



# DESPATCHES

the magazine of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides



## PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE TOURS TO THE BATTLEFIELDS OF NORTHERN FRANCE & BELGIUM.

A brief Survey of the areas  
covered by our Tours.

—  
**Barrett and  
Merryweather,**  
59-61,  
New Oxford Street,  
London, W.C.  
ENGLAND.

Telephone - Museum 2265.



# FIELDguides

Cover image: Barret and Merryweather's advertising pamphlet - courtesy of the Suffolk Record Office



Members of the Downman family who are descendants of the Australian Olympic medallist Cecil Healy with General Steven Porter (third from left) Commander 2nd Division, Army Reserve at the unveiling ceremony held at Assevillers, west of Peronne on the evening of 1 September. The statue and ceremony were organised by the village mayor, Mr Michel Guilbert (right) and a local organising committee. Healy was the only Olympic gold medallist to fall in WW1. He was killed in action near Biaches, on the western side of the Somme River on the morning of 29 August 1918 in the opening phase of the battle of Mont St Quentin. He now rests in Assevillers New British Cemetery beside the three men killed with him in the same action.



Problems on Tour? Live Update from Scottie who has a small issue with his planned route into Natal with the Battle Honours South Africa Tour...



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## EX-CADET ARMISTICE 100

The fifth biggest British military deployment of the year took place in October and it was significantly underpinned by Guild members. Over a 10 day period the Army Cadet Force took almost 4,000 Army cadets to the Somme for a battlefield tour and commemorative event to mark the 100th anniversary of the 11 November 1918 Armistice.

Led by Col Mark Nash, Commandant Wiltshire ACF, supported by Associate Guild member Gareth Davies and two Dorset ACF adult volunteers, the small team spent 18 months putting the event together. What they delivered was 5 separate day tours that went to 4 stands on the Somme before coming together at Thiepval for a simple yet moving commemorative service.

Support came from a number of sources including the Guild. Accredited members Ian Gumm, Paul Oldfield, Mike Peters, Vern Littley, Rob Deere, John Harris, Julian Whippy, and Tim Stoneman, and Associate members Nick Clarke, Simon & Emma Worrall, Ian Langworthy, John Carey, Paul Knight, and Gareth Davies all braved 16 man room transit accommodation, 4am

reveille, ferries full of cadets, and bitter winds on the Somme to help deliver a truly memorable occasion for all those cadets and adult volunteers that took part.

The organisers are extremely grateful for all those who helped make the events a great success.



Ex-Cadet Armistice 100 was organised by Guild Associate Member, Gareth Davies, a detailed explanation will follow from Gareth. Numerous Guild Members volunteered their services for free. Wave 2 of the exercise that deployed 3,500 Cadets to the Somme involved, Gareth Davies, Ian Gumm, Mike Peters, Paul Oldfield, Vern Littley and Nick Clarke.

# OPENINGshot:

## THE CHAIRMAN'S VIEW



Welcome fellow members and Guild Partners to the Winter 2018 edition of your magazine, Despatches. Well here we are, as we go to print the commemorations of the Great War Centenary are drawing to a close. There has of course been much international debate about the nature and the tone of the many commemorations, whatever our views on this, we must accept that, if nothing else, far more people are aware of the War to end all Wars than prior to 2014. From a guiding perspective this must be a good thing and almost every Tour Operator I speak to states that they have more bookings than they had at this stage last year. Let us hope that this renewed trend for visiting battlefields continues over the longer term, the impending WW2 Anniversaries will hopefully add further momentum to our industry. Even the unknown variable that is Brexit seems, as yet, to have done little to dampen enthusiasm for battlefield tourism in Europe.

As a Guild we can reflect positively on our collective, and in many cases, significant individual contributions to the Centenary commemorations, not least the central role of Guild Accredited Members in the UK Government's FWW Centenary Programme of Battlefield Visits for Schools. Public exposure such as this and other worthwhile projects such as our enduring support to the Annual Help for Heroes Battlefield Bike Ride, or special events like the recent Cadet Armistice 100 Exercise on the Somme have all done much to raise the profile of our organisation. There is of course always more that can be done, and I urge you all to mention the Guild in everything battlefield related that you undertake. On the related subject of Social Media, I ask you all to keep your links to the guild distinctly separate from any personal comments on things such as religion or politics, not only does it distract from your own marketing message, but those who read any controversial comments often associate them with

the guild – therefore please make an effort to maintain a sanitised/separate battlefield media feed.

I hope that you will enjoy this edition of Despatches, it certainly reflects the diversity of interests within the Guild and our strength in depth. A big thank you from me as Editor to everybody who has contributed this time around and a plea to you all for contributions to the Spring Issue.

Looking back, we can all now reflect on what has been for most an exceptionally busy year that has seen the Guild continue to grow in stature. Our organisation is respected and is built on solid and transparent constitutional foundations, recent events in the WFA, at Pozieres Windmill and the slow demise of the FIFA Memorial at Prowse Point demonstrate the critical importance of proper management. Our stability is due to hard work behind the scenes and I will therefore take this opportunity to thank everybody involved in managing our validation programme, running our events and overseeing our daily activities, your efforts are vitally important and much appreciated.

Finally, let's all look forward to a prosperous new year. Wherever you all are in the guiding world, I hope you are all enjoying your guiding, whichever battlefields you tread and if you meet a fellow member, take the time to say hello and share your knowledge and experience – that is after all, what our Guild is all about! You could even give some thought to an individual Battlefield Guide that you personally respect and cast your vote in their name for the Will Townend Award? Good luck to all of you and above all, enjoy your guiding in 2019. Enough from me, I am going to press 'Send' and head off to London to meet over 50 members at the Guild Christmas Lunch.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Mike Peters

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Material for publication in the Spring edition of Despatches must be with the Editor no later than 28th February 2019.

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:  
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# TOO SOON? BARRETT & MERRYWEATHER'S BATTLEFIELD TOURS

Dr John Greenacre

On 8 August 2018 the Royal British Legion organised an event called Great Pilgrimage 90. It brought together thousands of members and representatives of the Legion to commemorate the original Great Pilgrimage on 8 August 1928. One hundred years ago 11,000 veterans, war widows and other relatives of the dead of the First World War visited the battlefields of the Somme and Ypres. They then marched to the Menin Gate, which had been unveiled just over a year before and took part in the thirty-second iteration of the Last Post ceremony.

Established 1919. Telephone 195.

## YPRES

### British Touring Information Bureau,

GRAND PLACE, YPRES.

### FOR HOLIDAYS IN BELGIUM AND FRANCE.

*State your requirements and we will make all arrangements.  
We are ON THE SPOT and do provide*

### CHEAP PARTY TICKETS FROM LONDON

For Rail, Boat, Motor-Saloon Coaches, Full Hotel Accommodation, Gratuities, etc.

*INCLUSIVE PRICES QUOTED.*

### Best Value. Save Time, Trouble & Expense.

*HOLIDAYS TO SUIT EVERYBODY'S POCKET AND TASTE.*

### PRICES REDUCED IN SYMPATHY WITH BRITISH MONEY.

*Parties however small or large, and Ex-servicemen's organizations a speciality.  
All information re British Graves in France and Belgium to hand.*

Travel Director: MR. L. N. MURPHY, F.I.L.  
Organizer of Official "Mons Pilgrimage."  
President Ypres Branch of the "Old Contemptibles' Association."  
Founder and Curator of the "Ypres Salient War Museum" at Ypres.  
Late of "1st Queen's Royals" and Intelligence Corps (b).

## Grand Place, Ypres (Belgium).

Postage 2½d. Stamp.  
*Large and Small Parties and Agencies Catered for and all Tourists' needs.*

This was not, of course, the first organised pilgrimage, although on a greater scale than those that had gone before. Richard van Emden in his 2011 book *The Quick and the Dead* records the Salvation Army took 185,000 visitors to the Western Front between 1920 and 1923 and the YMCA another 60,000 over the same period. Between the Armistice and June 1919 the Church Army took 5,000 family members to the battlefields<sup>1</sup>. At this time the balance between pilgrimage and tourism was heavily weighted towards the former but still there was a burgeoning industry catering for tourists in the early years. But how early?

Thomas Cook and Michelin are two of the earliest examples of familiar battlefield tour providers. According to the *Association des Collectionneurs de Guides et Cartes Michelin (ACGM) between 1919 and 1938* forty-six different Michelin Battlefield Guides sold a total of around two million copies. The ACGM credits the early Michelin Guides with being the precursor of all modern published battlefield guides. The Michelin edition *Marne Battlefields 1914* claimed to have gathered its information "even before the smoke of the battlefield had cleared". The guide also gives advice that rings true to the modern battlefield guide a century later; "Seeing is not enough, the visitor must understand...ruins are more impressive when coupled with a knowledge of

<sup>1</sup> R. van Emden, *The Quick and the Dead*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), p.287.

their origin and destruction. A stretch of countryside which might seem dull and uninteresting to the unenlightened eye becomes transformed at the thought of the battles that have raged there”<sup>2</sup>.

As well as the bigger tour companies some individual guides were also quick to establish businesses on the Western Front in the wake of the war. British First World War veteran and resident of Ypres, Mr Leo Norbury Murphy established his tour company in the Grand Place in 1919. He listed his credentials as an organiser of the official Mons Pilgrimage, President of the Ypres Branch of the Old Contemptibles Association, founder and curator of the Ypres Salient Museum and late of 1st Queens Royals and the Intelligence Corps. His marketing material emphasised the bespoke nature of his tours and would sound familiar to the modern sole trader. “State your requirements and we will make all the arrangements. We are ON THE SPOT to provide...Best Value. Save time, trouble and expense...Parties however small or large, and ex-servicemen’s organisations a speciality. All information re British graves in France and Belgium to hand”. Mr Murphy had kindly noted that his prices had been reduced “in sympathy with British money”<sup>3</sup>.

Before the war had ended some were anticipating and predicting the post hostilities tourist industry. John Stanley Purvis of the 5th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment (Green Howards), writing under the pen name of Phillip Johnstone, had a poem published in February 1918 imagining tourists being guided round the devastated landscape of High Wood on the Somme and all the issues and secondary effects that would follow the potential tourism trade.

*Ladies and gentlemen, this is High Wood,  
Called by the French, Bois des Fourneaux,  
The famous spot which in Nineteen-Sixteen,  
July, August and September was the scene  
Of long and bitterly contested strife,  
By reason of its High commanding site.  
Observe the effect of shell-fire in the trees  
Standing and fallen; here is wire; this trench  
For months inhabited, twelve times changes hands;  
(They soon fall in), used later as a grave.  
It has been said on good authority  
That in the fighting for this patch of wood  
Were killed somewhere above eight thousand men,  
Of whom the greater part were buried here,  
This mound on which you stand being...  
Madame, please,*

*You are requested kindly not to touch  
Or take away the Company's property  
As souvenirs; you'll find we have on sale  
A large variety, all guaranteed.  
As I was saying, all is as it was,*

*This is an unknown British officer,  
The tunic having lately rotten off.  
Please follow me - this way...  
The path, sir, please,*

*The ground which was secured at great expense  
The Company keeps absolutely untouched,  
And in that dug-out (genuine) we provide  
Refreshments at a reasonable rate.  
You are requested not to leave about  
Paper, or ginger-beer bottles, or orange-peel,  
There are waste-paper baskets at the gate<sup>4</sup>.*

Even relatively early during the war, van Emden records, that many soldiers predicted a post-war influx of sightseers and tourists.<sup>5</sup> In early 1915 however, several tour companies explicitly ruled out running tours until the war was over. Messrs Cook and Son (Thomas Cook) stated that they had received many inquiries for battlefield tours but they understood that “the French authorities are strongly opposed to sight-seeing expeditions. When the war is over it will be different”. Dean and Dawson reported that they had no inquiries for tours at that time and had no intention of running tours. They had however received “hundreds of letters inquiring what we propose to do at the conclusion of the war, and without a doubt we shall then – but not before – be prepared to organize tours”. The American Express Company had received requests from several Americans to be taken to the battlefields in the summer of 1915 and had considered the proposals “but public opinion frowned so strongly on it that it was dropped immediately”<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, there was at least one company that was optimistically advertising battlefield tours of the Western Front as early as 1914.

The author Richard Keverne (a pseudonym of Clifford Hosken) was a First World War Royal Flying Corps veteran, Daily Mirror journalist and popular novelist and his collected papers are archived at the Suffolk Record Office in Ipswich. Aside from his writing the Hosken collection also contains an eclectic mix of First World War ephemera, most linked to 1914: several regimental Christmas cards, pamphlets containing speeches by Asquith and Lloyd George, a copy of Britannia (the Women’s Social and Political Union journal) and a copy of the order of service for Edith Cavell’s funeral in Westminster Cathedral. It also contains an intriguing pamphlet advertising battlefield tours. Just four pages long, the pamphlet announced “private automobile tours to the battlefields of Northern France and Belgium” provided by Messrs Barrett and Merryweather of 59-61 New Oxford Street, London<sup>7</sup>.

Initially Barrett and Merryweather’s pamphlet looks as though it is offering much the same experience as Murphy. Bespoke tours by purpose built automobile were promised, running every two weeks and carrying up to twelve passengers with luggage with “luxurious

seating arrangements”. The pamphlet’s cover offered a useful artist’s impression of the vehicles envisaged which, Barrett and Murphy proudly claimed, were “being specially built to effectively overcome any difficulties likely to arise from a motoring point of view”. The entrepreneurs were evidently aiming their product at tourists, not pilgrims. “To fully grasp the realities – to understand the terrible effects of modern warfare it is necessary to visit personally the battlefields, towns and villages over and through which the surging armies have passed, their gallant deeds committed”. The tours were clearly intended to cater for an exclusive clientele. At thirty-five Guineas per person for a standard tour and 100 Guineas per head for a bespoke tour Barrett and Merryweather’s products were out of reach for the majority of the population when average annual nominal earnings in Great Britain were less than eighty pounds a year.<sup>8</sup> As a bonus however, each tour did include a travelling artist, Mr Ernest L. Ford, to produce a souvenir brochure during the trip.

The most intriguing aspect of Barrett and Merryweather’s pamphlet is when it was probably being circulated and came into Hosken’s possession. There is no date anywhere on the document but by reading the full text it is relatively easy to deduce a likely bracket of time when it was produced. The advertising text outlines some of the locations the tour is expected to visit. The list includes Liège, fought over during the battle of the same name 5-16 August 1914 and Dinant, attacked during the Battle of Charleroi 15-24 August 1914 and where the Germans massacred nearly 700 Belgian civilians on 23 August. Louvain (Leuven) is included, sacked by the Germans on 25 August 1914 including the burning of the university library, which caused the loss of around a quarter of a million irreplaceable volumes and manuscripts. Barrett and Merryweather were also planning to take their clients to see Termonde (Dendermonde) which was attacked during the Battle of Buggenhout 25-29 August 1914 and “the pitiful splendour” of the ruins of Reims cathedral, shelled by the Germans on 5 September 1914 and destroyed by fire less than two weeks later. Finally the tour included Antwerp, which was besieged by the German army from 25 September to 10 October 1914 and there the itinerary ends.

Most of the sites we associate with a Western Front tour are absent; no Passchendaele nor any of the famous sites of the Somme battles in 1916. None of the battles of Artois are included nor is there any reference to the sites associated with the Second Battle of Ypres. In fact Ypres is not mentioned at all in Barrett and Merryweather’s advertising literature nor is it included on the map on the cover of the pamphlet. Surely the battlefield entrepreneurs would have been eager to take their clients to Langemarck, Gheluvelt and Nonne Boschen to show them where the British Expeditionary

Force had lost nearly 8,000 men killed in October and November 1914? It does not require a massive leap of faith to presume therefore, that the reason those sites were not included in the itinerary is because the battles associated with them had not yet taken place at the point at which the pamphlet went to print. It is fair to deduce therefore, that Barrett and Merryweather were advertising battlefield tour after the Siege of Antwerp but before the First Battle of Ypres, somewhere around the middle of October 1914.

It is possible that the pamphlet was produced later but Barret and Merryweather omitted any mention of Ypres because they did not believe the battlefield sites provided the requisite picturesque devastation. Nevertheless, even if we make this assumption the date of their advertising campaign cannot be much later. The tour operators stated that they would minimise risk by not conducting the trips until the former battlefields were safe. “It is impossible to fix a definite date at present as everything depends on the movement of the combatants, but it is anticipated that the Germans will have evacuated Northern France and Belgium by the spring of next year and our tours will commence immediately the ground is safe and the authorities will grant us the necessary permits”. Surely even the most optimistic businessmen would not have anticipated the Germans imminently withdrawing from France and Belgium at the end of 1917, 1916 or even 1915. Therefore the advertising pamphlet must have been produced before the end of 1914 at the latest.

This is certainly one of the earliest examples of commercial First World War battlefield tour activity and is therefore worthy of note. Unsurprisingly, there is no evidence of Barrett and Merryweather ever operating their tours. Their assumption that the Germans would withdraw during the spring of 1915, in common with many other observers, proved catastrophically over-optimistic. In fact any evidence of Barrett and Merryweather operating as a company is elusive. They do not appear in the Post Office London Directory at the address they display on their advertising. Listed at the same address are a company called Standard Tours Ltd, with which there may be a connection. Motorcar manufacturers Rover Co Ltd are also listed at the same address and it is possible that this is where Barret and Merryweather were intending to procure their bespoke vehicles.<sup>9</sup> Barrett and Merryweather must have come to the same conclusion as Messrs Cook and Son, Dean and Dawson and the American Express Company, that tours before the war had ended and the fighting had finished were simply impractical. The entrepreneurial drive of Barrett and Merryweather and their eye for a business opportunity have to be admired but at the end of 1914 it did prove rather too soon for the battlefield tour industry on the Western Front.

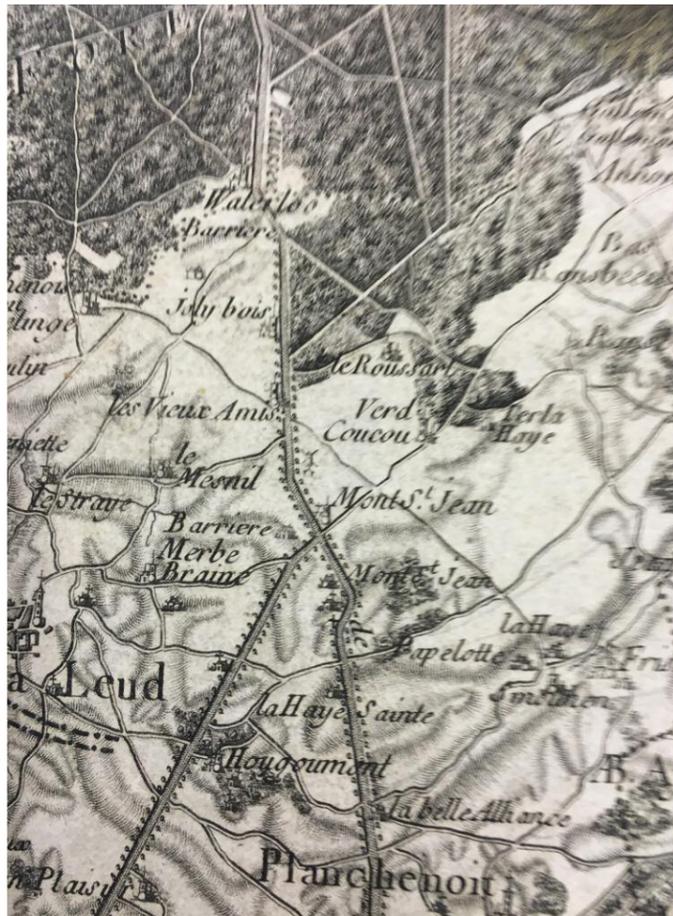
<sup>2</sup> B. Murphy, ‘Dark Tourism and the Michelin World War 1 Battlefield Guides’, Journal of Franco-Irish Studies, Volume 4, Issue 1, Article 8, 2015. <sup>3</sup> Advertisement, ‘Ypres British Touring Information Bureau’, *The Old Contemptible: Official Organ of the Old Contemptibles’ Association*, No. 15, January 1935, back cover. From the private collection of A. Thornton. <sup>4</sup> J.S. Purvis, *High Wood*, *The Nation Magazine*, 16 February 1918. Another poem about later battlefield tourists, *The Road to La Basée* describes how time had erased much of the evidence of the fighting and was written by Bernard Newman and Harold Arporth in 1934. Listed in *Catalog of Copyright Entries, Part 3, Musical Compositions*, (Washington: Library of Congress, 1934), p.805

<sup>5</sup> Van Emden, *The Quick and the Dead*, pp.283-285. <sup>6</sup> *Trips to the Battlefields*, *The Times*, 31 March 1915. <sup>7</sup> Suffolk Record Office HA158/1/3/28, Pamphlet for Barret and Merryweather, ‘Private Automobile Tours to the Battlefields of Northern France and Belgium’, undated. I am grateful to my colleague Dr Harvey Osborne at the University of Suffolk and Bridget Handley, the collections manager and Paul Botwright at the Suffolk Record Office for bringing this document to my attention. <sup>8</sup> <https://www.measuringworth.com/datasets/ukearnpcil> accessed 21 October 2018. <sup>9</sup> Post Office London Directory 1914, Part 2: Street Directory, p.521. <http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/143101/rec/25> accessed 21 October 2018.

# WATERLOO: THE UNKNOWN BATTLEFIELD

Charles J. Esdaile

**To label Waterloo an unknown battlefield must seem rather odd. If there is one stricken field which each and every reader of this magazine - indeed, each and every person with an interest in history - is going to have some idea about it is this one.**



Map of Waterloo area courtesy of Royal Army Museum, Brussels

After all the general situation, the plan of operations settled on by Napoleon and the events of the battle camp[aign] are well known: in brief, desperate to restore his fortunes, the erstwhile emperor overthrew the Bourbons and, having put together a fresh army, launched a vigorous offensive designed to break his nearest opponents - the Anglo-Dutch Army of the Netherlands and the Prussian Army of the Lower Rhine - only to see this founder in a welter of misfortune and

finally fall to pieces at Waterloo. As for the battle of 18 June, there will be few people who cannot come up with an approximation of the basic story, this being in essence one of increasingly frenzied French attempts to break the resistance of an imperturbable Duke of Wellington before nemesis hit home in the form of the forces of the Prussian commander, Marshal Blücher. Nor will there be many who cannot come up with at least some of the episodes that marked the course of the day, be they the desperate defence of Hougoumont, the charge of the French cavalry or the last stand of the Old Guard.

If this is so, it is scarcely surprising: accounts of Waterloo have ever been innumerable while the bicentenary of the battle in 2015 was marked by a positive tidal wave of publication, something else that many people will have encountered being the film released in 1970 by Dino de Laurentis. Yet, all this said, how much do we really know about '1815 and all that'? Probe the traditional story even just a little and it will be found to be shot through with myth, fancy and downright falsehood. In this respect, readers of this article can do no better than to acquire the estimable Gareth Glover's *Waterloo: Myth and Reality* (Pen and Sword, 2015) in which it is conclusively shown that many aspects of the aspects of the 'received' version of the battle are erroneous. If the author of the current piece may be forgiven for mentioning it, also very critical was his *Napoleon, France and Waterloo: the Eagle Rejected* (Pen and Sword, 2016), a work which essentially argued that Napoleon had such limited popular support in France in 1815 that he would have been doomed to go down to defeat in the end even had he somehow pulled off an unlikely triumph at Mont Saint Jean (there is, alas, no space to go into detail here, but considerable evidence is presented of the revulsion and horror with which a war-weary

France greeted the return of the emperor in 1815, the latter's support essentially being restricted to the ranks of an army for whom peace offered nothing).

If *Napoleon, France and Waterloo* chose as its theme the strategic and political context in which Waterloo was fought, it does not ignore the military detail. On the contrary, the book begins with what is sincerely hoped is a plausible account of Napoleon pulling off a narrow victory by (a) responding in the affirmative to Marshal Ney's request for reinforcements in the wake of the fall of La Haye Sainte and (b) ensuring that the attack of the Guard was delivered in a single concentrated mass that struck Wellington's line at its most vulnerable point, namely the sector between the site of the Lion Mound and the cross-roads (even as it was, the three battalions that hit the Anglo-Dutch forces at this point routed the brigades of Ompteda, Kielmansegge and Colin Halkett, not to mention the independent three-battalion strong First Regiment of Nassau before being routed by a counterattack on the part of the Dutch division of General Chassé). Writing about the battle, of course, necessitated a visit to the field, and this proved to be something of a ground-breaking experience: indeed, one might even say that the earth moved!

To understand this, we have to first examine the field of Waterloo as it is traditionally configured. Thus, it is commonly envisaged as a simple matter of two parallel ridges with a shallow valley in between. However, what one actually has is a rolling upland pitted with a variety of dips, valleys and indentations, all the high ground being pretty much of a similar elevation: far from dominating the scene as is commonly supposed, Wellington's position does not stand out in the slightest. Having emerged from the forest of Soignies and passed through Waterloo, where Wellington had his headquarters, the Brussels-Charleroi highway rose gradually for the two miles that it took to reach the battlefield. After perhaps three quarters of the distance at a small hamlet known as Mont Saint Jean, a second highway branched off to the south-west in the direction of Nivelles, whereupon the Charleroi highway ascended a steep slope culminating in a long east-west ridge: known, like both the hamlet and the substantial walled farm half-way up the hill, as Mont Saint Jean, it was this that provided Wellington with his main fighting position, and here, too, that the upland we have spoken of begins. At the crest, meanwhile, the highway was crossed at ninety degrees by a lane stretching left and right, the junction being marked by a solitary elm tree. To the west this lane, which ran from the town of Braine l'Alleud two miles to the north-west to the village of Ohain, was lined on both sides by thorn hedges, but to the east the ground was completely open. In the immediate vicinity of the cross roads,

meanwhile, both the Charleroi highway and the Ohain road were deeply sunken, the banks rising to as much as ten feet on either side, but it is worth noting that, from the vicinity of the present-day Lion Mound to the vicinity of Hougoumont, it is partially embanked. As for the forward slope of the ridge, to the immediate west of the highway it was broken by a prominent knoll, in front of which there was a shallow quarry which had been dug out over the years in search of gravel to maintain the highway.

In so far as the ground was concerned, to the east the battlefield was much as it has generally been portrayed: across a shallow valley perhaps half a mile across, a second ridge ran from east to west more-or-less parallel to Wellington's position. However, several hundred yards to the west, rising a little as it did so, a broad ridge jutted out diagonally in the direction of the French lines which it reached in the vicinity of the spot where they crossed by the Charleroi highway; an important local watershed, this cut the battlefield completely in two and rendered it quite impossible for troops posted to the east of the highway to see what was going on to the west and vice versa. To the right of this feature, meanwhile, there was a deep hollow which after half a mile opened out into a broad north-south valley through which ran the dead-straight Nivelles highway, said hollow being crossed diagonally by a lane that ran in a roughly south-easterly direction from the Ohain road and joined the Charleroi highway just a little short of the spot where it reached the French ridge, this last being much more prominent to the east of the highway than it was to the west.

Even this passage does not exhaust the complications offered by the battlefield. As the Charleroi highway rose towards the French positions, it then passed through a deep cutting occasioned by the presence of a significant swell in the ground which is convenient to refer to as the intermediate ridge that ran parallel with the French position for much of its length, and was separated from it on both sides of the watershed mentioned above by a shallow valley. Beyond the French right, meanwhile, there was a much deeper depression and then a ridge that connected the upland crossed by the Charleroi highway with a further mass of high ground known as the heights of Agiers, this last feature thrusting a pronounced shoulder northwards that all but merged with the ridge that marked the French front line and hid a deep re-entrant that angled sharply back uphill from the valley beneath Wellington's positions and was home to the hamlet of Smohain (today La Marache).

From Smohain a lane ran southwards up the side of the re-entrant and at the top of the slope this crossed what was to turn out to be the most important channel of communications on the battlefield, namely a country road that led westward

from Wavre to Braine l'Alleud. Having ascended, crossed a small river some distance to the west, this ascended the heights of Agiers via a thick wood called the Bois de Paris, and then ran due west along the ridge parallel to the French front line to a spot above a second and far more substantial village called Plancenoit that was situated in a deep valley to the left where it turned sharply to the south and ran uphill to the high ground crossed by the Charleroi highway, at which point it turned sharply to the west once more, and, crossing the highway, dropped down into the dip behind the intermediate ridge from whence it followed a generally north-westerly course in the direction of the Nivelles road and, ultimately, Braine Alleud. To its left, meanwhile, the ground was undulating and also broken by a pronounced hill just to the west of the Charleroi highway, but it generally sloped upwards to a further area of high ground that marked the northern edge of the upland on which the battle was fought and in 1815 was crowned by a wooden observation tower that had been erected for map-making purposes the year before.

With the exception of the need to note that, except for the Bois de Paris, patches of woodland either side of the Wavre-Braine l'Alleud road at the western end of the ridge above Plancenoit and various features at Hougomont and La Haye Sainte (see below), the battlefield was almost treeless, and, further, that it was mostly given over to the cultivation of cereal crops grown in broad open fields, there is little more that needs to be said about the physical geography. As for the human geography this was limited. Setting aside the two villages and the farm of Mont Saint Jean, on the French side of the battlefield the course of the highway was marked successively by two way-side taverns, of which the first was known as La Belle Alliance and the second owned by a man named De Coster, and, a mile to the south near the further edge of the upland, a house called Rossomme. In the rear of the French left beside the Nivelles road was a large country-house called Mon Plaisir, and, more-or-less opposite it at the other extreme of the battlefield on the slopes overlooking Smohain, the chateau of Frischermont. However, the most important buildings on the battlefield by far were the four complexes that dotted the forward slope of Wellington's position, namely from east to west these were the farms of La Haye, Papelotte and La Haye Sainte and the chateau of Hougomont.

Beginning with the first two, these stood side by side a few hundred yards from Smohain, though La Haye was a mere cluster of buildings whilst Papelotte was a stoutly built courtyard farm. Meanwhile, another courtyard farm, screened to its south by a small orchard, La Haye Sainte constituted a compact rectangle built on a north-south axis immediately

beside the Charleroi highway perhaps 250 yards south of the cross-roads. And, finally, situated deep in the hollow beneath the watershed in advance of Wellington's right flank, Hougomont was a much larger affair than any of the rest, comprising the chateau itself, a three-storey building surrounded by a series of barns, stables and store sheds; a large walled formal garden; a kitchen-garden; an orchard; a paddock; and a large wood that stretched southwards all the way to the summit of the intermediate ridge. Much of the perimeter was surrounded by a dense hedge and ditch, while a further hedge separated the orchard from the paddock.

Hougomont was linked to the Ohain road by a lane lined by a row of poplars, whilst other lanes besides the ones already mentioned criss-crossed the battlefield in various directions (for example, from Hougomont to La Belle Alliance; from Papelotte to La Belle-Alliance; from Smohain to Plancenoit; from Plancenoit to the Charleroi highway; and from Rossomme to the Nivelles road), but, though occasionally deeply sunken, particularly in the vicinity of Papelotte, they were to play little role in the battle. With the exception of the Charleroi highway and the Nivelles road, meanwhile, all the roads were mere country lanes with no paving of any sort, the heavy rain of 17 June therefore meaning that that they were all deep in mud even before the fighting began. Indeed, with the whole of the battlefield composed of a thick clay soil, the going was everywhere at best heavy and, in places, completely impossible: of all the myths about the battle, one of the most absurd is the one which claims that Napoleon delayed the start of the battle till half-past eleven to allow the mud to dry out, this being a vain hope even had the weather been hot and sunny rather than damp and overcast.

From all this it should be clear that Waterloo is a battlefield that has much more to it than just two parallel ridges linked by a main road. Yet few visitors to Waterloo gain any sense that this is so. Here one of the chief problems is the fact that the main tourist facilities on the battlefield are all clustered around the Lion Mound, the enormous latter-day Silbury Hill erected by the Dutch government on the highest point of Mont Saint Jean in the 1820's. From here, however, it is all but impossible to get a sense of the battlefield as a whole, the chief problem being that the Lion Mound completely obscures the watershed spanning the battlefield from sight (by contrast, the damage its construction did to the configuration of the ground is minimal, all that was lost being the southern bank of the sunken section of the Ohain Road) whilst at the same time affording those who climb the stairs to the summit with a panorama of the field in which all its irregularities are smoothed

away as a result of some optical illusion. To get a grip on the reality, it is necessary to get away from the Lion Mound and find other perspectives. In this respect even the brief car-ride to La Belle Alliance is very rewarding, but by far the best thing to do is to walk the battlefield, and it is to this end that the past two years have been spent developing an e-guide to the battlefield in conjunction with the Royal Army Museum in Brussels. Composed of a series of self-guided tours, this is available free as an app from both Android and Apple (search under 'University of Liverpool Waterloo'). Coming early in 2019 with Pen and Sword, meanwhile, is a paper version of said guide entitled *Walking Waterloo*.

Even a short time spent exploring the battlefield can be most rewarding. Take Hougomont, for example. This is portrayed in most British accounts as a key position, even a key to the whole battle, and yet nothing is clearer on considering the site that that it was utterly worthless. Thus, troops posted around the perimeter of the thick wood and extensive orchards (all cleared in the wake of the battle) that almost completely shielded it from the French could certainly have swept the open fields beyond with heavy fire, but attacked by a full French division supported by elements of a second, the defenders were too few in number to hold their initial positions and were therefore quickly driven back into the chateau and its walled garden. Viewed today, this looks a solid enough bastion and the French were never able to break in, but the fact is that, situated in a hollow and screened by dense foliage, it commands nothing and therefore was completely useless to Wellington's army, the ever greater numbers of troops being sent to defend it being completely wasted. Nor did denying it to the French offer any real advantage for the whole complex was completely commanded by the numerous guns posted on the ridge above, and at the same time a most unsuitable point from which to launch an attack, the fact being that any troops who were ordered to push through it would necessarily have had to pause on the Anglo-Dutch side so as to reform their ranks, a manoeuvre that would have been extremely dangerous so close to hidden enemy positions.

In part, Hougomont is confusing because of the disappearance of its wood and orchards and, for that matter, the appearance of a thick wood on the ridge above. However, one feature of the ground that has not changed in the slightest is the watershed that runs from the vicinity of the Lion Mound to La Belle Alliance. More or less the same height as the two ridges that it links, this is hardly ever mentioned in descriptions of the battlefield and yet it is in many respects its most dominant feature. Not surprisingly then, it played an important part in the battle,

affording as it did an easy route for the French cavalry and, later, the infantry of the Guard to reach the Allied positions, as well as enabling Dubois' cuirassier brigade to take the unfortunate Luneberg battalion by surprise near La Haye Sainte. However, still more to the point is the way that it completely cut the battlefield in two as far as the French army was concerned: in brief, forming as it does a pronounced skyline, it stopped Reille's men from seeing what was happening on Drouet's half of the battlefield and Drouet's men seeing what was happening on Reille's half of the battlefield. This, in turn, has important implications for how the end of the battle is understood. According to the standard account, the defeat of the Guard produced the rout and disintegration of the whole of the French army, but the fact of the matter is that the troops on the latter's right were not affected by what was happening on the other side of the Brussels highway - where the three divisions of II corps and the remnants of the cavalry did indeed fall apart - for the simple reason that the whole area was out of sight. Nor were they assailed by the triumphant advance of Wellington's army as the troops to the east of the high road were in so parlous a condition that they for the most part did not move from their positions. What, then, did break the French right? The answer, is, of course, the Prussians, and, in particular, Zeithen's corps. Thus, bursting onto the field at precisely the same time that the brigades of Maitland and Adam were putting paid to the Guard, this fresh force smashed through the thin line of French troops holding the extreme right flank of the original French position - a single brigade of Durutte's division - and poured down the valley behind it in the direction of La Belle Alliance.

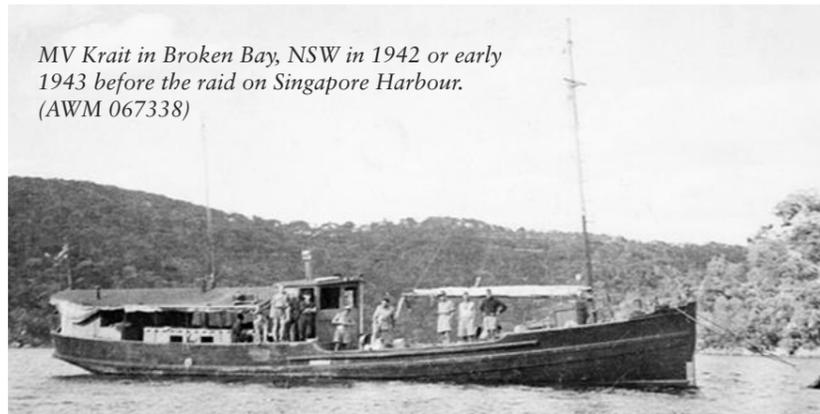
In short, the simultaneous collapse of the Army of the North was brought about by two entirely separate causes acting in completely coincidental unison in different parts of the field. Thanks to the configuration of the ground, however, very few British troops were aware of Zeithen's arrival just as very few Prussian ones were aware of the impact of the repulse of the Guard, the result, of course, being that both armies were convinced that the rout of the enemy was primarily their doing, this being a conviction that continues to resonate in the historiography to this day.

**To conclude, then, the battlefield of Waterloo is a historic document which still has much to teach us, and it is the author's sincere hope that the e-guide he has developed will help its many visitors to understand its many mysteries rather better.**

# MV KRAIT RESTORATION OF A WORLD WAR TWO ICON

David Wilson, Badge No 81

The Krait is owned by the Australian War Memorial and has been officially dedicated as a 'floating war museum'. It is permanently on loan to the ANMM in Sydney where it can be displayed to maximum advantage. Beginning in January 2017 and under supervision of ANMM staff the Krait underwent a complete repair and restoration programme to bring it back to its 1943 raid configuration in time for the 75th Anniversary.



*MV Krait in Broken Bay, NSW in 1942 or early 1943 before the raid on Singapore Harbour. (AWM 067338)*

On 26 September this year I was privileged to attend a memorial service to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the 1943 raid on Singapore Harbour. The service was held at the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) at Darling Harbour in Sydney. The centrepiece of the event was the MV Krait, the iconic survivor of this daring commando raid known as Operation Jaywick which caught the Japanese completely by surprise. Official Guests for the ceremony included Mr Kevin Sumption, Director of the ANMM, Dr Brendan Nelson, Director of the Australian War Memorial and Major General Adam Finlay, AM, PhD, Commander Special Operations Command Australia. Also in attendance were some two hundred other guests who included representatives of ex-Commando and Special Forces organisations plus members and friends of the ANMM. A combined catafalque party of RAN and Army personnel was mounted on the fore-deck of Krait during the proceedings.

In June this year I was also privileged to be part of a small group of donors invited by the Museum to see the progress of this restoration work. Our tour was conducted by Mr David Payne, Curator of Historic Vessels. He explained how the first stage of major repairs was completed by Michael Bartley Shipwrights at Woolwich in Sydney where the ship

was slung in a special cradle and the keel straightened, while the rudder and shaft were also removed for repair. The teak planking was surveyed and replaced with new teak as necessary, but as much of the original structure as possible was retained. The deck, hatches and bulwarks were all removed and replaced correctly, as these were add-ons from earlier 1980s repairs.

The second stage of restoration was completed at one of the ANMM's private wharves. Using shipwrights' plans and photographs from the WW2 period, the restoration team brought Krait back to its 1943 operational fitout. This stage involved the re-installation of correct bulkheads, hatches, fuel tanks, galley, storage areas and the secret radio room known as Compartment 3. The sole surviving member of the Singapore raid, Mr Mostyn Berryman was instrumental in describing the ship in its wartime layout.

The vessel's background story is almost as fascinating as the raid itself. She is a 20-metre wooden Japanese fishing trawler built in Japan in 1934 and originally named the Kofuku Maru (Good Fortune). In 1941 she was confiscated in Singapore harbour by the Allies as Japanese invasion forces progressed down the Malay Peninsula. In 1942 she was offered to Australian miner and merchant seaman Bill Reynolds as a means of escape. He and



*'Z' Special Unit crew of the Krait for Operation Jaywick 1943. (AWM 045424)*

his small crew did not proceed directly to Australia, but operated in waters west of Singapore where they rescued 1100 survivors from other ships that had been sunk or damaged by Japanese air or naval patrols. These survivors were taken to Java and Sumatra in what was then known as the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia. Reynolds and his small crew also later avoided the Japanese by taking their craft on a circuitous course to India and Ceylon, before shipping the vessel to Australia in late 1942.

During these rescue operations in 1942 Reynolds had met a British commando officer, Captain Ivan Lyon originally of the Gordon Highlanders. Together they formulated a rough plan to use the trawler for clandestine activities as the vessel was ignored by Japanese patrols because of its known silhouette as a 'friendly'. Back in Australia and now part of the Australian war effort inventory, she was re-named Krait after a deadly species of South-East Asian snake (pronounced variously as 'krate' or 'kryte', the latter being more commonly used). In September 1943 a 14-strong group of British and Australian army and naval personnel, part of a larger secret operations group known as 'Z' Special Unit, set out from Exmouth in Western Australia on a daring operation to disrupt Japanese shipping in the Singapore Roads. Codenamed *Operation Jaywick* and commanded by the now promoted Major Ivan Lyon, Krait was again disguised as a Japanese fishing boat. They successfully sailed to within 20 miles of Singapore itself and hid on a nearby island. Six men led by Lyon himself then used three folding canoes from the UK for the final night approach. They attached limpet mines to seven Japanese tankers and freighters, sinking or damaging some 37,000 tonnes of shipping. The raiders all then escaped back to Australia aboard Krait without casualty.



*MV Krait restored to its 1943 wartime configuration moored at the Australian Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour NSW – 75th Anniversary of the Singapore raid, 26 September 2018. (Photo courtesy ANMM)*



MV Krait 75th Anniversary of the Singapore raid – combined Army and RAN catafalque party during the wreath-laying ceremony. (Photo courtesy ANMM)

The detailed story of the Singapore raid can be read elsewhere in one of several books written about that particular exploit, such as Lynette Silver’s excellent history: “Krait – The Fishing Boat that Went To War”. Although news of the successful attack was kept secret from the general public at the time, it was acknowledged by strategic planners as a small, but important success that showed the Japanese were neither invulnerable nor invincible. After Singapore, she was officially commissioned as HMAS Krait in 1944 and operated out of Darwin as a Coastwatch and intelligence-gathering vessel in East Indies waters. She was present at Ambon in the Moluccas Islands to witness the Japanese surrender in September 1945.

After the war, the Krait was sold to the British Borneo Company and re-named Pedang (Sword), but she was heavily modified to carry timber cargoes around Borneo. In 1964 a publicly-funded Krait Trust Fund was set up to bring her back to Australia and she was purchased and entrusted to the care of the Australian Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol for use as a training vessel.

MV Krait was acquired by the AWM in 1985 and loaned to the ANMM where she has been on display since 1988. With an eye to the future and in recognition of its iconic status as a living war memorial, the Krait has been carefully and accurately refurbished and is now fully operational in several senses of that word. In her 1943 war paint, she will continue to be a star attraction at the ANMM. This will ensure its viability as a floating war memorial for decades to come. Visitors to Sydney should make the most of the opportunity to see this unique 80-year old vessel.

The ANMM is the repository of a large historical marine, maritime and naval collection, many of which are floating exhibits and available for inspection. Its corps of volunteer guides will be more than happy to show visitors around this and many other displays



Wreath being laid aboard MV Krait by Mr Barry Grant, NSW President of the Australian Commando Association, 26 September 2018. (Photo courtesy ANMM)

MV Krait Dedication Plaque – a floating war memorial. (Photo courtesy ANMM)



both within the museum and at the adjacent wharves. For those particularly interested in naval heritage the museum is home to several decommissioned HMA Ships including HMAS Vampire a Daring class destroyer (1956), HMAS Onslow, an Oberon class submarine (1969) and HMAS Advance, an Attack class patrol boat (1968).

For further information, the ANMM can be visited on-line here: <http://www.anmm.gov.au/>

# GUILDevent SALISBURY PLAIN GUIDES

Paul Oldfield

A small but ‘traditional’ Guild event was held around Amesbury on Salisbury Plain 7-9 September with nineteen members attending. Friday evening the group gathered and over an excellent curry they completed the quiz kindly compiled by Ian Mitchell, who was unable to attend. There’s no point mentioning who won! Saturday started on Beacon Hill above Bulford Camp and the A303, where a smörgåsbord of subjects was tackled. The Navy was not to be left out and Tim Stoneman gave an account of the Battle of the Nile, based on the corpses laid out close to the A303 – clearly a high tide that day. Other subjects included the first measurements by the Ordnance Survey from Beacon Hill, military light railways, Battle of the Beams in 1940, Porton Down and chemical warfare, armoured development in the 1930s and the many airfields in the area (Thrupton, Middle Wallop, Boscombe Down, Old



Gareth Davies trying to convince everyone that they are standing on a railway line.

Sarum & High Post). This was followed by a walk to the Bulford Kiwi and an outline of its origins and continuing upkeep. The morning ended with a walk around a well preserved WW1 practice trench system overlooking Park House Camp and an outline of the exploits of Percy Topliss in the area, kindly provided by Paul Marsh, who was unable to attend at the last minute. In the afternoon, Gareth Davies led an enlightening tour of the military camps at Larkhill and the light railways constructed to support them. Andy Johnson then ran through

the development of the RFC, its first airfield at Larkhill, the 1912 military aircraft trials and the departure of the RFC to France in August 1914. We then spent an hour looking at the development of airborne forces in WW2 and the training site for Op Deadstick. Dinner in an Italian restaurant rounded off the day. Sunday saw a change of theme to various aspects of the preparations for the Normandy invasion. This included the experimental bombing range in the New Forest, an invasion airfield, PLUTO, MULBERRY, sausage camps, assembly and loading and finally up to Portsdown to consider the command and control sites inland, all the plethora of invasion associated sites to seaward.



Andy Johnson explaining to the group the development of the RFC on its first airfield at Larkhill. The site is now much overgrown and partly covered in married quarters, but five of the hangers survive and are still used, although not for aircraft!

# 'HIS GRACE KNEW THE NECESSITY THERE WAS OF A BATTLE': MARLBOROUGH'S DANUBE CAMPAIGN 1704

Jim Tanner

Older battles too can have a surprising connection with today and they are critical to understanding how today's nation states are as they are. None, arguably, are as important as the Second Battle of Höchstädt, known to Britain as the Battle of Blenheim.



Simkins' fanciful painting of the English Guards approaching Blindheim village. But it gives some idea of the numbers involved.

There is a very understandable focus in today's studies of battlefields in covering modern, or relatively modern, campaigns. Whether conducting tours for military groups or for holidaying tourists there is a persistent relevance demonstrated by, say, the Western Front in the Great War or Normandy in the Second. I have a particular passion for the 1943 Sicily operation for its lessons for today's British Armed Forces and especially for the raw nature of the battles. Many people visit the battlefields of the two World Wars because, of course, of their relevance to their own family story. But older battles too can have a surprising connection with today and they are critical to understanding how today's nation states are as they are. None, arguably, are as important as the Second Battle of Höchstädt, known to

Britain as the Battle of Blenheim. Yet, as Charles Spencer has observed, "If it were not for the vast and impressive palace of the same name, it's doubtful whether many people outside the academic world would be aware of [it]". Arguably, too, it is a more impressive battlefield to examine than that offered by Waterloo.

John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough, conducted his victorious campaign on the Danube (Donau) in Bavaria in conjunction with the equally talented Prince Eugene of Savoy in the middle months of 1704. The two battles of the campaign – the storming

of the Schellenberg at Donauwörth on 2 July and the Battle of Blenheim (*Blindheim*) itself on 13 August – were fought by infantry in brightly coloured coats, bearing the relatively new flintlock muskets of the time and manoeuvring in lines and columns and engaging at short range to effect decisions on the field. Great numbers of cavalry were involved and they still retained the decisive role. But increasingly effective smoothbore artillery also began to demonstrate its growing influence. These images seem far removed from today's experiences but there are tremendous lessons at the tactical and operational levels for intelligence and deception, logistics, combined arms, command and control, and leadership. For the English/British redcoated

infantryman (Great Britain was not created until the 1707 Act of Union with Scotland) there was the first real sign of his supremacy on the battlefields he would dominate, largely speaking, for a couple of hundred years. On the larger political arena the campaign was also an example of successful coalition warfare, with all its accompanying headaches, over the domineering power of Louis XIV's France. While the eventual outcome of the War of the Spanish Succession, which fizzled out in 1714, was not what it might have been, French ambitions were ended and Britain was now firmly established as a great power.

In this campaign Marlborough, at that time still largely unrecognised, demonstrated a new approach to warfare. The indecisiveness of European warfare hitherto, with its manoeuvrings of armies to no great effect and its constant round of sieges, was abandoned for good. While such warfare limited casualties and was often economical in all resources, it also created a condition of unresolved conflict, which invariably led to the next war. Marlborough, the de facto head of the Confederate army, determined from the outset, much to the consternation of his third ally, the Margrave of Baden, to fight and win outright. To achieve the right conditions he also set out to organise and resource his army with great thoroughness and the logistic arrangements for the campaign, which saw the army march from the United Provinces to Bavaria and back again, suffering little hardship, are a study in their own right. From beginning to end he also demonstrated a mastery of decision-making and political skill which combined to keep his enemies everywhere on the back foot.

To force the Franco-Bavarians into battle and to secure his lines of communication Marlborough needed a crossing over the Danube and determined on achieving



The memorial erected within the bounds of the Gustavus Adolphus fort close to the Schellenberg.

this at Donauwörth. This was protected by the entrenchments of the Schellenberg – the 'bell on the hill' – and Marlborough's direct assault, while a bloody affair, was a great success and a great shock to the enemy. The whole matter demonstrated Marlborough's tactical ability: a rapid but controlled approach via a river crossing over the Wörnitz, supported by pontoon bridges, an attack from the line of march, and a combined arms battle. It is worth beginning a tour at the 18th century stone bridge that spans the Wörnitz at Ebermergen as one can then appreciate the speed and agility of Marlborough's army as it bore down on Donauwörth. A close examination of the ground at the Schellenberg allows the viewer to come to some pretty accurate conclusions about how the infantry attack under the command of the Dutch Major General Johan van Goor, supported by the artillery of Colonel Holcroft Blood, was developed. The personal leadership of van Goor, who was killed, and of the Margrave, often depicted as timid, together with their regimental officers, kept the desperate assaults together and when the Franco-Bavarian defence collapsed Marlborough's cavalry was poised to complete a total victory.

Despite the expansion of the town and the presence of a modern bypass on the eastern fringe of Donauwörth, the northern approaches to the Schellenberg, over which Marlborough's men attacked, are surprisingly untouched. An excellent viewpoint can be found at the small hilltop chapel above the vacated Bundeswehr barracks, with views north towards what was once the village of Berg (now the suburb of



One of the few memorials to the Battle of Blenheim, this one above the village of Lutzingen, marking the spot where the French artillery did so much damage to Eugene's Prussian and Danish foot.

Parkstadt) and the location of the Confederate artillery and of Marlborough himself. Van Goor's deployment of his infantry as well as the location of the Bavarian entrenchments can be readily appreciated. A remnant or, possibly, an earthen reproduction of a fort of Thirty Years' War vintage and built by King Gustavus Adolphus, which occupied the centre of the Franco-Bavarian position, can be seen close to an open-air swimming pool and a footbridge over the bypass, near the pool, provides a good if noisy view west beyond Donauwörth and towards the Danube and Blenheim. The main battle at Blenheim deserves a whole day's attention, so if there is time, having looked at the Schellenberg, it is worth also driving north-west to the walled town of Nördlingen to see St George's Church. The town lay on Marlborough's lines of communication and he had his wounded taken there after the Schellenberg. Memorials inside the church include that of General van Goor.

Driving and walking the Blenheim battlefield is a very rewarding experience; 21st century intrusions are hardly noticeable and the whole area remains remarkably unspoilt. The battle itself was a model of manoeuvre and exploitation by the attacking Confederates who, at the outset, had no obvious advantages in their favour, save the talents of Marlborough and Eugene over the arrogance of Marshal Tallard and the shortcomings of Marshal Marsin and the Elector of Bavaria.

The battle was fought on the Plain of Höchstädt. Here Tallard, with an army of 56,000, had placed himself on the dry cornfields, safe behind the Nebel stream with his left flank secured by the wooded hills of the Swabian Jura and his right by the Danube. The villages, including Blindheim on the right, were garrisoned and semi-fortified, but Tallard did little more to ensure the security of his camp, confident that

Marlborough, with around 52,000 men, would not commit to battle but would turn away to the north and fall back on his lines of communication. A battle would, in Tallard's view, entail too much risk for the Confederates. In the way things had been done before, his assessment was probably correct. But when Marlborough and Eugene viewed the Franco-Bavarians from the church tower at Tapfheim on the afternoon of 12 August they were satisfied that bold action would undo the inherent weaknesses of Tallard's position.

Marlborough approached the battlefield from Donauwörth, moving south-west towards Tapfheim along an axis represented today, more or less, by Route 16. Access to Tapfheim church tower might be possible but a good viewpoint can be had from the railway bridge on the village's western edge. From here the two Confederate commanders skirted to the north of Schwenningen and found a further viewpoint above the village of Wolperstetten. A skirmish had taken place that day in the Schwenningen Defile when 40 squadrons of French cavalry, attempting a reconnaissance in force, encountered Rowe's Brigade of English infantry covering Marlborough's pioneers as they filled ditches and improved the way. From here one can begin to appreciate Marlborough's skill at the handling of his army, and the tactical skill too of his men. Even a modestly sized French force deployed forward could have scuppered his movements in the tight confines of the ground, squeezed between the Jura and the Danube. But with the French cavalry driven back, that night Marlborough brought up the whole Confederate army behind Schwenningen and at 0300 the next morning it was on the move again. His march columns were organised to deploy in line of battle rapidly if required, and the French let them come on, undisturbed.

There is not space here to describe the battle in any



The church at Tapfheim, from where Marlborough and Eugene observed the Franco-Bavarian army on 12 August.



The old bridge over the Wörnitz River at Ebermorden. Marlborough crossed here on 2 July en route for the Schellenberg.

detail but some snapshots will serve to highlight the salient features of the overwhelming Confederate victory. The Franco-Bavarian position seemed strong enough. It was anchored on the left on Lutzingen and an arc of wooded hills that barred effective manoeuvre and then ran east through Oberglau and south-east to Blindheim, with the whole force held behind a line of streams, principally the Nebelbach. But Tallard had effectively surrendered all initiative to his foe and Marlborough could see this. He was aware too that there were rivalries between the French commanders while he led a unified army, despite its international makeup of English, Dutch, Prussian, Dane and other Imperial troops. The Confederate foot were also trained in a superior tactical method that was to demonstrate the first evidence of what became epitomised, for the British, as the 'thin red line'. Nevertheless, Marlborough's 'scheme of manoeuvre' allotted the decisive action to his horse. Tallard had already concentrated the main body of his own horse on the open plain, precisely where Marlborough wanted them. He would use his infantry to fix the French infantry in place; concentrating force at the right point at the right time became Marlborough's trademark and made him the great general that he was to become.

The general action took some hours to get underway as Marlborough positioned his brigades, and getting Eugene across to the Confederate right flank was a particularly lengthy process. But Tallard obliged by doing nothing to interfere. Considering the battle in the order of Confederate left, Confederate right and Confederate centre is roughly chronological.

On the left, General the Lord 'Salamander' Cutts –

"as brave and as brainless as the sword by his side" – began to fix the French infantry in Blindheim around 10 in the morning. Cutts' columns formed line in the dead ground of the Nebelbach and a walk from there up the gentle rise to the church provides a good feel for the ground on the day. The Confederate infantry battered itself against this French strongpoint throughout the day, withstanding an attack at one stage by the elite French Gens d'Armes. Casualties were high. General Rowe and the Colonel of the English Guards were killed at the head of their men but the overall effect on the French was to prove catastrophic. That afternoon, the Marquis de Clérambault, commanding the Blindheim garrison, ordered Tallard's entire infantry reserve in to the village and here they remained, useless. Almost as bad was the rout of the Gen d'Armes by the English horse of Colonel Palme, the English demonstrating their better discipline and better tactics.

On the far right at and between Lutzingen and Oberglau, Eugene faced perhaps an even more formidable task. His first attack by his Prussian and Danish infantry was repulsed and this exposed them to Marsin and the Elector's cavalry. A second attack seized the edge of Lutzingen, despite murderous enfilade fire from Marsin's artillery, but was again forced to withdraw. This time the Franco-Bavarian cavalry did not pursue and, as with Cutts on the left, Eugene had achieved the fixing in place of the Elector's force. Tallard was fixed in the centre too as he could observe Marlborough's main body to his front and could do nothing about it; neither de Clérambault or Marsin responded to his appeals for additional troops.

While fighting on both flanks raged the conditions



Colonel Bob Killebrew discusses a tactical point at the chapel on the Schellenberg. The chapel marks the Franco-Bavarian entrenchments, with splendid views north towards Van Goor's approach.

for a Confederate victory were being set and Marlborough began to move. His brother, Charles Churchill, had drawn up his 14,000 infantry in two lines, with Prince Hesse's 72 squadrons of horse between both lines. Dutch infantry were told off to capture Oberglau and had a tough time dealing with the red-coated Irish regiments in French service. The great mass of French cavalry could still have turned the situation to Tallard's favour but such initiative was not within his gift and efforts were instead wasted in despatching groups of squadrons hither and thither to no real effect. Tallard sat and watched as Churchill's first infantry line crossed the Nebelbach undisturbed and halted while the whole of Hesse's horse then passed through. The French horse, tired and demoralised, held at first but when Marlborough committed his second line, the French broke and Tallard was captured. Nothing could stop the rout in the centre and the next to go were the French infantry at Lutzingen. With his left in the air, Marsin, now in command, was forced to retire, abandoning Blindheim to its fate. The village was in flames but the French infantry, impotent as they were, still outnumbered Lord Orkney's. However, with darkness approaching, 10,000 of France's best infantry were eventually obliged to surrender. Casualties were considerable on both sides: 14,000 Confederates, but a staggering 20,000 Franco-Bavarians plus a further 14,500 prisoners. Marlborough's victory was absolute, a "glorious victory" as he wrote in his despatch to Queen Anne.

There are few memorials: one on the Nebelbach and one by the church at Blindheim, one above Lutzingen and a visual display in the castle at

Höchstädt. But the drive south, along the 'romantic road', a map and a day in the Bavarian countryside, walking the fields and lanes, provides an immensely rewarding experience. Here a rather junior and relatively unknown English general, with his very able ally, ruined the Sun King's war plans. Marlborough's skill and leadership had done what British armies were to do time and again in the future to French armies in the field: tumbled them to ruin.



The memorial to the slain Dutch General Johan van Goor in Nordlingen church.

# REMEMBER?

## Tonie and Valmai Holt

How is your memory? Can you remember what you did yesterday? Can you remember what you did on this day last year? Can you remember what you did on this day 20 years ago? Even if you can remember the events of those days, how accurate do you think that your memories are?

### The Commandos Return

In 1982 we took a group of some 40 Commandos back to Dieppe. Very few of them had been back before, indeed many of them had not seen each other since those days of 1942. The town welcomed them with open arms and we arranged a March through the streets to the town hall where we had a welcome address by the Mayor and of course had a *vin d'honneur*.

It was a most exciting few days and very quickly stories of the landings and of the fighting were told and retold. It was cathartic for many of those who came. They could share with each other the realities of the fighting and the truth as they remembered it. The locals had arranged a ceremony in recognition of the bravery of the Commandos, and they did this by naming a street and placing a plaque acknowledging the winning of the Victoria Cross by Major Pat Porteous, who was with the group. Colonel Pat, (as he later became), won his VC during the battle. One of us had known Colonel Pat while at Sandhurst and he later became a firm friend.

### The Gully

Of course, we visited the places where they had fought, and the memories began to flow as voices were raised. We were privileged to hear those moments. But were those memories accurate? We went to a small village which sat at the top of the cliffs above a small beach. Leading down from the village to the beach was a very narrow gully, about 30 feet wide and around 15 feet deep. The German defences had included machine guns at the top of the gully and loops of barbed wire woven into the whole length of the gully from top to bottom.

From the moment they landed here in 1942, the Commandos were under fire. The only way to the village and to their objective, was up the gully and through the barbed wire. Their stories of the struggle through the wire, up the steep slope, and under machine gun fire and grenades, brought tears and laughter, hugs and handshakes. Everywhere you

could hear words of recall, "do you remember ... that silly bugger ... poor old Charlie ... on that roof..." They had gone back in their memories 40 years, sharing without reservation, clasp hands, wiping eyes, some animated, some silent. But how accurate were those memories? And did accuracy matter?

### Success or not?

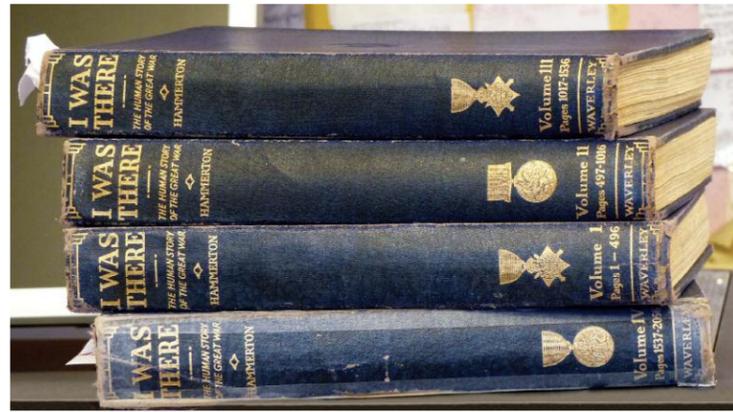
The operation was not a success - or was it? That is another story and still it has not been properly told. However, German opposition was too strong, and the Commandos had to withdraw down the barbed wire gully. In 1982 our coach took us to the village where we debussed, and about 20 of us gathered together at the top of the gully. It was the third day of the tour and the Commandos had reverted almost to the same relationships that they had had in 1942. The Sergeant Major had now become 'sir' or 'sergeant major' and his right to tell others what to do had been firmly re-established. We all looked down the grass-covered, rubble-sided gully which led steeply to the narrow beach. "We are going down," commanded the Sergeant Major. And they did. They slipped, scrambled, fell to the very bottom and as they did so the laughter that had greeted the order fell away. At the edge of the sea they collected into a tight, silent group around the Sergeant Major.

### The Caves

In 1942 during the withdrawal operation, they had scrambled down and then headed for caves in the cliffs hoping to hide from the Germans until rescued. Now 40 years later, they were again on that same beach and once again the Sergeant Major took charge. "Right" he said, "we went this way", and he strode off along the beach below the cliffs.

"Hang on a bit Sergeant Major" said someone at the back, "we went the other way."

It was never agreed who was right and to everyone's relief the discussion morphed into laughter. They had the memories but who had the accurate ones - and did it matter?



Our battered 'I Was There' volumes

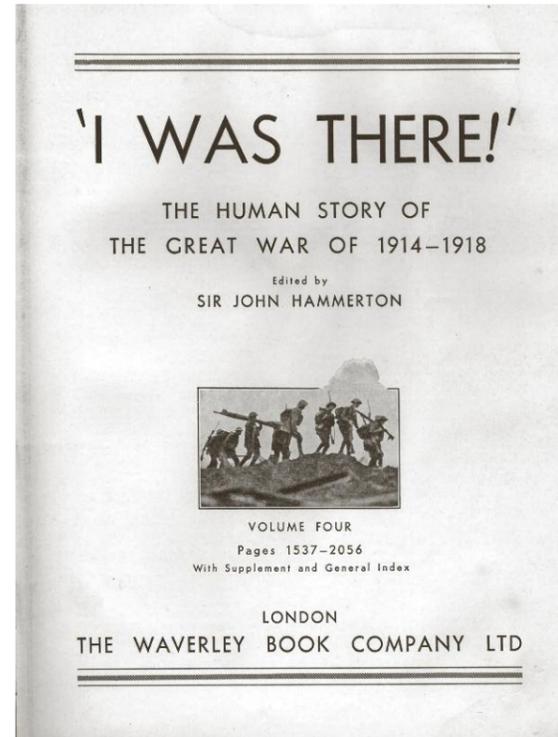
### Using Memories in Our Presentations

As professional battlefield guides, we all strive to be accurate, and we do our best to help those we are conducting to at least catch a glimpse of the real actions that we are describing. One of the best ways we can do this is by using the words of those who were there. We all have our favourite sources for information. Each tour we conduct needs careful preparation and the outright 'military bits,' such as orders of battle etcetera, can be gathered from anywhere - including the classroom. So where can we find the memories of those who actually fought over the battlefields upon which we are standing?

There is the IWM of course but that is difficult to get to and you may have to pay. There is the internet but - accurate?

### Our sources

We use books to find those memories, ones which allow us to delve deeply into the realities rather than the theories of what happened. Our favourite sources are greatly under-used and little regarded by the normal run of academics, but by using them you get a broader look at life in the round contemporary to the fighting.

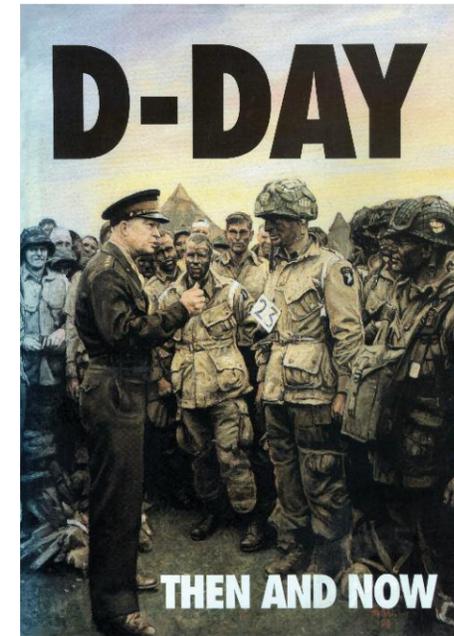
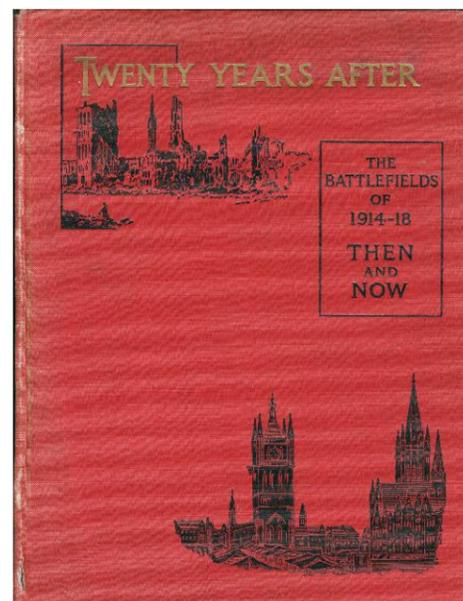


Frontispiece 'I Was There'

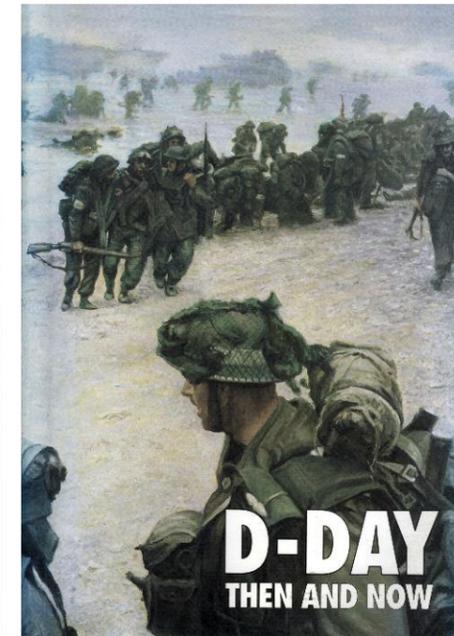
For the First World War we use 'Twenty Years After' and 'I Was There'. The former consists of three large format hard-back books totalling around 3,000 pages which are fully indexed. They were published by George Newnes and edited by Major General Sir Ernest Swinton of tank fame. The 'I Was There' series is also large format and hard back and consists of four volumes totalling some 6,000 pages. They too are fully indexed. They were published by Hammerton. These books are quite often found (sometimes singly) at very low prices at boot



'I Was There' Plugstreet story extract



D-Day 'Then and Now' Cover, Volume 1&2 After the Battle



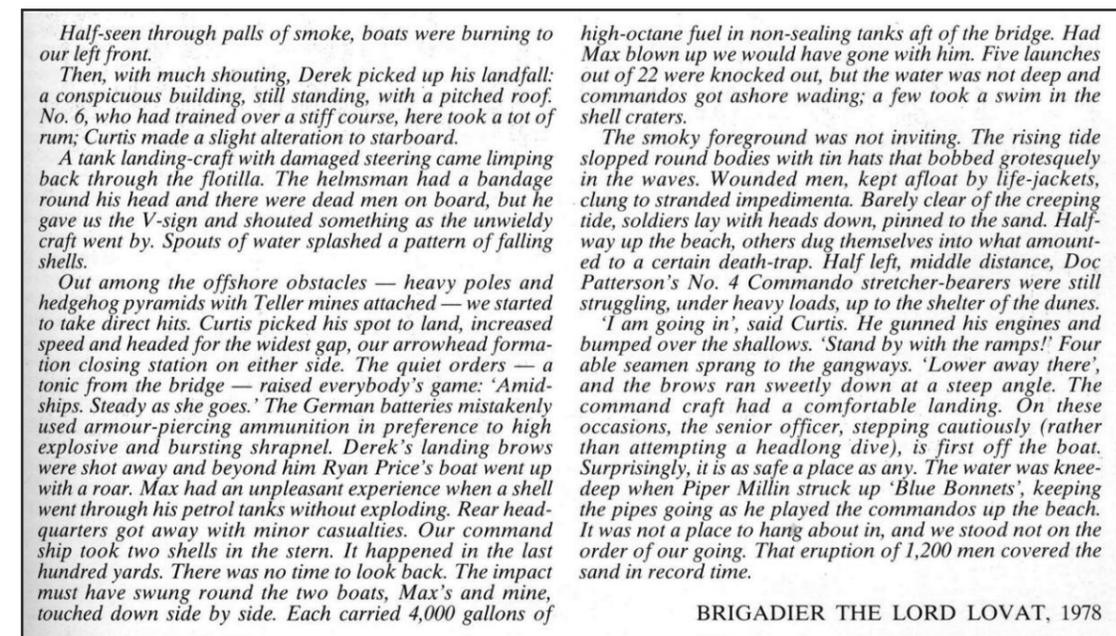
fairs and local antique sales. If you don't have them, then rush out to get them. They are full of memories.

The government has announced that it is continuing to support beyond 2018 the programme of subsidising school trips to the battlefields. Therefore guides who specialise in World War I have work ahead.

For World War 2, upon which the media is already feeding, we use the works of 'After The Battle', an extraordinary collection of works inspired, researched and published by our old friend Winston Ramsay. If you are unaware of the detail, the richness, the accuracy and the formidable effort that goes into everything produced by After the Battle, you will be

won't pick these books up at boot fairs. They are expensive and big in form (hardback), big in pictures and big in detail. In them you will find the salt-and-pepper to bring out new flavours in your presentations and you will find the memories of the Commanders and the Soldiers. If you don't have those books, figure out some way to get hold of them (the library?), because if you are going to conduct tours to Normandy, these books will help you to do your very best with new insights. They are riveting in their approach to military history and offer so much detail that you will never tire of delving into them.

**Esty** (if you remember the reply send an email with it to [battlefields@guide-books.co.uk](mailto:battlefields@guide-books.co.uk)



'After the Battle' - Lord Lovat memory extract

astonished the first time that you come across it. Have a look at [afterthebattle.com](http://afterthebattle.com).

The year 2019 is the 75th anniversary of both D-Day and the Arnhem operations, and the papers, the radio, the television, the social media, will all be writing about them, and doubtless the tour operators will be heading to Normandy and/or Holland.

If we look just at D-Day as the most significant 75th anniversary event of 2019, there are two volumes produced by *After the Battle* which will give you every element of detail that you will ever need and most of which you won't find in conventional histories. You

# WWII NATION – EXPLORING WWII HISTORY USING MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Lawrence Waller

Born from a passion for history, travel and all things digital, WW2 Nation was founded in 2014 as a way of documenting our journey exploring the history of the Second World War and paying our respects to this remarkable generation. It is also a community for like-minded and similarly interested people who share our passion for history.

By sharing our experiences across multiple digital platforms it will hopefully reach and engage with younger audiences and act as an open resource for people to use, especially those who are unable to easily visit these places.

Travelling from the home front to the battlefields of Europe and beyond we set out on a personal life-long journey of discovery. Visiting historical wartime locations, speaking with veterans, historians and battlefield-guides alike we aim to learn more about this remarkable period of history and try to keep its

memory and the memories of those who served alive for future generations to learn from.

Our most recent exploration during October saw the team head across the Channel to France and Belgium to discover more about the German invasion of western Europe in May-June 1940. Working alongside the Tourism Boards on this project, we spent several days filming our trip visiting a number of historical locations connected with this turbulent period and talking with specialist guides knowledgeable on each aspect of the campaign we looked at.



*German troops captured the Citadel of Dinant overlooking the town until it was recaptured by a French counter-attack during the afternoon. French troops spent the next few days fortifying the Meuse crossings and exchanging fire with German troops on the east bank.*



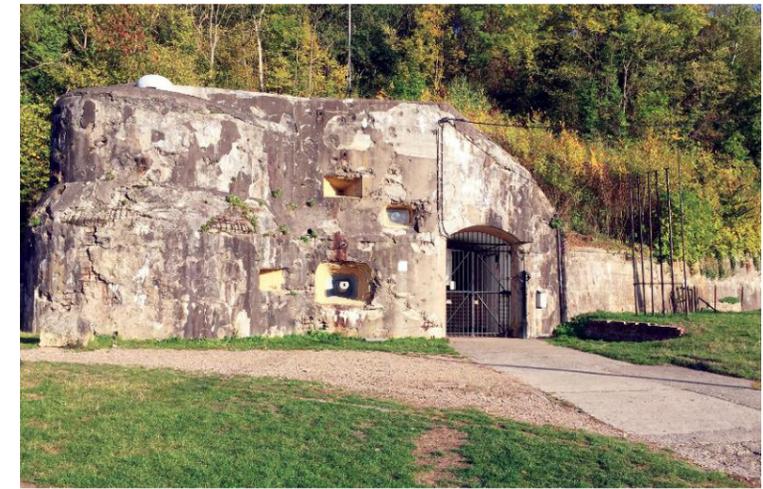
Having spent a few weeks reading and prepping for this trip, I could not wait to get out on the ground to explore the terrain, and it certainly did not disappoint. It offered a fresh sense of perspective and understanding by walking the battlefields that simply could not be fully appreciated by reading alone. This trip also provided me with a first real glimpse into what it must be like to be a battlefield guide and a new found appreciation for how much more goes into battlefield guiding than purely a knowledge of the history.

Just like the Panzer Division spearheads of Army Group A and B, we certainly clocked up the miles across Europe. Starting out in Belgium with a visit to Fort Eben-Emael to discover more about the audacious glider-borne assault on this believed impregnable fortress, we also stopped off on the way near Gastuche to see the location of a VC action (the first awarded to the British Army during the campaign). We then headed to Dinant to follow Rommel's tank tracks by taking a closer look at the actions of the 5th and 7th Panzer Divisions crossings of the Meuse River.

Having heard all about the birth of the legend of Rommel, we headed to the tiny Belgium village of Bruly-de-Pesche. When most people think of Hitler's bunker they no doubt would immediately think of Berlin below the Reich Chancellory, or the Wolf's Lair in East Prussia perhaps, but here secluded deep in the woods near the French border was one of Hitler's HQ Bunkers. From Bruly, he conducted the second half of the campaign in France - Case Red - as well as drafting the armistice terms.

It was a relatively short journey across the border to Sedan to discover the pivotal battle and breakout by Heinz Guderian, as well as focussing in on the RAF's experiences here trying to stem the tide. Stopping in Stonne, we learnt all about the fierce French resistance in this tiny hamlet, which changed hands no fewer than 17 times in two days.

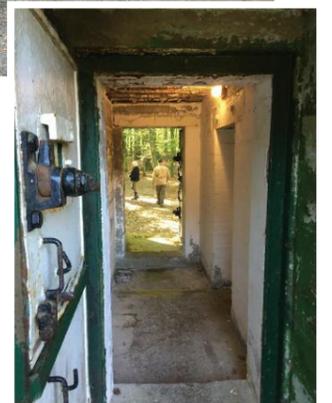
Certainly for me, one of the most remarkable places we visited was a section of the much vaunted Maginot Line, the casemates of the Ouvrage de Villy La Ferte. This was a truly harrowing experience exploring this concrete maze of defences full in the knowledge that 107 men of this French garrison never left this final resting place. From here we headed to Compiègne turning our attention to the signing of the Armistice, before departing northwards and stopping



*Fort Eben-Emael was a Belgian fortress located between Liège and Maastricht.*



*One of Hitler's HQ Bunkers at Bruly-de-Pesche near the French border. From there Hitler orchestrated his invasion of France.*



off at the site of the massacre at Le Paradis, as well as Cassel to try and appreciate the furious defence put up by Force Somerset as part of the determined rearguard action fought by the BEF.

Having watched Christopher Nolan's film Dunkirk last year, it seemed only fitting to conclude our trip looking at the BEF's evacuation from Dunkirk during Operation Dynamo. Our final day was also something of a personal pilgrimage for both myself and Alex for many reasons. Both of us are Warwickshire lads, and as such we wanted to pay our respects to our local regiment. This included those killed during the massacre at Wormhout on 28th May 1940 by visiting the La Plaine au Bois and the CWGC cemetery at Esquelbecq, where a few of these men now rest. Furthermore for myself, a year or so ago I also had the pleasure of speaking with a local veteran Jack Hall, who served with the 1/7th Battalion the whole way through the Second World War. Jack recalled for me his experiences of retreating through France, repeatedly being harassed by the Luftwaffe all the way to Dunkirk, and I wished to share Jack's story with Alex by visiting the Mole where Jack boarded HMS Malcolm in the early hours of the 1st June 1940.

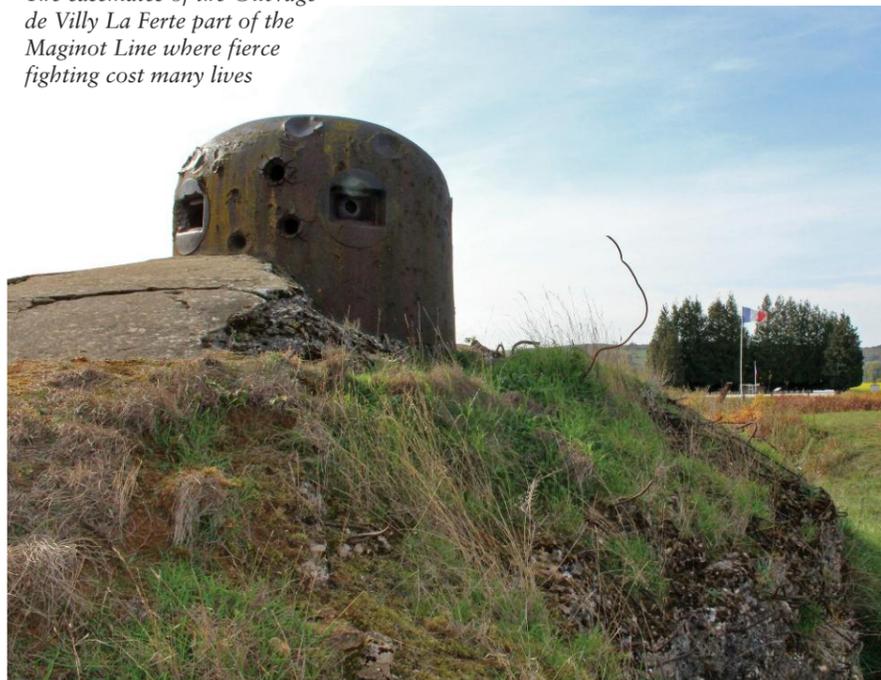


Sedan - site of a pivotal battle to try and stop the German offence.



The village of Stonne was the scene of fighting between the Wehrmacht and French tanks. Taken and retaken seven times in four days, the place was completely destroyed.

The casemates of the Ouvrage de Villy La Ferte part of the Maginot Line where fierce fighting cost many lives



Compiègne, the memorial where the Armistice was signed.



The site of the massacre at Wormhout, where British and French POW were murdered.

Over the last few years, we have also had the pleasure of speaking with a few names you may well recognise, being fellow Guild Members such as James Holland, where we discussed the War in the West, Dr. Peter Caddick-Adams about the Battle of the Bulge, and also Guild Chairman, Mike Peters, where we

found out about the Allied invasion of Sicily in 1943 and the Glider Pilot Regiments' role within this. All of these are freely available to listen to on our WW2 Nation Podcast as well as a growing range of interviews we have carried out with veterans recalling their wartime service.



The WWII Nation team at work



Join us on this journey by visiting WW2 Nation, or following us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or YouTube, and discover this and much more today.



There were two concrete moles protecting the outer harbour at Dunkirk playing significant part in the evacuation of British and French troops during World War II.

# GUIDE *insight*

## THE SLAUGHTER OF THE SUBALTERNs

John Hughes-Wilson

Past President, International Guild of Battlefield Guides, and author of the 'IWM History of the First World War.' (2014)

**I was dismayed to read the letter from Elisabeth Wooley in your September magazine on officers in the First World War. It is a frequent misapprehension and demands the strongest rebuttal.**

I speak from experience. Once, some years ago, I was compelled to intervene at Delville Wood CWGC cemetery in France, after hearing an earnest young school mistress holding forth to her gullible pupils that *"the reason there were so few officers' graves was because they all stayed in the trench, forcing their men to advance at pistol point or be executed for cowardice."* My (somewhat forceful) interruption to point out that she was talking nonsense and there were only 30 officers in a battalion of 900 men, (3%) and the officers led from the front was met with incredulity.

A century on, we do a grave dis-service to the dead young officers of the Great War to allow this disgraceful lie to continue unchallenged. Historical facts and truth are more important than ignorant opinions and prejudice. The Legion has a national duty to set the record straight.

The real truth is that the casualty rates among the junior officers in the Great War were horrific. The title of John Lewis-Stempel's book *Six Weeks: The Short and Gallant Life of the British Officer in the First World War*, describes the fate of most; the life expectancy of a lieutenant in the Western Front in the trenches was just 42 days: *"The universal expectation of a subaltern was 'a hospital bed or interment in the soil."* Many had come straight from the classroom to the most dangerous job in the world, yet nearly all stepped forward, unflinchingly, to do their duty.

Attacking across 'No Man's Land' with nothing but a revolver and in a distinctive uniform, junior officers were obvious targets for German defenders; they dropped in their thousands. One in five of the officer-students drawn from Oxford and Cambridge Universities died.

In the UK around six million men were mobilised, and of those just some 750,000 were killed. That's around 12%. (In fact, as a British soldier statistically you were more likely to die during the Crimean War (1853-56) than in WW1.)

But, although numerically the great majority of casualties in WW1 came from the working class, the

social and political elite were hit disproportionately much harder by WW1. Their sons provided the junior officers, whose job it was to lead the way over the top and expose themselves to the greatest danger as an example to their men.

Some 17% of the British army's officers were killed, compared with 12% of the rank and file soldiers killed during the war. Most of those were junior officers, although, contrary to popular belief, more British generals were killed in WW1 than any other. (Including three divisional commanders at Loos in 1915.) And in 1914-1918 most officers came from privileged backgrounds: Eton alone lost more than 1,000 former pupils - 20% of those who served.

Casualty rates for regimental officers have always been proportionately higher than for other ranks.

The reason is simple. Young men as junior officers are needed to command infantry. The basic unit of foot soldiers was - and still is - the platoon under the command of the lowest commissioned officer rank. The official title of these junior officers is 'subaltern'. A century ago in Britain, any educated young man over 18 and with a private school education was deemed officer material and, given a minimum of training, competent to lead his men into battle.

At the outbreak of war in 1914, these young men (many were still barely out of school) rushed to join the forces; many thought the war would be over in a few weeks, months at most, and they didn't want to miss out on the glory and fun.

Overwhelmingly, these junior officer volunteers were educated in British public schools, which, in the quaint way we British have with the language, are actually *private* institutions open only to those who can afford the fees. In 1914 that student body came almost exclusively from the British upper and professional caste and filled the classrooms of 120 elite schools.

*"They trained a whole generation of boys to be waiting in the wings of history as military leaders. The young gentlemen from Eton and the Edwardian public schools paid a terrible price for this duty ... but there was one unassailable, and surprising, truth about it. The more exclusive your education, the more likely you were to die."* Manliness, duty, love of Britain, stiff upper-lip self-denial were the inescapable

virtues. So when Lord Kitchener asked public school boys to step forward to officer the expanded British Army in 1914 they did so in their thousands.

These products of tough boarding schools had been educated in a regime of muscular Christianity: team games; cold showers; demonstrating 'pluck' at sports, and immersion in history and the classics. They read Henty and Kipling and were brought up on the famous Newbolt poem, 'Play up, play up, and play the game!'

In a society defined by class and the accent with which a person spoke, public school boys were taught it was their destiny to lead, above all to set an example, and to inspire others through their gallantry. Their soldiers deferred to their young leaders sharing the same hardship in the trenches, and acknowledged their courage and devotion to duty.

They were rarely let down. The courage of these junior officers was by and large amazing. A common thread is in the letters of many of these well-educated young men; they seemed to fear to be seen "letting the side down" or "not being brave enough" in front of their men more than they feared death itself. They were schooled to set an example; and they did.

The subalterns - in all armies - were always the first ones over the top of the trench and the last ones to retreat. The idea was that through this display of careless bravado they would inspire their men to follow them into Hell. Lionel Sotheby was a product of Eton and a subaltern on the Western front. He wrote in his last letter home that *"To die for one's school is an honour."* He fell in the Battle of Loos in September 1915. He was just 20 years old. His public school, Eton College, sent 3,000 of its ex-pupils into the army of the First World War. 1,157 (over 30%) of them died on the battlefields.

Guy Chapman of the Royal Fusiliers recalled "I was

not eager, or even resigned to self-sacrifice, and my heart gave back no answering throb to thoughts of England. In fact, I was very much afraid; and again, afraid of being afraid, most anxious lest I show it."

Another tragic example was Rudyard Kipling's son, John, educated at Wellington, keen to join the fight, but rejected because of his severe short-sightedness. His father pulled strings and wangled him a commission as a second lieutenant in the Irish Guards. In autumn 1915, he saw his first and last action in the Battle of Loos. Within minutes of going "over the top" he was dead, crying from the pain of his wound, shot through the jaw but still, according to his platoon serjeant, gamely trying to carry on, only to be later blown to pieces by a shell - just six weeks after his 18th birthday.

John Ellis wrote in his 1989 book *'Eye-Deep in Hell: Trench Warfare in World War I'* that among subalterns "estimates for the mortality rates among platoon commanders in the attack range from 65 to 81%. This was, at its lowest estimate, double the rate for enlisted men." The German and French casualties reflect even higher mortality rates for their officers, and lost over fifty percent of their young males aged 20 - 24 during the Great War.

Bloodshed on this scale prompted the British historian A.J.P. Taylor to write *"The slaughter of the subalterns in World War I destroyed the flower of the English gentry."* The American novelist Gertrude Stein lived through the Great War and afterwards described the dead young officers as "The Lost Generation."

Sandhurst's proud motto is "Serve to Lead." The British soldier expects nothing less from his officers - then and now. The dead young officers of the Great War prove that truth, as a visit to any CWGC cemetery on the Western Front shows.

## EVENT *guide* 2019

18-20 Jan - Guild Annual Conference at Leicester (Bosworth)

- John Harris & Tony Smith

30 Mar - Validation Day, Caythorpe Lincs - Chris Finn

22-25 Jul - Normandy 75 Conference, University of Portsmouth - Chris Finn

26-30 Jul - Guild Recce - Redcoats in the Pyrennes - Graeme Cooper

9 Aug - Badged Guides Dinner, London - Graeme Cooper

28 Sep (TBC) - Validation Day, Windsor - Tim Stoneman

7-11 Oct - Berlin Recce - Chris Finn

# GUIDEbooks:

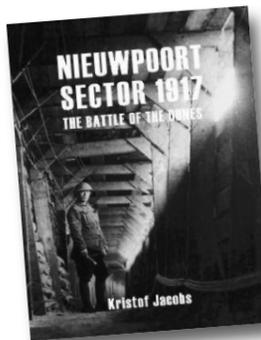


## MONTE CASSINO Opening The Road To Rome

By Richard Doherty

The Abbey at Monte Cassino physically dominates the Liri Valley and the road to Rome in much the same way that the series of battles fought to wrest control of the Monte dominate any history of the Italian campaign. So many accounts of the Cassino battles have been written over the years that it is difficult to see what can be added. This comprehensive tome certainly stretches to deliver a complete narrative of the repeated attempts to capture the Abbey and breach the Gustav Line. This is certainly a useful book for guiding, well-illustrated with archive images and pictures of current memorial sites. However, the location of the maps together at the beginning of the book and a lack of chapter headings are frustrating.

Published by Pen & Sword  
RRP £25.00  
hardback, pp426



## NIEUWPOORT SECTOR 1917 The Battle of the Dunes

By Kristof Jacobs

It was quite refreshing to find a new book on the Great War that really did explore a less well-known corner of the Western Front. This latest title from the Uniform Press is pleasantly absorbing in its level of detail; it really draws the reader in right from start to finish. The comprehensive and informative narrative is lavishly supported with hordes of photographs, maps, trench maps and diagrams; a real tour de force. This would be an absolutely ideal addition to any Western Front Guide's library, well worth the price. Don't go to the dunes without it!

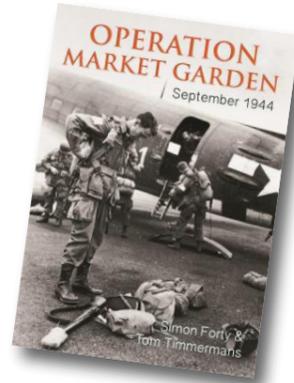
Published by Uniform Press  
RRP £28.00  
paperback, pp326

## OPERATION MARKET GARDEN September 1944

By Simon Forty  
& Tom Timmermans

The 75th Anniversary of Operation Market Garden is imminent so we can expect a deluge of re-released, rehashed Arnhem titles. There are however a few new works that focus on some of the niche or less well-known unit experiences. This latest release from Casemate offers nothing new but it is extremely well presented and features some excellent maps. If you are about to launch into OMG and you are looking for a good chronological guide that offers a sound campaign overview, this will do that job for you.

Published by Casemate  
RRP £25.00  
paperback, pp192



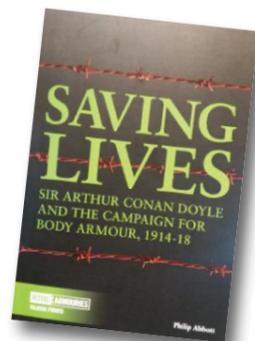
## SAVING LIVES Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the Campaign for Body Armour, 1914-1918

By Philip Abbott

This slim volume by Philip Abbott, Archives and Records Manager at the Royal Armouries, records the struggles, both official and unofficial, to introduce the helmet and body armour into the British Army during the First World War. Alongside Conan Doyle it introduces a host of scientists, politicians and personalities who were involved with the campaign. Many of the issues they faced would be familiar to those working in military procurement today. An enjoyable read with interesting photographs that will reward the battlefield guide with a couple of new vignettes for the next Western Front tour.

Review by John Greenacre

Published by Leeds: Royal Armouries, 2017  
RRP £14.99  
paperback, pp73



# GUILDmerchandise

With the winter guiding season fast approaching now is the time to get your orders in for your Guild clothing! All items are available with either the GBG logo or Accredited member badges. The range includes:



Polo shirts:



Sweatshirts:



Soft Shell Jackets:

The easiest way to order is online via the Guild website – go to:  
[www.gbg-international.com/shop/](http://www.gbg-international.com/shop/)  
and pick what you want in the sizes you want.

If you don't want to pay online you can still send a cheque for the required amount to the Secretary at: Trenanton, Shutta Road, Looe, Cornwall. PL13 1HP

# 10 Questions:

Name: Mark Allen

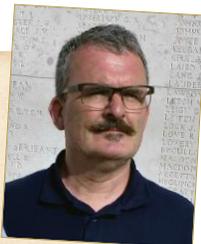
Age: 56

Nationality: British

Home Location: By the sea  
in West Sussex

Tour Company: Anglia Tours & Leger Holidays

Validating: On the 'To Do' list...



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

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

Growing up in the 1960s surrounded by family and other people who had both served in, and/or lived through, the Second World War and earlier conflicts influenced me greatly and gave me the thirst for knowledge – particularly stories from my grandfather, an old Eighth Army soldier, who lived with us. Careers from the 1980s onwards enabled me to explore and study many battlefields further afield, particularly in the Far East as well as those in Western Europe.

**2. Have any experiences stood out?** Taking one of my elderly relatives to the exact place that her uncle, a 19-year-old Subaltern in the 13th Bn Royal Sussex Regiment, had been buried in a field grave during 'Operation Michael', on the 100th Anniversary of his death. The Graves Registration Unit had recorded the exact location of his exhumation, down to the number of paces into the field.

**3. What do you enjoy the most about battlefield guiding?** Being able to tell the stories of the men and women who served. The most rewarding of these can sometimes be from those on the tour who share primary sourced material about their relatives' own experiences.

**4. What is your favourite stand, location or battlefield and why?** For me it would be the Royal Sussex Regiment's actions in the Richebourg-l'Avoué / Cinder Track area. This is where the men of the 2nd (with many remaining 'Old Contemptibles') and the 5th (Cinque Ports) Battalions fought at The Battle of

Aubers Ridge in May 1915, followed by the 11th, 12th and 13th Battalions (1st, 2nd and 3rd South Downs) at the Battle of the Boar's Head on 30th June 1916. This gives the opportunity to look at the Regular, Territorial and Kitchener men of one county regiment in one small location over separate actions and timescales.

**5. Which battlefield would you like to visit in the future?** Three months in the US allowing a more in-depth look at the battlefields of the Civil War will do for starters!

**6. What have you enjoyed the most about being a member of the Guild?** The acceptance by, and assistance from, many experienced guides, who are happy to help with any aspect of the craft.

**7. If there was a fire and you could only save one battlefield-related book or prop, what would you save and why?** A tough decision, but it would be between two books, both original copies - each for the reason of the wealth of detail about characters and the locations in which they were serving. The first is *'Two Years on Trek, being some account of the Royal Sussex Regiment in South Africa'* by Lt. Col. Louis Du Moulin; the second, *'Undertones of War'* by Edmund Blunden MC, describing his service with 11th Battalion (1st South Downs) in the Great War.

**8. What type of group do you think is the most challenging to lead on a tour?** Being fortunate enough to guide both school/college and adult groups on a regular basis, each presents its own particular set of testing situations. However, the ability of today's younger generation to photograph, text, chat and move whilst simultaneously listening, understanding and taking in information is something that still astounds me every day – so students it would be, and their potential for 'multi-multi-tasking' – something they do very well.

**9. What's the best tip, story or nugget of information you have been given by a fellow battlefield guide?** That of using anything to point with, as long as it's not your finger – an early tip from my mentor....

**10. What is the funniest or most dramatic thing you have seen on tour?** A student, snug inside a parka on an extremely cold day, managing to sleep, standing up, during a show-and-tell session. The resultant snoring was brought to an abrupt end by a blast from a trench whistle at close quarters.

## NEWmembers:

New members who have been welcomed to the Guild between Summer 2018 and the date of publication.

Arno Brouns  
Anthony Coyle  
Onor Crummay  
David Curry  
Graeme Davis  
Clément Derbaudrenghien  
Paul Durham

Mark Evans  
Danny Frenken  
Robert Hamilton  
Alan Hawley  
Paul Iverson  
William Jehu  
Glyn Jones

Andrew Lock  
Francis Mullan  
Peter Munday  
Dale Munn  
David O'Mara  
Allan Penman  
Kate Pettigrew

Jon Radcliffe  
Martin Roden  
Tom Sellen  
Edward Smallwood  
Andrew Tracey  
Seumas Tan  
Paul Wincup