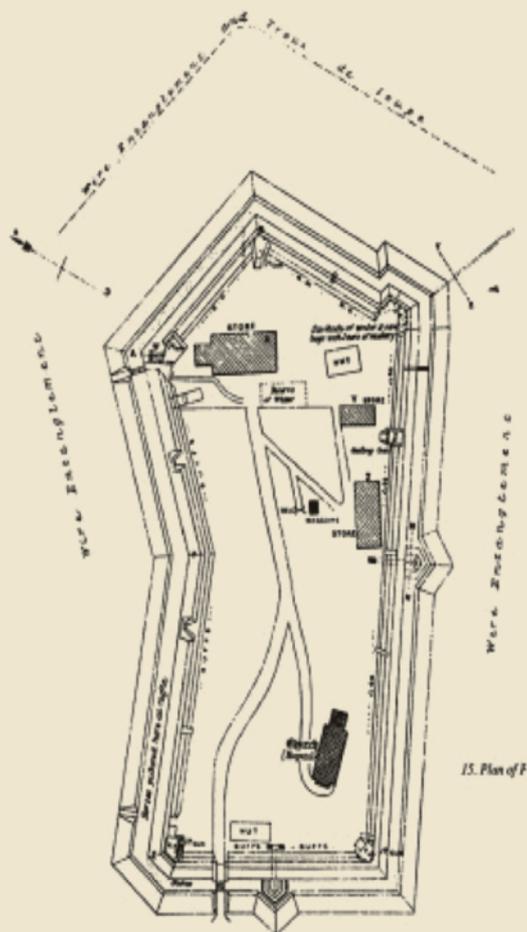
Colonel Pearson was made aware that there had been multiple Zulu attacks in the area. He had received the news that Durnford and his NNC unit had been killed and that Lord Chelmsford had engaged the Zulus too. Fearing that the Zulus were making gains, he ordered maximum effort on the defences of Eshowe. It was decided to dig a rampart all the way around the complex. This was a huge, unpleasant task under the blazing sun.

The next day, 27th January, Pearson at long last received a direct telegram from Lord Chelmsford: *“Consider all my instructions as cancelled and act in whatever manner you think most desirable in the interests of the column under your command. Should you consider the garrison of Eshowe too far advanced to be fed with safety, you can withdraw it.*

*Hold however, if possible, the post on the Zulu side of Lower Tugela. You must be prepared to have the whole Zulu force down upon you. Do away with tents, and let the men take shelter under the wagons, which will then be in position for defence, and hold so many more supplies”.*



Zulu view of Pearson's Column from Wombane Hill



Map of Fort Eshowe



Memorial at Eshowe

Naturally, this threw the cat amongst the pigeons! Pearson immediately called for a Council of War and got his officers together. He would not be fully aware of the 1300 men that had been brutally cut down by a Zulu force of over 20, 000. He would also not know that Chelmsford failed to laager his men at Isandlwana, contrary to his very own order but instead, had them spread out over a huge area. But he was aware that the comfort of having two strong columns on his left flank was now much weaker with the latest telegram.

After consultation with his fellow officers, he decided to stay at Eshowe. Renewed enthusiasm was put into the defences. The stores were carefully calculated to see how long they would last. Ramparts were completed, wagons were put into position and ammunition centralised.

Little did Pearson know that he would be ‘besieged’ within the fort by the threat of the Zulus until early April. In that time, many of his officers and men succumbed to the various diseases, such as Enteric Fever. The water supplies were contaminated and all suffered from ill health. Their diet was very poor with the meagre rations being infested with weevils. Lethargy had set in and morale was becoming very low.

For Albert, it was a lucky escape. He remained within the numerous forts around Tugela until the relief column destined for Eshowe was organised. Lord Chelmsford knew he had to gather up a force strong enough to deal with any attacking Zulus enroute.

Limited communications were established between Tugela and Eshowe in the form of an improvised heliograph. Morale started to improve when the word came out that the relief column was being organised. The personal messages that had been flashing to and fro on the heliograph had to take a back seat whilst the urgent, operational matters were dealt with. After months within the fort, morale was picking up within the Fort at Eshowe, the relief column were on their way.

Albert set off with the remainder of the 99th Regiment (A, B, D, F and G Coy) that were located in Tugela as part of the relief column. They departed Tugela on the 29th March. After hearing about the horrors of Isandlwana and Rorkes Drift, Albert was naturally a little perturbed; he was only 15 years old and about to engage with over 15,000 Zulus.

On the 1st April, the relief column, numbering some 5700 men arrived on a gentle plateau of high ground called Gingindlovu; the men would refer to this as “*Gin Gin I Love You*”! Chelmsford had learnt many lessons from the disasters of Isandlwana, particularly in underestimating the effectiveness of the Zulus. This time he took no chances. As the relief column arrived, they were immediately laagered. The laager consisted of a large square of about 130 yards on each side. Around the outsides a hastily dug ditch gave some limited protection and 30 wagons were parked end-to-end on each side. All the oxen were located inside the wagons for protection. Albert was located on the western side of the laager along with the buffs.

Very early on the 2nd, the Zulus sprang their attack to the northern part of the laager against the 60th Rifles. The Naval Brigades, along with their respective artillery pieces, were located on each corner. The grass around the immediate surrounding area had been trampled down whilst the relief column were moving into position, but outside of this, there was long grass that offered excellent protection for the Zulu approach. The Zulus could be seen splitting formation as far as Inyezane, some 5 miles to the north. The horns were getting into position whilst the chest and loins moved slowly forward under the cover of the long grass.

Albert knew this was it, he knew that a huge swarm of Zulus were planning their attack; they could see them splitting formation and it was now just a case of waiting. Fire discipline was essential. The Martini Henri had an advertised effective range of between 4-600 yards. The brief was to allow the Zulus to get as close as 200 yards before opening fire. They did indeed close in. The Gatling Gun from HMS Boadicea was positioned on the north-west corner and could see the Zulus on the edge of the tall grass. The Petty Officer in charge begged to be allowed to fire: *“Beg your pardon, sir, last night I stepped the distance to that bush where those blacks are, and it’s just 800 yards. This ‘no firing’ seems like throwing a chance away. I’ve got her laid true for them; may I give her half a turn of the handle?”*

After two turns of the handle, there was a clear lane cut through the Zulus. Poor old Albert’s heart must have been racing, his throat dry and sweating profusely under a heavy red tunic. The relative silence was now over, this was the time for action.

The Zulus first attacked the north side of the laager, the 60th Rifles struggling to contain the assault. The Zulus were not only armed with a spear and a shield, they were putting their newly acquired rifles from Isandlwana to good use. The fighting was rather fierce, with some Zulu individuals even making it to the ramparts before getting cut down. As the attack started to falter, the Zulus withdrew to the long grass as the ‘right horn’ approached Albert’s position.

The officers had to grip the men of the 99th and control their fire. Most of the men were very young and inexperienced. The war cry of *“uSuthu”* rang out amongst the mass of black bodies approaching the western face, only to be met by a wall of fire. They too, withdrew as another part of the right horn approached from the direction of Misi Hill to the west. It was the turn of the 91st to the south of the laager to face the enemy onslaught. Again, the Zulus got very close: *“The natives were all around us in swarms, shooting as fast as they could. Fancy, there were some of them twenty yards from the trench. Talk about pluck! the Zulu has all that. They were*

*shot down one after the other, and they still came on in hundreds.”*

By 7am, the Zulu attacks had collapsed on all the sides of the laager. Chelmsford saw his moment and pushed his Mounted Infantry out of the east side of the laager to attack the Zulus. Swords were drawn and it would be totally unforgiving. The horses charged into the withdrawing Zulus with swords tearing down onto limbs and torsos. Over 300 withdrawing Zulus were killed, leaving over 700 more around all sides of the laager. Only one prisoner was taken, a young boy.

There were 62 British wounded and 11 killed at Gingindlovu from the Relief Column, they were buried in the cemetery on the western side of the laager, but the Zulu death toll was in excess of 1000. Eshowe was successfully relieved the next day, much to the relief of Pearson and his men. Over twenty of Pearson’s men had died of disease and were buried just outside the fort.

As for Albert, well, he went on to spend 22 years in the Army. His travels took him to Bermuda, back to South Africa and then the majority of his time was spent with both the 1st and 2nd Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment in India (and Pakistan). He left the Army in 1900 and became the Barrack Warden in Bodmin with the DCLI. He would never speak of his experiences of 1879.



*With my son Harry at the north west corner of the laager*

With references from *‘Fearful Hard Times’* by Ian Castle and Ian Knight and *‘Anglo-Zulu War Battlefields’* by David Rattray.

# WHEN IN ROME...

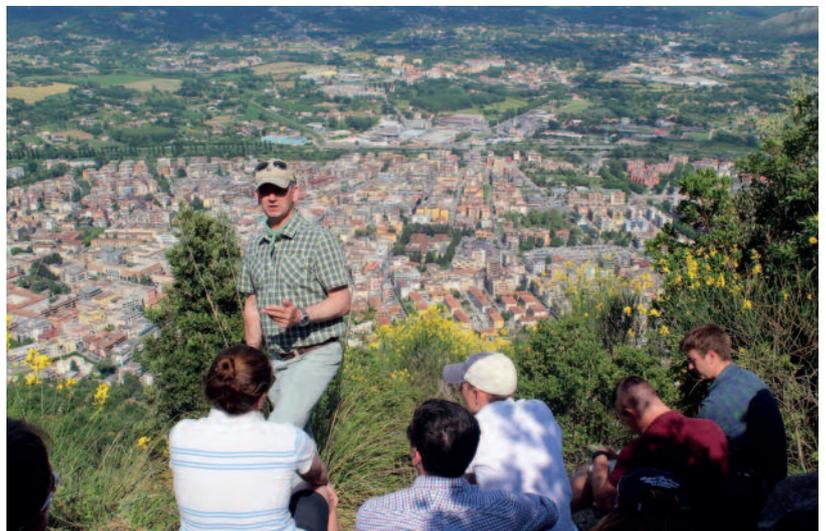
John Greenacre

Over the past three or four years the Second World War Italian Campaign has become an increasingly popular destination for British military battlefield studies and staff rides. In particular, tours to the Cassino battlefields have become more frequent but so have tours to Sicily to study Operation HUSKY, Salerno for Operation AVALANCHE, Anzio for Operation SHINGLE and to a lesser extent tours including Rome and to the Gothic Line sites. It is not difficult to determine why this has happened. Since the draw-down of the recent campaign in Afghanistan education and conceptual study has been re-emphasised in the military and the army in particular, leading to a general rise in the frequency of battlefield studies and staff rides across the board. There are the obvious attractions of spending a week roaming around the Italian countryside but the battles that make up the campaign have a lot of lessons and relevant points to study for a military conceptual study.

All phases of the campaign are examples of large scale, divisional (and multi-divisional), combined arms and joint warfighting, a subject the British army is keen to re-embed at all levels after years of focussing on counter-insurgency. Sicily, Salerno and Anzio are excellent studies of theatre entry, amphibious and littoral operations and therefore have something to offer the senior service. The capabilities of and restrictions imposed by air and independent air operations such as Operation STRANGLE bring something for the light blue element. And there are the enduring lessons of working in a multi-national environment, military governance of a civil population, the character of commanders and the decisions they make and the experience of soldiers on the ground and the moral component.

On 25 May 2017 I was about to embark on a particular hectic period of tour guiding with five tours totalling twenty-three days jammed into just over five weeks with a couple of lectures and study days thrown in the gaps for good measure. Four of the tours were battlefield studies to Italy and one a university tour to the Western Front. I was working with either Anglia Tours or StaffRide across all five trips and had to ensure my ducks were all in one row in order to be able to step smoothly from one to the next. All started well meeting my first group of thirty regular and reservist Royal Signals officers bright and early at

Heathrow for the flight to Rome and coach journey onwards to Cassino. Groups often combine two or more phases of the Italian campaign to build a battlefield study, usually Salerno and Cassino or Cassino or Anzio and sometimes all three but on this occasion, the event only being four days (Thursday to Sunday), we were sticking to the battles of Cassino. The battlefield study was pretty straight forward from my point of view, visiting many of the popular stands including Monte Trocchio, Colle Belvedere, Sant Angelo in Theodice, Hangman's Hill and a tour on foot of the main sites on the Cassino Massif. The group were concentrating their study on the moral component and human aspects of the battles to give the



*The author explaining 9th Gurkha Rifles defence of Hangman's Hill above Cassino town.*



*The tour still going well as the author sums up on Point 593 with Monte Cassino Abbey behind.*

junior subalterns, who were the majority of the participants, something to get their teeth into. All proceeded as planned for the first three days.

The news on Saturday 27 May that British Airways had suffered a catastrophic IT failure causing massive disruption did raise my interest. By Sunday morning however, my fears had been allayed by further news that the BA schedule was largely running normally and a quick check confirmed our evening flight out of Rome was due to depart as scheduled. As we stepped

off the coach at Rome Fiumicino airport, warm in the glow of a job well done, one of the young officers checked the BA app on his phone and announced our flight was cancelled. A few moments later at the check-in desk this was confirmed. There was very little the check-in staff could do to advise us on our options, there was no BA information desk or representative at Fiumicino to advise us, none of the BA information numbers proffered were answering calls and their website was down. To make matters worse Alitalia were on strike and it was a bank holiday weekend in the UK.

With thirty now rather frustrated army officers on my hands I was not short of advice and bright ideas, however a call to the Anglia Tours 24 hour assistance number quickly began the process of looking at our serious options. An hour or so later Alison at Anglia had checked every major airport in Italy and told me it was going to be impossible to fly us out to any airport in the UK that evening. With that confirmed we picked up our bags and moved by the very efficient shuttle train service into Rome Termini station. Once there we explored a couple of other options; could we get back to the UK by train from Rome? No non puoi! Could we get a coach all the way



*The author assesses his options as the group's flight is cancelled at the Rome Fiumicino check-in desk.*



*Padre Chris in full flow explaining the architecture to the group in Piazza Navona.*

home? No non puoi! Within thirty minutes, with all travel options exhausted, Anglia had got the group into a very nice hotel close to the Vatican and so we all jumped on the Metro.

Once we arrived at the hotel any frustration was transformed into happy resignation at the prospect of a night out in Rome. The following morning, bank holiday Monday in the UK, there were more phone calls back and forth to Anglia and by 10:00 am it was clear that we not going to be evacuated from Rome until the following day at the earliest. This led to a number of considerations. First, being a largely reserve organisation the group had several members

that had to be back at work at reasonable high-powered London City jobs on the following day following the Bank Holiday. After discussion two individuals were 'given leave' to book their own extortionately priced flights home. Second, I had the next tour of my sequence of five leaving on the Tuesday morning. Unfortunately the group was my own history department from the University of Suffolk on a three day tour looking at British Army development on the Western Front during the First World War. Once again, phone calls and emails to the Anglia office resolved the issue and an able stand-in was found to take the tour for me. While all this was

going on simultaneously the final consideration was also being sorted out; how best to spend an unexpected day in Rome.

The group had brought their padre with them, a young reservist captain whose 'day job' was as a vicar in Faringdon in the City of London. Chris Trundell had spent a considerable amount of time in Rome during his earlier life and volunteered to run a walking tour of the city. We agreed a route and the sites to be covered, with me adding a couple of Second World War stands and another young officer, a graduate in classical history also contributed. Chris turned out to be a fantastic tour guide and without any reference to a map led us at a brisk walking pace around the back streets of Rome. He



*Padre Chris concludes his impromptu tour at Piazza San Pietro.*

took us via many of the expected sites; the Pantheon, Piazza Navona and Castel Sant Angelo but also significant churches, tucked away from the usual tourist trail. Chris regaled us with the importance of these ecclesiastic sites and the early history of the Church in Rome. Any of his stands would have passed Assignment 1 as we could certainly smell the incense. He even had a tour guide's idiosyncratic dress sense as we followed his battered Panama hat through the crowds. Apart from the history of the church I also learned the most important thing a guide needs in Rome to ensure a smooth tour. It was not the ETOA card nor the essential paperwork (the dichiarazione) you need to operate as guide anywhere in Italy. Chris's secret weapon was his black shirt and prominent dog collar. Whenever we stopped for refreshment service was instantaneous and his drinks were often free, traffic stopped when he lined us up to cross the road and crowds parted before him like a biblical Red Sea. I was happy with my two stands at the Capitoline Hill covering US Lieutenant General Mark Clark's controversial entry into Rome on 4 June 1944 and at Via Rasella describing the Italian partisan IED attack on an SS Police unit on 23 March 1944 that led to the Adreatine Massacre. Nevertheless they paled beside Chris's performance.

After our final stand in the Piazzo San Pietro the group returned to the hotel in the late afternoon, tired and foot sore but thoroughly happy with the day's experience. The following morning a quick phone conversation with the Anglia office gave us the good news that we were all scheduled on a BA flight in the late afternoon. A morning spent shopping for

many, a pleasant lunch, a train back to Fiumicino and we were back where we had started forty-eight hours earlier. We arrived back in Heathrow on the evening of Wednesday 1 June with the group still smiling. What did I learn from this experience? Number 1 – Be Prepared! Like any good boy scout knows it does not mean having endless contingency plans rather it means reacting quickly and effectively to any one of the plethora of things that could go wrong when it does go wrong. Dithering, constant changes of plan or a guide sitting gently sobbing with his or her head in hands will not reassure your group or instil confidence and morale will quickly evaporate. Number 2 – The advantages of working for an established, reputable and experienced tour company. I came to this conclusion many years ago and this Rome episode has only reinforced my feelings on the matter. Without the backup of the Anglia Tours office I dare say I may still be in Rome having been strung up from a lamp post by my group. The travel and accommodation issues would have been significantly more difficult, if not impossible and would not have allowed me the time to look after my group on the full day we had in Rome. Four members of Anglia Tours office staff gave up a significant part of their Bank Holiday weekend to arrange accommodation, harass BA, ensure I had sufficient funds available and rearrange my following tour and I thank Alison, Kate, Helen and Gary for their sterling efforts. Number 3 – Never underestimate the capabilities within your group and don't be afraid to call on them when needs must.

Thank you Chris.

## EVENT*guide* 2017-18

16 Sep - Validation - UK Day - Thundersley

13-15 Oct - Whiskey & War Scotland - UK

27-29 Oct - London Event with Validation - UK

7 Nov - Richard Holmes - Lecture - Regional Event (tbc)

TBC Nov - Operation Michael - CPD Recce Tour

1 Dec - Christmas Lunch - UJC London

1-4 Feb 2018 - Core Event with Validation - AGM - Mons

2-4 Mar 2018 - Core Event with Validation - UK - Staffordshire Event

# GOODBYE TO ALL THAT

## Dennis Weatherall

At the end of March 2017, I returned from my final Battlefield Study Tour of South Africa, the fifth in the series. 21 days in field with twelve guests, one a member of the Guild. We set off 25th February and returned 23rd March 2017. The journey covered both the Anglo-Zulu (1879-81) and Boer War (1899-1902) sites of South Africa.



Top L-R: Terese Binn, Dianne Weatherall, Kathy Campbell, John Adeney, Mr Aleksandr Agafonov (Russian Embassy Pretoria), Major Paul Naish, Dr Tony Stimson, Captain Victor Dolgerov (Russian Naval Defence Attaché Pretoria), Wayne Binns, Dennis Weatherall, James Willson and Dale Liepins.

Bottom L-R: John Adeney, James Wilson, Terese Binns, Major Paul Naish, Dennis Weatherall, Dr Tony Stimson, Kathy Campbell, Wayne Binns and Dale Liepins.

*This journey had three highlights:*

(a) **MORANT & HANDCOCK** - 27th February 2017 in the Old Pretoria Cemetery (South Africa) we commemorated the 115th anniversary of the execution of Lt. Harry Harboard 'Breaker' Morant of the Bushveldt Carbineers (BVC) and Lt. Peter Joseph Handcock (BVC) both court-martialed by the British Army under the command of Lord Kitchener for deeds allegedly committed in the Limpopo

Province 'Zoutgansberg' region in Northern South Africa, an area policed by the 'Bushveldt Carbineers' of which Morant & Handcock were both officers. The BVC was the first ever specially raised unit formed to fight the 'counter-insurgency' war of the 'Bitterender' (those that would fight to the last man) Boers. There were six Officers of the BVC brought before the court-martial, three were committed to death. Lt George Witton (born Warnambool Victoria) - his initial contingent was the Victorian Imperial Bushmen - was the third who received the death sentence, but was given a reprieve by Kitchener and sentenced to life in prison in the UK. Fortunately for him he was released on 11th August 1904 and wrote a scathing attack on the 'system' titled '*Scapegoats of the Empire*'. The other three officers were Lt Henry Picton DSM - British, he was cashiered, Captain Alfred Taylor DSO (he lived to fight another day) and was the area Intelligence Officer appointed by Kitchener and got off scot-free. Major Robert Lenehen VD from Victoria was admonished for his lack of command in not reporting certain events that occurred under his watch within the BVC. There has been much written on Morant & Handcock (and some conjecture) but both men had already served 12 months in their various state colonial contingents (and were highly thought of as good soldiers) before rejoining and deciding to stay and fight another day. Morant was British by birth (a bit of a lady's man) and became a horse breaker, therefore the name, and went to South Africa with the 2nd South Australian Mounted Rifles (2SAMR). Whilst Handcock was born in Peel NSW and was a member of the 2nd Contingent of the 1st NSW Mounted Rifles (2NSWMR). A farrier by trade (blacksmith) and Veterinarian Officer when he signed on to the BVC. Both men were executed before the Australian Government of the day was informed, and their execution wasn't reported to the Australian public until 1907. The man probably best versed in their trial is Cmdr James Unkles RAN (R), I recommend any reader interested in '*Justice Denied*' check out his web site - <http://breaker-morant.com/>, it's quite an amazing story. Attached is a group photograph with the Australian Flag as it was the day after their execution in 1902 when their defender Major James F. Thomas



*L-R: Dennis Weatherall (in field rig), Rene Jordaan, Albert Jordaan, Taks Jordaan - Land Owners on which the memorial stands, Dr Tont Stimson, Major Paul Naish*  
*In front, local school children, some from the Jordaan family, along with their teacher from the local college.*

stood at their grave and reflected on what he wasn't able to achieve. Wreath laid in remembrance. All names can be supplied – I titled it 'Australian Battlefields of the World Study tour group 2017.'

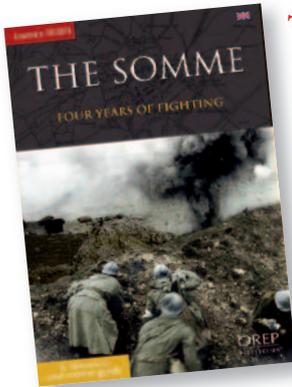
**(b) STROLMAN INCIDENT** - Also on the 27th February 2017 in the Old Pretoria Cemetery (South Africa) we paid respect to a fallen enemy of our South African Colonial Forces, with a difference. A fellow academic Dr Tony Stimson of Adelaide (Dr of History) was with us on his third visit to the battlefields of South Africa and he had a story to tell. His grandfather, Captain Alfred EM Norton, was in command of B Squadron of the 4th South Australian Imperial Bushmen. His unit on the 26th June 1900 were the first British military to arrive in Bethlehem – this town is located 324 kms south of Pretoria (South Africa's Capital) in what was then the Orange Free State. The Boer commandos were withdrawing from the town. It is recorded that Captain Norton was on a kopje (hill) overlooking a similar kopje outside Bethlehem and spotted some enemy, as they were retiring off the kopje, he took aim and at 1000 yards felled one of the 'Burghers' (Boer farmers in a group were known as burghers). His 2IC Lt White rides out to check if there was any ID on the body of the felled enemy. What he found in the saddle bag was quite amazing. Captain Norton had shot and killed a Russian observer. What's more he was a Lt in the Imperial Russian Navy of the Tsar. His name - Lt Boris von Strolman. This is all recorded in research material in the possession of Dr Stimson. In trolling the web for

information on Strolman, it was discovered that last year the Russian Federation Embassy in Pretoria held a memorial service for Lt Strolman. So I made contact with the Russian Embassy in Pretoria and asked the Ambassador if they'd like, after 117 years, to meet the grandson of the man who killed their then young officer. Much to my surprise the offer was accepted. So on this early morning on neutral ground we met with the Deputy Ambassador, Councillor Aleksandr Agafonov and the Deputy Defence Attaché Captain (Naval) Victor Dolgerov. Dr Stimson related the story of the event then we respectfully and jointly laid a wreath on Lt Strolman's grave. Lt Strolman's remains at his mother's request in 1905 had been reinterred here in Pretoria from his original burial site in Bethlehem.

### **(c) UNVEILING OF THE 1st AUSTRALIAN BOER WAR MEMORIAL ON SOUTH AFRICAN SOIL IN OVER 100 YEARS**

that was for all sides of the conflict and privately funded - Monday 13th March 2017 - In 2012 whilst on a previous visit to the area west of Lindley in the Orange Free State (now known just as the Free State) Dr Tony Stimson was introduced to a local land owner, Mr Albert Jordaan (via our historian colleagues) on whose land a battle was fought by his grandfather, Captain Alfred EM Norton B Squadron 4th South Australian Imperial Bushmen (4SAIB) on the 3rd July 1900. The battle was fought by artillery between two kopje's known as Leeukop (then it was spelt Leeuwkop and Bakenkop). What followed the initial meeting on his farm was the suggestion of raising a memorial to all who fought over the ground on that day 117 years ago, to stand in memory to all those on both sides who fought and died here so long ago. Mr Jordaan agreed, Dr Stimson 'stumped' up the funds and the memorial was built of stone quarried off the surrounding land. It was another story of being in the right place at the right time for Captain Norton and his men of B Squadron 4SAIB. Without turning this text into a novel, the basics facts are as follows – The British Forces had six guns on Leeukop firing a duel with the Boers on adjacent kopjes some 2 kms away. Four of the six were manned by the 38th Royal Field Artillery. The Boers crept up a 'donga' (gully) at the bottom of the kopje, in this donga was a crop of quite tall maize growing. The day was reported as being very cold and wet. The Boers dropped some rounds on target, then in the confusion the Boers rushed out of the maize field and grabbed three of the four 38th R.F.A. guns. The artillery officer in charge was seriously wounded and yelled, "save the guns" and sent one of his men up and over the kopje where Captain Norton and twelve of his B Squadron men were taking cover. They, along with others close by at the time, recaptured the guns from the Boers. In due course Captain Alfred EM Norton was awarded a DSO for his efforts in leading to the recapture of the guns.

# GUIDEbooks:



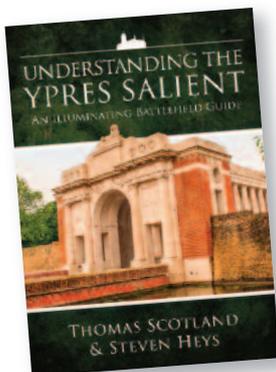
## THE SOMME Four Years of Fighting – A Historical and Tourist Guide

By Lawrence Brown

Glossy, well presented layman's guide that catches the eye, especially the high quality colourised FWW images. The narrative although concise is

well written and takes the reader through the Somme timeline at a manageable pace. That said, like too many of the recently released guide books it has very poor map coverage, in this case relying on the Somme Circuit of Remembrance for navigation and some tiny contemporary maps to orientate the reader on the geographically and historically – a mixed review.

Published by Casemate  
RRP £9.00  
paperback, pp48



## UNDERSTANDING THE YPRES SALIENT

### An Illuminating Battlefield Guide

By Thomas Scotland &  
Steven Heys

This is a comprehensive Guide Book that uses 18 chapters of historical narrative, colour maps

and photographs to recount and interpret the fighting around the Ypres Salient. Similar in size, level of detail and layout to the very popular Holts Guides there are subtle differences. The chapters are set out in chronological order and each of the major battles is explained and illustrated using maps based on the Official Histories and War Diaries. In summary, a very useful Battlefield Guide that may be the Samsung to the Holts iPhone!

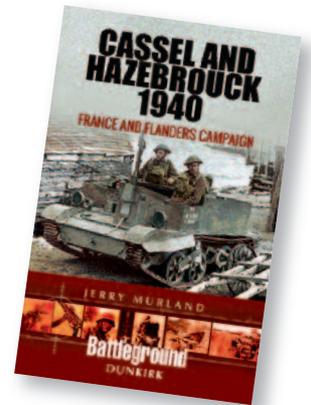
Published by Helion  
RRP £19.95  
paperback, pp291

## CASSEL AND HAZEBROUCK 1940 France and Flanders Campaign

By Jerry Murland

The latest addition to the Battleground range is a welcome one, focusing on one of the lesser-known facets of the Dunkirk story. The format will be familiar to those who regularly use battleground guides; this particular guide seems to have a higher proportion of first-hand accounts of the fighting at tactical level. These personal stories combined with a really generous amount of maps and pictures make this an ideal tour companion.

Published by Pen & Sword Ltd  
RRP £12.99  
paperback, pp168



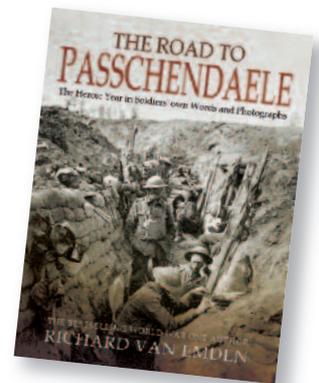
## THE ROAD TO PASSCHENDAELE

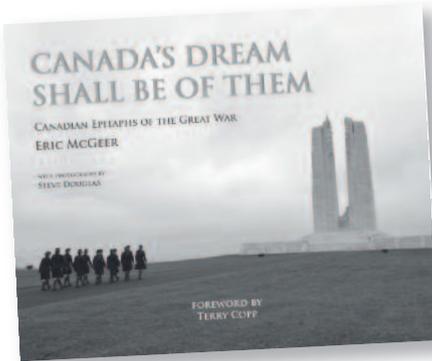
### The Heroic Year in Soldiers' own Words and Photographs

By Richard van Emden

The centenary of the Third Battle of Ypres marks one of the hardest fought series of battles in the history of the British and Commonwealth Armies. Like the Somme before it the story of 'Passchendaele' remains obscured by myth and controversy, this narrative history of 1917 sets out to cut through the smoke of battle and view the events of Arras, Messines and Ypres from the soldier's perspective. Lavishly illustrated and well written it is an ideal place for the Passchendaele novice to start. Does what it says on the tin but from a guiding perspective, disappointingly lacking in maps.

Published by Pen & Sword Ltd  
RRP £25.00  
hardback, pp186



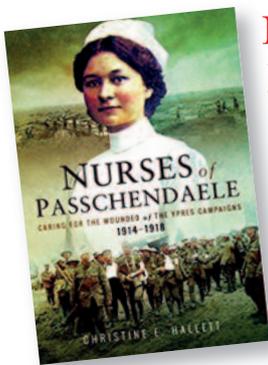


## CANADA'S DREAM SHALL BE OF THEM Canadian Epitaphs of the Great War

By Eric McGreer

Never judge a book by its cover so the saying goes. It is certainly true of his new book focused on Canadian sacrifice on the Western Front. First impressions of another well-presented coffee table book are instantly dispelled once the reader ventures inside. This is a rich combination of historical narrative, moving epitaphs and an array of beautiful and evocative photographs of the corners of the Western Front regarded as sacred by the Canadian nation.

Published by Uniform  
RRP £30  
hardback, pp221



## NURSES OF PASSCHENDAELE Caring for the Wounded of the Ypres Campaigns 1914 – 1918

By Christine E Hallett

Those of us that visit Lijssenthoek Cemetery near Ypres often tell the story of Nellie Spindler one of the nurses on the Salient. This new book describes the development of military nursing in the First World War and the lives and experiences of some of the nurses from different nationalities involved on the Ypres front. Nellie's story is included amongst them.

The book's main aim is to capture the perspectives of the nurses involved and it draws heavily on letters, diaries and personal accounts from across the world. It describes the way the medical systems worked and the challenges faced by the nurses with the conditions and the injuries they had to cope with. With the interest in medical advances of WW1 this book is well worth getting to add to your knowledge.

Published by Pen & Sword Ltd  
RRP £12.99  
paperback, pp216

## ZERO HOUR Z DAY - 1ST JULY 1916 XIII Corps Operations between Maricourt and Mametz

By Jonathan Porter

This is an outstanding book which looks at the actions of Congreve's XIII Corps on the first day of the Somme. Porter analyses in detail, using prime sources, the formulation of the Corps offensive plan and the ground from Maricourt to Mametz. He gives a description of how XIII Corps and its two divisions trained for and executed their successful attack. There is a wealth of photographs – some previously unpublished, maps and diagrams as well as other illustrations. There are also adaptations of coloured aerial photographs annotated with the exact plans and moves of the different levels of units – brigade, battalion, company and platoon. This book is highly recommended.

The book is exclusively available via Jonathan's website [www.zerohourzday.com](http://www.zerohourzday.com) and Amazon books. Information, historical background and sample chapters available on the website.

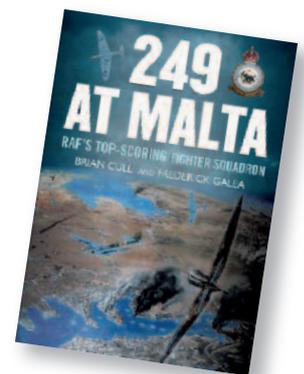
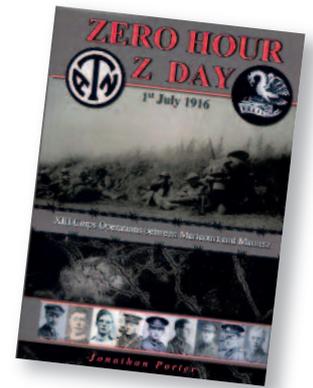
RRP £30.00 (hardback)  
£25.00 (paperback)  
pp512

## 249 AT MALTA The RAF's Top Scoring Fighter Squadron

By Brian Cull & Frederick Galea

Bringing the WW2 Siege of Malta can be a challenge for a Battlefield Guide; so much of the action takes place at sea or in the skies overhead. It is always good to be able to humanise the story by focusing on individuals or a specific unit. This new book allows you to do exactly that with an RAF Fighter Squadron. Packed with anecdotes, useful photographs and colourful characters it is ideal. A healthy number of appendices provide all the hard data you might need too. Going in my bag next Malta trip!

Published by Fonthill  
RRP £25.00  
hardback, pp224



# 10 Questions:

Name: Chris Preston

Age: 57

Nationality: British

Home Location: Belper,  
Derbyshire, England

Tour Company: Accountant and  
Part-Time Guide Freelance

Validating: Yes



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

**1. How long have you been interested in battlefields and what was it that initially attracted your interest?**

I have been interested in battlefields for over 50 years now. When I was a young boy, I used to sit with my Grandfather, Jim Riley, and he told me stories about his service on the Western Front with the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry during 1917 and 1918. This really sparked my passion and interest for the First World War battlefields where he served. When I was older, I reconstructed his war service from his stories as his records had been destroyed during the Second World War and walked all his battlefields. He used to show me his medals, which he kept in a Princess Mary Christmas 1914 tin, which I now have, and told me that he also brought back a dead German's finger. I kept asking if I could see it and eventually he agreed to show it to me. He took out a small box from the drawer and when he opened it, there was a finger inside nestled in bloodstained cotton wool. I didn't realise at the time that there was a hole in the box and it was his finger!!

**2. Have any experiences stood out?** On 3rd May 2017, I led the Second Battle of Bullecourt Centenary Memorial Walk which I had organised in memory of my Grandfather, who was wounded that day, and all those who took part in the battle. I was joined by people from the UK, Australia, Belgium and America, many of whom had relatives who fought there. We were on the battlefield exactly 100 years to the minute of Zero Hour 3.45am British Time. We shared stories of our relatives and Barry Thompson told the story of his father being taken prisoner on the exact spot where he was captured. It was an emotional and unforgettable day.

**3. What do you enjoy the most about battlefield guiding?**

I enjoy taking people to the areas where their relatives served on the Western Front and hearing their personal stories and bringing the battlefields to life.

**4. What is your favourite stand, location or battlefield and why?** My favourite battlefield is Bullecourt because this was my Grandfather's first major battle of the war with the 2nd/5th Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry on 3rd May 1917. He never forgot his experiences here. The area has not changed since 1917 and it is easy to follow the battles of 1917 and 1918 on the ground. I have studied the 1917 battles in great depth and they are very controversial, plus there

is a lot to learn, see and discuss when touring the area.

**5. Which battlefield would you like to visit in the future?**

I would like to visit the Vosges Mountains area of France to study the First World War mountain warfare and battlefields there. Last year I visited the Italian Dolomites and walked the Austro-Hungarian First World War Fortification System and through the 52 Tunnels to the summit of Monte Pasubio and would like to compare the two regions.

**6. What have you enjoyed the most about being a member of the Guild?** I have enjoyed meeting lots of like-minded people with a great range of knowledge and the camaraderie. I have made several good friends and learnt so much about the craft of battlefield guiding. I still have more to learn as I go through the validation program. Is it possible to enjoy doing the Guild accounts too?

**7. If there was a fire and you could only save one battlefield-related book or prop, what would you save and why?** I would save my Grandfather's military binoculars, which were issued on 25th July 1918, Issue Number U2502, and went through the Advance to Victory from 8th August to 11th November 1918 with the 2nd Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. They would originally have been issued to an officer, but like those comfortable boots in "*All Quiet on the Western Front*", would have passed on to a new owner when the previous one was killed or wounded. Jim inherited them when a shell exploded nearby and his Sergeant was killed and he survived. He was promoted from Corporal to Acting Sergeant.

**8. What type of group do you think is the most challenging to lead on a tour?** I think the most challenging members of a group are the partners and friends of battlefield enthusiasts who come on a tour but have no passion for battlefield touring and would probably rather go shopping. It is a real sense of achievement when their interest begins to grow and they end up enjoying it!

**9. What's the best tip, story or nugget of information you have been given by a fellow battlefield guide?** The best tip I have been given is to use the expertise of those who are on the tour and give them the opportunity to share their specialist knowledge or personal stories to enhance the tour

**10. What is the funniest or most dramatic thing you have seen on tour?** The most dramatic moment I have experienced on tour was when we were walking along the path on Hawthorn Ridge and noticed a French hunter marching steadily towards us across the field with a shotgun in his hands. He came right up to us and gave us a lecture about how it was wrong that we were out walking the fields looking for souvenirs and complained that we were spoiling his hunt for which he had paid good money. I was tempted to mention that our relatives had risked their lives and some had been killed during the First World War so that he was now able to hunt in these fields. But discretion is the better part of valour and we walked away looking suitably humbled.