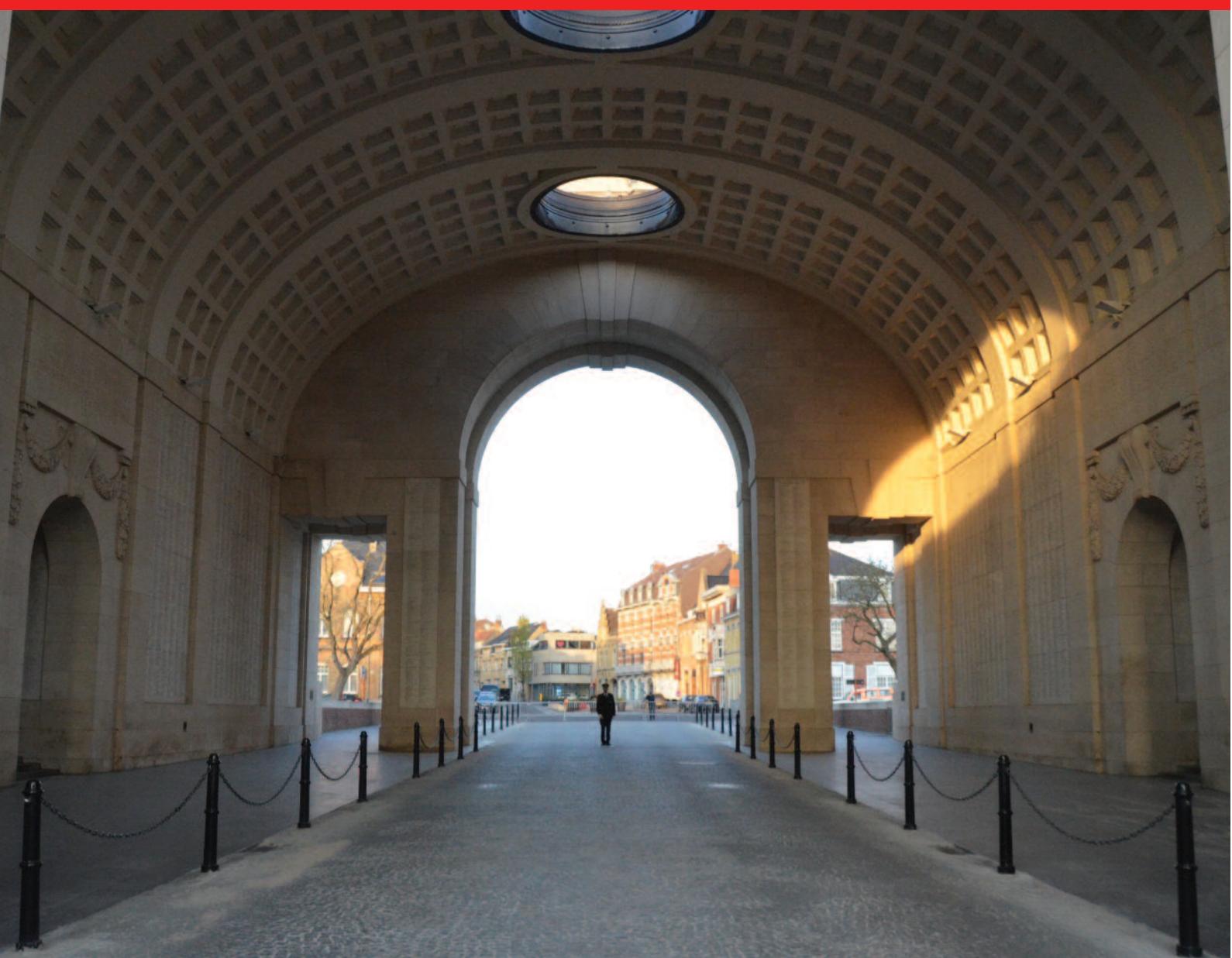




DESPATCHES

the magazine of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides



IN THIS ISSUE:

Berlin to Colditz

Reflective Centenary Guide

Saddle Sore Infantryman in Normandy

Memorials at the Uttermost End of the Earth

PLUS

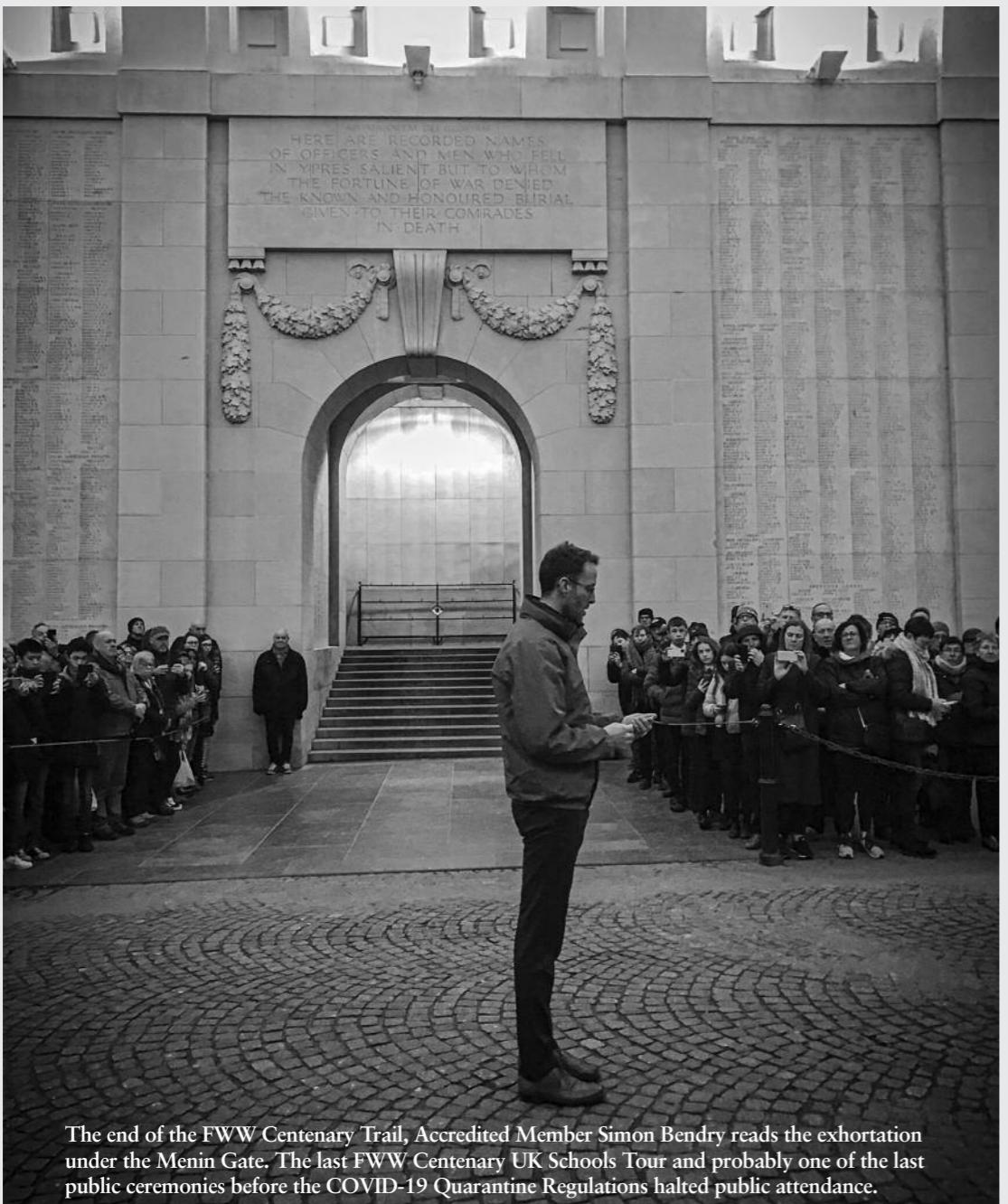
New Validation Guide

AND

Wine Guide

FIELDguides

Cover image: Last post Bugler - Ieper. The Ceremony is not about the Public, it is to the Fallen (Last Post Association)



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Material for publication in the Summer edition of 'Despatches' must be with the Editor no later than 1 August 2020. This is a deadline and submissions should be sent as far in advance as possible.

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

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GUILDhighlight



On the 11th of November 1923 the Memorial to the Royal Irish Regiment (18th of Foot) was unveiled at Mons.

The inscription on the limestone cross reads: "To the Glory of God and to the memory of the Officers and Men of the Royal Irish Regiment (18th of Foot) who fell during the Great War of 1914 - 1918." Near this spot the 2nd Battalion commenced operations on the 23rd of August and finished on the 11th of November 1918 after being decimated on four occasions.

Kay Neagle



OPENINGshot: THE CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

Welcome fellow Guild Members and Partners to what I hope will be a unique issue of '*Despatches*'. As part of our initiative to make the most of the quarantine situation, we have produced a bigger than usual magazine for us all to enjoy. Thank you to everybody that has contributed a wide variety of articles and reviews, It has made my editorial task more difficult...in a positive way. I hope that you will all enjoy the magazine and perhaps feel encouraged to contribute to our next issue?

There can be no doubt that we are going through extraordinary times, all the more so as we spend much of our time recalling extraordinary times in history. Yet, here we are now, experiencing something that none of us could have forecast or imagined. Rest assured that the GBG Management Board are aware of how difficult these times are for members both personally and commercially. Wherever we are, we have no choice to sit this out and wait. It is true however, that for once, we are all in this together – it is not a cliché. I have watched the virus spread like all of you, the emails from members around the globe tracing the spread like Contact Reports on a tactical radio net. There has however been an underlying tone of resilience and a determination to bounce back when the 'All Clear' is sounded.

The innovation of GBG members in the way that they have continued to function as virtual guides and historians has been a real positive development. It will be interesting to see whether the current abundance of lectures on Zoom, Twitter Blitz Walks and Lockdown Lectures endure after COVID-19 has passed. Congratulations to everyone who has developed new ideas and continued to share their knowledge. I could say that, there has been no better time to be a Virtual Battlefield Guide...best not!

As I have said in recent updates, the Management Board has been busy. We are striving to maintain the momentum gained from the Annual Conference. You will be aware of the recent changes to our Validation Syllabus that have been implemented – details from DVal, Chris Finn are contained in this issue and on the website. Please take a look at the documents before you drive forward to complete Accreditation in Quarantine. Joking aside, I sincerely hope that many of you will seize this unexpected opportunity and the new validation initiative to become accredited. It would be an amazing outcome if in the aftermath of

this Pandemic, we could emerge from our collective quarantine with a bumper cohort of new badges. There are few excuses now for not getting into validation. Wherever you are, if you can get an internet connection, you can now validate. Well done to Chris and the Validation Team for their efforts.

As you can see in the Events Guide, we have been forced to postpone a host of events. Rest assured though; Events Director David Harvey is monitoring the situation. We will adapt to the shifting timelines that have been forced on us, we are already planning next year's events. We are also intent on resuscitating the current 2020 event season as soon as the opportunity presents itself. I am personally looking forward to all gathering together (without social distancing) and catching up at the Annual Conference. More details on that to follow in the coming weeks.

Finally, from the Board – Marc Yates continues to overhaul our Governance policies and their management. He is working with John Harris to get all of this onto our website in an accessible and secure place and format. Please take the time to have a look at the result of a lot of work. Accredited Guides now might be the optimum time to refresh your biography page and to consider the IT security aspects of the page. As per the last update, we are removing your direct email addresses in order to prevent hacking and phishing on our site.

I hope that you are all in good health and not too frustrated being locked away, unable to roam your favourite battlefields. This will pass, we will look back on it as history soon. In the meantime, lets all stick together and support each other from a distance. Please, if you have not paid your Annual Subscription – do so. We are busy enough with all of the initiatives that I have mentioned, without chasing individual members for half of the membership year. If you are experiencing genuine hardship and can't pay, contact the Tony Smith, the Membership Secretary in confidence.

That is enough from me I think, I hope that you enjoy this copy of '*Despatches*'!

Good Health to You All

Mike Peters
Chairman



FIRST WORLD WAR COMMEMORATION BATTLEFIELD TOUR PROGRAMME (FWWCBT) A GUIDES REFLECTION

Terry Webb

Guild members will be aware of the above programme. It was well publicised at the Guild Conference in February and has rightly attracted much praise. It was the most outstanding programme/event of the First World War commemorations, and probably the only one that truly reflected that conflict. As it is now finished, I thought it would be a good idea to give a guides view of it, and how it has shaped the way I now approach school tours.



CONCEPT

Many members in the Guild guide school tours. Although we are always encouraged to involve the students by way of activities, it has to be said that the majority of tours include guides talking for several minutes at a time, often 'losing' their audiences. After all we are 'story tellers', and we want to tell the story. Several guides engage students by using uniforms, weapons and other props, and sometimes getting them to 'dress up'. This

goes a long way to getting them involved, and is often very popular, but does it by itself educate? Other activities do help, but usually lack much context.

Another issue with many school tours is trying to cram in multiple sites, leading to insufficient time to absorb each location. This is sometimes because schools have specific reasons for certain locations; graves of former students, a student's relative etc. Whilst these are important, and can 'lead in' students to develop an interest, it leaves little time to really appreciate the battlefield and understand what happened and why it happened there. Students are rarely encouraged to analyse events whilst in the best place to do so, where it actually happened.

The First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours Programme was different in several ways. First, the tours were not stand-alone events, but part of a wider education programme. This included briefings and CPD for teachers, and the Legacy 110 project. That project was, and still is, a scheme whereby schools developed ideas to reach out to their local communities. It was originally estimated that about 8,000 students would attend the tours, and that if each student project reached 110 people that total reach would 880,000 – roughly the number of British and Empire soldiers killed in the First World War. That total target of 880,000 people has been exceeded by a factor of 17, over 15 million people having been reached to date!

Every state secondary school in England was invited to send one teacher and two students on the tours, paid for by the government. This was later extended to one teacher and up to four students. Special Education Needs providers were included, usually on the basis of one teacher to each SEN student. This was a unique opportunity, especially for those schools who for several reasons did not already visit the battlefields. There was much competition amongst students to gain a place, and often 'competitions' were held by teachers to select appropriate attendees. It may seem unfair that only 2-4 students could attend, but it would have been impractical for greater numbers. The aspiration was that those attending would encourage greater interest amongst others, through projects like Legacy 110 – and as is shown by the numbers, many did.

As responsibility for education is devolved, governments in Scotland, Wales did not run similar programmes, preferring to conduct their own commemorative events. I doubt if they had any real impact. Sadly a similar scheme for Northern Ireland was never able to get started due to the lack of government between 2016 and 2020.

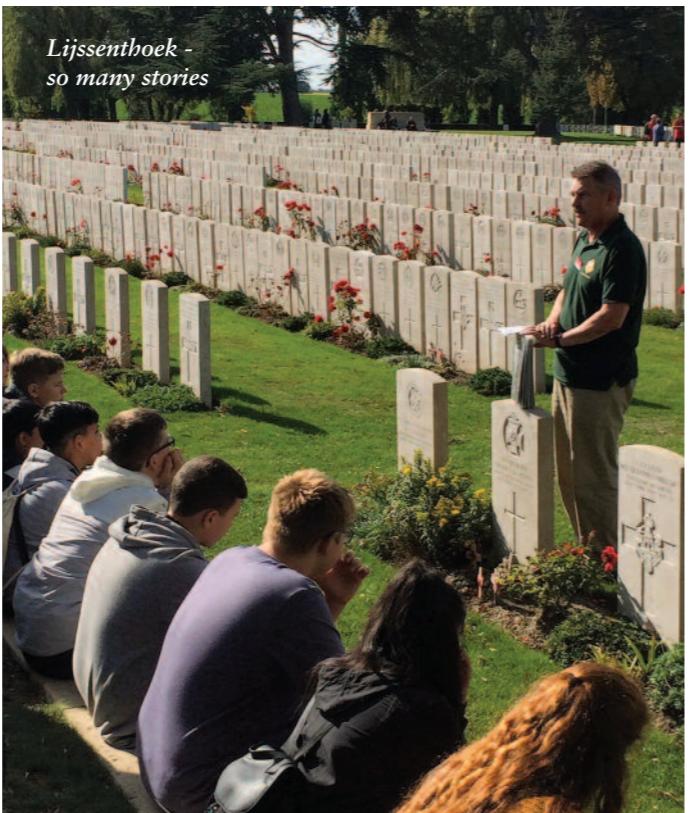
ORGANISATION

The contract for the scheme was jointly awarded to University College London's Institute of Education (UCL/IoE) and STG later renamed Equity Travel.

UCL designed, developed and delivered the aims and content; teacher briefings and CPD, Legacy 110 and the battlefield tours while Equity provided the logistics element; transport, accommodation, meal arrangements etc. A UCL Educator accompanied each tour, made up initially of three coaches per tour but later reduced to two. Coaches were comprised of a number of schools from a particular region. UCL were responsible for overall direction of the tour, education being their principal driver. A Tour Rep was provided by Equity for each coach, alleviating the guides, and probably more importantly the teachers, responsibilities for the logistic arrangements. This allowed them to concentrate on their particular roles.

An early agreement and part of the contract stipulated that the guides had to be badged/accredited members of the Guild. Originally they were selected by Equity, and administered by them. Equity also required the guides to be First Aid trained. About half way through the programme the guides administration was rightly transferred to UCL.

In addition the Army wished to be involved as part of their commitment to the First World War Commemorations, Operation Reflect. As a result, a serving soldier accompanied each coach, and a command team of two, usually officers/warrant officers, provided back up, roving between sites in a separate vehicle. The soldiers contribution was to provide comparisons with modern day soldiering. At the beginning of the programme most of the soldiers had operational experience so they could relate somewhat to First World War soldiers experiences.



Even on later tours where several soldiers had no such experience, they were able to compare various aspects of tactics, weapons and equipment.

TOUR OUTLINE

The tours themselves were designed to be focused on specific themes, using enquiry based learning, but within the context of providing the 'bigger picture'. Focus questions were set for each of three days. Sites were selected to partly reflect these questions, and each site had a particular focus designed to dovetail into the day's question. As the programme developed a further question was added to reflect the events of 1918.

Often sites were added for specific school populations. Neuve Chapelle for those schools from areas with Indian sub-continent ethnic backgrounds, and Devonshire Trench for those from that county, for example.

Equity had a facility at Ashford in Kent that was utilised as a rendezvous for all coaches, and, for the first four years, as transit accommodation for one night. During that evening various activities took place to prepare teachers and students for the tour. These included briefings on locations to be visited, an introduction to enquiry based learning, 'local soldier' research and an artefacts handling session.



Artefacts Session - SMLE always popular

UCL had researched local soldier stories from the coaches regions and distributed them for research on the facility IT systems, or using tablets/phones and laptops. Every school therefore had a soldier from their own town to research and all were commemorated at Tyne Cot and Thiepval, so their graves or names on the memorials were visited to follow through the research.

ITINERARY

The tours were four days long. It often involved long journeys for schools, especially from those in the north of the country or the far south west. For the first four years the itinerary was:

Day 1. Travel to Ashford. Evening briefings, teacher CPD, local soldier research and artefacts handling. Tour booklets were distributed to teachers and students. These contained maps and information on sites being visited, and included suggested activities at those locations. It should be emphasised that these were not workbooks to be completed. Activities were suggestions and not necessarily to be followed. More about enquiry based learning later.

Artefacts included fragments and parts of shells, medals, personal items, bullets and a SMLE. Of course everybody wanted to handle the rifle, and it was left to the end as the 'wow' factor. This session was led by the guides, assisted by the soldiers. Most guides added their own items; I always showed my grandad's medals and his 1914 Christmas Tin.

Day 2. Focus question: 'How did the First World War affect ordinary people?'. Travel to Ypres area. The first visit was to Lijssenthoek CWGC Cemetery. En route the CWGC DVD 'A Debt of Honour' was played to give an initial introduction to CWGC, and guides often gave two or three short talks lasting no more than five minutes, similar to normal school tours. Themes included logistics, terrain and orientation. These themes would be developed over the following days.

Lijssenthoek was a convenient start, not only geographically, but for other reasons. It contains graves from many countries showing what a global event the war was, and it was a Casualty Clearing Station so medical aspects could be covered. It was a perfect site for enquiry based learning.

Visit Passchendaele Memorial Museum Zonnebeke. This was not like several school tours where the teachers and students often rushed through. They were told what was contained within the museum, and working in their school groups, to select, if they wished, any theme to concentrate on but always linking to the day's enquiry focus.

Attend Last Post Ceremony with wreaths being laid by two students from each coach, each accompanied by a soldier in uniform.

Day 3. Focus question: 'Was the Battle of the Somme really a disaster for the British Army?'. Travel to the Somme Battlefield. Play 'Somme: Defeat into Victory' DVD en route. Although not perfect, it is a



useful tool to start considering the enquiry question. If practical the first part covering 1 July 1916 would be played before arriving at the battlefield, and second part covering the rest of the campaign after a day on the ground. The sites selected reflected the chronology of the campaign.

That evening teachers and students would be asked to rate the question, 1 to 5, with 1 being the disaster believed by most of the general public, 5 being the opposite, and to say why they had done so. My own experience showed the largest grouping being around 3-4.



**FIRST WORLD WAR CENTENARY
BATTLEFIELD TOURS PROGRAMME**

**The Battle of the Somme
1st July 1916 – 18th November 1916**

Exploring your battlefield...
Getting your bearings... Set out by getting your bearings. Use the map overleaf and a compass you should have one on your phone) and locate north, south, east and west. Use the map to try to work out where the German trench lines were in relation to your location you are in. Can you work out where they were attacking from? They were initially attacking the command lines from the south or the west?

What can you see...?
Look around you at the landscape around you. Are there any landmarks in the distance? What changes have taken place since the war? What does all this information tell you about the fighting that took place here in 1916?

Exploring the cemetery...
Use the information on the headstones and memorials to note down where in the UK and other parts of the world the soldiers came from? When did most die? What does all this information tell you about the fighting that took place here in 1916?

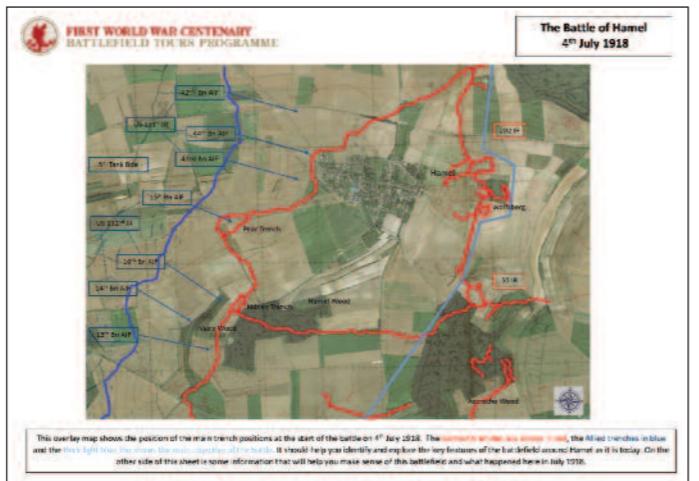
Lessons learnt...?
Using the information on this sheet, how did the British Army develop during the Battle of the Somme to meet some of the challenges it faced?

What questions do you now have for your guide? What else do you want to know about this battlefield?

Outcome of the battle...
British Commonwealth casualties including 57,430 on the 1st July 1916
202,267 French casualties
563,000 German casualties

- The British Army had gained valuable experience, learnt many lessons and developed a great deal, but at a huge cost
- The pressure on the French Army at Verdun had been lifted
- The German Army was forced to withdraw 30 miles to the newly created Hindenburg Line in the spring of 1917 to reduce the length of the line they had to defend

Final question to consider...
So, was the Battle of the Somme really a disaster for the British Army in 1916?



**FIRST WORLD WAR CENTENARY
BATTLEFIELD TOURS PROGRAMME**

The Battle of Hamel

Exploring the battlefield...
Start with the image on the left... What can you learn about the area around the battle? What are the key features of the surrounding area? What are the key features of the Allies on the battlefield? How could the Germans attack the front? How could the British defend the front?

Getting your bearings...
How get your bearings... Use the map overleaf and a compass (you should have one on your phone) and locate north, south, east and west. Use the map to try to work out where the German trench lines were in relation to your location you are in. Can you work out where they were attacking from? They were initially attacking the command lines from the south or the west?

What can you see...?
Look around you at the landscape around you. Are there any landmarks in the distance? What changes have taken place since the war? What does all this information tell you about the fighting that took place here in 1918?

Exploring the site...
Use the information on the headstones and memorials, can you try to work out what happened here on 4th July 1918?

What questions do you now have for your guide? What else do you want to know about this battlefield?

Capture of Hamel village 4th July 1918 by A. Pearce, Official War Artist

Resource cards

After the evening meal there was a ‘show and tell’ session where the educators and guides demonstrated British First World War uniforms and equipment, and the soldiers compared it today’s army kit. Several students enjoyed dressing up. The army’s modern rations were very popular.

Day 4. Focus question: ‘Is remembrance more or less important 100 years on?’ Visits included Langemark German Cemetery and Tyne Cot. Although remembrance was the theme, the significance of each site was explored, as a battlefield as well as a cemetery.

ENQUIRY BASED LEARNING

Instead of guides giving talks and then letting schools wander around sites, this programme approached it in a different way. School groups were more encouraged to look for evidence around them themselves, something that can only be done on the battlefield, not in a classroom.

Guides gave introductions to sites, sometimes partly en route and partly on arrival. Specially designed large maps were used (see photo). These were very useful to outline the area, point out where the group were and where they were visiting. Teachers and students were then given time, in their school groups, to explore the site. At some sites resource cards were provided by UCL for the groups asking questions, suggesting activities and identifying features of the battlefield. An example of is one below for Caterpillar Valley.

After the allotted time, all schools would gather and present their findings, citing evidence they found of what happened there. The guide would then develop those findings and help sum up.

On some sites, for example at Lijssenthoek, no introduction was given, but schools were asked to look around them and use the visitor centre before entering the cemetery to find evidence of why it is there miles behind the front.

Another example of looking for evidence was the Sunken Lane at Beaumont Hamel, where stills from Mallin’s film were examined to identify equipment soldiers were taking into battle. These helped to illustrate the planning and preparation for the Battle of the Somme.

Caterpillar Valley CWGC Cemetery was utilised for the how the campaign developed, if time permitted travelling via Maricourt and Montauban to look briefly at the successes of 1 July. It is a site where so much can be seen, and a resource card for that site reflected this.

As mentioned, Langemark and Tyne Cot were not just cemetery visits. School groups were encouraged to explore to find evidence of the battles that took place there and also to locate the soldiers they had researched on the first day of the tour.

Even the artefacts session was used to encourage enquiry based learning. One student would be asked to call out the countries on the 1914 Christmas gift tin, and the group asked why those are named.



EXTENSION OF PROGRAMME

The original programme was due to end in the spring of 2019. However an additional £1m was granted to extend it for one year. Equity decided not to be involved any longer, so UCL undertook their original role as well, recruiting additional administrative staff and tour managers. Those managers had worked with the project employed by Equity, so continuity was maintained.

The opportunity was also taken to develop the content of the tours, with particular emphasis on 1918. Instead of transiting at Ashford, coaches drove straight through on Day 1 to the Peace Village Hostel at Messines. This gave an additional half day on the battlefields. Previous tours had stayed at Flanders Lodge in Ypres. Messines was better suited to requirements. The normal briefings and artefact handling were conducted on the first evening as before.

Day 2 covered the same sites in the Ypres Salient as the previous programme. On **Day 3** the tour departed the Peace Village and headed for the Somme. After the day’s activities there the tour booked into the Poppies Schools Hostel at Albert. This saved travelling back to Ypres for the final night,

giving more time on the ground as well. The ‘show and tell’ session followed evening meal as before.

Day 4 was devoted to 1918. The focus question being, ‘How effective were decisions made by allied command during the final months and last few days of the First World War?’ One coach visited Le Hamel whilst the other Moreuil Wood. Large maps were used to display the changing circumstances of 1918. Some emphasis was on how the allies developed the ‘all arms’ battle. The Le Hamel resource card well illustrates this.

The final visit of the tour was to Compiegne where the armistice was signed. This was a fitting end. The previous four days focus question ‘Is remembrance more or less important 100 years on?’ was still relevant and often discussed.

WAY FORWARD

The FWWCBTP was a unique programme. It was conceived and thoroughly researched and developed by UCL. Although we are now past the 100 year centenary,

GUILDnote... Deactivated Weapons Guide



Firearms in your Possession

UK legacy specifications deactivated before 7 April 2016 - **No Action Needed.**

2010 UK spec for firearms outside the scope of EU regulation, such as Mortars and Flare Pistols, Deactivated from 8 April 2016 - **No Action Needed.**

EU Regulation 2015/2403 (EU Spec 1), deactivated between 8 April 2016 - 27 June 2018 - **You Must Notify the Authorities by 14 March 2021.**

EU Regulation 2018/337 (EU Spec 2), Deactivated between 28 June 2018 - 13 September 2018 - **You Must Notify Authorities by 14 March 2021.**

EU Regulation 2018/337 (EU Spec 2), Deactivated from 14 September 2018 onwards - **You Must Notify Now.**

its legacy may well continue. I have a school tour booked in July including the Somme battlefield, although I suspect it will now be cancelled. The outline itinerary drafted by the school includes, ‘Was the Battle of the Somme really a disaster for the British Army?’ The school must have been on the programme and the message taken on board!

Although the format may not be appropriate for all schools, especially as the mix of teachers to students is different, certain aspects could be. Time and effort would be required to design and produce resource cards, but the use of focus questions is relatively easy to implement.

It would be good if a similar programme was developed for the Second World War. There was some discussion of this but funding was obviously not available. However a similar Holocaust Programme is being delivered by UCL. Unfortunately that programme is limited to one theme. Maybe a suitable project will be taken up some day...

In the meantime, I shall use much of the techniques used in the FWWCBTP on both First and Second World tours.

UK Guides will be aware of ongoing changes to the UK law on ownership of Firearms and Deactivated Weapons. Here is a brief summary based on information posted in various locations by the Deactivated Weapons Association (DWA) in UK.

Sale/Transfer of Firearms to Someone Else

UK Legacy Specifications deactivated before 7 April 2016 - **No Action Needed.**

2010 UK Spec for Firearms Outside the Scope of the EU Regulation, such as Mortars and Flare Pistols Deactivated between 8 April 2016 - 27 June 2018 - **No Action Needed.**

EU Regulation 2015/2403 (EU Spec 1), Deactivated between 8 April 2016 - 27 June 2018 - **No Action Needed.**

EU Regulation 2018/337 (EU Spec 2), Deactivated between 28 June 2018 -- 13 September 2018 - **You Must Notify Authorities on Sale or Transfer**

EU Regulation 2018/337 (EU Spec 2), Deactivated from 14 September 2018 onwards - **You Must Notify Authorities upon Sale/Transfer.**

Further information can be obtained by visiting the DWA (UK) Website.

THE VALIDATION PROCESS – 2020 UPDATE

Christopher Finn, MPhil, FRAeS, Director of Validation

When I wrote my Report for 2019, I identified a number of reasons for candidates being referred, for Assignment 1 in particular. These can be summarised as:

- Inadequate military and historical knowledge.
- A linked inability to deliver a coherent narrative.
- Failure to read, and follow, the tasks and outcomes.

The last reason is as old as the Validation Process itself, but the first marks a definite shift over the last few years.

I also concluded that the decision to drop the requirement for a Proposer and Seconder for Guild membership, whilst increasing and diversifying the membership (a good thing in itself), has had a role in decreasing the Assignment 1 first-time-pass-rate. When a member tells the Validation Secretary that they are practicing Guides with a minimum experience we take that on trust. Consequently, Assignment 1 has become much more of a ‘filter’ and those candidates who lack broader guiding experience are being caught out by it.

Since taking over as the Chief Validator, five years ago, (and Director of Validation three years ago) I have been concerned by how we assessed a candidate’s knowledge. The Guild has a broad membership and the majority of its guiding spreads from the mechanised wars of the 20th Century to the Medieval period. Furthermore, as I have said on many occasions, Validation is essentially a ‘peer review’ process and not an examination process at the end of a syllabus of education or training. All the skills we assess during validation are practical ones: it is just as important for a guide to be able to research their subject accurately and impartially, as it is to present it in the same way. So, we have always assessed a candidate’s knowledge through what they present at various assignments, and how they present it. Given the general spread of subjects for Assignments 1 & 6 we can usually allocate least one validator who knows the subject well and has the experience to judge what is an ‘in-depth knowledge’. The problem is that some candidates don’t have that experience.

Putting all these issues together it seemed to me, after the 2020 Annual Conference, that it was time for a more fundamental review of the Validation Process than that in 2017. Ten years ago, and with a small membership, it was obvious to all that a Badged Guide was one who his peers felt met their standards, as laid down in the Validation Manual. Today, that is not so obvious nor so easy to define. So, my first task was to define more clearly what being an Accredited Guide meant.

I started by using the entry standard of a practicing guide. I took this to be someone who was an enthusiast, possibly starting into guiding, and who was able to take a standard text and tell a story from it. Looking at various educational taxonomies I came to the view that DESCRIBE was the best verb to define what our entry-standard guide generally did. When one looks at the ‘Evidence’ required in the current Accreditation Manual it is clear that the Accredited Member operates at a higher level than the entry-standard. Here the verb EXPLAIN seems to fit well, taking us a step beyond simple description. Having just gone through the (nervewracking) experience of delivering a Fellowship-level presentation I concluded that I had needed to go to the level of ANALYSIS.

The current validation process separates out the Evidence (or criteria) by which a candidate demonstrates a particular Skill and the Level to which this has to be done. This separation makes it difficult to re-define the requirements in terms of EXPLAIN. It also makes it difficult to define more clearly WHAT knowledge is required, which I will come back to. What I have therefore done is to combine all three into a single STANDARD of which there are one or more per Skill.

Table One on the following page, defines the Standards, shows which verbs apply to each Standard and gives a simple set of examples. The next step was to create a set of Standards for each skill in each assignment. Table Two shows just two of the Assignment 1 Skills.

The first thing that should stand out is that the required knowledge is, in each case, specifically defined, stating exactly what the candidate should be able to explain rather than using words such as ‘contextualise’. The second is that not only is the STANDARD defined but also what is both below and above standard. The reasons for stating what is below standard should be obvious. Firstly, they give the validator clear guidance as to what they must give a NO for against any one Skill. In the P1 example either below standard performance

Table One VALIDATION STANDARDS AND DESCRIPTORS

	BELOW STANDARD	TO STANDARD	ABOVE STANDARD
	A series of examples of performance each of which, individually, are below the standard for the award of the Guild's Guiding Badge.	Each Skill has to be demonstrated to this Standard for the award of the Guild's Guiding Badge.	Fellowship standard and Chandler Trophy consideration standard for Assignment 6.
DESCRIPTORS	DESCRIBE	EXPLAIN	ANALYSE
	This happened/this is or lists/states.	Because/why/causing.	In order to/and therefore/which means.
	The Skill, or element of it, may also simply be ignored.		
EXAMPLES	The Battle of Britain was fought between the GAF and the RAF between August and September 1940.	The Battle of Britain was fought between the GAF and the RAF between August and September 1940. The GAF's task was to gain control of the air over southern England and the Channel. This was to enable Op SEALION and/or force Britain to capitulate.	The Battle of Britain was fought between the GAF and the RAF between August and September 1940. The GAF's task was to gain control of the air over southern England and the Channel. This was to enable Op SEALION and/or force Britain to capitulate.

would lead to a NO (some other Skills have a series of below standard examples). Secondly, they give the candidate something to measure their preparation against before submitting or attempting any assignment. The statement of what is above standard may be less obvious. Firstly, it is there to help validators avoid over-assessing and, in particular, avoid using the test of "*I would have done it this way*". It also helps assessing a potential

Chandler Trophy candidate (Assignment 6). Lastly, it gives the candidates something to aim for. Whilst, for reason of space, only TO STANDARD will be included in the description of each assignment, the entire set of Standards are an Annex to the Accreditation Manual. Thus, both validators and candidates will have a clear view of all the requirements to pass any assignment.

In general terms a Below Standard is awarded to a candidate who just describes or states something, in a particular Skill, or who ignores it completely. To Standard is awarded where the candidate explains what they are presenting, for a particular Skill, means using terms like "because" or "why" or "causing". This is applied to the subject eg the requirement to explain weapons, tactics and doctrine in the Skill K2 for Assignment 1. But what we are not asking is for the candidate to ask "so what" at the end of each sentence. This form of Assessment Strategy is very common in

both education and training establishments. It should also, therefore, be familiar to the majority of candidates. But, what I must make absolutely clear to candidates and validators alike is that we are NOT adopting a marking system where scores are aggregated against a pass standard. Each Skill, in each Assignment, has to be demonstrated TO STANDARD for the award of the Guild's Guiding Badge.

Having come, latterly, from a tertiary education background I had been considering this approach for some time. My reluctance to adopt it in 2017 was due to a concern that we would be telling the candidate HOW to pass the assignments. But having now gone through every skill in every assignment to derive the new Standards I am happy that will not be the case. If we consider Assignment 1, and I have copies going right back to the first version, I do not think there is any more or less there, in terms of what is required from the candidate, than a decade ago. Indeed, each assignment then had a 'pen picture' of a good assignment and a poor assignment!

The Assignments themselves are unchanged as are the Skills, which have just been re-phrased to make them fit the revised methodology. I have also taken the opportunity to simplify the Advice for most of the assignments as this has been subsumed in the Standards.

Table Two ASSIGNMENT 1

	SKILL	BELOW STANDARD	TO STANDARD	ABOVE STANDARD
K2	Demonstrates knowledge of a chosen period of warfare and battles, including relevant terminology.	Can describe the basic political and military reasons why a particular battle occurred when and where it did, and with its particular participants.	Can explain the basic political and military reasons why a particular battle occurred when and where it did, and with its particular participants.	Can analyse the political and military reasons why a particular battle occurred when and where it did, and with its particular participants.
		Can describe the weapons of the time and their uses.	Can explain: the weapons of the time, their uses, capabilities and limitations; the doctrine and tactics of the time (both sides); how these factors influenced the course of the battle.	Can explain in depth: the weapons of the time, their uses, capabilities and limitations; the doctrine and tactics of the time (both sides); how these factors influenced the course of the battle.
		Is not familiar with any historical debates and controversies concerning the battle.	Can demonstrate a familiarity with any historical debates and controversies concerning the battle.	Can demonstrate a deep understanding of the key historical debates and controversies of the time.
		Resorts to terminology and jargon without being able to explain it.	Can explain and use the relevant terminology.	Can explain and use the relevant terminology.
P1	Communicates in an engaging and entertaining manner.	A dull and lifeless presentation which fails to hold the attention of the audience.	Gains and holds the attention of the audience; brings the action 'to life'; uses appropriate anecdote or humour; engages the imagination and interest of the audience.	Delivers a compelling presentation which holds the audience's attention throughout. brings the action 'to life'; uses appropriate anecdote or humour; engages the imagination and interest of the audience.
		Or one which is so rapid or rambling that the audience cannot keep track of it..		

Finally, where an assignment has a Conduct paragraph, these have been simplified and, particularly in Assignment 1, 'tightened'.

Although it has happened quite quickly, this change to the way we validate has been structured. Having decided this was the approach I wished to take I sent the Validation Standards and Descriptors table and the re-worked Assignment 1 out to selected validators and some other education professionals across the Guild. Following their feed-back I then sent the complete set of Standards and Descriptors to all the validators. The responses have been universally positive. They have also been "trialled" on two Assignment 1s, conducted by ZOOM, and on some validator training exercises.

In conclusion, the object of these changes to the validation system is to help candidates remedy the following reasons for Referral, for Assignment 1 in

particular, identified in the Director of Validation's Report to the Guild for 2019:

- Inadequate military and historical knowledge.
- A linked inability to deliver a coherent narrative.
- Failure to read, and follow, the tasks and outcomes.

The new Standards for Knowledge and Presentation should help candidates remedy the first two reasons; the descriptions of what is Below Standard should help focus their attention on the third.

The "*proof of the pudding is in the eating*" so I will be interested to see what next year's statistical analysis reveals. I will also be asking candidates and validators for feedback as we go along.

Lastly, can I thank those Validators, Members and Candidates who have particularly helped me with this review process.

OF WINE AND WAR - EVEN THOUGH WE DON'T CALL THEM 'BATTLEFIELD TOURS' NOWADAYS

John Cotterill

I don't know about you, but I am now thinking about where I should be this spring and summer. Where I should be is sitting on a terrace overlooking the Mediterranean and recovering from a hard day's guiding with a glass or two of the local wine with my clients. The clients are always particularly charmed when the vineyards are actually on the battlefield or the wine is named after a battle. There are a surprising number of wines that fit into one or the other category.

On the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Balaclava, in 2004, the Valley of Death was full of light cavalrymen milling around in confusion, about 300 of them in all. The only representatives of the more successful Heavy Brigade were a group of eight that I was guiding. After the day's re-enactments and commemorations and the current Earl of Cardigan getting left behind and separated from his formation, the valley emptied of the 'light bobs'. As dusk fell, nine of us built a fire in the midst of the vineyards through which the Royals, Scots Greys, Inniskillens and the rest of Scarlett's men had charged. We then toasted their fine feat in wine grown on that field and thus, if only symbolically, "watered with the blood of the Heavy Brigade and their victims". Never has wine tasted better.

So, where else can one find battlefield wines? Guides will have their own favourites, so here are a few of mine from the Crimea, Gallipoli, the Iberian Peninsula and Italy. The Crimea has been a wine growing region since antiquity. The local winery in the

Sevastopol area is 'Inkerman', whose vineyards extend over much of the battlefield of, not Inkerman, but of Balaclava, as vines did in 1854. 'Inkerman' use a



Inkerman wine grown, confusingly, on the battlefield of Balaclava in the Crimea



Alma Valley Winery in the Crimea

bewildering variety of grapes and make wines which are consumed mainly within what was the Soviet Union. One or two of their reds are drinkable and the winery hosts tastings. The vines were grown on terracing rather than on vine poles in the 19th century, which explains why the Heavy Brigade 'charged' at not much more than a trot. The word 'Inkerman' is Tartar for 'cave dweller' and local wines are stored in deep underground cave-cellars. These were utilised as fortified arms and ammo stores by the Soviets in WW2 and Manstein had to blow them open with 'Heavy Gustav', a 31.5 inch railway gun. The Black Sea fleet continues to use them to store munitions beneath the Heights of Inkerman, which explains one of my two arrests in the Crimea. In 2013, the year before Russia annexed the Crimea, a new winery was opened called 'Alma Valley' whose vineyards are traversed as one drives north from Sevastopol to the battlefield of Alma.

Moving up the spectrum of wine quality takes us to Gallipoli. On the west side of the little port of Eceabat (Maidos as was) is the Suvla Winery. Visitors to the



Suvla Winery, Eceabat

Dardanelles who know the battlefields are largely covered by scrub, dwarf oak, conifers and wheatfields may wonder where the vineyards are. In fact the grapes for Suvla Wine, despite its name, are grown in the Bozokbag area which is actually between Cape Helles and ANZAC Cove rather than in the Suvla Bay area, just inland from the magnificently named Hotel Kum. The Suvla winery is a very civilised spot which sells wine, olive oil and honey and serves excellent meals. They use many imported grape varieties including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc but, for the last 7 years, have also been using indigenous grape varieties such as Kinah Yapincak and Karasakiz.

Tours to Spain and Portugal are a great opportunity to enjoy battlefield wines. Indeed one can follow in the footsteps of Wellington's redcoats from 1808 to 1814 and find good wine much of the way. A brief, rather than a lifetime's, journey would see us starting at the 1808 Battle of Rolica. It is in the Denominacao de Origem Controlada (DOC) of Lourinha which, perhaps because it does not produce any really good wine, makes Aguardenta or Old Brandy. As the saying goes "wine for boys, port for men and brandy for heroes". In this case the heroes of Rolica. Moving into 1809, as Moore withdrew towards victory and death at Corunna he crossed some small wine growing areas in Galicia that use the Albarino



Torres Vedras Red

grape to make white wines that go particularly well with Galician seafood. For 1810 the Battle of Bussaco, Bucaco or Busaco lies in the DOC of Bairrada and the Lines of Torres Vedras have their very own eponymous DOC. The Bussaco Palace Hotel makes its own red and white wines from grapes in the Bairrada DOC. The hotel is right on top of that steep ridge that Massena's exhausted men were thrown back down by British and Portuguese volleys and bayonets. It is mainly table wines that are made in the Torres Vedras DOC but at least you are drinking a wine with the name of a French defeat on the label. The construction of the Lines of Torres Vedras in secret being a more significant victory for Wellington than many of his battles.

Following Wellington into 1811 we come to Almeida and Albuhera. The former lies in the Portuguese Douro DOC.

One of the oldest winemaking families in that area are called the Almeidas and they make everything from port to table wine. Look out for Marques d'Almeida wine. The fatal hill at Albuhera still has some vineyards on it as well as olive groves. The bloodiest battle of the Peninsula War it saw 14,000 men fall, dead or wounded, on small area of hillside from which, quite simply,

neither side would give way until the French finally broke. Albuhera and Badajoz lie within the Ribera del Guadiana Denominacione de Origen Protegidas (DOC)

For 1812, although there is no wine made in Ciudad Rodrigo, if you go 25 miles to the north west, over the Portuguese border you come to Castello Rodrigo which makes a good value Douro red. The rest of 1812 is a bit of a wine desert as neither Salamanca or Burgos are within wine producing regions although Burgos is not too far from Rioja. Our most appropriate Riojas are those made by the Bodegas Marques de Vitoria as they refer to Wellington's great 1813 victory. Their Marques de Vitoria Reserva, made from Tempranillo grapes, is the best wine on our Iberian trail. It is made in Oyo in the Alava Province area of Rioja. General Alava, born in Vitoria, where his museum is, was Wellington's Spanish attache. As we cross the border into France both the Nivelle (1813) and Orthez (1814) are in a valley that leads to the Appellation of Jurancon. They make a notable sweet wine using Gros and Petit Manseng grapes. But, possibly, one may not



White wine made on Bucaco Ridge

want to toast the redcoats in French wine so a Wellington Port bottled by Berry Bros & Rudd might be a good way to finish the trail.

Italy is probably my favourite battlefield tour destination. Luckily good wine is now made throughout the country. To follow the Allies attacking the 'soft underbelly' of the Axis from 1943 to 1945, Sicily is not our start. A month before Op HUSKY, the island of Pantelleria was occupied by 3 Infantry Brigade in Op CORKSCREW (really!). If you like dessert wine you will enjoy Moscato di Pantelleria. On 10 July 1943 the allies landed in Sicily. 151 Brigade, comprising three battalions of the Durham Light Infantry, captured the town of Avola after a stiff fight and a fratricide near miss with US Airborne who had landed 50 miles from their DZ. Avola has given it's name to what is now widely thought to be Sicily's best wine: Nero D'Avola made with the 'black grape'.

In September 1943 the 8th Army landed on the Italian mainland in Ops BAYTOWN, SLAPSTICK and AVALANCHE. The latter were the Salerno landings which take us into an ancient wine making area. Battlefield tours invariably visit the atmospheric ruins of the much fought over Fiocche tobacco factory. Less than 2 miles to it's west is the Rossella Cicalese estate where they make two decent reds: Jevule and Evoli, both using the local Aglianico grape. Commandos and Rangers secured the north flank of the Salerno landings by landing on the wine growing Amalfi peninsular at Maiori and Vietri respectively. 2 (Army) and 41 (Royal Marine) Commandos fought for a week on steep slopes above Vietri. On these slopes, since 2007, Le Vigne di Raito have been producing a red called Ragis Rosso and a Rose called Vitamenia Rosato in a tiny vineyard.

After the breakout from Salerno and capture of Naples, the next obstacle to the Allied advance was the Volturno River that marks the boundary between Campagna and Lazio. 5th Army, led by the Midland Territorials of 46th Division assaulted across the Volturno on 12 October. Terre del Volturno now has it's own Indicazione Geografica Tipica (IGT). Two of the grape varieties allowed in this IGT and Pallagrello Bianco and Pallagrello Nero, which are found in the white and red whites, respectively of this region. The winter of 1943 -44 was spent fighting through the Gustav Line from Monte Cassino and Anzio on the



White wine from the Terre del Volturno IGT

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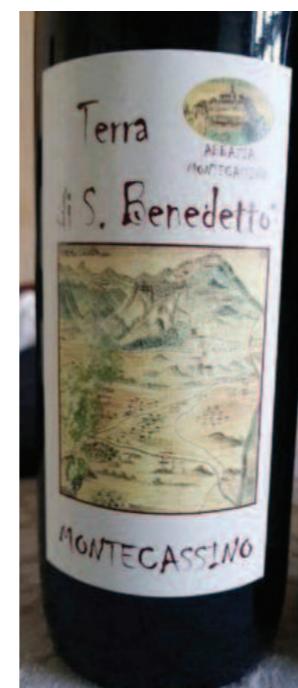


Gustav Wine made by Cantina di Ortona in memory of the Gustav Line battles

west coast, across the Apennines to the River Sangro on the east coast. The best known wines from this area are the Frascati and the Colli Albani whites. Frascati was liberated by the US 85th (Custer) Division on 4 June 1944 and the Colli Albani (Alban Hills) were the ones that VI Corps, that landed at Anzio were 'advancing on' in that controversial phrase. At the other end of the Gustav Line, the Cantina di Ortona makes a wine called 'Gustav' in commemoration of Ortona's liberation by Canadians in December 1943 and the VC awarded to Captain Paul Triquet. There is a wine called 'Monte Cassino' but it is produced in the Veneto because it is made in the Terre (area) of S. Benedetto (St Benedict) not because it is anywhere near Cassino.

En route from a winter spent on the Gustav Line to the next winter spent on the Gothic Line the town of Orvieto was liberated in June 1944. A cemetery was constructed there by 78th (Battleaxe) Division and Orvieto War Cemetery now contains 190 Commonwealth dead.

Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) Orvieto is known for its very popular white wine containing Trebbiano and Grechetto grapes. As the Allies closed on the Gothic Line, which ran from Pisa in the west to Rimini in the east, the 5th (US) Army liberated Tuscany, the home of the 'super Tuscan' wines and popular Chianti. The British 8th Army on the east coast closed up to the Gothic Line in August 1944. As they did so, 1st Canadian Corps and 2nd Polish Corps liberated the area of Le Marche where an excellent white wine in distinctive narrow-waisted bottles is made. This is the Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi. As the 8th Army fought their way into the main Gothic Line they crossed from the Province of Le Marche to that of Emilia Romagna. Much of the fighting from September to December 1944 took place on vine covered slopes. The Apennine



Monte Cassino wine from nowhere near Monte Cassino



Winery in San Savino on the Coriano Ridge in the Gothic Line. The winery is in a building captured by the 14th Sherwood Foresters in September 1944.

foot hills south of the Via Emilia were cleared by the 2nd New Zealand, 3rd Carpathian, 8th and 10th Indian Divisions. This is the heartland of Sangiovese di Romagna, the robust red made from the Sangiovese grape. The Germans stopped the advance of the 8th Army before Bologna before the end of 1944 and it was to be April 1954 before the other well known wine making area of Emilia-Romagna was over-run. This is the Lambrusco production area south of the Via Emilia between Modena and Parma, liberated by the Brazilian

Expeditionary Corps a few days before the war in Italy ended on 2 May 1945. It would be nice to think that this accounts for the great popularity of Lambrusco in Brazil today but that is unlikely as until 1960, when it was deliberately sweetened and weakened for the US market, Lambrusco was a dry wine.

Finally, to avoid confusion and purchasing errors, the following battles, fought in the Old World, are also wine producing areas in the New World:

- The Barossa Valley, Talavera Grove, Vimiera Village and the Pyrenees are all in Australia
- The Salerno Winery (California), the Salamaca (sic) Winery (New York State) and the Monte Cassino Vineyard (Kentucky) are all in the USA



Wine tasting near Salamanca.

An Ode to Colditz

75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Colditz

An early autumn evening
I'm sat wrapped in a wall
The battleground surrounding me
The walls so very tall

A castle built like granite
To keep the outside out
But for a slice of history
It's purpose was in doubt

So many hundred people
Locked in its northern side
Their masters said they couldn't flee
But woe betide the tide

The British, Poles and Dutchmen
The French and others too
They dug and scammed then ran and ran
In war that's what they do

You'd like to know just where I am
This place beyond the Blitz
A simple name in Germany
You know its name, Colditz

© Karl Tierney ex Army Air Corps.

TO COLDITZ VIA BERLIN

Piers Storie-Pugh OBE TD DL

I am pleased to submit this article to 'Despatches' in this 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Colditz. At the end of last year, I guided to Germany, a group of wounded beneficiaries from the 'Not Forgotten Association'; a service charity founded in 1920. The group was drawn from all three services including the Royal Marines.

Part 1 – We flew to Berlin, Schönefeld. Our first stop was the beautiful 1939-45 war cemetery in Charlottenburg designed by Philip Hepworth. It is the resting place for 3,594 airmen and POWs from the



Peter Storie-Pugh at grave of Mike Sinclair in Berlin with whom they served, where they lived if in Great Britain or within the Commonwealth; and in a few cases to whom they were married.

Whilst in Berlin I wanted to share with the group a bit of the Old City, sites associated with the rise of National Socialism, the Battle for Berlin, the STASI's frightening period of entrapment, so well portrayed in the film "The Lives of Others" and of course, the Wall.

We saw historic sites including the 1791 and much photographed Brandenburg Gate with the Quadriga – winged goddess aboard a chariot; the 1873 Victory Column sited along Strasse 17 June and celebrating Prussian military might. Nearby is the Soviet war memorial, flanked by two T-34 tanks, located deliberately in West Berlin, commemorating some of the 80,000 Russians killed in the Battle for Berlin. Strasse 17 June, named in honour of the victims of the viciously quashed 1953 workers' uprising in East Berlin, runs through the famous Tiergarten. We drove past the rather haunting remains of Kaiser Wilhelm

Memorial Church bombed in 1943 by the Royal Air Force: it now stands as a memorial against all wars. Then onto the square where Count Claus von Stauffenberg was executed by firing squad for his part in the attempt on Hitler's life on 21 July 1944.

Checkpoint Charlie was of great interest, not just for its international symbol of divided Berlin but also because many of the group had seen it whilst posted as part of the British Berlin Brigade. In 1979 I passed through Checkpoint Charlie wearing scarlet mess kit on my way to the National Opera House. Later that year I had patrolled the Harz Mountains not far from Spangenberg where my father was imprisoned before Colditz. Checkpoint Charlie is only a stone's throw from the ghastly Topography of Terror alongside Prinz Albrechtstrasse – it was here that the Nazis made no secret that torture and interrogation took place; as a reminder to the many of the ordeal they could face. The Muskatoon Seven were brought here from Colditz for interrogation.

On the opposite side of the road is Goering's Air Ministry which bizarrely was never bombed by the Royal Air Force. Not far is a most non-descript car park – and underneath lie the remains of Hitler's Bunker.

The Jewish suffering is clearly commemorated by the Burning Books Square, the 2005 Holocaust Memorial, the Little Jewish Cemetery and the Jewish Quarter. The Synagogue Pestalozzi still receives police protection.

Potzdamer Platz, once the very epitome of the glitz social nerve centre of this self-aware city that never slept, became No-Man's Land during the period of division. Today it is a criss-cross of busy streets, vibrant, confident, glossy buildings for multinational companies and a mecca for the new young.

Our hotel was located near Müllerstrasse possibly the best section of the Berlin Wall left in existence: it includes the world famous Brezhnev / Honecker embrace – "My God help me to survive this deadly love". In order that the group understood the politics that led to the four power division of Berlin we went to Cecilia Hof in Potsdam, this beautiful old city, home of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia. On the way back we stopped at the Glienicker Bridge recalled

in the Tom Hanks and Mark Rylance film, "Bridge of Spies". Final stop that day was the STASI Museum, former headquarters of the East German secret authorities. (Thank you Patrick Gale).

For years John B, veteran of Not Forgotten events and ex Special Forces, wanted to revisit the Havelsee Bridge. In April 1966 it was the scene of 'Britain's secret jet crash Cold War coup.' At that time John had been ordered to guard a barge under which divers, unbeknown to him, worked to extract vital components of a Yak 28 for the Farnborough boffins to examine.

Our Berlin tour ended with a walk down to the River Spree, across which a number of East Germans had in vain tried to swim. Crosses nearby name attempts who died trying to flee the East: first 24th August 1961 Günter Litfin: last Chris Gueffroy 5th February 1989.

I did my best to describe the climax to the Battle for Berlin, between the Russians and the German defenders, fought between 29 April and 2 May 1945. The glory goes to the Soviet Army's 756th Regt of the 150th Infantry Division under command of Major General Perevertkin. Stalin had directed that the Reichstag symbol of Nazi power, be captured by 1st May and he handpicked loyal party members for the glory of planting the red flag on top of it. Two days later the Russians raised the red flag over the Reichstag. The final attack had been mounted across the Molke Bridge which we later sailed under as part of the five star river cruise. That same month, May 1945, Colditz came under Russian domination. The River Mulde at Colditz flows into the Elbe. Ten days after the Americans liberated Colditz Castle and 40 miles to the north American and Russian forces met at Torgau on the River Elbe. On our final evening we enjoyed the highly interesting "Then and Now" tour of the Reichstag, including the final siege, the Russian graffiti, the modern parliamentary chamber and the breathtaking terrace night view of Berlin. A great way to end Part 1.

Part 2 – Our turn to visit Colditz. Following my own visit to the castle with my father in the mid 1990s and his subsequent life changing car crash, I vowed I would never return. Time however passes and since my successor as Chief Executive of the Not Forgotten Association asked me to run a tour there, I grabbed the chance with both hands and do not regret a single moment. So it was in a way a tour for my group but a pilgrimage for me. It would be the first time I had seen Colditz in its newly painted, striking reinvention of itself. As we know, its future had sat in the balance – at one time Marriott had considered it as a hotel in its 5 star portfolio.

Colditz Castle was originally built, before the Battle of Hastings, as a hunting lodge for the Kings of Saxony and the residence for the later Dukes of Saxony. Napoleon Bonaparte spent a night in what is now the primary school in May 1813, (thank you



Today you are welcome in Colditz

Reiner Ruft) as he pursued the Allied Forces in what is now called the War of Liberation.

My father arrived in Colditz from Spangenberg in the second batch of British officers, in December 1940; and despite his twenty one attempts to escape, was destined to

remain there until its liberation by the American forces under Colonel Shaughnessy on 15 April 1945. Imagine the excitement for me at the prospect of actually staying in Colditz Castle, the very place which had been my father's 'home' for four and a half years. I first went to Colditz in 1987 with my father and a group of POWs.

Immediately before the outbreak of war, Colditz had been a concentration camp in the grip of the Nazis – specialising in the imprisonment of 'disruptive idiots' and 'incurables'. There is a little known memorial to 'Victims of National Socialism' in the cellar by the main gate of Colditz. It later became the potato store. Nearly two hundred patients died in Colditz, the youngest aged thirteen. Colditz was their final place of fear and torment.



Peter Storie-Pugh on Colditz steps



Piers and his group in the Prisoners Exercise Park at Colditz Castle

Regina Thiede, well known to all The Colditz Society, could not have been more helpful or welcoming. I have been checking groups into hotels since 1983 but I think this was my first experience of checking into a Youth Hostel! Housed in the Kommandantur, it is efficient and functional but somehow still retains a deep sense of history.

We enlisted on the wonderful tour of the castle with Michael and the men and women of my group were completely gripped by each twist and turn, every tale, every escapade; it was just what they had hoped for and a hundred times more. The theatre and Airey Neave's dramatic escape earned him the accolade of the first successful British escape: the story of Pat Reid's escape, the move across the German square by night only to find the door locked. We dropped down into the cellar from where Reid's group of four escaped. In my presentation later that evening, I talked about one of his escape colleagues Ronald Littledale. Littledale having reached Switzerland decided his duty was to get back to, well to his duty. He slipped down to the escape line pseudonym Pat O'Leary (in real life Major General Comte Arthur-Marie Edmund Guérissé GC, KBE, DSO – died 1989). Littledale crossed the Pyrenees and after weeks of adventures, including being arrested and imprisoned in Spain by the local police, managed to get to Gibraltar. He reported to his regimental headquarters "Well done sir. Good news you are getting command of our 2nd battalion" (King's Royal Rifle Corps). Colonel Ronald Littledale DSO was killed on 1st September 1944 during his regiment's attack. He is buried in Airaines War Cemetery north of the Seine. When my father came across his grave he turned to me and said "What a bloody waste, to escape from Colditz only to be killed in the Normandy breakout."

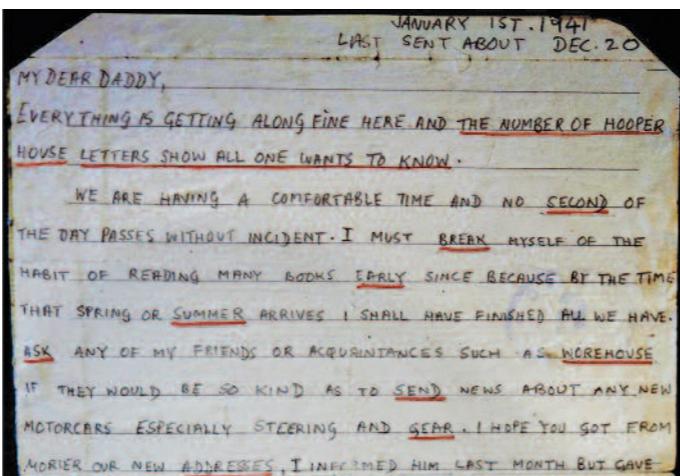
Pat Reid had been the first British escape officer (succeeded by Dick Howe) and his writings and role as military adviser in Ivan Fox's 1955 film "*The Colditz Story*," launched the castle and those who worked tirelessly within it, into legend. It stands even today as a beacon example of ingenuity, international co-operation, leadership, endurance, courage and British Bulldog determination.



Piers and Canteen Tunnel - then and now

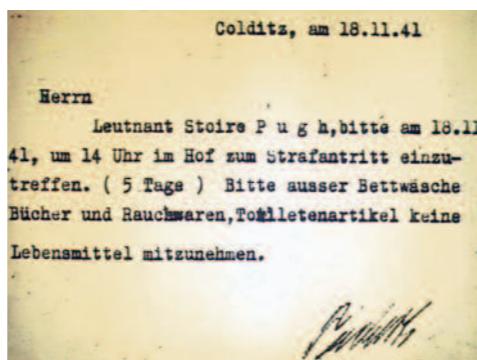


Peter Storie-Pugh's hazardous rooftop escape attempt



Above: Part of Peter Storie-Pugh's first coded message

Peter Storie-Pugh and Dutch colleagues after another unsuccessful attempt.



Peter Storie-Pugh sent again to solitary confinement.



Doorway to the Chapel - then and now



The Chapel today



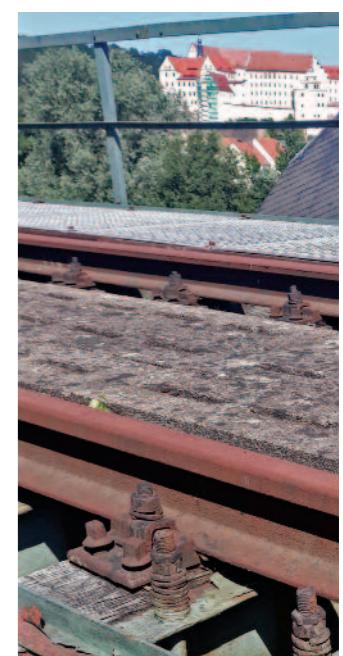
The Terrace and Machine Gun position - then and now



Colditz Commandant in main square of Colditz - then and now



Peter and Piers at Colditz reunion



Colditz station has been closed for many years but the rails still run through it



Street in Colditz leading to the station where prisoners disembarked

The French tunnel, the most ingenious of all tunnels, is best seen from the wine cellar, its start point, and followed under the chapel, itself painstakingly restored to its original charm and spirituality from the Middle Ages.

The story of the glider held much appeal especially to the young veterans, even though it never flew. They had mostly seen the film in which a replica was launched and landed successfully in the meadows alongside the River Mulde. My father said if the Germans had turned on the prisoners, at least two could have escaped to tell the story and what their fellow Colditzers had tried to do; – including the tying up of large numbers of high grade German soldiers. We watched the short film which included a clip showing the book '*Aircraft Design*' borrowed from the Cambridge University Library and no doubt of considerable use!

We walked around the town square and enjoyed the lovely Colditz pastries and slow pace of life. We passed the old town gaol where Hugh Bruce had managed to have a conversation with the Muskatoon group before they were taken away for execution at Sachsenhausen. On this walk everyone had their own thoughts about life here in the war years. One Royal Green Jacket veteran, Martin, said, "I have got to pinch myself to believe I am in Colditz. It has been on my list since I was a boy!" It was a hot day so we enjoyed an ice cream each and discussed the extremes of life and hardship with today's freedoms and privileges taken so often for granted; yet bought by a generation of youth sacrificed.



Remembrance cross

Back in Colditz Castle, I was very pleased to see the sewer manhole cover in what had been the entrance to the Canteen Tunnel escape of March 1941. It was my father's first serious escape attempt and he was number thirteen - Pat Reid was number one! I wanted to get a photograph of 'Then and Now'.

My father later tried to drill through into the German quarters with Dutch colleagues Lt Kruiminck and Captain van den Heuvel. However they were heard and ordered out. My father delayed long enough to throw the valuable bag of tools to waiting prisoners before being sent to solitary. Undaunted he tried with a Polish escape plan to cross over the roof tops from the British quarters to the German area. The hazardous plan involved climbing across a rope ladder to the fire escape and then to England. In order to reach nearer to the edge they erected a false chimney. The Poles were not as wealthy as the British in money or in food and so my father and Captain Cyril Braithwaite bought their places. A cold blustery night seemed the perfect setting and as the Pole (human) crossed over, the arc light below suddenly swung a full 180° to silhouette the unfortunate escaper.

During my brief presentation in Colditz Castle I talked about my father's coded letter; every ninth word was the clue, based on his Malvern House. The opening line of the first letter to his father - "My Dear Daddy, the Hooper House number is all you will ever need to know." Frank Hooper had been my father's Housemaster, it was however always called No 9 and at no time Hooper House. MI9 used this coded form in subsequent exchanges.

My first employer had been Kenneth Lockwood and so I knew a bit about Colditz from him. He played an important role in the years 1940-1945 and no doubt spent his fair share in solitary confinement. The old cells are now Regina's offices. Ken Lockwood and my father last returned to Colditz together on the 50th anniversary in 1995; and during a visit they planted a tree behind what was The Kommandantur.

The museum has wonderful archive material and the souvenir shop is a magnet for all. We loved our time there and were grateful to Regina and her colleagues; and full of admiration for the men whose memory they strive to keep alive. The weather was so pleasant that we had our breakfast on the terrace. On one occasion

QARANC veteran Jan rang her husband and said, "Hi I am having breakfast in Colditz Castle!" This prompted the reply, "Why?" "Because we have just spent the night in the castle!" Hoots of laughter from all.

In our group Northern Ireland veteran Neil wrote: 'As night falls the gates to the Castle are closed and now I really feel like a prisoner; although at dawn I know I will regain my freedom. The night was almost eerie; wide awake I found myself thinking how the prisoners would attempt to sleep; their minds filled with thoughts of escape - perhaps they were going out that night.'

Another veteran produced the book "Reach for the Sky" by Paul Brickhill. He showed me the page which mentions my father in conversation with Squadron Leader Stephenson; he was the pilot who landed his Spitfire on the beaches at Dunkirk; clearly showed in the recent film of the same name. "Reach for the Sky" was the first book I read in which my father was mentioned in association with Colditz. I was at my preparatory school, Bilton Grange, and Colditz was a big deal then because Reid's book had just been published.

On the final morning we walked to the exercise park, visiting the drain cover which was the setting for the successful Dutch escapes; then to the boundary wall the scene of Frenchman Lt Le Ray's dramatic Olympic style escape; and then of course Mike Sinclair's flight to freedom on his own terms. When I was helping to make a film 'Colditz the Legend' we asked Mickey Burn if he remembered Mike Sinclair's final effort. Mickey, very ill at this stage, told us that he was on radio stag when he heard the shooting. In a weak whispering voice he recalled his words: "Oh no Mike not now, not after all this!" It was not lost on anyone in the group that our tour had started with Sinclair's grave and ended with his escape.

We had already packed our cases aboard the coach - we just walked slowly up the path which our heroes had walked 75 years before, with barely a word between us. We had each experienced something quite extraordinary and been party to slice of history like none other. The Colditz POWs had planted a standard where a standard had never flown before.

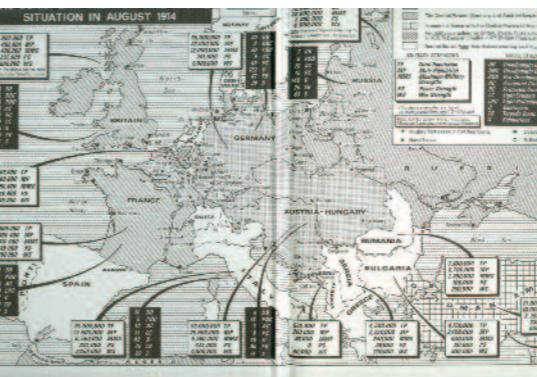
My father and his fellow Colditzers would surely have approved that the castle is now a Youth Hostel after an eye watering refit. It now benefits the youth as they learn the lessons of life and hopefully that the opportunities they possess have become possible through the unselfishness of others. I am pleased to continue their legacy through my talks including 'Escaping From Colditz'.

I went to see my good colleague Brigadier Matt Meyer DSO MBE who had commanded 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales Royal Regiment and told him of the castle's role. "I like it" he said, "It sounds just right."

(The author of this article was the first commanding officer of the 6th/7th Battalion the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment) Contact: piers@wartalks.co www.wartalks.co

GUIDEresources

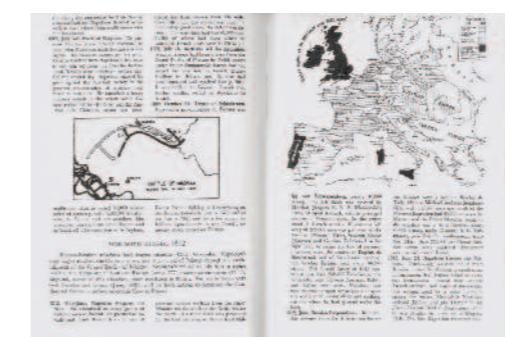
- Title: **A MILITARY ATLAS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR**
- Author: **ARTHUR BANKS**
- Published by Purnell Book Services with Heinemann Educational Books 1975



- Title: **THE STRUGGLE FOR EUROPE**
- Author: **CHESTER WILMOT**
- World Books Special Club Edition 1954 (previously by Reprint Soc)



- Title: **THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MILITARY HISTORY**
from 3500 B.C. to the present
- Author: **RE DUPUY & TN DUPUY**
- Published by MacDonald and Janes. 1970 Reprinted 1974 - 1,406 pages!



I asked members to have a think about useful sources for research. Well, here are three heavyweight contenders from our own Tonie and Valmai Holt. MP

Leo Cooper took over from us the publication of our first slim Battlefield Guide Books (48 small pages) when he was also working for Heinemann. He recommended this book to us and had some amusing stories about Arthur Banks (who, like Leo, was quite a character), notably of how he used to work in a red telephone box on the phone to Leo! We found these extraordinary maps to be quite invaluable when researching our early tours. They are incredibly detailed and bursting with information. The book was dedicated to his father, who fought in the Mesopotamia and his uncle who 'fell at Mons'. While recce-ing for our Western Front North book we visited the British Memorial at La-Ferte-sous-Jouarre we found his name - Rifleman Charles Frederick Banks, KRRC, killed 14 September 1914. On googling the book we found several versions for sale and this review: 'This is a unique study of the conflict of 1914-18 on land, sea and in the air, through maps, diagrams and illustrations. Within the scope of some 250 maps, Arthur Banks has presented both broad general surveys of political and military strategy, and the most closely researched details of major individual campaigns and engagements. These are supplemented by comprehensive analysis of military strengths and command structures and illustrations.'

In this year of 'Victory in Europe' commemorations, this comprehensive book (848 pages) with many useful sketch maps, is a must. The following review sums it up well. "Australian war correspondent Chester Wilmot's credentials are impeccable (He landed with the British 6th (Airlanding) Brigade on the evening of D-Day) but he stays clear of the tactical trip-wires in this unsurpassed and magisterial examination of the United Nations' operations in North West Europe. His sources, which include the post-capture testimonies of senior German officials and officers, transcripts of the Nuremberg interviews, recovered fragments of the twice-daily conferences held by Hitler with his senior military staff and personal interviews, give his account a balance that few have since achieved."

Now reprinted and updated to cover the Iran-Iraq war, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the wars in Lebanon and the Falkland Islands. This again has been a 'bible' to us when planning tours. It is a tour de force and is absolutely unique in its width and depth. Written by a father and son team, each chronological chapter has a comprehensive introduction assessing all aspects (e.g. strategy, weapons, leaders etc) of the period and its campaigns. One can follow a particular nation or region throughout the tome, thanks to the exhaustive general index. Many helpful maps and pen and ink sketches of weapons, fortifications etc.

THE ITALIAN COLDITZ

Adam Williams

I recently went on the run from a small town in Northern Italy, where I work, called Sesto Calende when the COVID-19 virus was sweeping across the north resulting in a total lockdown. When the police roadblocks started to appear, I knew it was time to make a hasty retreat and although this does rather sound dramatic, I simply went online to see where the road restrictions were located. I then looked at Google Maps on my iPhone and drove via the pretty country lanes to Milan Malpensa. Enroute, I managed to stop and refuel the hire car and even book a flight back to Stansted. All rather straightforward and easy to achieve, but back in early 1940, to go on the run would have not been so easy.



Lt Alastair Cram

Alastair, he was taken as a Prisoner of War (POW) during the Battle of Sidi Rezegh in 1941; he was in an Observation Post as it took some incoming rounds and was knocked unconscious for a period of time then subsequently woken by a very young German soldier shaking him by the shoulder. He then became a guest of the Afrika Corps for a short time before being sent to Sicily as a guest of the Italians.

Alastair was a very private individual, described by his wife as a ‘well-known loner’ and as the legendary escaper from Colditz, Pat Reid, once said: “*For, when you escape, you court loneliness – the loneliness of a hunted animal! And even for the escaper there comes an urge, aided by fatigue and hunger, to give himself up in order to regain lost companionship – if only of other prisoners. Here, then, is the big question: Are you gregarious, or can you take being a loner?*”

Being a loner does give you certain advantages, especially if you do not crave companionship when up against the stops, Alastair was quite content with

being on his own and so did not necessarily need company in order to survive.

As many of us are aware, it is better to escape as early as possible before you go further ‘down the line’. Remarkably, Alastair tried to escape twice before he even left the Libyan Port on his trip to Sicily! The trip across to Sicily was quite eventful as a storm forced the boat to reluctantly return to Benghazi. Many of the prisoners were held below deck and it was truly miserable for many. After a short period of time in Benghazi, it was decided to fly the POWs to Sicily instead; this was naturally, quite a risky affair considering the RAF activity in nearby Malta. On Christmas Eve 1941, Alastair landed safely in Sicily and headed for a 17th Century convent in the center of Castelvetrano where very shortly after his arrival, he escaped and evaded capture for a short while before being caught and sent to Palermo. Already, Alastair had the reputation of a dangerous prisoner – which duly attracted more guards on his prison cell.

A short time was spent in Palermo before he set sail to a camp in Capua just north of Naples, thought to be Campo 66 – a transit camp. Alastair would describe the camp in Capua as ‘a muddy, dreary camp’ which reinforced his enthusiasm for escape and so he spent many hours studying and copying maps. He maintained his fitness by carrying out a strict regime every morning using the Müller System: a system of sit ups, squats, press up exercises and then rotating the palm in circular motions around the whole body in the form of a massage. Alastair insisted on doing this naked, every morning, much to the surprise of his fellow cell mates.

After two weeks at Capua, he was sent to L’Aquila as punishment for his previous escape attempts. Whilst enroute to L’Aquila during a cold winter, the

train was forced to stop due to deep snowfall and as the train came to a halt, Alastair immediately seized the opportunity to leap from the train into very deep snow and promptly sank in it up to his waist. From that moment, he knew it wasn’t going to work out too well and the guards soon realized that one of their prisoners was missing. Unable to move in the deep snow, he was soon captured again - four attempts already!

The 16th century castle at L’Aquila looked quite daunting but he was in for a very pleasant surprise as he was taken to his own room, with a huge double bed. The security there though was very poor and only a few days later, Alastair was caught planning an escape; he had ‘procured’ a uniform from one of the guard’s accommodation. As punishment once again, he was sent to Campo 35 in Padula which was a huge 500-year-old monastery with over 300 rooms and perfectly suited to housing the various POWs who had been collected from North Africa. By now, Alastair had a reputation for escape and as soon as it was known that he was at Padula, he was approached by Jack Pringle of the 8th Royal Hussars, a fellow POW, who needed an escape partner.

Jack respected that Alastair liked to work alone but eventually won his confidence as like Alastair, Jack could also speak fluent Italian. They soon became friends and started noting the various guard routines and looking for every available escape option. They noted that workmen were working on a hole in the inner defence wall



Capt Jack Pringle

and calculated that if they could get out through this hole, that the outer wall could be easy enough to scale. No time was wasted in procuring work clothes, spare food and local intelligence, then with day sacks full of food and donning scruffy workman’s clothes, they managed to get out through the small hole with ease. A diversion was then created inside the prison which allowed them to scale the outer wall undetected, however, as they approached a small road party working outside of the prison wall, they were compromised as their large heavy day sacks and military boots gave them away and an hour or so later, they were back behind bars.

The Italians were getting slightly tired of Alastair escaping and so it was time to send him to the Italian Colditz – Campo 5; they both had to first spend a week in the cooler whilst transport was arranged. Immediately after their release from the cooler and prior to departing to Campo 5, they both escaped again but this time they managed to find little tunnels in the walls of the monastery and spent a few days on the run. Jack was caught 16 miles away in the village of Marsico and Alastair a few days later further to the north. Back to Padula, and oddly enough, back in the same cell together after a month in the cooler.

Campo 5 is located in the very north of Italy, between Genova and Alessandria; its origins route back to the 12th Century and it was deemed to be the ‘Italian Colditz’. Perched high on top of a hill and surrounded by steep walls, no one had ever escaped Gavi in the 400 years it had been a prison. Alastair and Jack both arrived at Gavi in July 1942 and went straight into the cooler for punishment, Alastair was given 40 days straight.

Campo 5 had two courtyards; the upper courtyard and lower courtyard. Connecting the two courtyards was a gentle slope that can be seen in the picture above. The cooler was located in the upper courtyard with only two small windows and a sheer drop. After



Campo 5 – Fortress Gavi



Lower Courtyard. Mess hall to the left by the wooden decking. To the right of the picture are various cells. Alastair's cell was to the far end of the courtyard on the right at the top of the wooden stairs. The orderly's rooms were located to the left side of the picture ground floor.

his 40 days, he settled into his new cell in the lower courtyard along with his fellow POWs. At the end of the courtyard was a small chapel that was converted into a shower for the prisoners.

The camp commandant, Colonel Moscatelli, was quite brutal and not popular amongst the prisoners as he was an ardent fascist and showed little sympathy. Steep walls surrounded the fortress and all exits were via tunnels, heavily guarded. Alastair and Jack needed time to recover from their various escapes and their time in damp, solitary confinement cells with little or no sunlight. It was a time to settle into a routine of reading and gaining strength through sports such as basketball in the lower courtyard, but of course, the thought of escaping was never far from their minds.

While settling into the routine, Alastair and Jack had met a small team of fellow escapees that all possessed various skills which could aid an escape. They all had a burning desire to escape and ran through the various options; walking out through any of the normal exits proved to be very difficult and going adrift during a working party excursion was also too difficult as the Italian guards were very sharp and didn't miss a thing.

There was a steady influx of Red Cross parcels and it is fair to say that morale within Gavi was very high, with a very strong bond of camaraderie



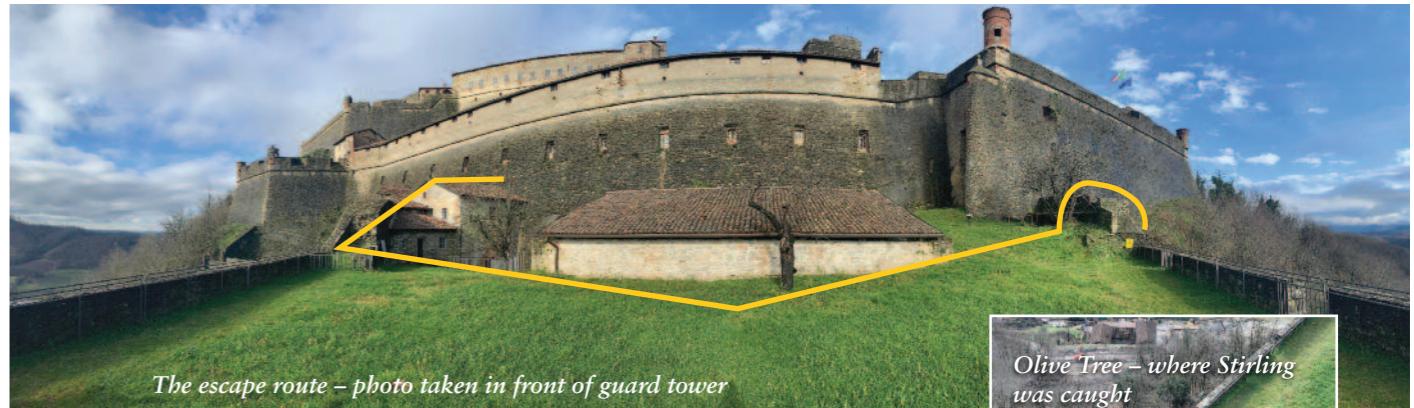
Alastair's Cell – six beds per room made this very crowded



amongst the prisoners but some were content with prison life. But for Alastair and his new team of friends, there was still a burning desire to escape, especially as there had been numerous attempts, all cleared through the committee, but none of which had come into real fruition.

It was by chance, that one of the orderlies named Hedley, when lying in his three-tier bunk, bumped his head against the wall. The wall felt quite hollow so, together with his cell mate, they cut a small hole in the wall and consequently realized that it opened up into a hollow shaft. They duly dropped a stone inside of the hole and heard it splash into water below and knew immediately the huge significance of this find and so it wasn't too long before the shaft was opened up to be large enough for a person to climb into and descend into the water. Underneath the lower courtyard ran a long water cistern which had been built into the fortress as a means of storing water. Naturally, the Italians were totally unaware of this.

After exploring various options, it was decided that a hole in the outer wall leading onto the guard's accommodation should be dug out. This would mean that it would then be possible to exit the outer wall and walk across the roof of the guard's



The escape route – photo taken in front of guard tower

accommodation, down a small wall and across a small green area to abseil, using bed sheets tied to a sturdy olive tree, over the outer wall. This was considered to be a very daring escape as it required walking past a guard tower. Fortunately, with the low cloud and rain, it was hoped the guard would not be looking.

It was February 1943 by the time the tunnel was ready, and all escape equipment sourced. It was decided that initially only ten prisoners would escape as any more than this would be simply too obvious. The committee approved the ten prisoners but then a spanner was thrown in the works when Lt Col David Stirling SAS arrived after having been caught in Africa. Naturally, he was keen as mustard to escape and persuaded the committee that it was vital that he be included. David Stirling's arrival and subsequent intelligence update from North Africa was most useful to all.

The weather in February was quite pleasant, not ideal weather to escape with the guards being so alert and so consequently it was decided therefore that once the weather was more favourable for escape i.e. low cloud, rain and winds, then the escape would be on. It wasn't until 20th April before the ideal conditions were present and as the storm came in over Gavi, when the clouds hugged the fortress giving very limited visibility, the escape was on. First, the escapees had to descend into the cistern, swim the entire length of the lower courtyard and then climb out through a hole dug in the outer wall. Alastair managed to climb out through the hole in the wall and climb onto the roof of the guard's accommodation. Fortunately, there seemed to be a party going on and loud singing was heard below in the guard's accommodation. Alastair tiptoed over the roof, descended the smaller wall and then walked briskly to the tree and climbed over the small wall. He grabbed hold of the makeshift rope and, to his horror, it snapped. He fell 30 feet to the ground and was knocked unconscious. David Stirling eventually

emerged through the outer wall and struggled to get his huge frame through the hole. He gingerly climbed over the guard's roof, down the wall and ran to the olive tree. Sadly, he was caught red-handed when the guards came out of their accommodation and saw him

approaching the tree. Despite a short tussle, David was caught.

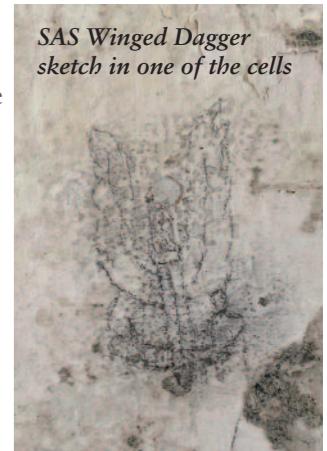
As Alastair came to, he heard the commotion above and quickly ran down the hill; he knew he was injured but the adrenaline kicked in. He crossed the river below and kept moving through the night then stumbled across a hay loft to hide in and get out of the rain. A farmer found him the next day, fed him a glass of milk and encouraged him to move on. Sadly, for Alastair, he was caught several days later in a very sad state as his body had taken a bit of a battering in the escape.

Jack Pringle managed to get as far as Lago Maggiore, only five miles from the Swiss border by the time he was caught. One more day, and he could have made it but he was caught, absolutely exhausted, sleeping under a rhododendron bush and eventually ended up with David Stirling in Colditz.

Alastair Cram would go on to make a total of 21 escape attempts throughout his time in captivity and eventually succeeded just before the end of the war. He subsequently joined the SAS and served with the War Crimes Commission utilizing his linguistic skills.

Much of the material for this article has come from 'The 21 Escapes of Lt Alastair Cram' by David Guss. It is a fantastic read and ideal belated Mother's Day present.

Gavi Fort is opened to the public for limited periods. The graffiti on the various cell walls is worth a visit alone. It is unknown how many SAS soldiers ended up as prisoners there but a 'Winged Dagger' has made itself onto a wall along with many other cap badges and various Regimental Mottos.



MEMORIALS OF COURAGE & SACRIFICE IN NEW ZEALAND

Paul Colbourne

On a recent trip to New Zealand our travel plans were disrupted by the quite unseasonal weather resulting in a changed itinerary, longer journey times and frequent stops for coffee. During these stops I noticed local war memorials and began capturing images of them. I was, to be honest quite taken aback by the variety, quality and number of memorials we saw. Why this should have caught me so by surprise is a mystery to me, the level of New Zealand's commitment and sacrifice is well documented and something I discuss on a regular basis.



Bridge of Remembrance, Christchurch, New Zealand

Names of far off places - Ypres, Somme, Messines, Belvue Spur and others all familiar to us - featured on a regular basis. The less obvious, like the flower bed in Christchurch Botanic Gardens with its subtle mix of poppies, cornflowers and daisies, resonated with me particularly. Remembrance and commemoration was everywhere, not just in grand structures.



The Queenstown War Memorial

The striking Soldiers Memorial on the Otago Peninsula with the figure looking out over the bay was quite a climb but worth the effort. Looking out for the return of his lost comrades since 1923 the views are spectacular and emotive. Memorials in some of the remote and at times isolated communities were none the less impressive and conveyed the sense of loss. All were beautifully maintained and cared for. Memorials were often surrounded by gardens to offer a place for contemplation and reflection with the modern addition of children's playgrounds which will hopefully engage the next generation.

Queenstown, Timaru, Wanaka and Akaroa were all quite stunning with Queenstown containing the names of all who served, not only the ones who did not return. Opened on ANZAC day 1922 many returned service people objected to the inclusion of their names as 'we have received our welcome homes, these boys have not'. Timaru contains the name of Robert Daniel Norrie, a greengrocer from



Akaroa Memorial

Timaru whose story I researched two years ago for a client. Promoted to 2nd Lieutenant, killed in action 15 September 1916 and commemorated on Caterpillar Valley (New Zealand) Memorial with no known grave, it was quite a moment to pay my respects to him on the other side of the world. Akaroa had been unveiled by Viscount Jellicoe in 1923 as he was then the Governor General of New Zealand and is surrounded by some pristine gardens.

The ties are numerous, the bonds everlasting and the respect I now feel for these men and women who travelled to the other side of the world is immeasurable. From the Land of the Long White Cloud they came and some did not return. I have recorded the names on the memorials and during this year's guiding I will pay my respects at Tyne Cot, Polygon Wood, Caterpillar Valley and other familiar places.

As Dr Stephen Clarke commented to me, "*He toa taumata rau: Courage has many resting places*".



Memorial Otago Peninsula



Christchurch Botanic Gardens



The Wakana War Memorial



The Soldiers Memorial, Otago Peninsula

A SECRET ARMY MUSEUM VISIT – THE HIDDEN WORLD OF THE NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM REPOSITORY IN STEVENAGE!

Marc Raven

Normally, as Battlefield guides, we are used to finding the top viewed sites and attractions well signposted and displayed. That is not the case with the 'secret' National Army Museum. (NAM)

My contact at the well-known museum situated in Chelsea, Terri Dendy, had extended an invitation to visit the repository containing all the exhibits that NAM have accrued, which they don't have space to display in the London museum.

The main museum is, in essence, the British Army central depository of the history of the British Army (drawing a line from 1650) concentrating on individual Corps and Regiments.

This 'secret' repository is situated in the very dull and low-key setting of a non-descript building in Stevenage, on the edge of town.

Driving up, you would be forgiven for thinking you were in the wrong place, only a barrier entrance hints at the security, and the request for ID and your registration number in advance gives a clue to what treasures lie within.

We entered into a fairly non-descript classroom for a briefing, with Terri and Antonia Phillips, Collections Access Coordinator. They casually dropped in that the repository has about one million items and artefacts, the main museum only displaying about 10 per cent of what they have within the collection. We could take pictures, but not of windows or doors or exits, and with that we got up and moved into the main repository through a small door.

What greeted was quite shocking, a huge warehouse in essence, stretching, it seemed, as far as the eye could see, dwarfing us, huge towered racks 50 feet up into the heaven, crammed with every artefact from our military history.

Racks of Military Drums, paintings, guns, swords, banners, badges, helmets, artefacts, medals and a host of military vehicles of assorted shapes, age and sizes. The list is endless.



The 'Pink Panther' Land Rover Series 2

The initial impression is one of awe and wonder, the randomness of the 'display' is quite daunting, its in no particular order and your eye has to adjust to the varied and almost comical melange of militaria on display most of it priceless in its monetary value or its history.

For instance, the Austin K2/Y Ambulance is thought to be the one the then Princess Elisabeth learnt to drive in, it's a bit dusty, and sits next to a pink Land Rover Series 2 used by the SAS in 1960, hence its name "*The Pink Panther*". Oh, and just behind that are a couple of pieces of the Berlin Wall.

Although none of the military vehicles actually run (which is sad) as I would love to see someone ride again, an in-line three wheeled Triumph 'Trusty' half-track motorbike (someone thought that a good idea to design in 1926) or a 1940 Bedford MW 8.5 Litre with a 2lb gun on the back. Terri said this model was



An original Willys Jeep 1941 with a Napoleonic cannon in front

very rare as most were left at Dunkirk.

In a corner, is a virtually untouched original early production 1941 Willys Jeep, which was 'given' to the Army by the US before they joined the war, for assessment, but was never used, and, as if to underline the randomness of the display, lying next to it on the floor is an old Napoleonic cannon – 'liberated' by the British Arm.

On the subject of liberation, Terri opened up a wooden packing case and posing the question to me and the other seven guests, asked, if we had any idea what it was?

Amid some conjecture, it turns out to be the fighting helmet (he was actually wearing) taken from Sultan Tipu when he was killed by the British East India Company in 1799 and bought back as a prize. Perhaps that's why it is kept in a discreet box rather than on display, as perhaps these Imperialist moments are not as popular in some quarters as it undoubtably was when the future Duke of Wellington paraded the spoils over two centuries ago.

Moving on, into another huge section, racks and racks of neatly packaged uniforms hang in silent attention. This is the largest male uniform display in the world with 80000 uniforms and costumes stretching back to the 17th century to present day.

We randomly pick a few to peer into, kept perfectly, in air-conditioned controlled conditions to



Captain John Grant Malcolmson with the Victoria Cross

have bullet or shrapnel holes and blood, which soberly reminds you that this is about real people, real sacrifice and that war isn't just about celebration and victory.

We move into another section where we speak to the hard-working team of researchers and preservers who restore artefacts, identify and catalogue. They prepare items to be displayed worldwide, the project I observed, of cleaning memorial plaques in readiness for a display at Sandhurst later this year.

The collection is still growing, at a rate of over 2000 new items being bought or donated every year only recently they were donated over 20000 badges of regiments from India, Nepal and the far corners of the Empire.

Perhaps to underline the history that lies within the vast collection, Terri pulled out a small drawer, and there was the original funeral banner which was draped on the coffin of Oliver Cromwell in 1659, lying on a desk a perfect medical kit from 1900 and for another visit they have the first Victoria Cross ever made, it's the one that was 'approved' by Queen Victoria when the medal was originally conceived, so pre dates the one in the Tower of London. That says it all really.

The two hours flew by, there is so much I haven't mentioned, and I only saw about 0.05% of the total display, in the words of another famous Army General - I will return.

stop deterioration. Beautiful colourful Crimean war tunics, a pristine Royal Army Medical Corps 1918 tunic, Second World War SAS and Para uniforms (one worn at Arnhem) up to modern day are all preserved for posterity.

One of the tunics, a startling bright blue, belonged to Capt John Grant Malcolmson, who won a VC for his actions in the Persian War of 1857, they have the VC, the Tunic and the painting of him wearing his medal on said tunic, all gifted by the family, a mind bending piece of history.

Although we didn't see, Terri said some

TO NORMANDY - BY BIKE

Des Fitzgerald

What started as an idea over a glass (or two) of beer with a parent of one of my daughter's school friends, suddenly became a reality. He wanted to tour Normandy, for me to explain the history and he would pay for all my food and drink. The only catch he was a very keen cyclist and I am not. Even so, I decided that it was too good an opportunity to miss.

I checked with James (my sponsor) and Kevin his cycle buddy who would also come on the tour, if they had any family connections. It turned out that James had an uncle that landed on SWORD with 1 DORSETS, but other than that they just wanted to cover the beaches. I worked out an itinerary and we settled on landing at Cherbourg and returning via Ouistreham. We would land on Friday 7th June 2019 and cycle that weekend. The Normandy 75th Celebrations would be in full swing but we would miss the VIP lockdown of the 6th June.

I dug out my old mountain bike and quickly confirmed why I rarely cycled. James kindly lent me a road bike and a set of panniers, so prior to our own D-Day I got training, at least an hour each morning. He sensibly advised me of the correct shorts to purchase, ones where the lycra is hidden inside a pair of empire builders. Men of certain age need to maintain what little dignity they have. The extra padding certainly made training a little more comfortable. With space and weight at a premium I decided that a few laminated maps and a small notebook with relevant facts was all that I should take. I then spent my spare time reading up on the key points of the various stands that I selected.

We landed at Cherbourg and in light drizzle started cycling up from the port and onto the Cotentin Peninsula. With the rain increasing in intensity we pushed on southwards, fortunately my pre-training had paid off and I was able to keep up with the peloton. Apart from a few stops at random and I suspect rarely visited memorials, mainly to killed aircrew, we arrived at St Mere Eglise early evening. The square was slowly clearing of US personnel and the even more numerous re-enactors. It would appear that 101st Screaming Eagles now have more Willys



British Normandy Memorial



Des and Dudley at Le Cambe



James and Kevin look for their guide at Brecourt Manor

Jeeps on their inventory than their Table of Equipment authorised in 1944. After a couple of isotonic sport drinks, to maintain hydration, we headed off to UTAH. The original plan had been to sleep on the beaches, but with a gathering storm James, via the wonder of the internet had secured a small Air BnB chalet, the previous American occupants had cut their visit a day short. After a quick tour of UTAH in the fading light we joined in with the festivities being held at the Museum. Thankful at not being outside we slept soundly while the storm raged outside.

In a bright morning we set off at first light and took in the Dick Winter's Leadership Memorial, the action at Brecourt Manor before heading on minor roads to La Barquette where we crossed the River Douve. Shortly afterwards we came across our first example of that glorious, precision made British built bridge, which is the envy of the civilised world. With a pit stop for breakfast we pushed on to the German Cemetery at La Cambe, where as luck

would have it we bumped into Dudley Giles and John Harris. I am assured that that is not their normal residence. As we cycled towards Pointe du Hoc the road traffic had increased noticeably, as the various re-enactors appeared to drive round in circles following each other. The Overlord Museum at Le Bray, is one of my favourites, even better when the French Armour Museum had brought up various tanks and AFVs and had some driving around. Having working examples really brings to life the different tank design philosophies and doctrine of the belligerents. The roads were absolutely rammed and traffic was at a standstill to the American Cemetery, on our bikes we were able to pick our way through the mayhem. The red carpet and the cordoned off areas were still in place from the visit of POTUS. In the skies a steady stream of Dakotas, C-130s and C-5 Galaxy aeroplanes, some in D-Day plumage, confirmed our air superiority. It was a great shame that the Battle of Britain Flight Lancaster was not also in the skies; as it might have rebalanced what was starting to feel like an American-only show. I was later told the Lancaster was not ready



James on Pont Bailey



Cycling along SWORD

for its flying season. Still we only had 75 years to think about this, so it probably came as bit of a surprise. As we worked along the coast the traffic was not too bad and we were able to use routes closed to traffic. Cycling up out of Port en Bessin I managed to break my bike chain, fortunately James appeared to have gizmo for just such an emergency and I was back in action within minutes. We overnighted at Le Hamel on a discrete spot on GOLD beach close to where his uncle had landed.

Up before the lark we headed towards the beach where CSM Hollis VC had landed, then inland following his trail and visited the newly opened

British Memorial. Then to JUNO, where they got a very detailed description of the activities of 79th Armoured Division and of 80th Assault Sqn RE in particular. At SWORD we chanced across the Yorkshire Regiment, complete with Regimental Band, at the 3rd Infantry Division memorial, so we joined them for their act of remembrance. We pushed inland and uphill towards Hillman (a clue in the name) and from there a view of Caen, tantalisingly close. Our ad hoc church service had reduced our available time, and having further mechanical problems, we aborted our visit to Merville Battery but ended with the high that is Pegasus Bridge. From there a gentle ride to our Ferry and Blighty. Tired but elated we had a few more of those isotonic sport lagers that are very much in fashion.

A 3 day tour of the Normandy Beaches by bike is definitely worthwhile and achievable. I had trained for 3 weeks and we had covered c.197Km and about 30 stands. For the guide you need to reduce your aides and maps to the absolute minimum and ensure your mental database is correctly

topped up. The advantages of cycling is that you really get a feel for the terrain, every dip and gully is amplified. This also ensures that you focus on navigation. You have greater flexibility and can visit a wider range of stands, seeing many from entirely new perspectives. There are also the chance encounters where you stumble on some hidden gem that is slightly off the beaten track. We have planned to do the COBRA breakout for 2020 but that plan is now clearly on hold. I know that some guides have done tours by bike before, but for me this was my first foray and I am convinced it has some merit, though will always remain a bit niche.

A PICTURE PAINTS A THOUSAND WORDS

Ian R Gumm

The painting of the Last General Absolution of the Munsters is the work of the First World War Italian artist Fortunino Matania. He did not witness the event and according to one source, the Rt Rev John Moran the former Catholic Bishop of the Forces, the scene was captured on canvas by Fortunino Matania from a description obtained by Mrs Jessie Rickard, the wife of Lieutenant Colonel Victor Rickard, the commanding officer of the 2nd Battalion, the Royal Munster Fusiliers (2 R MUN FUS).



Last Absolution Assembly Site on Rue du Bois - GPS: 50°33'36.06"N, 2°43'46.84"E

The painting depicts the officers and men of the 2 R MUN FUS receiving the Last General Absolution from Father Francis Gleeson, the battalion's chaplain, on the evening of 8 May 1915. The 2 R MUN FUS were marching to the front at Rue du Bois on the Augers Ridge when they came across a French wayside shrine. At the shrine Lieutenant Colonel Rickard halted the battalion and had them form a hollow square facing the shrine. The painting shows the rifle companies forming the hollow square with Lieutenant Colonel Rickard and Father Francis Gleeson facing them on horseback. In the fading-light of the spring evening, the men bow their bared heads

as the chaplain raised his right hand and intoned general absolution. It is such a poignant scene, the officers and soldiers from all walks of life, thinking of loved ones back home, making their peace before entering battle. The ambiance broken only perhaps by the distant sounds of the guns from the battle front.

The original chapel, built by the Leroy-Pottier family in 1867, was destroyed during the ebb and flow of battle in the early part of the First World War. No photo or illustration of the original chapel exists but it was rebuilt in 1929. In the 1970s it was once again demolished, this time to make way for realignment of the road.

So, what is the story of the 2 R MUN FUS at Rue du Bois.

The Cinder Track

GPS: 50°34'9.95"N, 2°45'42.79"E

Rue du Bois battlefield is about a mile southwest of the French market town of Neuve Chapelle, and Festubert and Givenchy are further south. In May 1915 the British front line was about 500 yards south of the road and the German frontline was beyond.

On the evening of Saturday, 8 May 1915, the 2 R MUN F, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Victor Rickard arrived in the vicinity of the Cinder Track following the Last Absolution depicted in the painting. Sunrise on the morning of 9 May 1915 was at 04:06 hrs and, as the sun came up, all was quite along the Rue du Bois. Major General Richard Haking's 1st Division were waiting in their trenches ready to go over the top. They had completed their final preparation and Zero-Hour was fast approaching. To the right of the cinder track were deployed the battalions of Brigadier-General George Thesiger's 2nd Infantry Brigade and to the left were the battalions of Brigadier-General Henry Davies' 3rd Infantry Brigade.

In the 2nd Brigade's area, the assaulting battalions

were the 1st Battalion the Northamptonshire Regiment (1 NORTH'N R) and the 2nd Battalion the Royal Sussex Regiment (2 R SUSS R), the 1 NORTH'N R was to the right and the 2 R SUSS R the left closest to the cinder track. In immediate support behind the assaulting battalions were the 2nd Battalion the King's Royal Rifle Corps (2 KRRC) and the 1/5th Battalion the Royal Sussex Regiment (1/5 R SUSS R) right and left respectively. In reserve were the 1/9th Battalion, the King's (Liverpool Regiment) (1/9 KINGS) and the 1st Battalion, the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment (1 LNLR).

In the 3rd Brigade's area, the assaulting battalions were the 2 R MUN F and the 2nd Battalion the Royal Welsh Fusiliers (2 RWF), right and left respectively. The right of the 2 R MUN F was on the Cinder Track and their left at the Orchard Redoubt. In immediate support of these two battalions was the 1/4th Battalion the Royal Welsh Fusiliers (1/4 RWF). In reserve were the 1st Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment (1 GLOUC R) and 1st Battalion, the South Wales Borderers (1 SWB).

To the left of the 1st Division was the Indian Corps with Brigadier-General Claud William Jacob's Dehra Dun Brigade of Lieutenant General Sir Charles



The British dispositions along the Rue du Bois. (© Ian R Gumm, 2020)

Alexander Anderson's 7th (Meerut) Division astride the Distillery Road. Their assaulting battalions were the 2nd Battalion the Gurkha Rifles (2 GHURKA), 1/4th Battalion, the Seaforth Highlanders (1/4 SEA HIGHRS) and 1st Battalion, the Seaforth Highlanders (1 SEA HIGHRS). To the right of the 1st Division was Brigadier-General The Hon Charles Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby's 142nd Infantry Brigade of Major General Sir Charles St Leger Barter's 47th (2nd London) Division. Their assaulting battalions were the 21st Battalion, the London Regiment (21 LON R) and the 24th Battalion, the London Regiment (24 LON R).

The night's dampness was still in the air, as the first rays of the sun broke through promising a day of fair weather. The peacefulness of the new day did not last long, however, and at 05:00 hrs the British bombardment began; the field guns firing shrapnel at the German wire and howitzers firing High Explosive (HE) shells onto the enemy's frontline. The objective of the field guns was to cut gaps in the barbed wire in front of the assaulting battalions. The Germans in their frontline trenches, knowing that something was about to happen, were seen peering over the parapet. At 05:30 hrs the bombardment intensified; the field guns switching to HE and their rounds now directed at the breastworks of the German trenches.

At 05:40 hrs the bombardment suddenly stopped. In the sudden silence, Lieutenant Colonel Rickard gave the signal, whistles blew and the Munsters went over the top. Cheering wildly the men of 2 R MUN FUS followed their commanding officer over the breastworks. As the smoke of the explosions drifted away the German defenders of Infanterie-Regiment 57 'Herzog Ferdinand von Braunschweig' and Infanterie-Regiment 55 'Graf Bülow von

Dennewitz' could see the battalions of the 1st Division advancing in three long waves across the open fields.

The initial wave of British infantrymen advanced in extended order and were already within 50-yards of the German wire; the second wave was halfway across no-man's-land and the third was negotiating the gaps in the British wire, when the German machine-guns opened fire. The Munsters, with a rush, advanced quickly across the open ground to the drainage ditch that lay about half-way between the British and German frontlines. As they crossed that first 150-yards or so,

Lieutenant Colonel Rickard was struck in the neck by a bullet that severed his spinal column; he was dead before he hit the ground.

Reaching the drainage ditch, the Munsters lay down, taking cover while the Artillery opened fire once again in accordance with the plan. As the guns fell silent once more, the Munsters rose up again to press home their attack. Captain Campbell-Dick urged B Company forward with Lieutenant Price's 5 Platoon and Lieutenant Horsfall's 6 Platoons to the fore.

By now the Germans were firing furiously and their close-range fire poured into the advancing Munsters like hailstones in a driving winter's downpour. Seeming immune to the enemy's bullets, Captain John Campbell-Dick swept into the enemy's front trench, followed closely by his men. On

into the German second trench he charged to stand upon the enemy's breastworks, seemingly quite indifferent to the danger which lay on every side. Waving his cap, Captain Campbell-Dick shouted to his men: "Come on, the Munsters!" A moment later, he fell into the enemy trench shot through the heart. B Company continued onwards with Lieutenant Price and Lieutenant Horsfall leading. One man was seen to stand on the



Lieutenant Colonel V.G.H. Rickard



Captain John Campbell-Dick

enemy trench waving his green flag before disappearing; B Company seemed to be enveloped in the very heart of the field grey uniforms that opposed them.

Lieutenant Carrigan and Lieutenant Harcourt brought the machine guns forward and over the parapet of the German first line. Here they faced the murderous enfilading fire that beat and battered the men, who, without wavering,

held on grimly to the trenches. Nearby, Lieutenant Sealy King gallantly dashed forward to renew the attack only to be cut down.

To their left and right the advancing battalions had been unable to press as far forward and the Munsters were fighting out on their own; a forlorn hope in a tide of German field grey. They did not break in the hail of shells and the rain of bullets that never seemed to end. Major Gorham, now in command of the battalion and wounded in the arm, sent a message back to Brigadier-General Davies that the assault was held up by superior enemy forces.

Once again, the heavy guns boomed out, pitching shell after shell into the German lines, and under cover of this protective fire the 2 R MUN F withdrew. Sergeant Gannon carried one officer and four wounded comrades out under fire. Private Christopher Barry, only a slight slip of a boy from Cork, brought in Captain Hawkes, one of the biggest officers in the

Battalion. Captain Hawkes was severely wounded in three places and could not move. As Private Barry carried his officer to safety, he too fell mortally wounded. For his actions Christopher Barry was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Lieutenant Colonel Victor Rickard, so gallantly killed while leading the 2 R MUN FUS at Rue du Bois on 9 May 1915, is buried at Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery grave XXVII. A. 14.

Private Christopher Barry, who died of wounds received while carrying Captain Hawkes to safety, is buried at Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery grave XXIX. A. 61.

Captain John Campbell-Dick, killed in action while leading B Company at Rue du Bois on 9 May 1915, has no known grave and is remembered with honour on Le Touret Memorial panel 43 and 44.

EVENTguide 2020-21

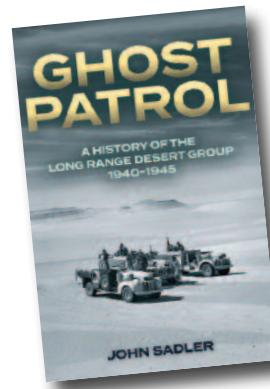
- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <small>CANCELLED</small> | 4 Apr - | Validation - UK Day - 'Tally Ho' Birmingham - Tim Stoneman |
| <small>POSTPONED
- LATER 2020</small> | 2-7 Apr - | Wellington in Portugal Recce - Graeme Cooper |
| <small>CANCELLED</small> | 5 May - | Visit Eurotunnel Folkestone, Kent - Mike Peters |
| | 7 Aug - | GBG Badged Guides Dinner - Graeme Cooper |
| | 14 Aug - | Guild Annual Golf Championship - Graeme Cooper |
| <small>CANCELLED
DUE TO
NUMBERS</small> | 15-18 Sep - | Greek Recce, Battles of Artemisium & Thermopylae - David Harvey |
| | 16-18 Oct - | Portsmouth Weekend with Validation - Tim Stoneman |
| | 1-5 Nov - | Somme, France Recce - David Harvey |
| | 4 Dec - | GBG Christmas Lunch, UJC London - Andy Thompson |

2021

- 29-31 Jan** GBG Annual Conference - John Harris

The above events planned to take place unless otherwise indicated.
Any Member wishing to plan a new GBG event should contact David Harvey for guidance and coordination of dates.

GUIDEbooks:



GHOST PATROL A History of the Long Range Desert Group 1940-1945

By John Sadler

Whilst there are several books on the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG), I don't recall any being so well researched as this book. The book gives a very descriptive account of both the formation and activities of the LRDG throughout WW2 in Egypt and Libya (Cyrenaica). It explains the desert war of 1940-43 from both the allies and axis side giving the reader a balanced view of the period. Ghost Patrol is referenced throughout which highlights the level of detail the author has gone to into making it such an in-depth account. The book also gives a dramatis personae of the notable characters and includes several appendices at the end to provide further background information. A thoroughly good read and highly recommended - especially for those who are unfamiliar with this area of WW2.

Review by Adam Williams

Published by Casemate
RRP £16.99
paperback, pp289



THE ST. MIHEIL OFFENSIVE The Americans 1918 - 12-16 September 1918

By Martin Otte

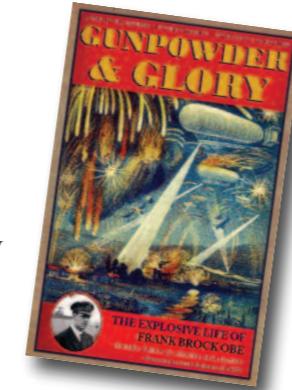
This latest addition to the Battleground Series is a bit of a hybrid. It is a successful combination of the detailed stand notes that we have come to expect from the best battleground volumes, with the excellent Guidebook information we attribute to a Holt's Guidebook. Packed with maps, labelled panoramic pictures, photographs and a detailed narrative, this is an impressive new release from Pen & Sword. Certainly, worth the investment if you are heading down to the US battlefields later in the year.

Review by Mike Peters

Published by Pen & Sword Ltd
RRP £15.99
paperback, pp298

GUNPOWDER & GLORY The Explosive Life of Frank Brock OBE

By Harry Smeet & Henry MacRory

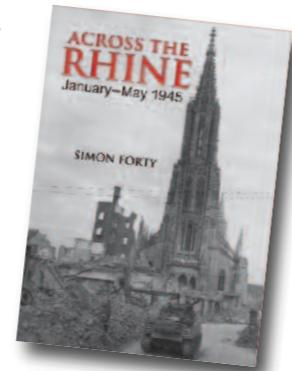


Franck Brock was the epitome of an Edwardian Hero; his colourful and exciting career does read like a Bond novel. A member of the Brock Firework family, he was involved in some of the most innovative technological advances of the Great War. Brock was involved in developing naval illuminant flares, artificial fog and the incendiary bullets that would bring down previously impervious Zeppelin raiders. He was never shy of frontline service; he held a commission in all three services. Ultimately, he would meet his end in dramatic style during a cutlass fight during the Zeebrugge Raid. A fascinating and engaging biography that will add depth and colour to any Great War Guide's knowledge.

Published by Casemate
RRP £25.00
hardback, pp252

ACROSS THE RHINE January - May 1945

By Simon Forty & Tom Timmermans



This is the penultimate title in what has to date been an exceptionally good series of historical guides to the campaigns in the West. The format and narrative are straightforward and themselves to tour planning and research and tracking individual formations. The chapters flow chronologically and in geographic sequence. As with the previous titles in the series, the standard of maps and photographs is high. This particular book goes a long way toward highlighting a critical phase of the war in the west that is often skipped over or neglected. Certainly, worth adding to your library if you are interested in the last months of WW2.

Published by Casemate Publishers
RRP £25.00
hardback, pp224

THE THAMES AT WAR Saving London from the Blitz

By Gustav Milne



The Blitz remains the defining moment in London's more recent history, when the citizens of our capital city were under attack throughout the autumn to spring of 1940/41 and following a welcome intermission, once again from June 1944, this time at the hands of Hitler's so-called 'Vengeance Weapons'.

This book by Gustav Milne and the Thames Discovery Programme, a community based archaeological project that surveys the Thames foreshore, tells the story of the London County Council's Thames-Flood Prevention Emergency Repairs Service, or 'T-F' for short, one of the lesser-known facets of London's Civil Defence service during those turbulent years. The River Thames is London's *raison d'être* and during the Second World War, fed the largest port in the world.

But whilst acting as London's life blood, a bomb or rocket breaching the river's embankments at high tide, or fracturing one of the tunnels beneath the river, could turn the Thames into a terrifying ogre which could kill thousands, paralyse the capital and destroy a major part of the British war effort. As we learn from this book, the embankments were breached quite often, as were two of the tunnels beneath the Thames but thanks to the superb work of the T-F teams and a certain amount of good fortune, a major flood disaster never followed.

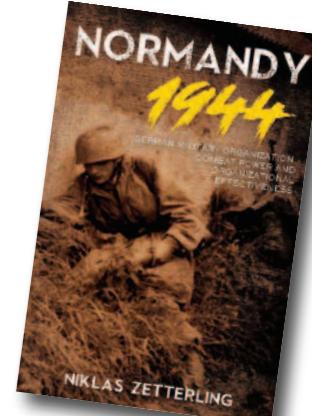
This is a well written, profusely illustrated and meticulously researched book, that tells an important story which was suppressed at the time and has been little discussed subsequently. Whether you guide Blitz Walks around London, or whether you have a more general interest in the wartime history of our capital, then this book is for you and I thoroughly recommend it.

Review by Steve Hunnisett

Published by Pen & Sword
RRP £19.99
hardback, pp208

NORMANDY 1944 German Military Organisation, Combat Power and Organisational Effectiveness

By Niklas Zetterling

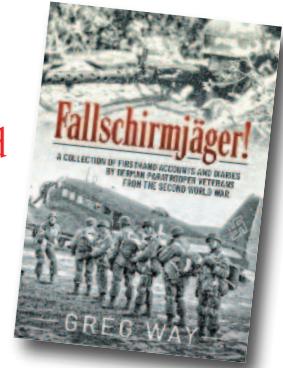


This is a revised and updated version of what was already considered an authoritative reference source on German forces during the Normandy campaign. It is exhaustively researched, detailing the strengths, equipment and order of battle of all major German units. Not just for the rivet counters amongst us it also challenges long established myths on Allied Airpower, the preferential treatment of the Waffen SS and numerous other subjects. All in all, a must if you want an in-depth understanding of German strengths and weaknesses in Normandy. Excellent!

Published by Casemate
RRP £25.00
hardback, pp450

FALLSCHIRMJAGER! A Collection of Firsthand Accounts and Diaries by German Paratrooper Veterans from the Second World War

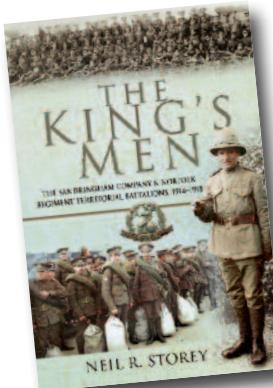
By Greg Way



There is already an abundance of printed material about the German Airborne Forces during WW2, does this new book tell us anything new? Well yes, quite a lot. This is a unique collection of interviews and correspondence with 16 Fallschirmjäger veterans collected by the author over a period of seven years. The major operations are well covered, but I did find the less well-known operations equally, if not more fascinating. What really makes this a must have addition over and above the memories of combat drops, is the numerous insights into recruitment, training, family life and the experiences of life as a POW. Recommended.

Review by Mike Peters

Published by Helion
RRP £29.95
hardback, pp384



THE KING'S MEN The Sandringham Company & Norfolk Regiment Territorial Battalions, 1914-1918

By Neil R. Storey

This book offers nothing new by way of new evidence towards the fate of the 5th Norfolk at Kuchuk Anafarta Ova on 12th August 1915. Neil Storey is good at writing stories. His books are always well written and full of nostalgia when it comes to Norfolk. The first three chapters of his book follow that route when he looks at aspects of Norfolk prior to WW1, how the Territorial Force was formed, and then looks at the Sandringham Company prior to the declaration of war.

The initial story of the 5th Norfolk Regiment mobilisation is told fairly well but there is a point in the book, namely Page 64, where he could have tackled a myth properly and certainly, as a historian, he should have evidenced something fully, which he does not. This page looks at the demise of the Sandringham Company when it amalgamated with another in February 1915. Instead of telling the proper story he decides to justify the use of the words Sandringham Company because after this there was some sort of tradition kept where the original members of the Sandringham Company were still paraded separately. He fails to mention that the Royal connection was still kept because the new amalgamated one was called the 'King's Company'.

This is a terrible omission in a book that should not detract from what actually happened after the 5th Norfolk reformed in February 1915. The words Sandringham Comapany should have ceased to exist after page 64. So, sadly, Mr Storey just keeps the word Sandringham Company in his writing after this. This does not help to quell a myth that others still follow when the entire regiment was assumed to be the Sandringhams, the Sandringham Regiment, etc, etc, etc. There are then a series of subjects which he either glosses over, does not challenge, or completely misses out. These are the following.

He does not look at the action on the 12th August 1915 from the Turkish perspective. Had he researched this properly he would have been able to do this by using, at the very least, the war diaries for the Turkish 1/36th, 3/35th and 3/36th Regts who faced the 163rd

Bde. He makes no mention of Major Munib of the 36th Regt who also wrote about the Turkish defence and counter attacks.

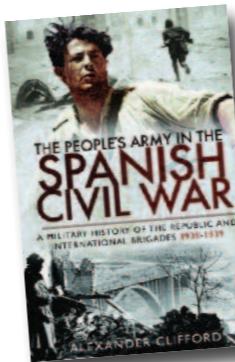
A really important factor within all of this, certainly when you try to debunk the myths surrounding the 5th Norfolk's fate, are Prisoners of War (POW), or the idea that the Turks killed the survivors in cold blood taking no prisoners. POWs are an afterthought in his book and he does not use any of the accounts that were recorded by the Turks from 5th Norfolk men who were captured, two examples being the interviews with Lt Fawkes and Sgt Allen. These would have added to the book, helping to debunk the 'shot in cold blood' myth. This is frustrating and extremely disappointing.

Another myth he writes about is the 'female sniper' stories that came out of the campaign. This story has been debunked by experts and has always been denied by the Although he uses accounts to tell his story, he does not use the accounts that came out from the men who survived the action who were interviewed at the end of 1915 and the beginning of 1916. These are readily available if you know where to look. He just relies on one account for this when this terrible myth could have been laid to bed once and for all had he allowed the men who came back to tell their story, all of whom refuted the disappearance story when they were interviewed sadly this led me to put the book down having read chapters 6 and 10.

This is sad because he also writes about the 4th and 5th Norfolks at Gaza. But, in my opinion, this book is ruined by the way Mr Storey has gone down the old, 'predictable' routes that others have taken when writing about this subject, this is also not the first time Neil Storey has written about this subject, He had a book published in 2009 which also looked at the Norfolk TF in WW1 and WW2. The same subject was looked at then, it was written about in the same way and many of the same images that appear in that book are present in this book. On the subject of imagery, he does not use any maps to describe the advance on 12th August, he just relies on two maps of Gallipoli as a whole. This would have helped to tell the story for people who need that sort of resource to help them understand the story visually.

Review by Steve Smith

Published by Pen and Sword
RRP £25.00
hardback, pp257



THE PEOPLE'S ARMY IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR A Military History of the Republic and International Brigades 1936-1939

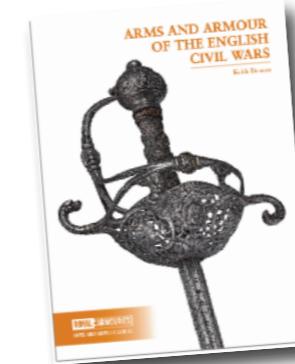
By Alexander Clifford

Alexander Clifford offers a different and interesting perspective of this complicated clash of social classes, focusing on three main offensives made by the People's Army during the Spanish civil war in 1937. Each chapter gives an in depth explanation of why the People's Army took offensive actions, it also explores the successes as well as why each failed on a tactical level. The first hand accounts give a real feel for the 'lived experience' of those directly involved or effected by these actions. You also get a sense of how the People's Army grew and developed into a fighting force which admittedly probably couldn't win the war, but could cause enough resistance to make it difficult for the nationalist's to 'take Spain'.

I found this publication well thought out for the reader, the style of explanations of this complicated war made for a really enjoyable read, even with a basic understanding of the subject.

Review by Susie Rotherforth

Published by Pen & Sword Ltd
RRP £25.00
hardback, pp315



ARMS AND ARMOUR OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS

By Keith Dowen

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 scrabbling 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.

Published by Unicorn Publishing Group
RRP £12.99,
paperback, pp96

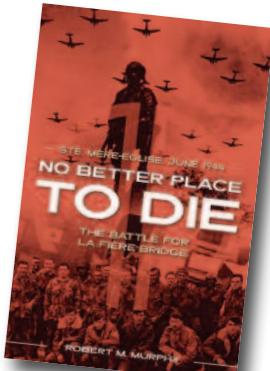
FROM THE ASHES Reconstruction of Flanders Fields after the Great War

By Somon Augustyn, Dries Claeys, Karen Derycke, Dominiek Dendooven, Hannelore Franck and Stephen Lodewyck

This is an extremely useful pocket history and guide published to commemorate the reconstruction of Ypres and the surrounding towns that many GBG members know so well. The fate of Ypres 1914-18 is well-documented and most guides that work in the Salient know the ground and the historical chronology well. This compact book takes the reader into less well-charted waters of the aftermath of the Great War and the huge efforts to rebuild the devastated towns and villages of the region. It contains a good balance of maps, photographs, all linked with a concise narrative. Ideal if you want to add a new dimension to your knowledge of all things Wipers.

Review by Mike Peters

Published by Unicorn Publishing Group
RRP £9.00
hardback, pp156



NO BETTER PLACE TO DIE Ste Mere Eglise, June 1944 - The Battle for La Fiere Bridge

By Robert M Murphy

The battle for the La Fiere Bridge and causeway has been described by soldiers and historians alike, as the bloodiest small unit action fought by the US Army during WW2. There are a number of caveats that can be attached to that statement, but nevertheless it was an epic battle that doesn't always finds its way into very D day itinerary. If you read this book, written by a US 82nd Airborne Division veteran of the action, you will want to see for yourself. It is an ideal source from which to construct your own stand notes. A good mix of maps, photographs and witness accounts.

Published by Casemate
RRP £13.99
paperback, pp268

10 Questions:

Name: Marc Yates
Age: 60
Nationality: British
Home Location: Jersey,
Channel Islands
Tour Company: my own business
Jersey Military Tours
(and History Alive!)
Validating: Badge No. 90



In each edition of '*Despatches*', we will be introducing a member of the Guild. In this edition, it is Marc Yates.

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

I have been interested in history since about the age of eleven when we had a combined history and geography class learning about Jersey. I loved it, got my map drawing skills and ended up doing history through to A-Levels! I got into military history as a teenager – joined the cadets and comics were replaced by War Monthly magazine. The World at War was compulsory weekly viewing on television!

2. Have any experiences stood out? A personal pilgrimage to Passchendaele on the 100th anniversary of its capture on 6 November 1917. My maternal grandfather was a recently promoted Lieutenant in the 27th Battalion (City of Winnipeg) Canadian Infantry who were part of the attack. I started at the jumping off point from where my grandfather led his platoon to capture a machine gun nest, which resulted in his award of a Military Cross. The only other person up and about in the dark was a Canadian who had the same plan to follow his grandfather's footsteps. As we quietly walked up to the town at Zero hour, thinking about what our grandfathers had faced, it was a 'hairs on the back of your neck' moment!

3. What do you enjoy the most about battlefield guiding? Firstly, meeting lots of people, sharing history with them and sometimes adding to your own knowledge from these wonderful people. Secondly, every day is different, and it helps being outdoors after 35 years in an office!

4. What is your favourite stand, location or battlefield and why? The Canadian Memorial at Passchendaele looking up to the town and ridge. (*See 2 above*).

5. Which battlefield would you like to visit in the future? The WW1 Italian Dolomites battlefields – my brother is a mountain guide and he has been tempting me with some superb photos!

6. What have you enjoyed the most about being a member of the Guild? The friendships that I have made in the four years since joining, the camaraderie and the willingness of other Members to share their knowledge and experience.

7. If there was a fire and you could only save one battlefield-related book or prop, what would you save and why? As the present custodian, my maternal grandfather's WW1 medal group and his dog-tags, which still have Western Front dirt ingrained in them, and my paternal great-grandfather's WW1 medal group including a DCM. Both served 4 years in France and Belgium.

8. What type of group do you think is the most challenging to lead on a tour? A work group on a bonding exercise or a social group whose real interest isn't battlefields. In many cases, had they the choice, they would probably prefer to be down at the pub. It is a case of winning them over and entertaining them. If you don't achieve this within about 5 minutes, you are going to have a hard time!

9. What's the best tip, story or nugget of information you have been given by a fellow battlefield guide? Stand with the sun in your eyes and not in the clients' (note photo!). Stand with the wind behind you as your voice will carry better. Stand in the rain if it means that your clients are in the dry. Keep stands short. Keep an eye on your clients and gauge how they are feeling – don't be afraid to cut something short or call it a day if they are 'battlefield-ed out', which can be earlier than you think!

10. What is the funniest or most dramatic thing you have seen on tour? The day, having arrived at the appointed pick up of some American clients, waiting and wondering where they were, a fellow guide drew up rapidly in his minibus and apologised profusely that he had 'stolen' my clients by mistake. He had a group of the same size and having spotted my group, who were early, he had bundled them into his vehicle and driven off before I arrived! It had taken them 20 minutes to realise that they were in the wrong vehicle with the wrong guide! Re-united, we laughed all day!

NEWmembers:

Simon Browne
Bob Crean
Rafaël Deroo

Andy Fittes
Alexander Graham
Dan Hayes

New members who have been welcomed to the Guild between Spring 2020 and the date of publication.

Dave Jackson
Barry Martin
Peter McCutcheon

Colin McGrory
Mick Sharman Davies
Sean Tierney