



# DESPATCHES

the magazine of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides



## IN THIS ISSUE:

Canada's East Coast Port  
in War and Peace

The Grave of Field Marshal Viscount  
French of Ypres with Major and Mrs Holt  
Intelligence in WW1

## PLUS

The Battle of Lincoln

## AND

The Longest War in History  
My Guiding Journey



## FIELDguides

Cover image: U461, a Russian submarine at Peenemünde on the coast of the former DDR. This boat was the subject of a guide visit on the recent Cold War event whilst discussing the Cold War nuclear triad.



Bridge of Spies - Guild members on Glienicke Bridge in Berlin during the recent Cold War Recce - the bridge is famous for being the point of entry for BRIXMIS teams into the DDR and where intelligence officers of East and West were exchanged during the Cold War. Unfortunately we couldn't find anyone to swap with John Cotterill so he is still with us.

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Material for publication in the Spring edition should reach the Editor no later than end of January 2024. This is a deadline and submissions should be sent as far in advance as possible.

All material should be sent via Guild Secretary Tim Stoneman at: [secretary@gbg-international.com](mailto:secretary@gbg-international.com)

# Contents



P2	FIELDguides	P24	MEDALguide <i>The Boer War Medals</i>
P5-9	CANADA'S EAST COAST PORT <i>in War and Peace</i>	P25	GUILDevent <i>Normandy Recce</i>
P9	FIELDguides	P26-27	COMMANDO MOUNTAIN WARFARE <i>Training Centre</i>
P10-11	THE GRAVE OF FIELD MARSHAL VISCOUNT FRENCH	P28-29	IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM <i>Spies, Lies &amp; Deception exhibition</i>
P12-13	BADGED GUIDES DINNER	P30-31	16TH ANNUAL GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS
P14	INTELLIGENCE IN WW1	P32-34	MY GUIDING JOURNEY <i>The Influence of Tonie &amp; Valmai Holt</i>
P15	GUILDevent <i>Second Battle of Bullecourt</i>	P35-36	GUIDEinsight <i>Becoming a Writer</i>
P16-18	BATTLE OF LINCOLN	P37-38	GUIDEreference: <i>Air Power</i>
P19	FIELDguides	P39	GUIDEbooks
P20-23	LONGEST WAR IN HISTORY		

## EDITOR'Sguidelines:

Welcome to the winter edition of 'Despatches'. Firstly I would like to say a big thank you to all those that have contributed; without the members contributions, there is no 'Despatches'! Although I am conscious that the winter months tend to be a bit quieter than the rest of the year, do send in material from throughout the year if it hasn't already been published or take advantage of your down time to write on something Guild-related you are passionate about. A lot has happened within the Guild this year and I have found myself as the new Editor, a post I'm very much looking forward to. It's my intention to continue the fantastic work done by Mike Peters and offer a diverse range of subjects and battles of different time periods so please do keep any articles, book reviews and ideas coming (if there is a theme you wish to suggest and contribute to please do get in touch). There are lots of Guild events being organised and run so please do keep attending, one of the most enjoyable aspects I have found with them is that despite anyone's expertise or experience there is always a new stand to be found and new things to learn. As Richard

Holmes said "When you join the Guild of Battlefield Guides, you realise you are not as good as you thought you were, but you quickly become better than you ever were". Having said that, once you have attended, please do send in your feedback to David, the events organiser so that the members running the event can see how they might adjust their events if required to better suit participants. We have new members to welcome and an upcoming Annual Meeting with validation opportunities so do get that date in your calendar and attend (it will be here before we know it), as it should provide more material to submit-hopefully more for 'Despatches' than Crimewatch! I hope that you all enjoy this edition and I look forward to your feedback to help shape it moving forward, after all 'Despatches' is like all other aspects of the Guild-it is a team effort and will reflect what all members put into it.



Bob Shaw  
Editor



# OPENINGshot:

## A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



Dear fellow members and Guild Partners, welcome to this issue of 'Despatches'. Contained within are all the battlefield specific articles of the preceding year as well as some new.

It is good to see many more requests for guides distributed by the Secretary. This is a clear sign that people are getting back to visiting the battlefields and have a desire to experience their tour in the hands of expert and experienced guides – specialists in their craft. It was quite possible that battlefield tours would be one of the last areas to which people would return with staycations and purely leisure travel 'coming back' first in the travel industry. But our guests are now returning. We should celebrate that good news.

It is good to see members find ways to overcome the demands of travelling post Covid and post Brexit. Long queues with coaches at Dover and Calais are one of the 'benefits of Brexit'. Seeing the border guard trying to match 'in' stamps with 'out' stamps in my passport is tedious. I remember the time a good friend got the first stamp as she crossed a border back in the 90s. She bounced around in the car leading to guards on the Czech border to draw their guns.

No such excitement nowadays. The need to keep count of the number of days we are in the EU has become one of the tasks each time we are invited to lead a tour. I have a spreadsheet with my 180 days periods since November last year and the number of days in Europe for each tour I have completed or may do in the future (and no tour is assured until you 'board the coach'). When I put a new tour in the numbers are automatically updated to let me know how many days I have left of my 90 days in each 180. Luckily, I already have sections for the second half of 2024 already.

So, I hope you all have a good season guiding before 2024 sneaks up on us. I hope to see you on the battlefields – often at the Menin Gate where we blend into the crowd only briefly before spotting each other. Happy travels.

**Mike Scott**  
Chairman

## EVENTguide 2023/24

- 1 Dec **Christmas Lunch 2023** - For details, please contact Bob Darby [bobdarby@btinternet.com](mailto:bobdarby@btinternet.com)
- 26-28 Jan '24 **Guild Annual Conference and AGM** - The venue will be the Doubletree Hotel, Lincoln. For details, please contact the Secretary.
- 11-15 Mar '24 **GBG Ypres Recce.** - Interested members please contact John Cotterill: [john.cotterill@btinternet.com](mailto:john.cotterill@btinternet.com)
- 5-7 Apr '24 **Paras in Normandy** - Interested members Please contact Bob Shaw [rtshaw@hotmail.com](mailto:rtshaw@hotmail.com)

Whilst there is a full programme of events planned for the next year, we are still encouraging members to organise localised events. Help in planning any event is available from David Harvey [events@gbg-international.com](mailto:events@gbg-international.com)

# CANADA'S EAST COAST PORT IN WAR & PEACE...

Leo J Deveau

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is located on the Canadian east coast of Nova Scotia. With a growing population of over 413,000, the municipality includes the formerly named City of Halifax, located on a boot-like shaped peninsula.

*A View of Halifax Drawn from y'Topmasthead, 1750 - showing the palisade wall and forts surrounding the settlement. By Moses Harris and D'Anville: printed for Thomas Jefferys, London, UK. Nova Scotia Archives.*



At the south-end-toe of the peninsula is a historic 75-hectare wooded area now called Point Pleasant Park. The main harbour entrance and container piers are located on the east and heel side of the peninsula, opening out into the Bedford Basin, while the Northwest Arm is entered on the west side by many leisure sailing boats and small motored vessels.

Historically, before the British settlement was established in 1749, the peninsula and basin area was known as K'jipuktuk to the indigenous Mi'kmaq peoples, meaning the "Great Harbour." What later became the Point Pleasant Park area had been a significant gathering place for the Mi'kmaq since time immemorial. Historically, the French had called the peninsula and basin area Chebouctou Bay, while the British anglicized it to Chebucto.

Once the British settlement was established in 1749 - and so named Halifax by Governor Colonel Edward Cornwallis - for the next two centuries it would be recognized as one of Great Britain's four principle overseas naval stations in the 18th and 19th centuries. The fortifications established in the Point Pleasant land area would operate for a continuous period from 1762 to 1945, representing over 183 years of service and hold national significance as Canada's sentinel "East Coast Port" location in war and peace.

Initially, when the British had established Halifax, it was to counter the French imperial influence in the

region. The harbour of Halifax would serve as a springboard for subsequent British attacks on the French strongholds of Louisbourg, Quebec, and Montreal, concluding with the Treaty of Paris in 1763 that formally established British North America.

### Early Settlement Fortifications

Though earlier treaties had been signed with the indigenous to allow for the establishment of further British settlements on mainland Nova Scotia, the early fortifications for the Halifax settlement of 2500 settlers had begun with defending itself from attacks from local indigenous forces supported by their French allies, in the fall of 1749.

The fortifications consisted of five stockades connected by wooden palisades forming a defensive ring around the settlement with a fort established on the high citadel hill overlooking the settlement called Fort George - named after King George III - it would be reconstructed four times up to 1856. By the late-1750s the line of palisades surrounding the settlement were removed as the final British capture of Fortress





The Halifax harbour defences: The locations of the George's Island fortifications - later renamed Fort Charlotte - and the Eastern Battery, later renamed Fort Clarence in 1798. Courtesy of HMHPS.



The location of Point Pleasant Battery and Fort Ogilvie on the Halifax Peninsula. Courtesy of HMHPS.

Louisburg in 1758 had ultimately negated French support for indigenous resistance to the British in the region.

Once Fort George had been established on Citadel Hill, a year later, in 1750, fortifications on George's Island were constructed. Located east of the peninsula in the centre of the harbour, it was later renamed Fort Charlotte in 1798 by Prince Edward, son of King George III, who at the time was serving as Commander-in-Chief in Halifax.

Four years later, in 1754, an Eastern Battery was constructed directly east of George's Island. It was later renamed Fort Clarence by Prince Edward, in honour of his brother William, Duke of Clarence and St. Andrews, who would become King William IV.

While the harbour of Halifax served as an anchorage for Britain's Royal Navy from that beginning, its importance would increase significantly within a decade with the establishment in 1758-59 of a naval yard - the first royal dockyard in North America - as a base for



A painting of Point Pleasant Park Battery from behind looking out the harbour to the Atlantic, by Waterloo War Veteran, Alexander Cavalié Mercer, 6 August 1842. Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

provisioning, maintaining, and repairing vessels of the Royal Navy. Halifax would rank as one of Britain's most important overseas naval bases. Later, it also would continue to serve as a key naval facility, ship repair base, and convoy staging point during the two World Wars of the 20th century.

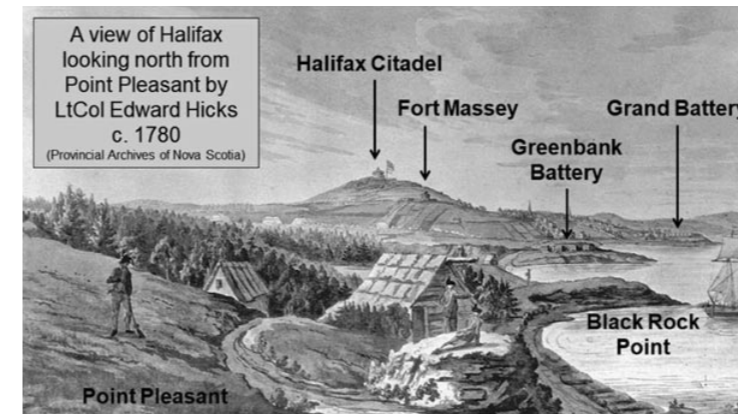
Once the immediate harbour fortifications were established, beginning in 1762, Point Pleasant Battery was constructed at the toe-end of the peninsula, looking out to the brooding Atlantic Ocean. It was often battered by many storms in such an exposed location, and because of new armaments developed over different eras, it was also rebuilt many times, playing a critical role in the defence of the inner harbour.

While Point Pleasant Battery was being constructed, Chain Rock Battery was also established on the west side of the peninsula - consisting essentially of an observation shelter that looked out over a boom of timbers and chains placed across the Northwest Arm. The work was carried out by none other than James Cook, then a 33-year old Master of Lord Colville's flagship HMS Northumberland, and later to become the famous navigator and explorer. Lastly, during that time, the Northwest Arm Battery was also positioned on the west side, between Chain Rock Battery and Point Pleasant Park Battery, to prevent enemy vessels from entering the Northwest Arm and/or attacking the Halifax peninsula from the west.

By 1793, Fort Ogilvie was constructed on the Point Pleasant lands on a high promontory 70 feet above sea level overlooking the east side of



Chain Rock Battery was established on the west side of the Halifax peninsula in 1762. Courtesy of HMHPS.



While serving with the 70th Regiment of Foot in Halifax from 1778 to 1782, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Hicks' art work captured a view from Point Pleasant looking north up the Halifax Harbour to other defensive batteries and to the Halifax Citadel (Fort George). 1780. Nova Scotia Provincial Archives.

the harbour. It was named after Brigadier James Ogilvie, who was the British Commander-in-Chief of the Nova Scotia colony from 1787 to 1794.

Later the Prince of Wales Tower was constructed



The Prince of Wales Tower, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Constructed between 1796 and 1798. Courtesy of HMHPS.

during the French Revolutionary War between 1796 and 1798 on the highest promontory in Point Pleasant, overlooking the harbour entrance. Built under the direction of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, he named it for his brother, the future King George IV. The Tower is now recognized as a National Historic site and maintained by Parks Canada. Finally, there was the Cambridge Battery, started in 1862 during the U.S. Civil War, and completed in 1868 - named for Prince George, 2nd Duke of Cambridge, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army from 1856 to 1895.

All the above fortifications were coordinated - between the immediate Halifax harbour defences to the inner harbour peninsula fortifications, and to the outer harbour defences that had been established at Fort McNab in the 1860s, and Sandwich Battery in the mid-1890s, all playing key roles in the wider Halifax Defence Complex to protect the "East Coast Port."

Following Confederation in 1867, the young nation of Canada assumed greater control of its military affairs, and an agreement respecting the use of the Point Pleasant land area and its fortifications was signed in 1875 between the British War Department and the Directors of Point Pleasant Park (one of the director signatories was John S.D. Thompson, who would later become Canada's 4th Prime Minister, 1892-1894).

While the fortifications in the Point Pleasant Park area were built by the British, Halifax was granted use of the area "on certain conditions" as part of the 999-year agreement, including payment of one shilling a year to the British.

Until recent years an annual traditional ceremony was held in the park and the shilling (Canadian equivalent) from Halifax was presented to the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, the reigning British monarch's representative in the province. It is a unique historical/heritage tradition that the current city councillors seem to no longer want to acknowledge, but which currently the Halifax Military Heritage Preservation Society is encouraging to be reintroduced as an important historical recognition - a recognition that would also acknowledge, in a spirit of reconciliation, the Mi'kmaq's ancestral presence in the area.

By the turn of the 20th century - in 1904, with the withdrawal of the Imperial Garrison from Canada, the defences of Halifax, including Point Pleasant Battery and other fortifications were handed over to Canada. The Battery would continue to play a key role through the First





The outer harbour defences of Halifax. Fort McNab, established in the 1860s, and Sandwich Battery, established in the mid-1890s. Courtesy of HMHPS.

The Point Pleasant Battery ultimately guarded the entrance to Halifax Harbour for 183 years - the longest span of active defence of any other fortifications in Halifax, except for George's Island, and thus one of the longest serving fortifications in all of Canada. Today though, one will only see the ruined remains of a mid-20th century version of the battery. Due to shore erosion the HRM Municipality is considering entombing the site. The Halifax Military Heritage Preservation Society has recommended putting in place near the site suitable information boards and visuals to indicate the significance of the battery and other fortifications in park. No response has been provided on input for such a change.

Today at Point Pleasant Park, the eras of the First and Second World



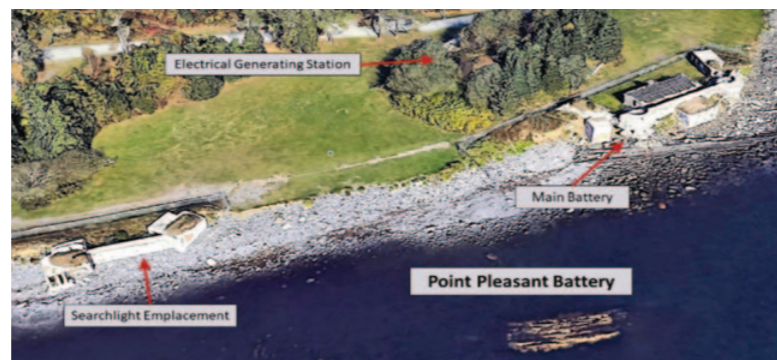
The Hindenburg Zeppelin is photograph flying over Citadel Hill in Halifax, Nova Scotia. 1936. Public domain. Courtesy of HMHPS.



A convoy gathers in the Bedford Basin, April 1942, during the Battle of the Atlantic (1939-1945). Library and Archives Canada. Also see Churchill's Island, 1941. Montreal: National Film Board 'Carry On' series. URL: [bit.ly/44jpiRZ](http://bit.ly/44jpiRZ).

World War with 12-pounder QF guns and searchlights forming part of the anti-submarine and anti-torpedo boat harbour defences.

Later throughout WW II, Halifax was the Allies' principal staging area for merchant convoys supplying critical food, fuel and other war material to Great Britain. Prime Minister Churchill would also sail into Halifax harbour twice on the Queen Mary during the war in July 1943 and September 1944 on his way to the conferences in Quebec City to meet with other Allied leaders.



An aerial view of the Point Pleasant Battery shore erosion. 2022. Halifax, Nova Scotia. Courtesy of HMHPS.]



The Halifax Memorial stands in Point Pleasant Park, Halifax, Nova Scotia, where it can be seen by all ships entering or leaving the harbour. Unveiled in November 1967, the Royal Canadian Navy holds commemoration ceremonies twice a year at the memorial: on Battle of Atlantic Sunday (the first Sunday of May) and on Remembrance Day, November 11th.

Wars are reflected in the Halifax Memorial designed and placed at its current site by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The

Memorial has inscribed on it 3257 names of Canadian sailors, nursing sisters, merchant navy seamen and soldiers with no known grave who were lost at sea.

More photos and a brief history of the various batteries and related fortifications in and around Halifax are included in the historic sites section of the HMHPS website at: [hmbps.ca](http://hmbps.ca)

Leo J. Deveau, B.A., M.Ed., MLIS, is based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He is the author of '400 Years in 365 Days, A Day by Day Calendar of Nova Scotia History' (Formac Publishing), and 'Fideltier The Regimental History of The Princess Louise Fusiliers' (Princess Louise Fusiliers Regimental Heritage Association), and a columnist for the Saltwire Network. He would like to also thank Tom Tulloch, MSM, CD, MDS (RMC), Cape. RCN (ret'd) for his research and textual support in creating this piece.)

## FIELDguides



A Moooot Point - Mike Shiel seeking help map reading from a group of well-informed locals in Meuse Argonne.



# THE GRAVE OF FIELD MARSHAL VISCOUNT FRENCH OF YPRES

Tonie and Valmai Holt

In a recent article in *'Between the Lines'* the Newsletter of the WFA East Kent Branch Newsletter, James Brazier, who writes the Newsletter, mentioned the grave of Sir John French in Ripple and wondered what state it might be in today.

In an early edition of our *'Major & Mrs Holt's Battlefield Guide to the Ypres Salien'* we show a picture of this grave with our granddaughter Rebecca (Becca) Wise, then eight years old, placing a poppy wreath on the grave. At that time, we believe that members of the Royal Marines, stationed in Deal, kept the grave tidy.

John Denton Pinkstone French was born in 1852 at Ripple Vale House, which was sold by the family in 1874 and is now a school. His father, Captain John Tracey French, was always conscious of his Irish ancestry and the family's homes in Wexford and Roscommon. He died in 1854 after a strenuous career in the Navy.

John Denton had six sisters and their mother died in 1861, leaving them to bring up their young brother. They were all powerful women and sent their young brother to Harrow School.

French then joined the Royal Navy in 1866, mainly because of his father's career, but soon found that life on the sea was not for him. He therefore, much to his sisters' disapproval, resigned from the Navy to join the Suffolk Artillery Militia in 1870 for two years. In February 1874, he joined the 8th Bn (Queen's Royal Irish) Hussars, probably because of his family's history in Ireland, soon transferring to the 19th Bn Hussars, enjoying being with horses – and the company of women.

The 19th Bn moved to Ireland in 1876, French serving so well there that he was promoted to Captain in 1880. There then followed a period of campaigns in different countries, starting with Egypt in 1884 when he took part in the Sudan Expedition to relieve Major-General Gordon. In 1885, he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and, returning to the UK, spent several years in years in England. In



Becca Wise placing poppies on Field-Marshal French's Grave in St Mary's Church Cemetery, Ripple, 2003.

1891, French was posted to India. There he had a colourful period, including almost being dismissed for his adultery with a fellow officer's wife and being put on half pay.

French served in the South African War from 1899-1902, taking part in most of the important battles, sometimes with distinction, sometimes to the disapproval of Kitchener (qv) and other officers. He was appointed Lieutenant-General in 1902. After his return to the UK, he was appointed Inspector-General in 1907 and, in 1913, became Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

When the First World War broke out, French directed the first British major engagement in October 1914 from his HQ on Mont Cassel, moving to St Omer on 24 October. French's appointment was despite Sir Douglas Haig's doubt about his ability – *"In my own heart, I know that French is quite unfit for this grand command at a time of crisis in our nation's history"*. This, despite the fact that in 1899 Haig had lent French, who often became nearly bankrupt, £2,000 – a large sum of money in those days.

In 1918, Field-Marshal French was created a Viscount and promoted to Commander in Chief of the United Kingdom, retiring as a Field-Marshal in 1921. In June 1922, French was created Earl of Ypres and received a retirement grant of £50,000 (today worth around £35 million) in recognition of his service.

In 1924, Sir John French made an appeal for a British Church to be built in Ypres. In March 1929,



L-R: General Smith-Dorrien, Field Marshal Earl Kitchener and General Douglas Haig.



St George's Memorial Church in Ypres was dedicated and a bust of Field-Marshal Sir John French, First Earl of Ypres, faces one as the Church is entered. The twin pulpits also commemorate French.

French died of cancer of the bladder in Deal Castle (where he had been appointed Captain of the Castle in 1923) on 20 May 1925. He was cremated at Golders Green and the ashes lay in state at the Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks. At his funeral service in Westminster Abbey, his pall-bearers included his some-time adversaries Haig, Robertson and Smith-Dorrien. He was then buried in the non-military St Mary the Virgin Cemetery in Ripple, near the home where he was born.

Although his service career was probably more, rather than less, successful, French's private life was somewhat torrid and he was often described as a 'colourful character'.

In 1875, French married 'the daughter of a tradesman', Isabella Soundy. At this stage he was still a subaltern and therefore the marriage was regarded as non-acceptable and was probably kept a secret. The couple divorced in 1878, and, it was said Isabella was paid off by French's brother-in-law.

In 1880, French married Eleanor Selby-Lowndes, known as 'The Belle of Bletchley' and it is thought that she never knew of his first marriage. The couple had three children: son Richard, daughter who was accidentally suffocated by her nurse and a second son, Gerald - yet they gradually drifted apart.

French continued his affairs with society ladies and in 1915 he started a relationship with the elegant Mrs Winifred Bennett, wife of a British diplomat. He wrote to her daily and on the eve of the Battle of Neuve Chapelle he wrote to her: *"Tomorrow I shall go forward with my war cry of 'Winifred'"*.

In fact, French was a man who, throughout his military career, veered from being loved and admired to being scorned and, according to Lloyd George, who called him a *'far bigger man than Haig'*, felt he had *'Fallen by the daggers of his own comrades.'* French and Kitchener were both obstinate personalities and Kitchener varied from approval to disappointment of him, both in the Boer War and in WW1. Smith-Dorrien had a continuing feud with French and objected to his womanising and Sir Hubert Gough called him *"an ignorant little fool"* in 1916. Yet Churchill always admired him. In 1915, he wrote to French: *"...our deep friendship, though begun late, has grown strong and deep"*. In 1921, in *'Great Contemporaries'*, he wrote: *"French was a natural soldier. Although he had not the intellectual capacity of Haig, nor perhaps his underlying endurance, he had a deeper military insight."*

The career of this controversial man makes an interesting study and, for what must be the very best biography of John French, we heartily recommend *"The Little Field-Marshal: A Life of Sir John French"* by our dear friend, so popular with GBG, Richard Holmes, who sadly died of cancer on 30 April 2011, aged 65.

On 6 August 2023, we returned to Field-Marshal French's grave at Ripple and once more Becca laid some poppies in his remembrance.





# THE BADGED GUIDES DINNER

Graeme Cooper



Early days saw that gaining 'The Badge' spirited the camaraderie, trust and values within the Guild membership. Consequently in 2011 it was decided to hold an Annual Dinner for validated guides of the Guild at the Cavalry & Guards Club to celebrate their educational journey through the Guild's unique validation process.

Successive dinners were held to encourage others to validate and to grow the Guild. Since then, dinners have been held at the following venues:

- 2012 - *The 'In & Out Club'*
- 2014 - *The Oriental Club*
- 2016 - *The RAF Club*
- 2018 - *Special Forces Club*
- 2020 - *'The Covid Club'*
- 2022 - *The Cooper's Arms*

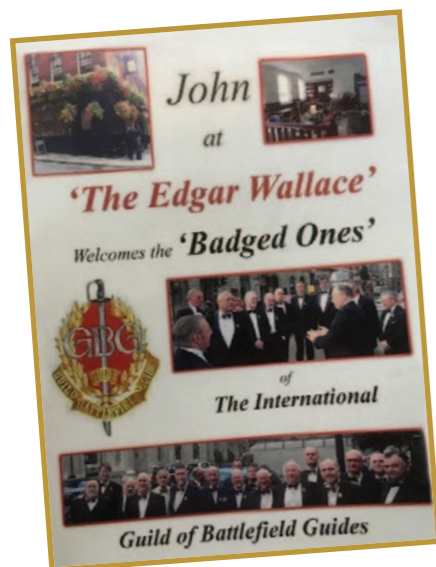


- 2013 - *The East India Club*
- 2015 - *The Reform Club*
- 2017 - *HQ Ship Wellington*
- 2019 - *The Army & Navy Club*
- 2021 - *The Fletchers & Farmers Guild*
- 2023 - *The Union Jack Club*

Badge Members attending the event would rendezvous at a London pub unaware of the dinner venue which would be a short walk away.



Above: Terry Webb, John Harris, Bob Darby, Paul Oldfield & Chris Finn



The Guild Dinner Grace Written by Andrew Jolly – Guild Padre 2003

*God bless this Guild as they dine  
Eating talking supping wine  
Exchanging stories of derring do  
Of campaigns old and newer too  
And as we share at this your table  
A Guild of Guides may we be able  
To look back at this time together  
And thank you our God for ever and ever.  
Amen*



Aboard HQ Ship Wellington in 2017

*During the dinner The Guild, The Referred Club, Absent Friends, and Heads of State represented on the night are toasted. The vast majority of 'Badged' members are also members of the 'Referred Club' and they humour the fact that they went through the process more than once.*

Right: Chris Finn, Tom Dormer & Chris Scott



Guild Patron Richard Holmes said in 2003  
*"When you join the Guild of Battlefield Guides, you soon realise you are not as good as you thought you were, but very quickly you become better than you ever were."*

Ask any 'Badged One' if they are a better guide as a result of experiencing the validation journey.



The Guild's unique accreditation process delivers the very best Validation programme for our craft and that is why 'The Badged Ones' cherish wearing the Badge.



Right: With four Dinner guests from the Royal Hospital Chelsea in 2022 at The Cooper's Arms and Sue King with Pensioner Pat Callaghan



2013 - The East India Club



Enroute to the Special Forces Club in 2018



# INTELLIGENCE IN WW1

Bob Shaw

**When we see the way in which intelligence is collected in modern conflict it's easy to forget that intelligence gathering is the second oldest profession in history and that it has always enabled commanders to make informed decisions. That doesn't mean to say that intelligence presented is always correct or indeed listened to, so how was intelligence gathered in WW1? Was it so different to today?**

As the political climate changed from 1870 to one of increasing international competition the majority of military general staffs established a permanent military intelligence service. The majority of these had departments that focused on specific geographical areas or specific potential opponents. Great Britain (being an island nation) had always used the Royal Navy as one of their intelligence collection agencies which resided in the RN Naval Intelligence Division and then in 1909, a Secret Service Bureau was created jointly by the Foreign Office, the War Office and the Admiralty to deal with intelligence. The following year, this divided into two services.

There was the Secret Intelligence Service, led by Mansfield Smith-Cumming, alias 'C', which dealt with intelligence abroad. Despite being in its infancy and with meagre resources, SIS did acquire useful intelligence especially on German shipbuilding.

There was also the Secret Service; responsible for the security of Great Britain and its empire which was led by an army officer, Vernon Kell, alias 'K'.

Although not an intelligence or security service the Military attachés stationed in embassies around the globe also played an important role although their diplomatic status prohibited them from conducting espionage against their host country. They took risks collecting military information and recruiting agents to carry out espionage in neighbouring countries.

The ground forces had always had a requirement for tactical level intelligence on enemy dispositions, ground and weather conditions and this had traditionally been collected by cavalry forces amongst others. But once WW1 devolved into Trench warfare this couldn't always be done by traditional means so instead it was augmented by aviation assets and we see the birth of Imagery Intelligence (IMINT) once aircrew took

photographs on their personal cameras created a montage that they used to brief senior commanders. The commanders were impressed and as a result IMINT squadrons within the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) were created.

The Intelligence Corps was born and Intelligence Officers were subsequently attached to units to interrogate captured German prisoners (CPERS) and enemy deserters. In addition to this troops in the front lines from the artillery observer in a balloon to snipers in camouflage hides and onto every soldier looking through a trench periscope were producing reports on what they had or could observe and this was fed into the intelligence cycle.

Human Intelligence (HUMINT) networks were created across Holland, France and Belgium called the train watchers. Over 4 years 250 networks were created of more than 6,400 Belgian and French citizens. In addition to reporting on train movements (most soldiers, ammunition and equipment were moved by train as close to the front line as they could get so trains might indicate the build-up for an offensive or at least help with area enemy strength estimates) they also gathered intelligence on the presence and state of airfields, ammunition depots and other enemy infrastructure.



## GUILDevent Second Battle of Bullecourt

Christopher Preston

**In the early hours of 3 May 2023, I led a walk to commemorate the 106th Anniversary of the Second Battle of Bullecourt.**



*We met up in Croisilles and Caroline Lemoine kindly opened up the Salle des Fetes at 3.30am (French Time) and served us with coffee and biscuits before we started on our walk.*



*We then walked to Bullecourt and on to the Australian Digger Memorial in time to watch the sunrise, which was very poignant as the symbol of the rising sun is featured on the Australian Infantry's cap badge.*



*We followed the route which the 2nd/4th and 2nd 5th Battalions, Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry took reaching their Jumping Off Position as part of the 18th Brigade, 62nd Division in time for Zero Hour, 3.45am British Time, 4.45am French Time where we discussed the battle.*



*The Digger Memorial just after sunrise.*



*Anne Moreau from Bullecourt met us at the Australian Digger Memorial at 7.00am French Time and served us with coffee and home-made ANZAC biscuits.*



# THE BATTLE OF LINCOLN (OR LINCOLN FAIR!)

Chris Scott

**Whilst the Guild is in Lincoln immersed in the doings of Bomber County and other modern happenings, it might be interesting to those ‘open’ to pre 20thC conflicts to take a stroll around a very nearby battlefield and tour an action that was set in the 13th century.**

The Doubletree Hotel is in the modern part of Lincoln so to visit the battlefield you’ll have to climb ‘Steep Hill’ up to the Cathedral Quarter – known also as the Cultural Quarter. At the top of the very long steep climb you will come to a market place with the castle to your left and the gateway to the Cathedral to your right - and that puts you smack bang in the centre of the action!

This battle took place in 1217 during the First Barons’ War (1215-17) and spans the reigns of King John and his son, Henry III. It features the most important baron of the age William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, who acted as the royal negotiator who had tried to mollify John’s rebellious nobles, including the drawing up of the Magna Carta in June 1215. His efforts were in vain, because in open hostility to the king, the barons invited the French Dauphin, Louis to invade and assume the English crown! A French army consequently landed at Sandwich on 22 May 1216 and many retinues of the English aristocracy flocked to the French prince’s banner. These rebels entered London and Louis was proclaimed king in St. Paul’s Cathedral. However, key castles like Windsor, Dover, Newark and Lincoln held out for John.

John responded by making a troop-marshalling progress across his realm trying to raise men and morale. However in the autumn of 1216 whilst en route to rally the north he contracted a fever before he reached Sleaford and then fell ill with acute dysentery. It was said that he had been poisoned. He made it to Newark Castle, but died there on 19 October and his son Henry, then aged 9, was proclaimed by the loyalists and William Marshal (then aged 70) chosen as Guardian of the Realm - a sort of Regent. Marshal quickly issued a cleverly-worded conciliatory and forgiving edict which enticed several rebel English barons to defect and return to allegiance; but French Louis still held all the cards, until, that is, he made a crucial campaign error.

In Spring 1217 he divided his forces. He took a large part of the army south from London to besiege Dover but despatched Count Thomas de Perche north

to deal with Lincoln, which was not only a royalist fortress but the erstwhile seat of the influential current Archbishop of Canterbury. Lincoln Castle was held by the Chatelaine Constable Nicola de la Haye, widow of Gerard de Canville and she was fiercely loyal to the Plantagenets. Being told the rebels were on their way, she begged the Guardian for support. William Marshal gathered a force of royalists in and around Newark, destined to aid her garrison. He mustered about 400 lances (ie: knights and their entourages of shield-service gentlemen at arms and their locally-raised forces) plus about 250 paid professional crossbowmen under the mercenary, Falkes de Breaute, and then set out for Lincoln. Before they reached the city news came to them that de Perche had surrounded the castle and begun siege operations, and that the French and rebels certainly outnumbered his loyal army.

De Perche too had intelligence. He was told of the advancing relief force and called a Council of War. Two of his leading commanders Robert Fitz Walter and Saur de Quincy advised him to march out and meet Marshal before he got to Lincoln, as having a much larger army they stood a better chance of victory in the open field. However, de Perche chose to defend the city walls, slamming and barricading the north, south, east and west gates, and manning the battlements whilst still continuing to make assaults on the castle itself. This obliged Marshal to devise a plan to assault and storm the walls even with a numerically inferior army.

He divided his force into four assault columns (called ‘battles’): one he led himself and the second he placed under the Earl of Salisbury, the third was allocated to the Earl of Chester and a fourth given to the Bishop of Winchester. He also received a spy report that the West Gate was poorly fortified, being blocked merely with a pile of rubble. He declared that his own ‘battle’ would assault this West Gate and drafted in servants and country people to act as forced labour. The Earl of Chester’s battle was to attack the North Gate which proved effective as it created such a diversion that more Frenchmen were sent to bolster up its defenders.



These attacks were normally head-on advances against gates or barricades under the covering shooting of their own crossbowmen and longbowmen. Gates were hacked into, especially around the hinges or at the plank-seams and battering rams of hewn tree-trunks brought up. Attackers would shoot or spear-stab through any holes cut through the wood and force the gates open. Once a small breach was made it would be widened and men fought their way through. Once inside, the bridgehead would be reinforced and expanded and then the knights’ horses would be brought up to lead a mounted charge into the enemy as they tried to block the streets. The attackers’ crossbowmen would also smash their way into nearby houses and shoot from the windows or the roof spaces, having first kicked out tiles or made holes in the thatch.

The fighting around West gate was bitter but eventually Marshal’s men gained the upper hand, struggling over the rubble and driving the French and rebels back. The fight here could well have needed the mass of men held elsewhere. Some were in the market place between the castle and the cathedral, but they were focused upon assaulting the castle’s main gate, whilst others were detailed to watch Salisbury’s and Winchester’s two divisions. Unfortunately we don’t know exactly where these two royal battles were positioned. They could have been directed at the East Gate or even held as a central reserve. It is unlikely they would attack the South Gate as it was protected by another walled Enclosure and an urban area, but no matter where they stood, they must have posed a threat that needed to be watched and countered if and when they attacked.

With the West Gate won the labourers were set to work clearing the rubble thus allowing more and more royalists to enter the city. As attention was focused on the four main royal battles, de Breaute

managed to get his mercenary crossbowmen into the castle via a western postern gate – this was a small entrance south of the West Gate which led directly into the castle. The castle formed part of the encircling walls and was thus manned by friendly royalist defenders, not rebels. These crossbowmen immediately joined the troops on the castle walls, particularly the north wall which overlooks the east-west thoroughfare of the city and leading to West Gate - the route which the French had to use in order to

resist Marshal’s incursion. Shooting from that wall they could shoot into the left flank of any French/rebel troops! Being pushed back by a ferocious combined mounted and foot charge from the front led by Marshal, and shot at from the flank by de Breaute’s crossbows, they fell back towards a road known as the Bailgate, the north-south thoroughfare through the city.

The battle shifted focus. Marshal’s division hacked and stabbed their way forward while the rebels fell back eastwards onto Bailgate and then turned south, past the road that led to the East Gate, and finally into the market place where they caused disarray among their own men still engaged in siege operations. These unfortunates had no idea that the city’s walls had even been breached and were completely surprised by the fighting that suddenly erupted in their midst. It all developed into a general chaotic melee with the besiegers on the back foot.

Meanwhile Chester’s men managed to breach the North Gate (now known as Newport Arch) and were advancing down Bailgate driving any straggling the enemy before them. They launched themselves into the market place mayhem. De Perche tried valiantly to restore order and charged into the fray, only to be killed by a lance thrust that went through his eye and into his brain. This is thought to have happened outside what is today the Magna Carta pub.

With the death of their commander the French/rebel morale collapsed and men started to stream away, through the South Gate and down Steep Hill running eventually through the Enclosure heading for the gates at the bottom end of the city and the bridge and ford over the River Witham.

The royal troops took after them, hacking down anyone they caught. Some pockets of resistance were sure to have been organised but they had no effect. It was a total rout and a complete decisive victory for Marshal and the royalists. The victorious army then





get out of Lincoln fled and tried to get home to hide. The majority of ordinary soldiers were cut down or taken. Prisoners who couldn't speak English supposedly had their throats slit for being French invaders and those who could speak it were hanged for being rebel traitors. Rich rebels or Frenchmen surrendered and were ransomed. Marshal was said to have received the modern equivalent of six and a half million pounds in ransom for the northern baron Nicolas de Stuteville whom he captured. Nicola de la Haye who had appeared on the walls herself, had both held onto Lincoln Castle and the east of

turned on the inhabitants of Lincoln, who had welcomed Louis as a better alternative to John. Despite protestations from Nicola de la Haye the royalists sacked the city, killing, raping, pillaging and burning, despoiling the Cathedral and stripping many of the churches. It was a chaotic orgy of celebratory destruction which ironically was dubbed by its chroniclers as *'Lincoln Fair'*!

De Perche's army was massacred. The French knights who struggled back to London got short shrift from Louis' garrison and were accused of cowardice. The rebel English barons who managed to

England - the realm was saved.

Later in the year Louis remaining invasion army was defeated at the Battle of Sandwich to where he had gone to meet with reinforcements from France. After a second crushing defeat Louis renounced his claim to the throne of England and was allowed to depart with his tail between his legs. William Marshal was hailed a hero, made a Knight Templar on his deathbed and was buried in the Temple in London in May 1219. Henry III went on to be a formidable English king and Prince Louis was later crowned as King Louis VIII of France.

Lincoln Castle



## FIELDguides



Bob Shaw guiding Omaha Beach - note the Brecon point being done incorrectly - the thumb isn't tucked in!



Operation 'Dinner Out'- Guides in Belin on the Cold War Recce having a suitably themed meal at a Russian restaurant-obviously no one asked for any side dishes containing Polonium 210!



V2 - Guild members at the V2 Rocket (the first man made object in space) at Peenamunde in the former DDR discussing the Cold War Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces.



Bob Shaw discussing obstacle crossing at Seelow with an MOD unit.



# THE LONGEST WAR IN HISTORY (THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIVE YEARS WAR)

Tim Stoneman



Ruins of King Charles's Castle (formerly Tresco Castle)

**Netherlands and an archipelago in the Atlantic, although followed by a de facto cessation of hostilities, was never followed by a peace treaty – until 1986! The said archipelago is now a holiday destination – and those who read my article in the Spring 2022 issue of this worthy publication may recall that I alluded to this assault in that piece.**

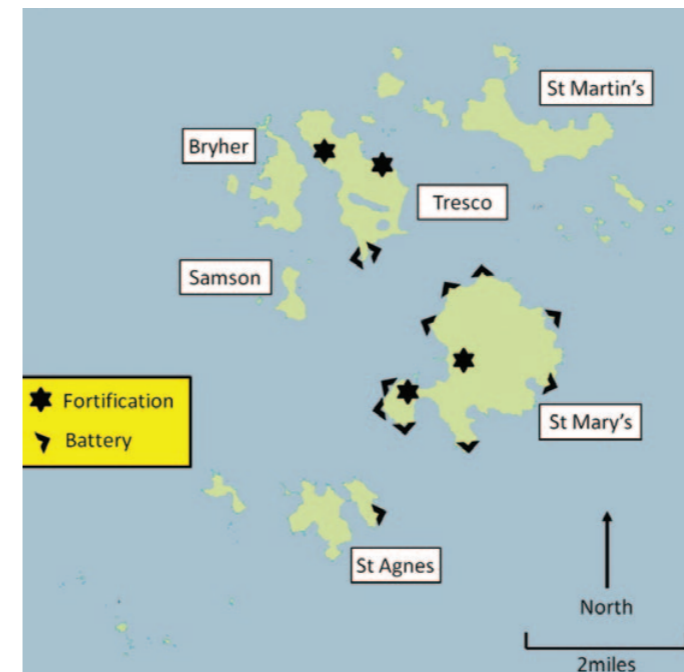
As background, 1651 was during a period which became known as The Interregnum – the period when England was a Republic, between the execution of Charles the First and the Restoration of his son, Charles the Second, as King of England. Royalists, loyal to Charles II, held out in distant islands such as Jersey and the Isle of Man. However, those in the Isles of Scilly, 25 miles off Land's End, were running out of food – and support – and had resorted to piracy (or, depending upon your loyalties, to privateering – raiding of enemy shipping legitimised by your king). They had preyed on neutral shipping as well (mostly Dutch) and the United Provinces had sent a fleet under Admiral Tromp to put a stop to these deprivations. He proceeded to demand the return of the captured ships and their cargoes; the Royalists refused (they had already sold the ships and their cargoes). Deprived of satisfaction, Tromp sailed to Falmouth, telling the authorities there that he was declaring war on the Isles of Scilly. The infant English Republic, anxious to avoid antagonising powerful neighbouring nations, and concerned that the Dutch might establish a base there, determined to eradicate the Royalist stronghold – which is where this story begins.

**The Longest War in History (Driehonderdvijfentigjarige Oorlog). The site of the amphibious assault which played a part in this conflict can still be visited, and still has most of the original features visible to an intrepid battlefield explorer!**

**A declaration of war between the United Provinces of the**

I'd better set the scene with a brief description of the geography. There were (and are) five inhabited islands, the largest (St Mary's) being no more than two and a half miles from side to side, and Tresco, the second in size, only half the area of St Mary's. These two will feature as the battleground for much of this article. St Mary's was the main Royalist stronghold, with coastal gun batteries, and Star Castle as its focus, and Tresco, also well garrisoned, was defended by Tresco Castle (now known as King Charles' Castle) and by a Blockhouse on its eastern shore. A glance at Map 1 should aid the reader's understanding of these defences. On the maritime side, there are good anchorages in St Mary's Pool, between the two largest islands, and in St Helen's Pool, to the northeast of Tresco, whilst many of the other stretches of water between the islands hide shallows and rocks to entrap the unwary mariner, or those unfamiliar with the area. There were many beaches, although waterborne approaches to some were obstructed by shoals and reefs – those beaches, still the same today, make the islands a popular tourist destination!

Parliament sent a force under General at Sea Robert Blake (a very competent soldier who had risen to prominence during the Civil War) to deal



Map 1 – the Isles of Scilly, showing defences as in 1651

with the troublesome Royalists. With a force of some 22 ships, and nine companies of foot, about 900 soldiers, he set sail for the islands, and anchored his fleet in St Helen's Pool. Facing him were some 1000 Royalists, about 600 on St Mary's and most of the remainder on Tresco. His plan? To take the second largest island, from which he could threaten the main harbour on St Mary's, the settlement of Hugh Town and the main defensive position; he could then prevent any resupply of the Garrison and hoped to starve out his opponents.

Blake ordered an attack on the eastern shore of Tresco, with a local man, Nance by name, to act as



Map 2 – Tresco and surrounding seas

pilot through the treacherous rocky channel from St Helen's Pool to Old Grimsby. The force, under Lieutenant Colonels Bawden and Clarke, set off in ships' boats early on 17 April 1651, a misty day with very limited visibility. As boats carrying part of the force approached land, through the mist they saw a beach, and made a landing, with some opposition. Setting off westward across the island, the troops soon found themselves on another, west-facing beach! Bawden realised his men had landed in the wrong place – in fact they were on the islet of Northwethel! Allegedly the pilot was a Royalist supporter who had led them astray, but *"They would say that, wouldn't they"* (to misquote Mandy Rice-Davies). Joseph Lereck, one of Bawden's men, wrote *"They had sufficient advantage against us, having rocks for their shelter, and our men so crowded in their open boats, as many of them could not make use of their arms; indeed it was a miracle of mercy that we lost not very many men here."*

The majority of the troops were forced to re-embark in their boats, leaving some 80 men *"... to alarm and amuse the enemy ..."* and retreat to the island of Teän, where they spent a miserable day and night with very little sustenance (even water had to be supplied from the ships at anchor), before relaunching the attack the next morning with more of the sailors from the fleet in support, crewing the boats. This time they reached the intended beaches, and, after a firefight (imagine using matchlock muskets standing up in a crowded ship's boat, under oars, in poor visibility against dug-in troops ashore), the Parliamentarians gained a lodgement on shore – not without casualties, although the defenders took far heavier losses. Lereck again: *"... where the enemy disputed our landing with stout resistance insomuch as the seamen were forced back into the water; yet our men charged them resolutely, even to club-musket, and, through the blessing of God, worsted them..."* The Royalist Governor, Sir John Grenville (or Granville), who had gone to Tresco to take charge of the defences, retired to his headquarters on St Mary's, leaving one William Edgecumbe in



Photo 1 – St Helen's Pool



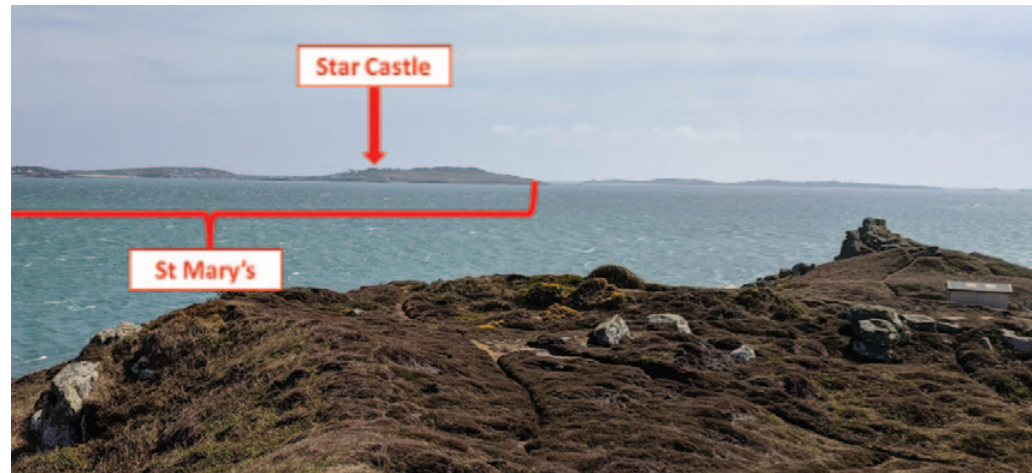


Photo 2 – overview of Oliver's Battery



Photo 3 – Oliver's Battery – gun position

command of the remaining garrison on Tresco, holding out in the Castle. However, the attackers bypassed that fortification, and established themselves at the southern point of the island.

Colonel Fleetwood, commanding the assaulting force, prepared an attack on the Castle, which was sited poorly to meet an attack from landward, whilst two of Blake's ships ventured into the channel to the west of the island and began to bombard the Castle from the seaward side. Edgcombe realised the game was up, and, determined not to allow the fortification to be captured intact, set a demolition charge and destroyed the structure, killing a number of both defenders and attackers (originally he was thought to have been killed in the explosion himself, but he did in fact survive).

Blake's men set up a gun position for a whole culverin and one, or perhaps two demi-culverins, on

a rocky outcrop on the southern part of Tresco overlooking the roadstead of St Mary's, from which they could threaten any shipping entering or leaving the Royalist harbour. However, in the course of preparing the guns, the first to be fired suffered a breech explosion, killing the gunner and an ensign and wounding nine others. Flying fragments narrowly missed Blake himself, who was nearby to watch the firing. However, having overcome the initial setback, the gun position (see Photo 2, subsequently named Oliver's Battery, although Cromwell never visited the islands!) was completed and another gun mounted.

Grenville realised his position was not sustainable, and surrender talks were held on the uninhabited island of Samson. These were initially unsuccessful, and hostilities continued, but eventually an agreement was reached, and

Grenville surrendered the islands to Blake and Fleetwood on 3 June. He and his men were allowed to leave without loss of face – and without loss of arms and accoutrements; he himself was even paid £1000 for the cannon he was forced to leave behind on St Mary's!

So what is left to show today's visitors what happened in this brief conflict? All of the locations on land can be visited with ease; the seaward approaches can be seen from high ground on Tresco, or, if you have a boat and a good chart to avoid the reefs and shallows, can be reached by water. Star Castle still exists, and is now a hotel (Photo 4) whose owners will be happy for you to visit the ramparts for tea or coffee (or something stronger!). Some of the earthen ramparts of gun batteries on St Mary's remain, and the outline of Oliver's Battery is discernible on Tresco, as can be seen in Photo 3. The ruins of King Charles Castle are prominent on the



Photo 4 – fortifications – Star Castle (left) – atop the hill and the Old Blockhouse (right) – overlooking one of the landing beaches

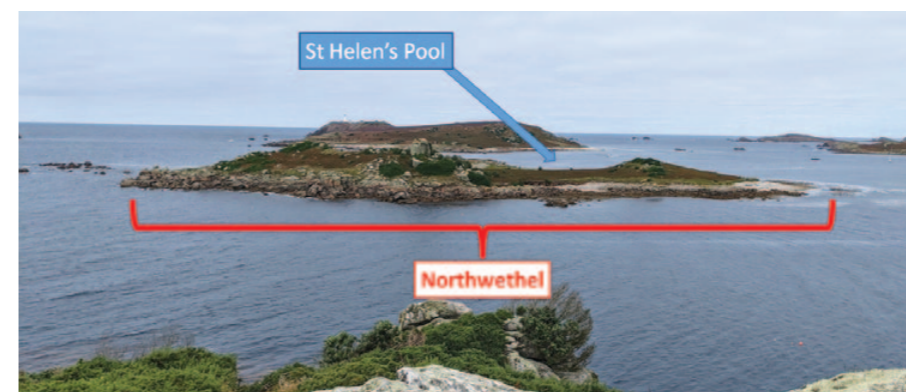


Photo 5 – the assault area as seen by the attackers (upper) and by the defenders (lower)

high ground to the north of Tresco, as is the Old Blockhouse to the east (which, incidentally, does not feature in contemporary accounts, although it would have been ideally placed to fire on the landing beaches and catch the assaulting forces in enfilade) – see Photo 4. Photo 5 shows the attackers' view of Northwethel from the east as seen today and, beyond it, the beaches attacked by Clarke's and Bawden's men, and the defenders' view from Tresco, looking towards Northwethel and St Helen's Pool.

And the Longest War in History? Roy Duncan, a local historian on St Mary's, realised that there had been no peace treaty – after an exchange of correspondence, the Netherlands Ambassador visited the islands in 1986, to formally terminate the hostilities between his country and the islands – hostilities in which no shots had ever been fired! Rein Huydecoper, the Ambassador, said "It must have been awful to know we could have attacked at any moment."

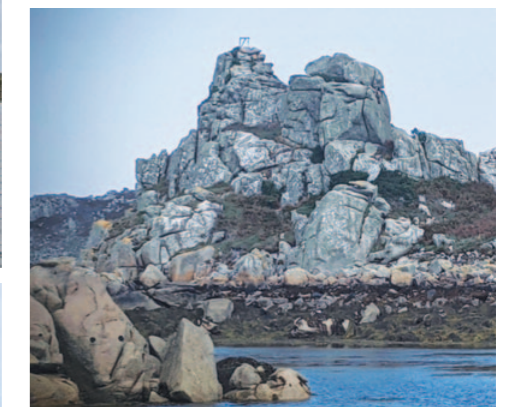


Photo 6 – Hangman's Island (above) – and a demonstration of the gallows

As another footnote, there is a rocky islet, in the channel between Tresco and Bryher to its west, named Hangman's Island, with a gibbet at its highest point. Blake is said to have executed the most significant of his opponents here, including, by some accounts, Nance, the pilot. However, there's no foundation to this tale! The name of the islet appears to be a corruption of the old Cornish 'An Maen', meaning 'the rock', and there's no record of him ordering such retribution after other engagements – but it makes a good story for the more gullible visitor. See Photo 6 showing my son in the representative position, with the gibbet presumably placed there to keep the story alive!



# MEDALguide

## The Boer War Medals

There were no medals issued for the first Boer War 1880-1881 or any of the earlier conflicts with the Boers. The second Boer War took place between 1899 and 1902 and for this conflict two medals were issued with two others for ancillary support.



The Queens South Africa Medal and the Kings South Africa Medal

The Queens South Africa Medal was the first to be issued. In total some 177,000 medals were awarded and these were issued with a number of clasps. In total 26 different clasps were authorised for the various engagements and 'states' that made up the war. However, the maximum number of clasps issued was nine to the Army and eight to the Navy.

Five 'state' clasps were issued – 'Cape Colony', 'Natal', 'Rhodesia', 'Orange Free State' and 'Transvaal'. These were given for service in the various states in which there were so many small actions it would have been impossible to recognise each separately. The other twenty-one clasps were for various engagements, one of the more famous being the defence of Mafeking for which approximately 1150 clasps were issued, making it the rarest of all the clasps issued.

The duration of the war was seriously underestimated, and the first issue of the medal bore the dates 1899-1900 on the reverse. Lord Strathcona's Horse were the only unit to receive these medals as it returned home to Canada before the war ended. Some 50 were presented by Edward VII at Buckingham Palace. When it was discovered that the war was actually continuing the dates were erased from the die. However, there are some medals where the ghost numbers '1899-1900' can still be seen. A later striking removed the dates completely.

The Kings South Africa Medal was authorised in 1902 and was awarded to all those serving in South Africa on, or after, the 1st January 1902 and who had completed 18 months service before 1st June 1902. There were two clasps issued 'South Africa 1901' and 'South Africa 1902'.

The medal was never issued singly, always in combination with the Queens South Africa medal and it was not issued without a clasp except for 587 issued to nursing sisters. Occasionally the medal was issued with just one clasp. Only 31 medals were ever issued to the Royal Navy as the Naval Brigades returned to their ships in 1901 and men who did not serve ashore were not entitled.

The Queens Mediterranean Medal was awarded to garrisons in the Mediterranean who guarded Boer prisoners of war. It has a similar reverse to the South Africa medals with the word 'Mediterranean' instead of South Africa. Some 2900 were awarded.

The Transport Medal was awarded to Masters, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Officers, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Engineers, Purser and Surgeons employed in the Transport Service who took troops to the South African war. A clasp was issued 'S. Africa 1899-1902' to those involved.



QSA reverse

# GUILDEvent Normandy Recce

Robin Burrows

Here are some photos from the recent Normandy Recce.



John Cotterill on Hill 226



Hill 112 - Viv and Gabz exploring the other side of the hill



Op Bluecoat Startline - John Cotterill at Caumont



# THE COMMANDO MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTRE

Bob Shaw

The Commando Mountain Warfare Training Centre was created in December 1942, to train Commandos to operate in mountainous terrain that was snow covered. Actually putting a square peg into a square hole, the War Office appointed Squadron Leader F S Smythe as the first Commanding Officer. He was a well known Everest Climber with the right experience. All of the appointed instructors were also skilled mountaineers with experience in the Alps and the Himalayas and were drawn from Scottish Command having originally been based at Braemar in the Cairngorms.

No's 1, 4 and 12 Commandos took part in the first 6 month training package but then the War Office decided not to use Commandos in this role and instead the centre trained the Lovat Scouts as a Mountain Task Force (Battalion sized) in North Wales. By now, the Commanding Officer was Major G Rees Jones and in late 1943 he and his instructors trained over 700 personnel in climbing and operations in mountainous terrain. The Lovat Scouts then deployed to the Canadian Rockies to train in a snow covered environment and subsequently to Italy on operations.

At this point the training unit moved to St Ives in Cornwall with the instructors still drawn from various Commando's and another 6 Captains and 8



Sergeants being added. The unit now focused its training on the new Royal Marine Commandos that were being formed for D Day as it was envisioned that they would be inserting onto the French coast via the cliffs rather than beaches. Although the specific climbing focus of the new training was now not the wider Mountainous Warfare, the unit kept the title of Mountain Warfare Training Centre for operational security reasons so that German Intelligence would not realise that the training was now specific and based on insertion via cliff faces.

Troops of No 45, 46 and 47 RM Commandos trained at St Ives from December 1943 to April 1944, covering individual rock climbing at Lands' End and then group tactical assaults in daylight and in darkness. In April 1944 on completion of the training, each Commando was allocated 2 Captains and 4 Sergeants from the training staff. Major Rees Jones, Captain Fothergill (the RMO) and Capt Greenhalgh (the Equipment Officer) were left to be available to either 45, 46 or 47 RM Commando. The mission for 47 RM Commando (a Coastal Defence Battery) was cancelled due to the RAF damaging it and rendering it inoperable. 2 of the Sergeants that had been allocated to 47 RM Commando were transferred to 46 and the others left behind to be re allocated with Major Rees Jones and 8 of his staff also being to 46 RM Commando. The O group and final rehearsals for their mission (another coastal defence battery) was



carried out on the Isle of Wight and on D Day they sailed to a point 4 miles off the French coast. However, the RAF struck again and had destroyed the Gun Battery the night before so they landed and fought until D+50 before returning to England.

The Mountain Warfare Training Centre now became a planning, training and experimental centre for small scale Commando raids and tested various types of small craft including Dories and Canoes and their handling was integrated into the unit training programme. In August 1944, Major Fraser became Commanding Officer and the centre trained contingents of foreign Commandos from the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway and France in addition to British troops. All of the instructing staff also deployed on Commando missions with the newly trained forces to incorporate lessons learnt and good practice back into the training programme.

From October 1944, instructors from the unit were continuously in the area of the Scheldt and Maas rivers helping to plan and then leading Commando raids across them. There was also 2 larger operations including a reconnaissance of the Walcheren beaches followed by the leading in of the assault itself and the Rhine crossing.

During the recce of the Walcheren beaches Captain Steven, Sergeant Barry and Corporal John excelled themselves when the parent ship failed to collect them for exfiltration and they had to sail their Dory (18 foot long) to Ostend over 50 miles away along an enemy held coastline through shallow coastal waters in the dark and without mapping whilst the weather was gale force winds and sea state. Sergeant Barry manned the helm for 10 hours unrelieved whilst Captain Steven navigated and Corporal John kept the

engine operating despite the waves constantly swamping them. They all knew that the intelligence gained on their recce was both vital for the assaulting forces and if they were captured by enemy forces then there was the potential for the assault being compromised and the enemy being forewarned which would have affected the chances of success and caused increased casualties. Fortunately the recce reached Ostend at first light and received recognition for their work. During the assault itself Lieutenant Richardson, Sergeant Barry and Corporal John led the attack on Flushing and as they were withdrawing (post assault) they were hit by machine gun fire and Lt Richardson was killed in action and Corporal John wounded. Despite this, Corporal John brought the craft back safely and was subsequently awarded the Military Medal.

During the Rhine crossing, the instructors and centre staff yet again carried out recce patrols for the assault force on the far river bank, running a fleet of Dories to patrol the river bank and preventing any broken down craft from drifting into enemy hands and picking up anyone that entered the water. Once the enemy had detected the crossing location they shelled it and put it under concentrated machine gun fire. The Dory crews had to fulfil their mission despite being under continuous and heavy fire.

Major Easton MC became the final Commanding Officer of the centre and led its preparations to deploy to the Far East after VE day, but this was not required as events overtook and the Japanese surrendered. Shortly after the disbanding of the Army Commandos was announced and the Commando Mountain Warfare Training Centre ceased to exist and the capability handed over to the Royal Marines.





# IWM LONDON - 'SPIES AND ESPIONAGE EXHIBITION'

Bob Shaw

The Imperial War Museum in London is one of the world's leading museums of war and conflict. Founded during WW1 it has amazing permanent and temporary exhibitions one of which is currently 'Spies, Lies and Deception'. Entrance is free and it covers the subjects of espionage and deception from WW1 to the present through 150 objects with personal interviews, film, and photography.

In the deception display it shows the usage of camouflage nets, dummy heads for counter sniping, dazzle camouflage on ships and Q ships during WW1 and then links this to the use of inflatable vehicles, wooden landing craft and false signals as part of Operation Fortitude (South) in WW2 to bring it into modern deception doctrine being used during the first Gulf War. In addition to the more famous Operation Fortitude (South) there is also information on Operation Mincemeat which has been made more popular by the recent film starring Colin Firth.

There is a display on the use of propaganda and materials produced for psychological operations from the scuttling of the Admiral Graf Spee in 1939 through the WW2 use of false German ration cards to the Cold War 'Free Europe' radio stations that transmitted to Europe occupied by the Soviets.



There is also a Human Intelligence (HUMINT) area that covers some of the more famous agents of SOE (Special Operations Executive) especially Noor Inayat Khan. Interestingly it also delves into the 'Radio Game' played by the Germans successfully against SOE in the Netherlands.

The part on tools of tradecraft delve into objects such as invisible inks, networks of Soviet 'illegals' and their camera's and radio sets (the example is the Portland Spy Ring from the Cold war and Operation Ghost Stories from more recently).

Bringing the whole story up to date, the exhibition also covers MI5 and Counter Terrorism, the use of Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) and the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) to create 'deep fakes' and find hidden identities.

## GUILD *merchandise*

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



*Polo shirts:*



*Sweatshirts:*



*Soft Shell Jackets:*



The easiest way to order is online via the Guild website – go to:  
[www.gbg-international.com/shop/](http://www.gbg-international.com/shop/)  
 and pick what you want in the sizes you want. If there are products not currently available on the Guild website shop page which you think would be of use to members, please contact the Guild Secretary (Secretary@gbg-international.com)

If you don't want to pay online you can still send a cheque for the required amount to the Secretary at: 8, Pidsley Crescent, Exeter, Devon EX2 7NQ



# 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023

Graeme Cooper



John O'Gaunt Golf Club - Potton

This year the Guild of Battlefield Guides celebrated its 21st Anniversary and the 13th Year of its Annual Golf Championships at the John O' Gaunt Golf Club in Potton. At every Championship a Guild Member has delivered a morning battlefield presentation to all invited guests prior to lunch and the Championship. Guild Member Mike Tipper the Captain of the John O Gaunt Golf Club mustered 45 friends at Potton. The presentation 'Down Memory Lane with Johnny Cooper 'L Detachment' raised funds for the Regimental Association'. James Davis is the Guild's Golf Championships coordinator.

Since 2007 the Guild Championships have been held at clubs in Southampton, North Weald, Aylesford and Potton.

The following have presented Battlefield Presentations:



- Chris Scott - Cheriton
- Mike Mizen - 'D' Day Landing Craft & Trafalgar
- Jo Hook - Arnhem Bridge
- Mike Peters - 'Glider Pilots in Sicily'
- Allan Wood - Verdun & 'Op Dragoon'
- Graeme Cooper - Waterloo & 'L Detachment SAS'



All presentations enabled the Guild's effort to raised funds in support of charity.



*The Guild Annual Golf Championship is open to any Guild Member and their golf friends*

Sutton Park, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2LY

For The John Akehurst Tankard & Putter

Friday 11th August 2023 In aid of the 'SAS Association'



*Memory Lane for some! Fantastic Prizes, Good Company on a UK Junior Championship Course*





# MY GUIDING JOURNEY THE INFLUENCE OF TONIE AND VALMAI HOLT

Piers Storie-Pugh

I have been guiding groups around the battlefields and war cemeteries worldwide since the early 1980s and am still doing this today. It turned out to be a career of a lifetime and I owe an unfathomable amount to Tonie and Valmai Holt, famously known as Major and Mrs Holt's Battlefield Tours. You might ask how this all came about.



The National-theatre in East Berlin

When I was stationed, as a subaltern, in Germany in the late 1970s my adjutant and I decided to spend some time in Berlin; of course Germany was then divided. We were keen to try the Check-Point Charlie experience and so went to see the ballet, Coppélia, at the National-theatre in East Berlin. The ruling in the four-power Berlin was that Allied officers, crossing from the West to the East, had to be dressed in uniform and, being an evening performance, this meant mess kit.

During the interval of this splendid production, at the champagne reception in the marble-floored foyer, being recognizable as a British officer due to my scarlet mess kit, Tonie and Valmai Holt came over and introduced themselves. A very interesting chat ensued, as they had just started their pioneering battlefield tour business, an enterprise which I found fascinating. They invited me to keep in touch at the end of my short service volunteer commission with the 1st Battalion the Queen's Regiment.

And so, back in England, I picked up the phone and within a few months was called to an interview at the Army & Navy Club in London. There were three candidates: myself, Bill Rogan and Richard Devonald-Lewis; the latter two being far more qualified than I. Luckily for me, Tonie and Valmai both thought that I was a more suitable candidate to join them since so much of

their business would be based on remembrance and they felt I would have the appropriate sympathetic approach.

And so, in 1981, I joined *Major and Mrs Holt's Battlefield Tours*, the start of my unique guiding journey. They were perfectionists in every aspect, and as pioneers of the battlefield tour business, Tonie and Valmai opened up destinations in many parts of the world which people would follow to later, with hotels and museums blossoming to meet this growing interest.

For some time, Tonie and Valmai had been writing their internationally renowned series of battlefield tour books ([battlefields@guidebooks.co.uk](mailto:battlefields@guidebooks.co.uk)) and, in so doing, included a huge amount of remembrance information about the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemeteries. The importance that they also placed on Remembrance guided me throughout my career.

Within a short time I was putting together a programme for a veteran's group to visit Crete



Suda Bay, Crete

including Suda Bay seen above; and then I started arranging battlefield tours for local newspaper groups (eg Kent Messenger, Cambridge Evening News, Oxford Times, Hendon Times to name but a few) to the First World War battlefields of Belgium and France.

In 1983 a major change for me took place when John Croskey, the pilgrimage officer of the Royal British Legion (RBL), unexpectedly died leaving an urgent unfilled vacancy. The Legion asked the Holts to manage the programme for them which became my remit. I therefore suddenly found myself having to go to many countries within North Africa and Europe with large groups of relatives who had one aim; to visit the graves of their fallen loved ones. This was for me a baptism of fire: I was meeting Remembrance head on, and thus Remembrance would become my life's work.

In 1984, Tonie and Valmai led a huge battlefield tour group to Normandy for the 40th anniversary and, as part of that, I led the Legion's pilgrimage group. The atmosphere was fantastic, veterans meeting relatives. During the service at Bayeux on 6 June 1984 two things happened which I still remember vividly. First, General Sir Patrick Howard-Dobson, President of the Legion, introduced me to Her Majesty with the words, "Ma'am may I introduce our Pilgrimage Officer."

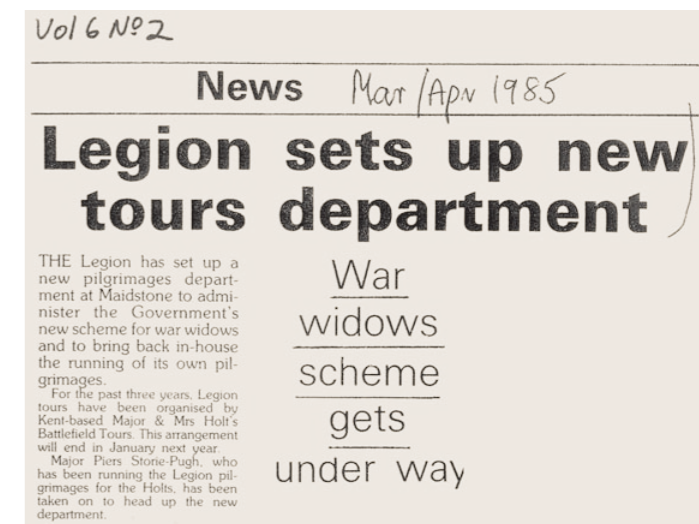


A "News" Excursion to Flanders MAY 1983



Secondly, during the service, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher met some war widows who had been sponsored by the Ministry of Defence. She turned to John Stanley, her Minister of the Armed Forces, and said that she wanted a scheme set up whereby all war widows from 1914 to 1967 (WW1 to the withdrawal from Aden) should have the opportunity to visit their husband's grave or memorial at the Government's expense. The Scheme would formally start as of 1 April 1985.

The MoD instructed that they wished the RBL to run the operation, given their contacts with their branches, associations and veteran groups.





The Legion, taking on this challenge, approached me and asked, since I was already running their programme, but from within the Holt's company, would I be prepared to transfer to RBL Headquarters in London from where the programme would be run. I therefore had the unenviable task of telling Tonie and Valmai, who had done so much for me, that I would be leaving them in order to continue the Legion's programme.

With Tonie and Valmai's blessing and best wishes, I left them with the perfect experience with which to set up a new operation based entirely on remembrance, which had always been a major part of their personal commitment. The operation would be called *Remembrance Travel*.

The Legion gave *Remembrance Travel* offices in their Poppy Appeal building in Kent which fortuitously happened to be John Stanley's constituency. He visited me in the office and, as he left, said "Good luck and I don't wish to hear any complaints about the standard of accommodation" thus we set the bar at a high level for all the Legion's pilgrimages. )



From 1985-2011 I set up, managed and guided my team at Remembrance Travel taking many thousands of widows and other relatives to war cemeteries and memorials from Belgium to Burma, the Somme to Singapore, Tunisia to Thailand, Kohima to Korea, and all points in between. And at all times we placed the same importance on the individual's personal aim, as did the Holts with their travellers.

In 1988 I drove to their offices, the Golden Key in Sandwich, to personally thank them for everything they have done for me.

During the period 1985 to 2011, at the helm of *Remembrance Travel* I was engaging a number of specialist guides for our worldwide operation; and I felt that I should become qualified as an accredited guide with the Guild of Battlefield Guides. In 2002 I proudly qualified as Number 12. (Picture 9)

And so we wind forward forty years, to August of this year, I took a train to Sandwich which in fact

became a pilgrimage of a kind. I exited Sandwich Station, walked through the lovely lanes and stood for a while in the town square because it was from there at 05.30 in the morning in May of 1982 that my Crete group assembled for what would be my first overseas group tour.

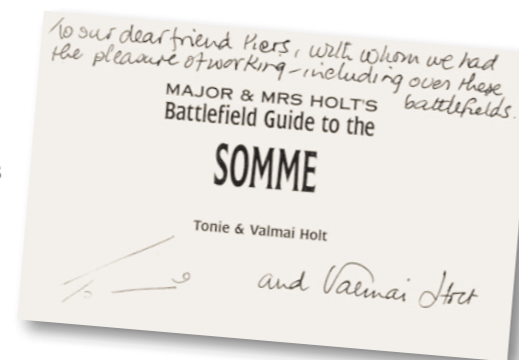
Leaving memory lane, I then went to the café to meet up with Tonie and Valmai for a wonderful reunion which was in fact the first time the three of us had been alone together since December 1984, the date when I left them with great sadness for my new adventure with the Legion.



Tonie, Valmai and I had a wonderful working relationship and I learnt from them a vast amount for which I shall always be grateful. I am delighted that we have remained the greatest of friends and our frequent telephone conversations always include memories of our adventures together.



The Golden Key, Sandwich, Tonie & Valmai's office



## GUIDE *insight*

# SO YOU WANT TO BECOME A WRITER?

John Hughes-Wilson

After Sandhurst I had a successful professional career as a soldier and then retired at 60 to become a full time battlefield tour guide and author. I was, with Richard Holmes, one of the founding fathers of the Guild of Battlefield Guides and President after Richard's untimely death. As an author I have published ten non-fiction, two of them world-wide best sellers, (one was found by the CIA alongside Osama bin Laden's bedside) and all well-reviewed, (*"Who Killed JFK?"* is on its sixth edition) as well as ten fiction novels which have sold well. This is what I wrote to a friend, who planned to write a book...



Dear X,

You ask me how to get into the writing game? Ah, there's the rub, old friend.

Good question; if you are serious, it's a job, like any other. You need self-discipline, a strong work ethic and a drive to succeed, despite the inevitable setbacks. It is a tough row to hoe. Writing, like self-flagellation, is a tough, rather lonely, solitary vice.

First off, I'd say make sure you have enough money to live on. Writing takes time and you have to live and eat in the meantime. Starving in a garret on spec is a mug's game.

Paradoxically it is both easy and difficult to get published these days. E-books have revolutionised the business. Any author can now go straight to Amazon and say "please run my book and I will go 50/50 with you - or better."

And you can certainly sell e-books these days. At £3 a pop, it's the publishing equivalent of 'stack 'em high and sell 'em cheap.'

However, If you go down that 'easy' route you are then personally responsible for the editing, marketing, publicity, getting reviews, etc. That's a lot of time and work. And with e-books it's hard to get any traction, in the latest buzz phrase. When did you last see an e-book reviewed in a national newspaper?

So the traditional way still works - just.

First, only write about what you know. You, with a distinguished career behind you and with a track record afterwards all over the world in your own rather specialised (and dare I say rather murky) world of special forces, then private and corporate

security, obviously have one hell of a story to tell. So, give it your best shot. When you have done it, then ask your chums to comment.

Present your manuscript as a clean A4 WORD document, double spaced on a regular font either on paper or as an email attachment. Make sure there are no egregious spelling errors and that it is complete and not a work in progress.

Then get an agent.

Not easy. Word of mouth works and if you don't know anyone, then use the Writers' and Artists' Yearbook to check out the agents who might be interested in your tome. There's little point in trying to sell a blood and guts SAS fiction thriller to an agent who specialises in gentle, refined non-fiction for ladies.

In an ideal world your agent should preferably be a hungry fighter, too. (Question: "How many authors do you have on your books?" More than c20 - 30? - forget it.) He'll be bothered with pushing his big sellers, not in promoting you - just how many working days are there in a year?)

While agents are always on the lookout for new blood, they do get snowed under with author wannabes and, like most folk in business, need to go where the money is.

If you can sell your idea to an agent, then be prepared to submit a CV, a synopsis and usually two or three specimen chapters to see if you are any good - or have something rivetingly unique to say. (The two often don't go together - that's why ghost writers thrive.)

Your agent - who knows the business inside out,



the individual editors by name and by lunch, and which publishing house wants what – will then try and flog the mss and you, his author, to a publisher.

Now prepare yourself for disappointment. Most authors could paper their loo walls with rejection slips. Frederick Forsyth got 14 rejections before ‘The Day of the Jackal’ was accepted. The J K Rowling story is not one of overnight success, either, despite the hype in the newspapers. So, if you’re a delicate blossom and can’t take rejection, then don’t bother to start, unless you are either supremely confident that you are something special, or if you are already a celebrity: that helps.

Publishers are very reluctant to invest in new authors nowadays, particularly fiction, so unless you’re a ‘celeb’ the advance will probably be derisory. If you can average £20K-£40K a year, you will be doing well.

Let your agent negotiate the contract. That’s how he earns his 15%. His job is to make you rich; your job is to make him rich. Then read the contract through carefully and make sure the various individual rights (TV, Film, paperback, USA, audio, translations; that sort of detail) are covered too. Be careful.

So, your book is accepted at last. Well done! However, let’s assume that it’s taken you a year to write. You will get paid in 3 tranches – on signature, on acceptance of a manuscript; and on publication.

Suddenly that tentative? £10K advance ain’t looking so good, is it? (And a £10,000 advance to a new, unknown author is considered pretty good these days.) With UK tax at 40%, you’ve earned £6K in a year, in three pathetic slices of £2K. Not enough to live on, is it?

The answer is simple: uncover some world-shattering newsworthy scandal story in your book; be a ‘sleb’ (ideally with big boobs or someone who can run around the park on Saturday afternoons kicking a ball); or be extremely prolific. The Mills and Boon writers knock out about 6 books each a year and probably earn about £40K-£60K. It’s a job: and hard work at that.

One M & B author told the Guardian: “*Anything from £5,000 to £100,000 a year. Advances are quite small, at just a few thousand pounds a book, and it does take a while before you start to see the royalties. But I’m making a pretty decent living at it now.*”

The other problem is that publishers hate one-off books. You are a brand and therefore they are looking to sell a line of books. So, you need to either build up a solid track record over several books and several years or present the publishers with some obvious long running idea they can sell.

For example, I recently sold a fictional series (about a WW1 officer’s diaries) based on one book a year, thereby giving the publisher a book for every

year of the Great War anniversary. That reassures them. It’s their money they are risking, after all.

After submitting the mss you will be asked to agree on the editing. This can be painful; how dare these ignorant people criticise your much laboured-over masterpiece? But remember Robert Louis Stevenson’s advice to authors: “*Be prepared to murder your darlings.*”

After a while you realise that the editor’s suggestions are probably sound both stylistically and, more important, commercially. These guys know what sells books. They are professionals. Swallow your pride and get over it.

As a general rule only argue over any change of meaning or hard facts. (eg, “*I’m afraid that your proposed cover picture is wrong, Charles. The BEF didn’t get those steel helmets until spring 1916.*”)

Then your book is published: my very genuine congratulations. Even with thousands of books being published every year, you have joined a very select few. And, as every honest author will tell you, there is nothing quite like the thrill of seeing your very first book in print for the first time. Enjoy it.

Because you ain’t finished yet. Oh, no! Not by a long chalk. Now you must get out and about and publicise the book for all it is worth. This is where good PR Queens in the business are one of the reasons you stick with big publishing houses. These individuals (usually women) are good, they all know the right contacts and buttons to press to get you on local radio, TV, Newsnight, BBC Radio 4, etc, etc, to push your book. To sell your book.

Understand that you, the author, are as much a part of the company’s sales team as any of the staff. Get out there and put yourself about. Go and talk in book shops. This is no time to be shy. After all, you wrote the bloody thing didn’t you? Do you want people to read your deathless prose, or not? You are selling; yourself and the book.

If it sells, you will then have to work off (‘earn out’) your advance of royalties, and that will take some time. Only once the publisher has sold enough to cover that advance of money will you start to receive royalties, usually as six-monthly payments. The Taxman will gross it up on your other income, pensions, whatever, so if you’re a UK taxpayer, then expect 40% tax unless you have an accountant who knows the self-employed ropes on legitimate expenses. (“I had to buy an expensive new suit to appear for the interview on BBC TV’s Newsnight...”)

I have taken the trouble to go into detail on all this because we are old chums and I know that you will have a good tale to tell. But it isn’t easy to break into publishing these days and you will need all the help you can get.

With my very best wishes – and good luck!

## GUIDEreference: Air Power

Instead of the usual number of book reviews I have gone with some recommended reading which I will include from now on if members think its of use. This edition’s titles are on the subject of Air Power, the next issue will be some Naval related titles.

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**Title:** Giulio Douhet and the Politics of Airpower  
**Authors:** Haslam, Jonathan

The Italian, Giulio Douhet, was the foremost pioneer thinker on air warfare. His distinctive contribution was twofold: he insisted that to win a war in the industrial age, one has to have command of the air: not superiority but total control. Second, that in order to obtain this at a time of international tension, a state has to pre-empt by all-out attack from the air against civilian as well as military targets. ‘Command of the air’, although popular with ‘blue-suiters’ the world over, inevitably antagonised the other branches of the armed forces who have seen air power as auxiliary and nothing more. Massive pre-emption has outraged those who believe war can somehow be won the easy way with minimal casualties but who end up conducting long campaigns in which suffering is the greater – but which are extensive rather than intensive (the First World War). Like most innovative and purist thinkers who have aroused controversy, Douhet from the outset suffered ostracism, abuse, and misinterpretation. Yet while his first precept – command of the air – has been demonstrated to be true, his second precept – pre-emption – has never been tried on any major scale, except against Iraq. Thankfully the US Air Force was never allowed to do so during the cold war. The main misinterpretation, however, comes from taking a selective reading of his work to justify or condemn the mass Allied bombing of Germany in the Second World War that took place over four years or the bombing of North Vietnam over two years, of which he would never have approved. This in part stems from the fact that his work has been available in English, but not entirely so. The explanation also lies elsewhere: in the politics of airpower past and present.

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**Title:** Precision-guided Munitions and Human Suffering in War  
**Authors:** Hickey, James E

The author proceeds from the premise that throughout history, humans have demonstrated a proclivity for using violence against one another as a means to achieve an end, means enabled, in many respects, by the technologies available at the time. Advancing technology has often been a prime enabler of ever-increasing levels of violence and attendant human suffering. At a few junctures in history, however, certain technologies have seemingly provided the armed forces that possess them the ability to fight wars with decreasing levels of violence and suffering. Today, precision-guided munitions (PGMs) with their high degree of discrimination and accuracy again hold such promise. This book seeks to answer the question: Do PGMs mitigate suffering in war, and have these weapons changed the way decisions regarding war and peace have been made?

Answering this question helps us understand possible shifts in emphasis in modern warfare, both in terms of methods employed and of the greater concern placed on limiting human suffering during conflict.

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**Title:** Airpower in India’s 1999 Kargil War  
**Authors:** Lambeth, Benjamin S

For 74 days in mid-1999, India waged an intense war against intruding Pakistani forces on the Indian side of the Line of Control dividing Kashmir in the Himalayas. The Indian Air Force (IAF) was a key contributor to India’s eventual victory in that war. Among other things, the IAF’s combat performance showed how the skillful application of air-delivered firepower, especially if unmatched by the other side, can shorten and facilitate the outcome of an engagement that might otherwise have persisted indefinitely. It also showed that a favourable position in the conventional balance remains strategically useful even in conditions of mutual nuclear deterrence.

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**Title:** War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime  
**Authors:** Favret, Mary A

What does it mean to live during wartime away from the battle zone? What is it like for citizens to go about daily routines while their country sends soldiers to kill and be killed across the globe? Timely and thought-provoking, this book considers how those left on the home front register wars and wartime in their everyday lives, particularly when military conflict remains removed from immediate perception, available only through media forms. Looking back over two centuries, the author locates the origins of modern wartime in the Napoleonic era, and describes how global military operations affected the British populace, as the nation’s army and navy waged battles far from home for decades. She reveals that the literature and art produced in Britain during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries obsessively cultivated means for feeling as much as understanding such wars, and established forms still relevant today. The author examines wartime literature and art as varied as meditations on the Iliad, the history of meteorology, landscape painting in India, and popular poetry in newspapers and periodicals; she locates the embedded sense of war and dislocation in works ranging from Austen, Coleridge, and Wordsworth to Woolf, Stevens, and Sebald; and, she contemplates how literature provides the public with methods for responding to violent calamities happening elsewhere. Bringing to light Romanticism’s legacy in reflections on modern warfare, this book shows that war’s absent presence affects home in deep and irrevocable ways.



**Title:** War, Volume III: Strategies of War  
**Authors:** Bellamy, Alex J (ed)

This volume focuses specifically on military strategy. The material collected here includes the main ideas of the most important strategic thinkers in history, together with learned commentaries on them. Key research on contemporary and future strategy is also included.

(CON) PART XI: STRATEGIC THINKERS -- Extracts from "The Art of Warfare" by Sun Tzu -- Comparing Sun Tzu and Clausewitz, by Michael Handel -- Extracts from "The Art of War", by Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini -- Jomini and the Napoleonic tradition, by Hew Strachan -- Extracts from "On War", by Carl von Clausewitz -- The strategist's toolkit: the legacy of Clausewitz, by Colin S Gray -- Extracts from "Strategy" by Basil Liddell Hart -- Extracts from "The Art of War: War and Military Thought", by Martin van Creveld -- Bargaining, communication, and limited war, by Thomas C Schelling -- Extracts from "Basic Tactics", by Mao Tse-Tung -- Strategy, tactics, and logistics in revolutionary war, by Mao Tse-Tung -- Principles of operations summarized, by Mao Tse-Tung -- The revolutionary strategy of Mao Tse Tung, by Edward L Katzenbach & Gene Z Hanrahan.

(CON) PART XII: WAR ON LAND -- Extract from "Strategy and Tactics of Land Warfare", by H P Wilmott -- Extracts from "The Continental School of Strategy: the Past, Present and Future of Land Power", by Michael Evans -- Hearts and minds of search and destroy? Controlling civilians in urban operations, by Alice Hills -- The Battle of Grozny: deadly classroom for urban combat, by Timothy L Thomas.

(CON) PART XIII: WAR IN THE AIR -- Aerial warfare, by Giulio Douhet -- The aeronautical era, by William Mitchell -- Extracts from "Air Campaign: Planning for Combat", by John Warden -- Kosovo and the great air power debate, by Daniel L Byman and Matthew C Waxman -- The influence of space power upon history, by Colin S Gray.

(CON) PART XIV: WAR AT SEA -- "Elements of sea power", by Alfred Thayer Mahan -- "Theory of the object: command of the sea", by Julian S Corbett -- "Lasting lessons of Trafalgar", by Joseph F Callo -- "Gallipoli, 1915", by T A Gibson -- "Amphibious aspects of the Normandy invasion", by Hanson W Baldwin.

(CON) PART XV: NUCLEAR WARFARE -- Deterrence theory revisited, by Robert Jervis -- Does deterrence have a future? By Lawrence Freedman -- The role of US nuclear weapons after September 11, by Josiane Gabel -- India and Pakistan's unstable peace: why nuclear South Asia is not like Cold War Europe, by S Paul Kapur.

(CON) PART XVI: THE TRANSFORMATION OF WARFARE -- Slogan or strategy? Shock and awe reassessed, by Harlan Ullman -- Transforming the military, by Donald H Rumsfeld -- The struggle to transform the military, by Max Boot -- Challenging the hegemon: al-Qaeda's evaluation of asymmetric insurgent warfare onto the global arena, by Kimbra L Fishel.

**Title:** The Great War in the Air: Military Aviation from 1909 to 1921  
**Authors:** Morrow, John Howard

A comprehensive study of the totality of the air war in its military, political, industrial, and cultural aspects.

**Title:** The Fighter Command War Diaries, Volume Five: July 1944-May 1945  
**Authors:** Foreman, John

(ABS) A chronological account of RAF Fighter Command's operational victories and losses from July 1944 to the end of the war.

(CON) Chapter One: The Battles for Caen and St Lo  
 Chapter Two: Breakout: Mortain and Falaise  
 Chapter Three: Belgium, Holland and 'Market Garden'  
 Chapter Four: Winter stalemate  
 Chapter Five: Snow, Jets and the Battle of the Bulge  
 Chapter Six: Germany at bay  
 Chapter Seven: Into Germany  
 Chapter Eight: Gotterdammerung: the final collapse

**Title:** The Fighter Command War Diaries, Volume Four: July 1943 to June 1944  
**Authors:** Foreman, John

The fourth book in the series looks at the growing strength of the Allied air power, in particular the growing relationship between the United States Air Force and the RAF. The book looks at the growing number of bomber attacks into Germany and occupied Europe and the aircraft that escorted them.

(CON) Chapter One: Allied mighty, Luftwaffe response  
 Chapter Two: Spitfire summer  
 Chapter Three: Fiery Autumn  
 Chapter Four: Re-organisation  
 Chapter Five: The fateful year  
 Chapter Six: Attrition - a necessary evil  
 Chapter Seven: Gathering pace  
 Chapter Eight: 'Point blank'  
 Chapter Nine: Final preparations for Overlord  
 Chapter Ten: Invasion

**Title:** A Military Atlas of the First World War  
**Authors:** Banks, Arthur

The author's 250 maps present both broad general surveys of political and military strategy and closely detailed treatments of individual campaigns and engagements. These are supplemented by comprehensive analyses of military strengths and command structures and illustrations of important guns, tanks, ships, airplanes and personal weapons. Introductions to each major stage of the war on the Eastern and Western fronts, the colonial campaigns, and the air and naval war have been written by military historian Alan Palmer.

(CON) I. The pre-war situation.  
 II. War on the Western Front in 1914.  
 III. War on the Eastern Front in 1914.  
 IV. The Gallipoli Campaign.  
 V. The war in 1915.  
 VI. The war in 1916.  
 VII. The war in 1917.  
 VIII. The war in 1918.  
 IX. The peripheral campaign.  
 X. Weapons.  
 XI. The war at sea.  
 XII. The war in the air.

# GUIDEbooks:



## STREATHAM'S 41 The V-1 Flying Bomb Offensive as experienced in Streatham

By Kenneth Bryant (updated edition prepared by John W Brown)

In mid-June 1944, Londoners thought that the days of attacks from the air were a thing of the past but on 13 June, a new threat appeared in the form of the V-1, the first of Hitler's Vergeltungswaffen or 'Vengeance Weapons'. 2,400 of these early cruise missiles were to fall upon London in a campaign that lasted until early September 1944, in which south and southeast London bore the brunt.

Kenneth Bryant, Senior District Air Raid Warden of the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth wrote an account of the forty-one flying bombs that fell upon the south London suburb of Streatham in 1946. This provides a detailed analysis of each of 'Streatham's 41' flying bombs, accompanied by a maps, personal accounts and contemporary photographs of the impact points.

In addition, there are useful and informative chapters on the organisation of the ARP (Air Raid Precautions), later the Civil Defence Service in general and in particular within the Borough of Wandsworth. There is also a brief history and timeline of the V-1 offensive and the counter-measures put in place, as well as an interesting chapter covering the human cost of the campaign and financial cost of rebuilding in Streatham, most notably the 'pre-fabs' that sprung up across London as a temporary solution to re-housing those who had been rendered homeless.

There is also a chapter on the design of the V-1, which leads to my only minor gripe with the book, in so far that the authors describe the propulsion system as a ram jet, whereas in fact the V-1s were propelled by a pulse jet system, which gave rise to the peculiar rasping sound made by the engine.

Overall though, this is an excellent local history publication which should be of interest to Home Front historians as well as those with a love of our capital city's history.

Review by Stephen Hunnisett

Published by The Streatham Society  
 (www.streathamsociety.org.uk)  
 RRP £11.00  
 paperback, pp90

If you have read a book that you feel others would find interesting, please submit a review for us.

## ARCTIC CONVOY PQ18 25 Days That Changed the Course of the War

By John R McKay

This superbly researched book tells the story of one of the most significant maritime operations of the Second World War. The importance of the Arctic convoys providing the Soviets with the necessary equipment needed to win the war on the Eastern Front has too often been underestimated. This book puts that right.

Following PQ17, the worst Allied maritime disaster of the Second World War, it was imperative that PQ18 got through. So when the convoy left Loch Ewe on 2 September 1942 the stakes could not have been higher. The Battle of Stalingrad was hanging in the balance. Had the convoy suffered unacceptable shipping and war supply losses, the Arctic route would have had to be suspended with potentially war-changing consequences not just for the Soviets but the whole Allied war effort. Consequently, as this work vividly describes, it was both the most heavily defended and the most heavily attacked convoy of the whole war.

The Author draws on contemporaneous accounts of the combatants from both sides including U-boat crews, airmen and, of course, the crews of the warships and merchantmen. Offering newly discovered facts about the convoy's turbulent passage, this book is a valuable addition to the history of the campaign which will appeal to historians and laymen alike.

Published by Pen & Sword Books Ltd  
 RRP £22.00  
 hardback, pp208





# 10 Questions:

Name: Christopher Dorman O’Gowan

Age: 77

Nationality: British/Irish

Home Location: Northumberland

Sole Trader: Yes

Validating: Currently



In each edition of ‘*Despatches*’, we will be introducing a member of the Guild. In this edition, it is Christopher Dorman O’Gowan.

- 1. How long have you been interested in battlefields and what was it that initially attracted your interest?** I have been interested in battlefields most of my life, especially those of WW1 and WW2, as my father was Major-General and fought in both wars.
- 2. Have any experiences stood out?** Yes, I visited El Alamein in July 1991 and the heat was incredible. It made me reflect on how hard those conditions were for those that fought there and how much they must have endured.
- 3. What do you enjoy the most about battlefield guiding?** At the moment I have only guided myself and haven’t yet guided other people.
- 4. What is your favourite stand, location or battlefield and why?** My favourite is El Alamein as my father fought there as Chief of Staff to General Auchinleck.
- 5. Which battlefield would you like to visit in the future?** I would love to go back, once again to El Alamein and the Middle East though it might be a little difficult at the moment. I would love to visit the Somme again or Ypres.
- 6. What have you enjoyed the most about being a member of the Guild?** I am very much looking forward to attending the Guild events as I have a general interest across the board in military history and look forward to meeting guides who are passionate about their area of expertise.
- 7. If there was a fire and you could only save one battlefield-related book or prop, what would you save and why?** This would be ‘*The Desert Generals*’ by Correlli Barnett or my fathers’ biography as both demonstrate the difficulties and challenges of desert warfare. I would have to flip a coin on the moment!
- 8. What type of group do you think is the most challenging to lead on a tour?** As I lecture at university level, and having enjoyed the humorous responses and searching questions from military personnel I would say that young university students are the most challenging as they can be quite unresponsive and do not engage as those who have served in the armed forces do.
- 9. What’s the best tip, story or nugget of information you have been given by a fellow battlefield guide?** I haven’t met many yet and look forward to meeting them at events.
- 10. What is the funniest or most dramatic thing you have seen on tour?** One incident that really struck me was the Bedouin I met in the southern sector of the El Alamein battlefield near Bab El Quattera who invited my driver and guide to his house for tea. It was made of breeze blocks but he had solar panels outside, a pickup truck and TV and fridge inside. We sat on the floor and they made us Libyan tea and he was most hospitable and interested in us. He did not have much but he shared what he had.



## NEWmembers:

New members who have been welcomed to the Guild between the Spring issue 2023 and the date of publication.

Stuart Adlam  
Catherine Bain  
David Barras  
David Bober  
David Burgess

Stephen Carter  
Mark Collins  
Patrick Donahoe  
Kevin Doyle  
Trevor Fettis

Danny Frenken  
Harlan Glenn  
Andrew Harrison  
Philip Jones  
Gabrielle Lechavalier-Boissel

Thomas Lee  
Vincenzo Mangini  
Mark Nicholas  
Derek Read  
Andrew Sayers

Lee Schofield  
John Shringley  
Erik Van Leeuwen