

Spring 2019

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DESPATCHES

the magazine of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides



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PLUS

Welcome to Next Generation Partner

AND

Field Guides - photos of guides
in action!

FIELDguides

Cover image: The striking Soviet War Memorial at Antakalnis War Cemetery outside Vilnius in Lithuania (Image Staff Ride Ltd)



Guiding the King on the Field of Naseby - Anthony Rich offers advice to the Royalist Cause



Guild motorbike enthusiasts at Brookwood Military Cemetery. L-R: Chris Gravestock, Marc Raven, Simon Collins, Jane Crossland, Paul Kersey and Eugenie Brooks. See article right (Photo, John Harris).

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GUILDmotorbikegroup

Motorbikers can quite often be seen visiting battlefields and it transpires that there are several Guild members who are bikers.

With a view to forming a biking group within the Guild to promote two-wheeled reces and site visits, we held an inaugural meeting on a chilly Sunday 14 April. We met at Newlands Corner in the Surrey Hills for coffee and a chat before a short ride over to Brookwood Military Cemetery. Eugenie Brooks gave us a fascinating and informative tour of the cemetery, sharing several personal stories of men buried there. After that we took another short ride to the White Hart in Pirbright where we had lunch. By chance, proving what a small world it is, we bumped into Accredited Member Brian Shaw there! Lunch over, we all wound our various ways home, except for Paul Kersey who was off to the Eurotunnel terminal in Folkestone en route to Dieppe.



1939-45 Memorial to the Missing, Brookwood. L-R: John Harris, Simon Collins, Jane Crossland, Eugenie Brooks, Paul Kersey, Marc Raven and Chris Gravestock. (Photo, Marc Raven and a co-operative passer-by).

All in all, a successful first outing - thanks to all for turning out, particularly those for whom this was their first Guild meeting, and to Eugenie for the tour and organising lunch.

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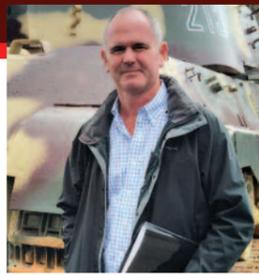
THE CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

Welcome fellow members and Guild Partners to the Summer 2019 edition of your magazine, Despatches. This issue has taken longer to collate than normal as so many of our regular contributors report an exceptionally busy Spring and Summer – they have all been out Guiding!

Firstly, on your behalf, I welcome Next Generation Travel (NGT) as a new Guild Partner, the NGT Group includes our old friends at Anglia Travel, a partner article introduces NGT in this issue. The annual Anzac pilgrimages and the Normandy 75 commemorations have certainly kept many Guild Members gainfully employed. We have maintained our usual coach-borne squadrons, seen a Guild Biker Chapter roaming the Western Front and even an amphibious element deployed off the coast of Normandy. We also have reports in from members operating further afield in both the Balkans and the Baltic.

This is a healthy level of activity in spite of the ongoing uncertainty surrounding Brexit and future Travel Regulation. Reports from our Partners suggest that the latter has certainly affected the enthusiasm of some older battlefield visitors who place great value on the reassurance offered by existing reciprocal health agreements between EU Partner States. The younger traveller is more concerned with data roaming charges on their smart phones and other IT. Whatever the eventual outcome will be, reputable Tour Operators and Sole Traders are emphasizing the need for comprehensive and robust travel insurance. We are in regular contact with our Guild Partners and ETOA, any travel related developments will be reported to the membership as we hear them.

In previous Chairman's columns I have mentioned the huge potential for Social Media feeds when used intelligently as a marketing tool. Suffice to say, the majority of our members maintain a high standard of professionalism and use SM responsibly. Twitter, Facebook



and the like are an extremely effective way to highlight what we do and, bottom line...they are an extremely cost-effective way of attracting potential clients. Sadly, there are a few individuals in the guiding community who routinely mix their historical/battlefield related posts with posts containing extremely bad language, political bile or inappropriate sexual content. Not only does this irresponsible, fire and forget attitude show a total disregard for the consequence of any such statement on the reputation of the individual, it also taints those around them with the same unprofessional hue. The key thing to consider is that any post on SM is irretrievable, it exists somewhere in cyberspace whatever you do to delete it. The prevailing attitude seems to be that any expletive or insult on SM does not matter in the real world. The reality of course is starkly different, battlefield travellers carry out research on potential Guides in the same way that an employer researches a potential employee – routinely viewing their Social Media Profile. Few who post corrosive SM content pause to consider the fact that it is almost entirely open-source and therefore accessible to potential clients and even children, including their own offspring in perpetuity. It does no harm to pause for a few seconds before posting an item on SM to check your spelling and more importantly, to consider the nature of the content that you are about to launch into cyberspace – is it appropriate, would you be happy for your youngest relative to read it?

Finally - Wherever you all are in the guiding world, I hope you are all enjoying your guiding, whichever battlefields that you tread and that 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!

Mike Peters

NEVER A RAID LIKE IT

Steve Hunnisett

Certain dates and raids during the London Blitz became indelibly marked in the memories of the citizens of London. There was the first day – ‘Black Saturday’ itself – 7 September 1940 when the air raid sirens interrupted a beautiful late summer afternoon and which signalled a major change in tactics by the Luftwaffe, the ‘Second Great Fire of London’ of 29 December 1940, when the City of London faced it's ordeal by fire and the two great raids of 16 and 19 April 1941, which due to their sheer ferocity, became known to Londoners simply as ‘The Wednesday’ and ‘The Saturday’, with no further explanation needed to anyone who was there.

However, none of these raids compared to the night of 10/11 May 1941. This was to prove the heaviest and the last raid of the Night Blitz on London and as Post Office engineer Reginald Matthews confided to the author Richard Collyer in *'The City That Wouldn't Die'*, his 1959 account of the events of that fateful night, *"There never was a raid like it, another one like that and they'd have had us on our backs."*

The opening raids of September 1940 had concentrated on the eastern side of the metropolis, with London's then massive dock system, the Woolwich Arsenal and the other industries strung out along the Thames bearing the brunt, along with the collateral damage to the tightly packed communities of the East End and Southeast London. However, following the Luftwaffe's heavy daylight losses of 15 September 1940, the Blitz was conducted almost exclusively by night, with the raids affecting the entire capital. Closer examination of the Civil Defence Incident Logs beyond this date shows every one of the capital's twenty nine Metropolitan Boroughs regularly affected to a greater or lesser degree.

German records show that of 541 bombers dispatched, no fewer than 505 reached London and dropped their bombs. The air raid warning was sounded at 23:00 and the first bombs fell at 23:02, hitting barges in the Royal Albert Dock. It was the beginning of six and a half hours of bombing which was to see many London landmarks damaged or destroyed and in excess of 1,430 Londoners killed, with a further 1,800 seriously injured.

Fires were soon raging across London, with the most serious centred on the area around the Elephant & Castle, with other serious fires raging in the vaults beneath Waterloo Station, in Fetter Lane, at Cannon Street Station, and along Queen Victoria Street in the

City of London. The London Fire Brigade records show that almost 2,200 fires were started in London, of which twenty were considered to be ‘major fires’, in other words, requiring over thirty pumps.

At Cannon Street Station, a small group of railway workers were demonstrating that acts of heroism were not limited to those in service uniform and the modest account of Driver Leslie Stainer of his own and his colleagues' efforts to save rolling stock is worthy of reproduction here:

"The smoke from the fires blacked out the Moon and fires seemed to be everywhere and then the station roof caught alight.

To save the trains from catching fire, two engines were coupled together, No. 934 and 154 and pulled out of Platform 8 onto the bridge. We stopped twenty yards ahead of the other train and then after about ten minutes we ducked down onto the footplate. We counted three bombs; the last one was terrific and very close. There was a terrific explosion and our engine seemed to roll; at first we thought our train had been hit. The debris flew in all directions – we were very lucky. My Fireman said at the time 'Look out – we are going in the drink' and I said 'I thought that my back week had come.'

We looked round and found that the bomb had made a direct hit on the boiler of No. 934 engine and had also blasted our train and turned part of the train onto its side. My Fireman and myself went to see where the other driver (Percy Collins) and fireman were and I am pleased to say they had got off the engine in time. Then looking round, we found our train had caught fire and the Firemen with buckets of water tried to put the same out but it was impossible as a strong wind was blowing up the Thames and the fire got the master. I uncoupled my

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Material for publication in the Spring edition of Despatches must be with the Editor no later than 1st July 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: secretary@gbg-international.com



Fires blazing out of control at Goodge Street & Charlotte Street (left) and Goodge Street & Charlotte Street in 2018 (Author's photos)

engine from the train and drew back about two yards and scoured the engine and then crossed to the west of the bridge until dawn – watching the fires. It was just like as if Hell had been let loose.

I am pleased to say there was no one injured and we were all lucky to be alive. Every railwayman at Cannon Street was very cool and calm and all assisted in every possible way under those trying and unique conditions.

That is my account of the Blitz."

The fires in Cannon Street began to spread eastwards along Queen Victoria Street, fanned by a strong easterly wind and began to threaten Faraday House, which at that time contained the largest telephone exchange in the world, as well as a radio link with the USA. The firefighters of the London Fire Brigade, ably supported by their colleagues of the Auxiliary Fire Service began to establish a firebreak at the site of 134 Great Victoria Street, where an office block had been destroyed in a 'normal' fire in 1939. Beyond here stood the



Warden Stanley Barlow GM standing outside his Wardens' Post at the RIBA Building in Portland Place and the same scene today (Author's photo)



College of Arms and then Faraday House itself, whilst on the opposite side of the street stood 100 Queen Victoria Street, the International Headquarters of the Salvation Army (known as IHQ), outside of which stood a canteen truck, crewed by two female Salvationists, who had driven up from Barking in Essex with the express purpose of serving teas and other refreshments to the firemen and other Civil Defence workers hard at work in the City. One AFS firefighter, George Woodhouse from Holloway later remembered "two Salvation Army lasses who were handing out cups of tea and a biscuit as if it was a Sunday school picnic. I often wondered what the word courage meant, but on that night those two lasses had it in abundance."

Hydrants began to run dry as water mains were fractured and with the Thames at low tide, water supplies were for a time dependent on a relay of tanker vehicles bringing water from the Regent's Canal. Until the tide began to flood on the Thames, this was only source of water and such was the importance of Faraday House, the Fire Brigade was prepared to use explosives to destroy buildings in order to create a further firebreak. Fortunately, the tanker relay, coupled with a change in the wind direction was sufficient, although IHQ could not be saved.

Further upriver on the south bank, Lambeth Palace was on fire and on the north side of Lambeth Bridge the House of Commons chamber was similarly ablaze, victim of a mixture of high explosive bombs and countless incendiaries. Fires were everywhere; in Marylebone, the Central Synagogue was burning out of control with the fires spreading to adjoining properties. ARP Warden Stanley Barlow was deservedly awarded the George Medal for repeatedly entering burning



St Clement Danes Church today (top) and the church on the morning of 11 May 1941 (bottom) (Author's photos)



Splinter damage on the exterior of St Clement Danes Church
(Author's photo)

buildings in order to rescue terrified shelterers – fifteen in one building alone owed their lives to him. Not far away from here, the Queen's Hall in Portland Place – the original home of the Proms – was destroyed and when Sir Henry Wood picked his way through the rubble a few days later, all he could find undamaged was a cymbal, although he was quick to point out “*That's significant. A cymbal is amongst the oldest musical instruments known to man. You'll find it in the Bible. Even now, nothing can take its place in the orchestra. Its trumpets for victory, but the cymbal for a triumph.*”

The Queen's Hall was never rebuilt, with the Proms finding a new home at the Royal Albert Hall, but one significant casualty of the 10/11 May raid did rise again. The present St Clement Danes Church had been built by Wren in 1682 and was regarded, then as now, as one of London's finest churches. Since 1910, it had been under the stewardship of the Rev. William Horatio Pennington-Bickford and his wife Louie, who were greatly loved by their parishioners. It was one of the many buildings to succumb to German incendiaries and as the bombs continued to fall, the elderly couple were seen to be weeping whilst watching the gradual destruction of their church. Within weeks, both William Pennington-Bickford and his wife were dead and indeed the Reverend's death certificate reads ‘Died from a broken heart’, so distraught was he at the loss of his beloved church.

Post-war, the church was magnificently rebuilt as the Central Church of Royal Air Force and was re-consecrated in 1958. The exterior of the church still retains significant splinter damage as a reminder of its wartime past and near destruction, whilst the interior has been superbly restored to its former glory, with many artefacts donated by the Royal, Commonwealth and Allied Air Forces, most notably perhaps, the magnificent organ, a gift of the USAF.

On the morning of Sunday 11 May 1941, the all-clear sounded at 05:52 as the last of the bombers

headed back across the Channel. The RAF night fighters had managed to bring down just fourteen enemy bombers and it was clear that much remained to be done in that department. In the meantime, bleary eyed Londoners began to emerge from their shelters to find a devastated capital.

Marylebone Station was the only one of London's major rail termini to be open for traffic that morning. The others were closed either because the tracks leading to them had been severed, or the stations themselves were devastated. Euston, King's Cross, Liverpool Street, Paddington and St Pancras managed to re-open on a reduced scale on the Monday morning but Waterloo and Victoria remained closed for over a week and then only reopened on a vastly reduced scale, with Waterloo not returning to anything like a normal service until early June. The damage to the London Underground network was immense, with nearly thirty miles of track having been destroyed. The stretch of line between Baker Street and King's Cross didn't reopen until 21 July and the East London Line remained closed until 8 June.

On the roads, things were no better, with almost one thousand being closed on Sunday, many due to bomb craters or UXBs. All but two of the bridges across the Thames were blocked, with just Tower and Lambeth remaining passable. Two bus garages had been hit, in Poplar and Croydon with the loss of four members of staff and 113 buses.

Industry too was paralysed, with the many factories vital to Britain's war efforts out of action, although on this occasion, the vast Woolwich Arsenal site in Southeast London had not been hit. The destruction of a huge gasometer in Kennington, one of those that loom over the Oval Cricket Ground, meant that even those factories in South London that were undamaged could not operate for over a week due to the lack of a gas supply. Across the capital, 605 water mains and sewers were fractured, giving rise to the fear of a typhoid outbreak, although mercifully this did not materialise due to the excellent preparations already in place for just such an emergency.

Whilst the clear-up was getting under way on the Sunday morning, there was the lingering fear in the minds of Londoners that the Luftwaffe would surely return that night and continue the destruction. Fortunately for the battered capital, the bombers did not return and neither would they for the remainder of 1941, or 1942 for that matter. The citizens of London weren't to know as yet but Hitler was turning his eyes eastwards, towards the Soviet Union and London and its war-weary inhabitants were to get a respite. In the event, this was to last until 1943, when sporadic ‘tip and run’ raids would commence, followed by the so-called ‘Baby Blitz’ of late 1943 and early 1944 and culminating in the Vergeltungswaffen attacks by V-1 flying bombs and V-2 rockets in 1944 and 1945.

KENNKARTE – WINDOW ON THE ‘WILD EAST’

Peter Edwards

The use of a family heirloom as a tour prop began when taking groups around sites of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Clients frequently asked about the chances of escape – especially through the cemetery area – and, of course, conversation then turned to survival ‘on the run’ in occupied Poland. As with so many wartime states, survival would depend upon identification, proving the rights of residence and rations and, in the case of occupied Poland, existence.

As an avid child-viewer of Secret Army in the 1970s, I was fascinated by the ritual recourse of the Belgian Resistance to ‘Max the Forger’. As custodian of my grandparents' papers, I found myself in possession of my grandmother's identity card or *Kennkarte* – exactly the sort of item Max was supposed to produce. A real identity card, of course, tells far more stories than any TV drama prop.

First, there is the issue relating to survival in occupied Poland. The Poles, being judged *Untermenschen*, were only to be educated, according to Hitler's wishes to “a point where they could understand road signs and show an appropriate level of deference to Germans.” In this environment, materials such as paper, coloured inks and photographic paper and chemicals were in very short supply. A second photograph has been cut out of the document to be attached to my grandmother's application for naturalisation as a British Subject – if photographic paper was in short supply amongst the victorious powers in 1946, then it will have been like gold dust in occupied Poland. Furthermore, many people with the skills to create a forged document had been killed in the decapitation of the Polish intelligentsia in 1939. The practical problems of reproducing this document would have been enormous and that is assuming contact was made with a forger. Procurement of old, stolen or blank *Kennkarten* on the black market required large amounts of money – something a fugitive was unlikely to have. The best chance of survival after escape from the Ghetto was to make contact with partisans sympathetic to Jews and that in itself brought huge risks. The *Kennkarte* provides a route to learning about life outside the official occupied state.

Second, the document speaks clearly about the nature of Nazi occupation in the East. The first

language of the *Kennkarte* is German. The place of residence is outlined in accordance with Nazi German administrative arrangements – not the use of Kreis. Major Polish place names have been Germanised – *Krakau* for Kraków – although the town of Jasło remains in Polish. This, in itself, is historically noteworthy. Kraków was to be preserved as a post-war German administrative centre, whilst towns such as Jasło were to be razed. Indeed, over 75% of Jasło was destroyed as the Germans retreated in 1945. The expiry date of the old and new cards – 18 June 1942 and 18 June 1947 are also instructive. Poland fell in September 1939 and the original identification was to last only until June 1942, by which time Hitler had intended to have completed the conquest of *Lebensraum*. By this stage, many Poles would simply be regarded as surplus labour and either left to starve or be exterminated. That the war was not progressing entirely according to plan by the summer of 1942 is reflected in the decision to extend the date of new *Kennkarten*, and by implication the owner's life expectancy, to 1947. *Generalplan Ost* had condemned the Slavs to death, but the scale of military operations in the East bought a stay of execution. Indeed, the stamp of the *Generalgouvernement* can be seen across the centre page; historians have alluded to this as nothing more than Nazi Germany's ‘racial dustbin’, which would provide a pool of slave labour with the remainder left to slowly starve. Thus, the *Kennkarte* allows for an exploration of the German military's implementation of racial policy in the occupied East.

Finally, the document highlights the inconsistencies of Nazi racial policy. My grandmother was born in Hatzendorf, Styria, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire – her father was a railway worker and the family moved to hostels as work required. Notice, too, that



Styria was now firmly classed as Deutschland, having been absorbed in the creation of Großdeutschland in the period before 1940. This made my grandmother nominally German by birth and potentially susceptible to deportation as Volksdeutsch. This probably also spared her life, since she held a Master's degree and had been a teacher in 1939, identifying her as an intellectual. A large number of teachers, lecturers and other educated people from the Kraków area had been transported en masse to Sachsenhausen for immediate execution in 1939, but a potential Volksdeutsch could be forgiven an education. Birth in Großdeutschland quite possibly

also discouraged the Nazi authorities from looking too closely at my grandmother's family which could easily have been defined as Mischling (mixed Slav and Jewish) by German racial classifications. Above all, though, she was, most likely, simply regarded as peasant Untermensch and therefore disregarded. My grandmother's address was simply Harklowa. During the war, this was a tiny rural settlement without an extensive, well-ordered street pattern. After her home in Jasło was destroyed as part of German reprisals, she returned to the small family home in the countryside with her sisters and their children and tried to survive off the land for the next six years.

Two questions, however, overshadow the discussion of this artefact: is it military history and is it relevant to battlefield history? The response to the first question is an emphatic yes. The Kennkarte was a product of a military regime during a racial-ideological war, whose features were manifest in all aspects of Polish life. The Kennkarte exists as a statement of what the German army was aiming to achieve through its efforts on the battlefield and it is also emblematic of the administrative occupation duties that huge numbers of German soldiers carried out from 1938 to 1945. The second question prompts a more esoteric response. The holder of this Kennkarte witnessed the fall of Poland, the levelling of her marital home in German reprisals, the desultory shooting of Jewish neighbours and the aftermath of the killing by grenade of fugitives she fed in the woods. With a brother-in-law active in the AK (Polish Home Army and the largest resistance force in that country), her shared home was frequented by AK soldiers and regularly visited by the German occupation forces and their dogs. The area around Harklowa was bombed and civilians were also murdered in reprisals, to intimidate the Poles or simply for sport. In 1945, two battles were fought over the ground around her home and the last German soldiers promised to kill all the inhabitants of the home if the Red Army drove them west; fortunately, the Red Army despatched the Germans before they could make good their promise. She then experienced, first-hand, the behaviour of Soviet infantrymen and, later, NKVD troops. My grandfather fought in the fall of Poland, the fall of France and then in the North African and Italian campaigns. He was highly decorated at Monte Cassino and Bologna. He spent the years after 1945 consumed by guilt derived from his belief that his war had been "easy" compared to that of his wife and daughter. The Kennkarte may lack the immediacy of military hardware, maps or diaries, but its three small pages stand as a catalogue of a European racial-ideological war, where the lines between combatant and civilian were at their most blurred – a stark contrast to war in the West. I begin any tour by explaining why soldiers were on the ground in the first place and this document is a reminder of the more inglorious side of war and military policy that is in danger of slipping into obscurity with the passage of time.



Afterword

The house in Harklowa listed on the Kennkarte. Once very isolated, the house is now surrounded by new-build weekend homes for the upwardly mobile of Kraków. The battlefield archaeology in the area is at risk of disappearing under patches of pebble drives and breeze block walls. The difficulties of exploring likely sites of fighting are compounded by thick undergrowth frequented by lyme disease-infested deer, but one day soon, I will unpick this site. However, my family does have a secret less than 50 metres from this house. After the Red Army drove the Germans out of Harklowa for the last time in 1945, the Soviet infantrymen banished the family to the cellar; an officer told them that his men had not slept under a roof for months and he had promised them shelter for at least one night. After a warning about the behaviour of the NKVD troops who would follow, the cellar door was closed. My grandmother emerged early the next morning, but the infantrymen had already left. The wreckage of the battle lay all around the house. After the dead were taken to a local military cemetery that still holds the dead from the 1915 Gorlice-Tarnów Offensive, there only remained the matter of dealing with a large amount of discarded German ordnance. To this day, the nearby pond is still full of rifles, machine guns and a not insignificant quantity of ammunition, slowly degrading in the agricultural slime that forms the pond's bed. One can only wonder at the thousands of other ponds like this in rural Poland...

THE CWGC EXPERIENCE – OPENING JUNE 2019, ARRAS, FRANCE

Peter Francis, Media and PR Executive

An extraordinary organisation, an extraordinary experience

More people are visiting the cemeteries and memorials of the two World Wars than ever before. Yet for many of those visitors, how those cemeteries came to exist, their significance in remembrance of the war dead, and the story of who cares for them and how, is not well known.

In June 2019 all that will change when the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) opens its first ever visitor centre – The CWGC Experience – near the city of Arras in France.

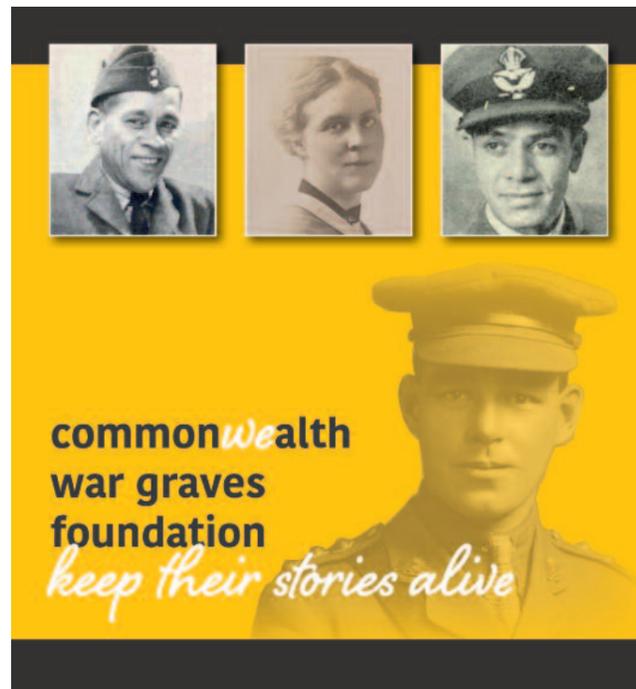
The CWGC Experience is a unique new visitor attraction at the centre of the First World War battlefields. It will shine a light on the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) – the remarkable organisation at the heart of remembrance of the war dead – giving visitors of all ages a never before seen glimpse into the workings of remembrance.

CWGC Director General Mrs Victoria Wallace explained; “We’re delighted, for the first time, to be able to share our story with everyone, at our workshop headquarters at Beaurains, near Arras in France. Here, we carve the world’s headstones; here, we restore architectural features, and here we still, almost every week, bring back the remains of soldiers lost on the Western Front, which we recover from the battlefields, ready for our member nations to identify. It’s a remarkable story – covering what we do not just in France but in over 150 countries and territories, mowing the equivalent of 1000 football pitches a week as we tend the cemeteries and memorials.”

“We believe the centre will appeal to all those who visit the Western Front and the battlefields - whether as a useful introduction, where you can find out more about the final resting places of relatives, or as a new layer of understanding to add to every tour of our sites.”



CWGC
Commonwealth War Graves Commission



“The CWGC Experience is emphatically not a museum, or a historical review of what we did in the aftermath of the First World War – it’s about what we do every day, and will continue to do into the future. Visitors will be able to see our headstone carving machines at work; watch as the forge fires up to restore bronze gates; follow the endless stream of lawnmowers and machinery coming in for servicing, and learn more about the artefacts that help point us towards tentative identification of newly recovered casualties. With films illustrating our work, and an



Find war dead

audio guide, they’ll hear from the staff themselves what they do to make these special places.”

The CWGC Experience is unique – in that everything and everyone you see during your visit are the real people, doing the real work it takes to remember the war dead.

The centre will give visitors an up close and intimate look behind the scenes at the teams who still work painstakingly to care for the fallen.

From the story of how we still recover and rebury the dead today, to the skilled artisan craftsmen at work maintaining the world’s most impressive and recognisable monuments and memorials, a trip to the battlefields of the Western Front is not complete without a visit to the CWGC Experience.

The CWGC Experience will open at the end of June 2019. Entry is free but larger parties – including coach groups – will need to book.

Visitors will take a self-guided tour, lasting approximately 45 minutes to an hour (a free audio guide is available). At various points on the tour, visitors can pause and see into the areas covering specific aspects of the CWGC’s work – be it



Find Memorials

headstone production, carpentry, blacksmiths or maintenance teams – before moving to one of the most moving elements of the tour – the recovery and reburial of the war dead.

To this day, there are, on average, 40 discovery of World War remains each year. In France, the CWGC’s staff play a vital role in that initial recovery process. Out of respect no human remains will be on display – rather recovery, identification and reburial area is a moving and contemplative space where genuine artefacts will detail the care and painstaking work that goes towards narrowing down an identity.

Regular special events and talks will supplement the existing offering – encouraging visitors to come back time and again.

We hope that visitors will find our story fascinating and look upon our cemeteries and memorials in a new light – becoming lifelong visitors and supporters of our work.

For more information see the CWGC’s website at www.cwgc.org/visit-us



GUILD *partner*

NEXT GENERATION TRAVEL

Alain Chissel

I am delighted that the NGT Group, which includes Anglia has been accepted as a Guild Partner. Next Generation Travel are the innovative parent company and driving force behind the UK's fastest growing educational travel brands; offering unique, immersive tours to young people from 10 -21 years, designed to open minds and empower learning.



The Group consists of WST, based in Blackpool who run the complete range of school visits including Geography and MFL (Modern Foreign Languages) tours, and FHT based in Cambridge, who deal with the University and Higher Education Sector. The Group acquired Anglia in 2017 and has since gone on to acquire Study Experiences, Sport Experiences, and Remembrance Travel for Schools and Youth Groups. Between us, the Group will take around 80,000 students on tour worldwide this year. This makes the NGT Group one of the top players in the education market. In addition to the numbers they take, and in my opinion far more important is the ethos behind each company in the Group. All have a proven track

record of excellent customer service and quality of product. NGT has also not tried to absorb the companies into one amorphous mass but instead kept the individual branding understanding that this is what customers want – as do we.

To members of the Guild, perhaps only Anglia and Remembrance Travel will be familiar names. Both employ the services of guides, many of whom are members of the Guild itself – some badged and some not. WST and FHT do not currently employ guides but Study Experiences and Sports Experiences do employ Tour Managers. The growth of Anglia in recent years has shown that in the education market, for history at least, there is a growing trend towards schools using



companies that employ guides, for a whole manner of reasons. This ranges from the expertise that they bring but also from the tour management perspective, taking a huge amount of pressure off already overworked teachers. Virtually every start up Tour Company in the education market now employ guides which is an indication of where things are moving.

I am however best qualified to talk about Anglia, a company I started along with Ed Church (Badged Guide – No 11) in 1997. Most of you will know us either personally or by reputation. Anglia has employed guides from the very beginning and now has some fifty guides on our books. Interestingly, we discovered that since we started, we have had 112 guides wearing the Anglia badge! Some retire, others decide for personal reasons to do something else, and sadly, one died - the irreplaceable Will Townend whose award I was honoured to present to Graeme Cooper at your AGM Dinner recently.

The selection process to become an Anglia guide is quite a lengthy one and for a variety of reasons, not all succeed. Being a schools based company our aim is to provide guides that can engage with young people and enthuse and inspire them – a tall order! The selection process starts with an interview by members of the training team, followed by a day trip to Ypres to watch guides working and to look at and note down the pluses and minuses of what they have seen. The group then discuss the good points and the bad that they have seen and how perhaps it could have been done better. On the Monday morning, the training team discuss and carry out a further sift of candidates. Phase 3 is a three-day training course centred in Ypres and the Somme where candidates are expected to deliver fifteen minute presentations to the other candidates based on our unique “Toolbox and Stand Notes” which would have been issued before the course. They will be told that they are delivering to a particular school (a real customer of Anglia), which could range from Special Needs, a deprived inner City school or Eton. They would be expected to present accordingly. All the candidates are “boarded” on return to the office and a

considerable amount of time is spent on each person and their suitability. The course is not free – candidates pay a fee, which is returned should they fail the course. If they pass, the fee would be refunded after ten successful guiding days with Anglia. The next phase is that they will attend a two-day tour with two experienced guides and they will be expected to deliver two stands, one in Ypres and the other on the Somme. They will be critiqued not only by the two guides, but also the school will be asked for their views as well. The guides will then be expected to write reports on the candidate, which again will be discussed by the training team. The successful guide will then be “badged” as an Anglia guide and given corporate clothing. The new guide will be on trial for a period of twelve months, during which time he or she will never work on their own until they learn the ropes. Guides will be encouraged and supported and their development monitored closely. This will culminate in an overnight observation by a member of the training team to ensure not only are they delivering the product to the customer, but that their Tour Manager skills are up to standard. This will normally take place towards the end of their twelve-month trial period. The report is detailed and is meant to be constructive and part of the report is dealing with where the guide sees himself or herself going forward. If the report is in any way unsatisfactory then a further observation will be undertaken by a different member of the training team within twelve months. Guides will normally be observed once every two to three years. Guides (by and large) enjoy the process and schools, who understand OFSTED really do appreciate it. The process to become an Anglia guide can take up to twelve months but the opportunities the company offers as well as the pay and conditions make it an attractive proposition.

The future is looking good and the NGT group is looking forward to working with the Guild to ensure that our guides and tour managers will be able to pursue their craft in Europe in the same way we currently do. I hope to see many of you in the coming months.



GUILD *merchandise*

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/
 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

BOUDICCA'S LAST STAND

David Harvey

On the first Saturday in March an intrepid crew followed Eddie Smallwood around Mancetter in search of where Queen Boudicca fought Roman legions. Battling against the elements, about twenty folk in wet weather gear were entertained to a walk, talk and lunch.



Eddie described how Boudicca's Iceni tribe led an uprising against Roman rule on AD 60. How having sacked London and St. Albans her army defeated the Roman 9th Legion. In this major revolt it's estimated 70,000 to 80,000 Romans and Britons died. The Romans responded by withdrawing the two remaining Legions from Anglesey. But where did the final decisive battle take place?

Eddie explained the likelihood of the Roman Legionary fortress at Mancetter as the primary place to search. We could see across the fields the A5 main road, the modern name for the Roman main military road 'Watling Street'. It made sense that this would be the route by which the two antagonists would approach each other for battle. So we walked around the terrain comparing what we could see with the contemporary account of Cassius Dio. As the rain set in we turned our backs to the wind, but were still enthralled to think we were standing on such an important battlefield.



The battlefield tour ended with a most welcome hearty lunch in Mancetter village hall. This was followed with a presentation, by Eddie, of a Roman Legionary's armour and weapons. As guild members looked on we treated to vivid explanations of the fighting methods and technically advance Roman weapons.

HAWTHORN RIDGE CRATER ASSOCIATION

The Hawthorn Ridge Crater Association Team 2019

2018 was quite a year for all involved in the association and so much positive work and study has been undertaken. We all met as a group for the first time, early in the New Year of 2018, at a very cold, wet and very overgrown Hawthorn Ridge site. From this first meeting of minds the seeds were sown for the coming year and the plans afoot of what we would like to achieve.



After eighteen months, at least, of groundwork, discussions and meetings with the local landowners of Beaumont Hamel and contacts formed with individuals with a passion for the subject and skills within varying areas of work, we had finally reached this point.

There were many challenges ahead, but plans were now put into motion to create a combined British-French association with the mutual intentions of firstly rescuing an iconic site from permanent loss and to then protect and preserve the area for years to come, whilst also allowing visitors the opportunity to visit in a safer and more accessible way. The local council of Beaumont paid for a site survey to establish the various land boundaries within the crater area (there were five different landowners). After these were agreed upon they also granted some extra land along parts of the perimeter, to allow us to have complete walking access.

Throughout the early months of 2018 work was undertaken to clear as much brushwood and bramble undergrowth from the crater as possible, along with the removal of dead and unsafe trees. The aim was always to maintain as many trees as possible to maintain the integrity of the site, preventing collapse and slip. At the same time the access path to the site was lightly levelled, under strict guidance from explosive and archaeological experts, to make the walk to the crater a little easier. The natural material removed from the crater was then chipped and mulched and recycled for use in maintaining the path. This work was all undertaken voluntarily by the association committee members and a number of volunteers who were some of the first to sign up!

In March the erecting of a boundary fence, separating the site from the surrounding farmland was begun, giving a controlled access to the site,



whilst respecting the surrounding property. This also gave better access to the path leading to Hawthorn Ridge Cemetery No.1. The exterior fence was completed by the summer. In May a team removed the old and crumbling steps at the entrance to the site and replaced them with safe and solid concrete steps, with the further plan of adding handrails - this was also undertaken in late September. A further



delineation fence, of a simple two strand wire construction was erected with our partners, local landowners, in the autumn. This also included a single safe path into the crater for viewing purposes. A further couple of days of brush removal was also undertaken in October.

This more or less completed the heavy, landscaping side of the project...from here it is just a case of maintaining the site on a yearly basis to keep the feel of the area but allowing good all round visitor viewing.

Throughout the year, the association has also been working alongside the Universities of Stafford and Keele, who are undertaking an ongoing study of the crater and its immediate surrounds. Drone photography, ground penetration radar scanning, soil

sampling and chemical analysis have all been used in helping to paint a picture of what happened and what the resulting effects have been over the following 100 years. Some of the results are proving to be very revealing and exciting, and the plan is for the universities to create their own website listing the ongoing results of their studies.

At the same time, we as an association, are in the process of constructing our own HRCA website, that will feature information and research around the site, whilst also linking to the university WebPages for all members to access. Again, we must

stress that we are all volunteers, with full time careers, so please bear with us in waiting...we are getting there!

In November we held the official inauguration of the crater and the handover of the site to the care of the association. It was a hugely successful event, with more than a hundred people attending. Many local dignitaries attended, the event was predominantly attended by French people, proving the total commitment by the local people to the project.

There will be a ceremony at the crater on the 1 July 2019, and all subsequent years, with plans for a similar event on the 13 November to support the commemoration of the capture of the crater and the village. All are welcome and details will be issued in the coming months.



Our aims are, and always will be, to preserve and protect the site, whilst honouring respectfully, the men of all nationalities who served there. This site was within weeks of possibly being used as a farm waste spoil dump...fortunately we got there in time.

We hope you will all visit the site in the near future to view our work and hope you will continue to support the association, all donations are reinvested in the maintenance and upkeep of the site. All committee members when travelling to work on the project give their time for free and fund their own travel and accommodation.

PRIMARY SOURCE CHURCHILL IN 1919 ON WAR GRAVES

John Hughes-Wilson

This primary source will be useful to every WW1 Western Front GBG Guide.



From The Times: May 30, 1919

In a written answer to Mr Wignall, who suggested that parents whose sons have been killed during the war should have permission to erect memorial stones over their graves on condition that the dimensions of the cross or headstone should not be greater than those of the headstones recommended by the Committee, Mr Churchill says:

“I regret I have no power to grant this permission. The responsibility rests with the Imperial War Graves Commission. The Secretary of State for War is ex-officio chairman, but otherwise it is entirely independent of the War Office. I may say that the aim of the Commission is to give effect to the desire expressed at the Imperial War Conference in 1917 that the Empire should accord equal honour to all those who have made the same sacrifice in the common cause.

A small section of the public has applied for permission to erect memorials of their own choosing but apart from the practical difficulties, which are not fully realized by those who have not seen the cemeteries, the Commission feel that the erection of individual memorials, varying according to taste and means, would be incompatible with a corporate commemoration of the citizens of the Empire who fought and fell together in her defence.

The Commission have asked those who object to their scheme to defer pressing their requests until the



three experimental cemeteries under construction are completed, when it will be possible to judge of the effect of the scheme as a whole.”

The Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress sent a letter to the Prince of Wales, who is **President of the Imperial War Graves Commission:**

“Representing some four and a half millions of working people, we urge most strongly that the natural desire of those who can afford it to put up memorials of their own choosing on the graves of their dead should not be allowed to interfere with the principle of equality of treatment.

The war has been fought and won by all classes joined equally in the suffering and sacrifice of life. This should be symbolized in the memorials in honour of our sons, and we would appeal to those whose means enable them to bear the cost of private monuments to set aside their individual preference.”

FIELDguides



Eugenie guiding a D-Day landing craft veteran on one of today's Royal Marine amphibious craft.



The Chairman dropped in for a Quality Assurance Check on Glenn Stennes beside Lake Doiran in the Republic of North Macedonia. Mike reports cold beer and a warm welcome were received on the Salonika Front.



Deere in the Dardanelles - Rob Deere using the terrain model at Ecebat to brief a Royal Navy Group on Ottoman defensive dispositions in 1915.(Staff Ride)



John Harris (left) and Dudley Giles at Utah Beach in Normandy on a D-Day 75 tour.



Wiltshire Army Cadet Force contingent being briefed by Tim Stoneman before going 'Over the Top' to attack the Schwaben Redoubt.



Classic Soviet iconography in Lithuania, for scale, the image shows Guild Member Julian Whippy at the base of the huge statues at Antakalnis War Cemetery (Image Staff Ride Ltd)

VALEDICTORY MESSAGE

Professor Gary Sheffield



Always keen to attempt to get away from the Western Front and spread the Guild Gospel...Gary working extremely hard in Bridgetown Barbados!

I stepped down as Honorary President at the AGM in January. I was very touched by the number of kind comments and good wishes, and was very pleased and humbled to be made a Life Member. I certainly have no intentions of losing touch, although it is good practice for a retired President to stay away from meetings for a period of time, to avoid breathing down the neck of his successor – even although we share an office at the University of Wolverhampton!

I was very honoured and flattered when asked to become President. At first, I wasn't sure, but I thought about it, looked at the state of the Guild, and then decided it was an organisation that I would be proud to represent. I confess that I wasn't a member at that stage. I had attended the initial open meeting in the National Army Museum when the Guild was set up some years before, but for various reasons decided not to join. One thing that deterred me was the impression that it was a bit of an army

officers' and ex-officers' clique. If that was true then, it was not true by the time that I became President, and certainly is not so now. However, the 'ex-officers' drinking club' image does linger to some extent in the outside world, and I think it is important that Guild members do all they can to dispel this misleading impression. In fact, we have an increasingly diverse membership, and we are all the stronger for it.

In my time as Honorary President, I have watched with pleasure as the Guild has grown and developed. The Guild Chairman throughout my time of office, Mike Peters, deserves much credit for this. Very early on we decided that my role, apart from the ceremonial aspects, would be work 'behind the scenes' on behalf of the Guild, and to offer advice to Mike and other officers of the Guild. Sometimes they asked for this advice, on other occasions I gave it unasked, but of course they were free to ignore it. I'd like to thank Mike and everyone else in the Guild for

making my term of office a pleasure.

Battlefield tours and staff rides have been part of my life for a very long time. I went on my first organized tour (with the Holts, to the Western Front) in 1984, as a postgrad, and two years later as a junior lecturer in the Department of War Studies, RMA Sandhurst was involved in leading a tour to Normandy. Since then I have lost count of the number of tours I have lead. The furthest flung one was a private tour of Maori Pa in New Zealand. My favourites are Gallipoli, and Wellington in the Peninsula. Oddly, the one tour I have never done, leading or otherwise, is Arnhem – so my bucket list remains incomplete, and I am open to offers! The tours that I have done most are variations on the Somme and Normandy. I like to keep them fresh by adding different stands, or looking at existing stands from different angles. Of course, moving beyond 1 July 1916 or 6 June 1944 can be a challenge. I've never done it, but I've often thought a 2 July 1916 or 7 June 1944 tour would be interesting. Of course, the reces are often more enjoyable than the actual tours. I remember two in particular with fondness. In 2003 I went with two friends to the Somme area, and we reced 12th Division's actions in the Hundred Days. Around the same time I did a Normandy recce for the (then) Army Junior Division of the Staff College, and walked/drove the route of Operation Epsom. But

perhaps the most memorable tour was for a private party – I did the 2nd Munsters at Etreux in 1914 as a TEWT. As no one in the party actually knew the story, it enabled me to build up the dramatic tension!

A few words to finish. Battlefield tours are absolutely invaluable as educational tools – whether overtly, as in taking parties of school students to the Western Front as part of the First World War centenary, or as part of the leisure industry. They can do great good, or great harm. Incompetent or biased guides, or those who lack knowledge of up-to-date historical research on their subject, can be extremely damaging. I'm not suggesting that you need a Ph. D to be a good battlefield guide – although the increasing number of guides who are taking MAs is very encouraging, and I have had the pleasure of supervising several guild members' dissertations – but guides do need to be abreast of current research. The Guild offers an excellent way of keeping up to date. And of course, the rigorous process of becoming a badged guide has been vital in driving up standard within the industry. That is why the Guild of Battlefield Guides is such an important organisation. I have been proud to have been your Honorary President since 2012, and I will continue to be a strong supporter of the Guild in the future.

I look forward to meeting you on the battlefields.



LIBERATION OFFENSIVE OCT 1918 – MEMORIAL TO THE CROSSING OF THE RIVER LYS

Gil Bossuyt

This is not so special a picture, but we are standing at a place on which – through researching and our memorial project – a spectacular, but almost unknown story can be told today. I don't think many battlefield guides will know this place, I would be happy to introduce it to you all.



I am on the absolute right of the picture, with a Scottish-Northern Irish group at our brand new 36th (Ulster) Division Memorial at the banks of the River Lys in Bavikhove (Flanders). Standing at the Memorial marker stone, you look over the exact place where the 36th (Ulster) Division crossed the river Lys, in October 1918.

I am happy to see that some British groups visiting the 'classic' WW1 regions of the Somme and the Ypres Salient, are now making this surprising detour for our Memorial and its story. I live nearby, and I am – of course - very proud to take them around.

The Memorial was inaugurated on August 18th, 2018. The Carnmoney 'Pride of the Hill' Flute Band came over to take part in the ceremony, to memorise a chapter from the First World War that was about to be forgotten...

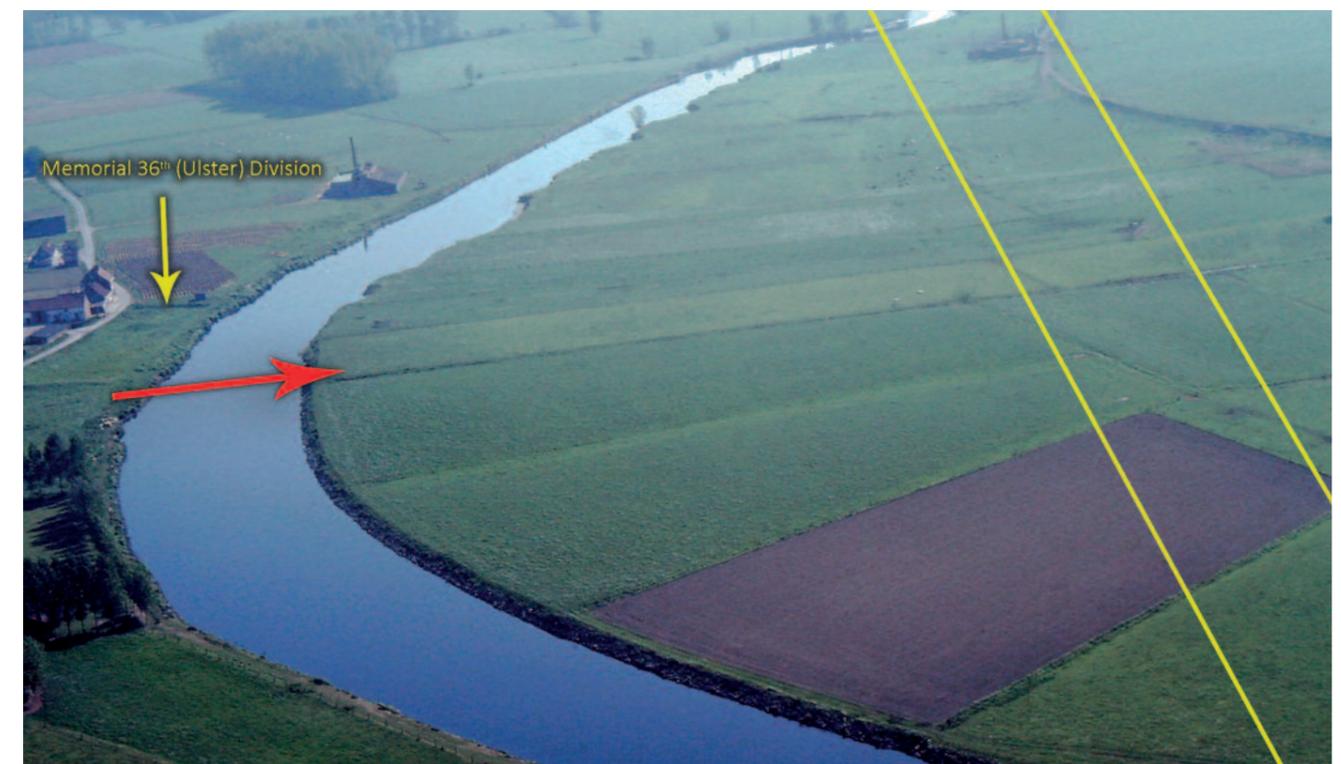
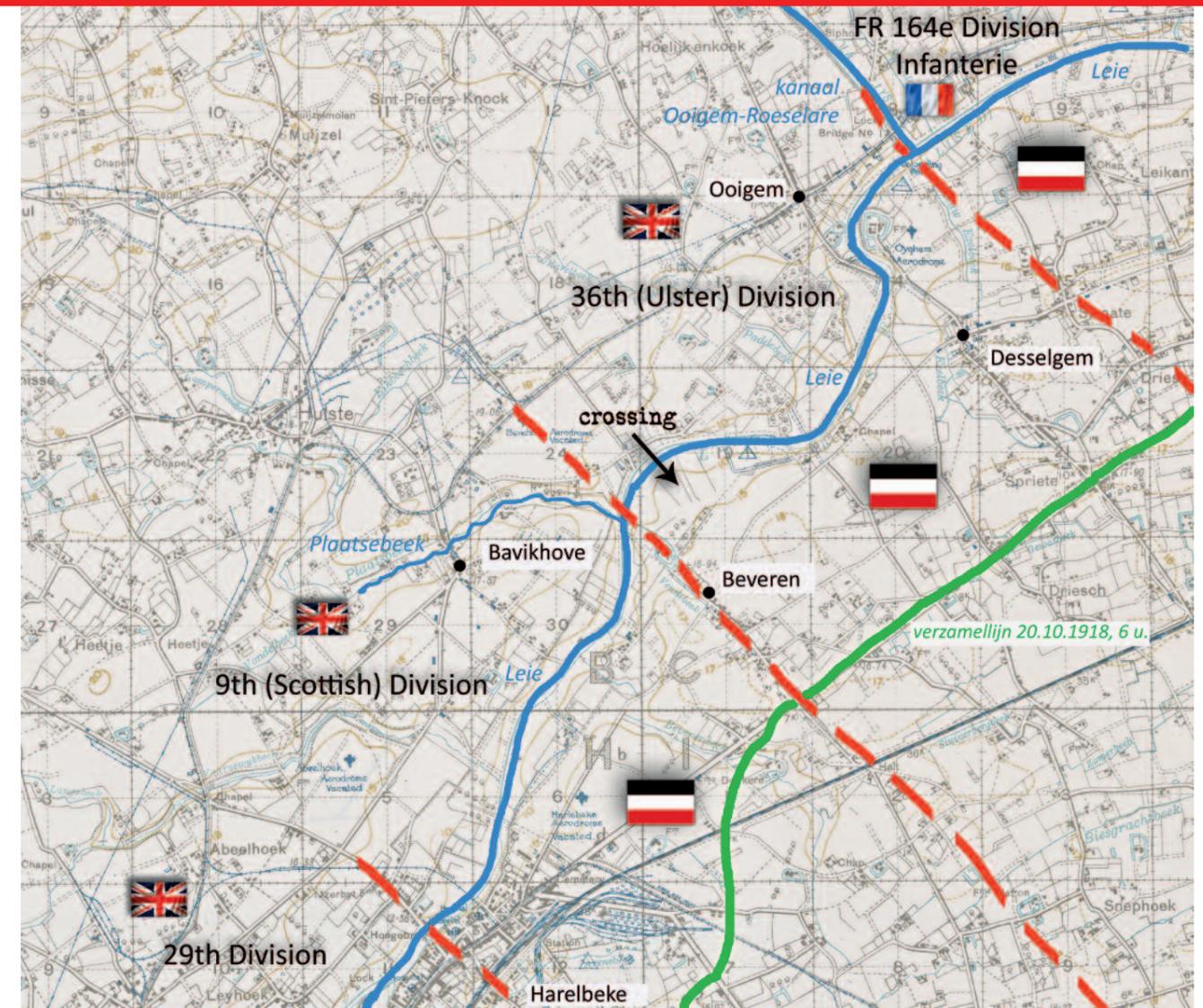
The events that took place here unraveled bit by

bit, while I was researching for my book on the Liberation Offensive around the Lys in Flanders. I was not only amazed by the events themselves, but also by the precision with which everything was written down in various diaries. I studied the final offensive in this region reading the reports from Belgian, British, French and German sides.

While researching I got in touch with Phil Hamilton from Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland, and a few weeks later (it was in May, 2017), we met, and visited some places in the region.

The idea for the memorial came from Phil, a few months later. And thanks to good cooperation with the local authorities, we could realise this project.

It was the Belgians, who first got to the banks of the Lys and liberated Bavikhove and Ooigem, on October 16th, 1918. Starting from the old frontline at Ypres they had - together with French and British troops -



driven back the Germans. The retreating enemy had blown up all existing bridges over the river.

On October 18th, the 36th (Ulster) Division took over from the Belgians here to implement the effective crossing plans. In the direction of Harelbeke, on the right flank, was the 9th Scottish division. On the left flank were the French, starting from the canal Ooigem-Roeselare.

You would hardly recognize this place 100 years ago: on the other side there were no woods, but a large meadow, with a high road behind it and the small village of Beveren-Leie. In the farms and houses across the river were German machine guns, who were spying every movement and did everything to disrupt the preparations for the crossing.

It is important to know that in this final phase of the war, the German army was NOT a panic-fleeing army. It was still a deadly opponent, who retreated very systematically. During these last weeks of the war, they regularly hit back strong, and caused many casualties.

In the night of 19 to 20 October, a joint crossing of the river by British and French troops was planned. This place in Bavikhove, with this favourable river bend, which allowed much coverage from the flanks, seemed the ideal place to build a bridge to the other side.

In the hours before the crossing, the 121st Field Company had hidden its material in a farm you can see very clear from the memorial. The 150th Field Company had put their material in reserve in another farm within short distance.

Of all the troops on the Lys, the Irish were the first to cross. At 19.25 they started the dangerous operation. After a few boats were towed to the other side, the Germans noticed the British actions: some light flares went into the air and the machine guns began to rattle. The German artillery also started its heavy shelling on this bank.

A moment later, a German artillery grenade fell on

this spot, killing four men instantly, and wounding several others. Sapper James Hutton and driver Coldridge died here on the river bank. They are buried in 'Harlebeke New British Cemetery'.

In the most dangerous and chaotic circumstances the Field Companies managed to build a bridge, and get soldiers (Royal Irish Rifles, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and Royal Irish Fusiliers) across the river.

What followed were hard battles to get a foothold in Beveren-Leie, Desselgem and further on to the Leemput, Molenhoek and Belgiek. The French on the left were far behind, so the left flank of the 36th (Ulster) Division was stretched out too long, and was very vulnerable. It turned out in a very difficult situation around Waregem and Anzegem.

When the 36th Division was taken out of the line at Anzegem on 27 October, they were completely exhausted and had lost many valuable men. At Harlebeke New British Cemetery there are - at least - 120 men who crossed the Lys at this very place, and lost their lives between October 19th, and October, 27th, 1918.

Among them: many who survived the Somme and Passendale ... and hoped for a quick end of the war. But they never came home. The memorial is meant to be a lasting memory of these dramatic events. For the victims from all sides: British, German, French and Belgian. To make us reflect on how brave people can be, but also what people can do to each other.

With groups visiting the memorial, I always take them to 'Harlebeke New British Cemetery', to go and visit the men who fell in these last actions. Lots of their stories are mentioned in my book, which is in Dutch. There is lots of interest from Northern Ireland and Great Britain to get it translated in English...

Any groups who want to come over, do not hesitate to contact me : gil.bossuyt@skynet.be or 0032.479.29.29.08, or www.frontaaltours.com



EVENTguide 2019-20

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

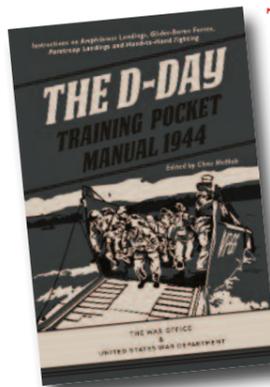
28 Sep (TBC) - Validation Day, Windsor - Tim Stoneman

7-11 Oct - Berlin Recce - Chris Finn

6 Dec - Guild Christmas Lunch, UJC London - Andy Thompson

31 Jan - 2 Feb 2020 - Annual Conference Maidstone - John Harris

GUIDEbooks:



THE D-DAY TRAINING POCKET MANUAL, 1944

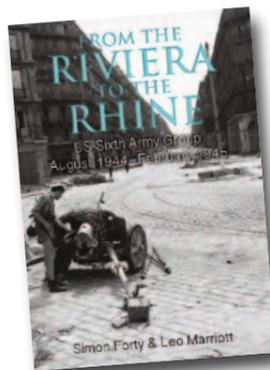
Instructions on Amphibious Landings, Glider-Borne Forces, Paratroop Landings and Hand to Hand Fighting.

Edited by Dr Chris McNab

The rapidly approaching 75th Anniversary of Op Overlord will inevitably trigger the release of waves of low-grade recycled books about D-day. I have not been looking forward to that part of the commemorations at all, so it was a pleasant surprise to receive this excellent compilation. The subject matter gives some great insight into the Doctrine of the day, the minute detail packed into each of the chapters is genuinely fascinating and useful to the Normandy Guides out there. Great value for money, unreservedly recommended for Battlefield Guiding.

Review by Mike Peters

Published by Casemate UK
RRP £8.99
hardback, pp160, 30 Photographs &



FROM THE RIVIERA TO THE RHINE US Sixth Army Group August 1944 – February 1945

By Simon Forty & Leo Marriott

Following on from their earlier successful battlefield guidebooks Casemate have released this new guide to US operations in Southern

France and beyond. Suffice to say the quality level has been sustained in all respects, lavish illustrations, maps and detailed historical narrative blend together well to produce a comprehensive guide. This is likely to be an area of interest for the Tour Industry once Normandy 75 is over; it is already attracting an increased level of military interest. This book signposts the route away from Op Anvil/Dragoon to much more interesting sites further inland.

Review by Mike Peters

Published by Casemate
RRP £25.00
hardback, pp192

LESSONS FROM THE MUD 55th (West Lancashire) Division at the Third Battle of Ypres

Edited by Paul Knight

There are numerous official and unofficial Divisional histories, this one is unusual in its origin and its format. Originally compiled by the GOC, General Jeurwine in the immediate aftermath of two separate attacks by his own division. The history was compiled using an extensive combination of Official Reports, War Diaries, Maps and most importantly, a broad spectrum of Officer and Soldier Narratives. The latter give a real insight into the reality of the Great War and robustly challenge the outdated myth of the Chateau General. Carefully edited and well presented, this is a useful addition to any Great War collection. Certainly a valuable resource if planning a trip to the Salient.

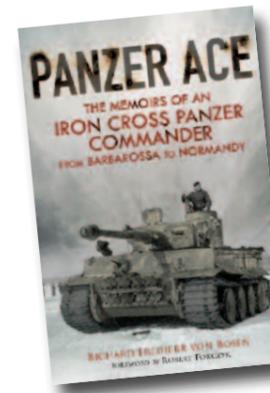
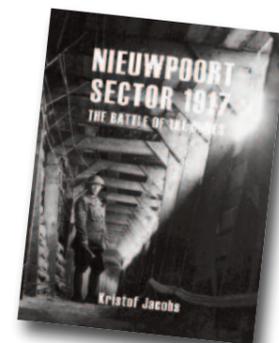
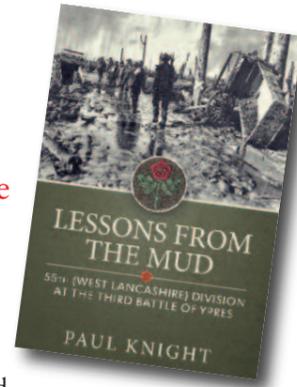
Published by Helion
RRP £35.00
paperback, pp463

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



PANZER ACE The Memoirs of an Iron Cross Panzer Commander from Barbarossa to Normandy

By Richard Freiherr von Rosen

There are an abundance of German Memoirs available to the reader today and the impending wave of WW2 Anniversaries will no doubt trigger a deluge of reprints. If you are going to buy one, take a good look at this remarkably crafted account of the war as seen from the turret of all types of Panzer. This book contains over 400 photographs, a detailed narrative and numerous maps and documents. The authors begins his war as a gun layer on the diminutive Panzer II, fights through Barbarossa, Kursk, Normandy and finally ends the war on the King Tiger in the last battle for Hungary. Outstanding!

Published by Greenhill Books Ltd
RRP £25.00
hardback, pp390



FIGHTING FOX COMPANY The Battling Flank of the Band of Brothers

By Terry Poyser and Bill Brown

If you like your military history and the soldier's eye level and a blow by blow narrative of combat at the tactical level, then this book is for you. The authors have meticulously researched the experience of a single US Parachute Infantry Company and followed them from formation to D-day and through Holland to VE Day. The maps are ideal for the Battlefield Guide walking the ground, in the case of St Mere Eglise, placing individual parachutists on the town plan. Although it is a parallel track to the legendary Easy Company, there is enough new information to make it a refreshing read. Highly Recommended!

Review by Mike Peters

Published by Casemate
RRP £14.99
paperback, pp344/16 Illustrations

BREATH TAKING SPECTACLE A Written and Pictorial History of IX Troop Carrier Command in England during WWII Vol1: The 52nd Troop Carrier Wing

By Adam G.R. Berry & Hans Den Brok

If there is an aspect of WW2 history that can truly justify the overused description of being forgotten, perhaps the contribution of the Troop-Carrying formations of all the Allied Air Forces does come close? We tend to pay them lip service and focus on the actions of the more glamorous units that they delivered into battle by glider and parachute. This exceptional new volume goes a long way toward redressing the balance of available history. Highlighting in an initial volume the 52nd Troop Carrier Wing USAF, this is a complete history of one of the most experienced Transport formations of the war, covering every aspect of the lives of its personnel both in the air over Europe and on the ground in England. It features a staggering amount of detail based on extensive research. Sure to be acclaimed as the benchmark work on the subject.

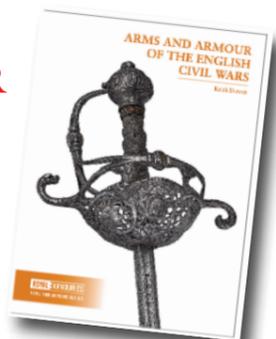
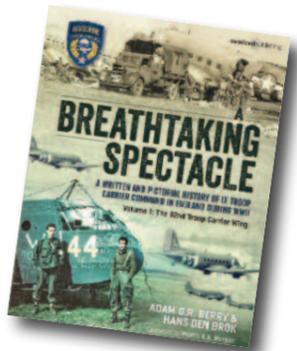
Published by Overlord Publishing
RRP £65.00
hardback, pp600

ARMS AND ARMOUR OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS

By Keith Downen

This is a period of military history that many of us know surprisingly little about. Every now and again I do have to plunge into it and find myself scabbling around for reliable, accurate and above all with time pressing, concise source material. Well, this new book will now be at the top of my English Civil War library, it really is very good. It is extremely well illustrated throughout and the narrative is readable and informative. The chapters cover the organization, equipment and armaments of the Armies of the period in a logical and accessible style. Simply put, it lives up to its billing as an Arms & Armour Guide.

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10 Questions:

Name: Paul Colbourne

Age: 56

Nationality: British

Home Location: Rugby,
Warwickshire

Tour Company: Backroads Tours & Independent

Validating: Intending



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

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

I have always had an interest in military history being one of the 'Airfix' generation. My unhealthy obsession with the First World War began some 30 years ago on a family holiday to France. A comment by my wife's late grandmother about 'our Thomas is in France' led me finding out who he was and where he was buried, a challenge back then but now that records are digitised this process is a lot more straightforward. We visited the cemetery and paid our respects, took some photos to show grandma and went back to our daily routine. I could not help feeling I owed Thomas a little more so began researching his service. He had served on the Western Front with the DLI from April 1915 to October 1918 so following his movements across the W F has taken me to most of the major British battlefields.

2. Have any experiences stood out? Guiding a private group last year called 'The Jolly Boys', 7 gentlemen with age's ranging from 68 to 76, they had a taste for good food and expensive wine. Pre tour meeting established three great uncles to follow, the 100th anniversary of one's death would coincide with the visit. I was not expecting them to be as moved as they were, both emotionally as individuals and as a group. Research had provided me with some out of the way locations and with the aid of Linesman I

was able to provide some quite extraordinary moments for 'The Jolly Boys' that became unforgettable for me.

- 3. What do you enjoy the most about battlefield guiding?** The personal touch, finding that little nugget that helps people connect with the past. Being out in the fresh air connecting with people who have a genuine interest in what you have to say.
- 4. What is your favourite stand, location or battlefield and why?** For me it has to be the Somme, particularly the area around High Wood. I feel a connection with the area that is difficult to explain but I am sure I am not alone.
- 5. Which battlefield would you like to visit in the future?** Gallipoli.
- 6. What have you enjoyed the most about being a member of the Guild?** The networking and the willingness to share information and knowledge. Jo Hook has always been extremely helpful along with our Chairman Mike.
- 7. If there was a fire and you could only save one battlefield-related book or prop, what would you save and why?** Thomas's soap tin, the only direct link back to him. It is also full of other bits.
- 8. What type of group do you think is the most challenging to lead on a tour?** I would have said schools until I took 'The Jolly Boys'. All well-educated and successful business men with independent minds who were difficult to get going in the morning, argued amongst themselves constantly, were forgetful and had somewhat regressed back a few years when away from home. They were quite special.
- 9. What's the best tip, story or nugget of information you have been given by a fellow battlefield guide?** Entertain your guests and never forget it is their tour, be prepared to be flexible.
- 10. What is the funniest or most dramatic thing you have seen on tour?** A couple in a passionate tangled embrace at Courcellette British Cemetery. I think they were there for the sunset.

NEWmembers:

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