

THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT



Summer 2017 Newsletter

On this first full day of Autumn I figured I'd better start compiling the Summer 2017 Newsletter as I seem to have missed my deadline!! As usual time has flown by, as it does, when you are enjoying yourselves, but 'conkers' on the tree have reminded me that the year is getting on as well as me!

Sandra and I have spent much of the Summer travelling to National Trust properties having renewed our membership after a gap of about 20 years.

This has given us the opportunity to re-acquaint ourselves with wonderful properties and landscapes in the South of England but also learn more about the history of these places, given the time, without keeping children amused. Most of the properties in the South have links with WWI and II with many acting as hospitals for returning troops or as places of clandestine operations planning.

In 1914 Lady Nancy Astor who owned Cliveden house in Buckinghamshire had handed over to the Canadian Red Cross some land on which the 'Duchess of Connaught Red Cross Hospital' was built.

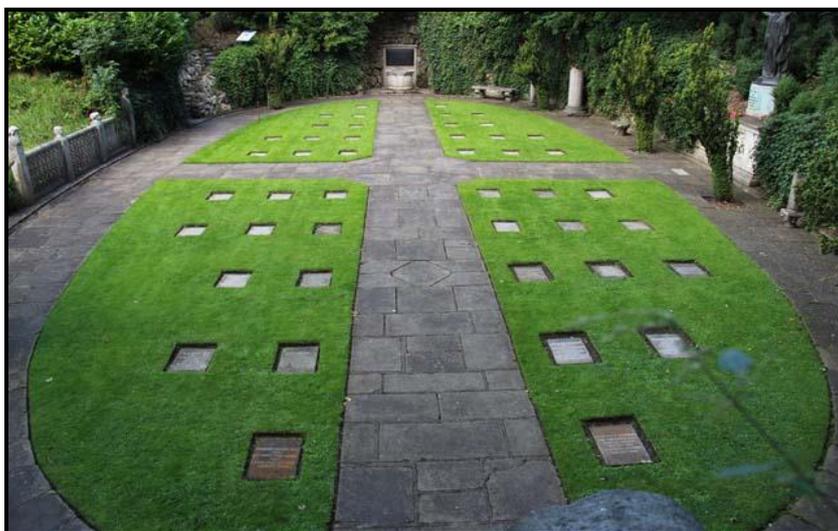
In 1915 the hospital could hold up to 110 patients at any one time but by the end of the war this number had risen to 600. Nancy Astor was often seen helping out in the hospital and it is said that her personality and great vigour worked wonders on the patients.

Of the 24,000 troops treated at the hospital only a relatively small number died. The 1st Viscount Astor's sunken Italian garden was adapted to create a memorial garden for the deceased.

A mosaic floor was replaced by turf, in which grave stones were later set and a sculpture was created especially for the garden by Australian sculptor Bertram MacKenna.

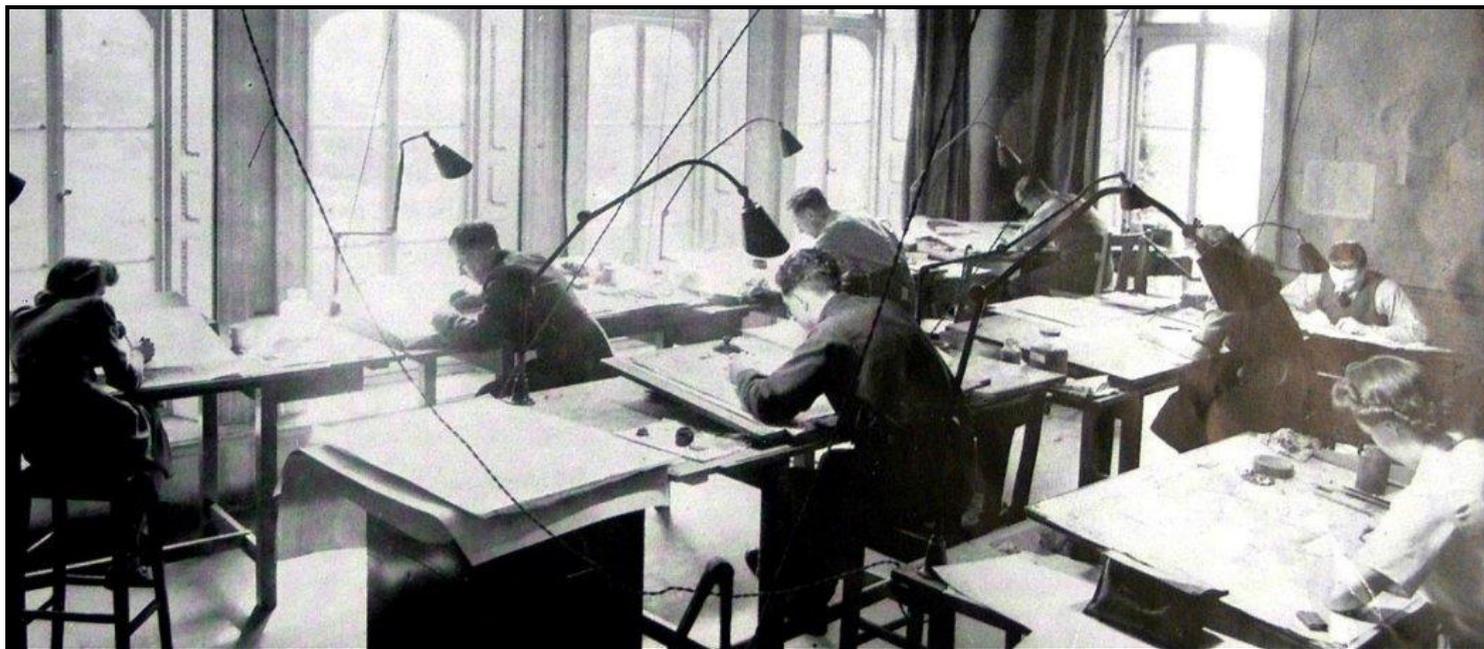
He was commissioned by Nancy Astor to design and create a symbolic bronze female figure for which it is thought he used Nancy's features as inspiration for the face.

It is unfortunate that the memorial garden is tucked out of the way from the main grounds as only a few of the thousands of visitors to Cliveden appear to make the effort to find it albeit a spot of tranquillity within the hustle of the crowds visiting Cliveden.



Sandra and I took the time to conduct a 'revisits' of that particular cemetery but many of the headstones were in poor condition, it must be said.

Other visits in the vicinity of Cliveden included Hughenden House which was owned by Benjamin Disraeli, Queen Victoria's Prime Minister.



His house was requisitioned during WWII and became the home of 'Operation Hillside' a Secret centre for map making for many bombing raids including that of the Dam Busters (Operation Chastise) and V1 bomb launch site at Peenemünde-West (Operation Hydra).

Whilst travelling to and from these visits we made full use of the 'POI Graves' App on Tom Tom to visit as many of the smaller cemeteries and churchyards in the area.

We also managed to visit Highgate cemetery, in North London, which is a 'Taphophiles' dream location with many famous people being buried there. The West cemetery is maintained by a volunteer trust and only organised visits allowed but well worth a visit if you can make it. The East cemetery is open to the general public and we managed to find an additional 39 family memorials to those service personnel buried abroad.

I must also thank David, Terry, John x 3, Joy, Barney, Jean & Chris, Craig & Sue who have also recently submitted images from revisiting cemeteries in order to update the archive. Craig and Sue confirmed that at least one headstone has not been replaced in Copenhagen after a 10 year wait!!

Passchendaele 100 – Dave and Liz Bowden

The biggest commemorative event of WWI this Summer was undoubtedly that of Passchendaele. I watched it all on TV as tickets to the event were again very limited and accommodation had been booked months, if not years, in advance. However, our volunteers Dave and Liz Bowden managed to get tickets so their report of the event is copied here.

"We were fortunate to be successful in the ballot for tickets to the Tyne Cot Commemorations and incorporated them with a Leger Battlefield tour. My great uncle Corporal William Ineson was killed in the later stages of Passchendaele on 25 October. He served in "A" Battery, 245th (1st West Riding) Brigade, Royal Field Artillery.

The official commemoration commenced with a special Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate. The square was packed with people and the event was shown on a large screen. The parade was led by the Bands of the Welsh and Irish Guards.



The King and Queen of the Belgians, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and other dignitaries attended along with descendants of those named on the panels in the Menin Gate. The Duke read a short eulogy and during the two minute silence poppies were scattered from the roof of the gate.

After the ceremony all the guests returned to the Cloth Hall for a reception before the son-et-lumière commenced. This told the story of four years of warfare along the Ypres Salient with events projected on to the Cloth Hall together with readings by Michael Morpurgo, Helen Mirren, Ian Hislop and many more. The readings were all extracts from letters and articles of the time including War Horse and The Wipers Times. The whole presentation was very well produced and not only entertaining but thought provoking.

The Commemoration on 31 July was held at Tyne Cot Cemetery, but initial accreditation and security checks were carried out at The Passchendaele Memorial Park in Zonnebeke. We were advised that security would be on airport style checks and advice had been given on what could be brought in. However, all that happened was our tickets were checked against our passports and a quick swipe with a metal detector wand.

We were all then transported to Tyne Cot on a fleet of buses. With 4000 people attending this did cause a few problems at the beginning and end of the event. The roads in the area are narrow and not very suitable for buses.

The Prince of Wales, The King and Queen of the Belgians and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were in attendance along with local dignitaries.



The service commenced with a musical arrangement of John McCrae's poem 'In Flanders Fields'. The rest of the service had readings written at the time and read by personnel serving in the same regiments or family members. Many of the readings were very moving.

The service closed with the Last Post played by the bugles of the Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth followed by a fly past of the 350th Squadron, 2nd Tactical Wing of the Belgian Air Force.

We were all then bussed back to Zonnebeke for a packed lunch. Fortunately the weather was hot with a breeze, much better than 100 years ago.

All in all the events were well produced and certainly gave us cause to think very deeply about what happened. In conjunction with the Leger tour we both have a better understanding of events in the Ypres Salient. It was not until we were touring the Salient did we realise how small it was and we were astounded by the number of CWGC Cemeteries in this small area.

The one cemetery that clearly shows the problems of attacking uphill is Tyne Cot. The slope is quite gentle but long and has a commanding view. No wonder the cost in lives was so high. Our tour was rounded off by attending the Last Post at the Menin Gate on our last evening. This was a very poignant and fitting ceremony to end our time in Belgium. We appreciate the time and trouble the citizens of Ypres spend every day to ensure that the events of 1914-1918 are not forgotten.

We have watched the BBC programmes on I-player and found them very interesting, seeing it all from a different view-point. We did see more that way but the atmosphere was missing. The high camera at Tyne Cot gave an inspiring view of the Cemetery and showed how large it is.

The events were a fitting reminder of the sacrifice the 46000 service personnel remembered at Tyne Cot made and those at other cemeteries in the Salient. We must also remember those who still have no known graves and are "waiting to come home". It was an honour and a privilege to be there and will be long remembered.

At TWGPP we were hoping that some of the cemeteries local to Passchendaele had been re-engraved during the preparations for this anniversary. Images taken over 10 years ago now were quite eroded so with many visitors due this year it was envisaged that an effort to restore many of the faded engravings may have been attempted. Apart from the 'tourist attraction' of Tyne Cot Cemetery it would seem not. Rudy Van Kerckhoven has popped in to a few cemeteries in the area on a 'recce' to see if a revisit to photograph again was warranted but not just yet.

'Soshal Meeja'



I must admit I have not been the greatest fan of 'social media' in the past but I'm dragging myself into this alternative means of information so readily available now. I still have times when I want to throw my smartphone and I am sure I do not use all the 'gears' that are incorporated within it but I am getting there.

By setting up a Facebook page for TWGPP <https://www.facebook.com/twgpp/> it is amazing how quickly we can pass out and get in information from around the world. Two recent examples are copied below. I apologise for doubling up on what some of our Facebook 'Followers' (sounds like a religious sect) have already seen but I do know that many of our volunteers are not on Facebook or want to go there.

Probably unique? – Norman Brice

Norman Brice has been revisiting a number of cemeteries to update the archive and came across a new headstone commemorating Private John Jakomolin at Englefield Green, Surrey

The story of John Chookomolin /Jakomolin of the Canadian Forestry Corps is an interesting one. He was Canadian First Nation (Cree Indian) and had very little command of the English language so he was registered phonetically at the time as 'Jakomolin' but it was only last year (2016) that his real name came to light. TWGPP have therefore recorded him under his correct name and given Jakomolin as an "Alias".



It is probably unique that his epitaph at the base of his headstone in engraved in his "first nation" language. On Facebook we asked if anyone could translate?

Within a few hours we had the translation and also links to a Canadian newspaper **Net News Ledger -Canada** which told his story:

ATTAWAPISKAT – My great grandfather John Chookomolin made history July 15, 2016 in England when the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) engraved its first Cree inscription on a headstone in a major ceremony at the Englefield Green Cemetery in Surrey. My great grandfather died 99 years ago of the Spanish flu after being transported by ship from Canada to fight in the First World War as part of the Canadian Forestry Corps. When I first travelled to visit his grave at St Jude’s Cemetery in Englefield Green, in 2011 his gravestone was improperly marked under the name of Jakomolin.

Sadly, his recruitment by the Canadian government along with 23 other young men from Attawapiskat in 1917 ended in tragedy. His involvement in the war resulted in much hardship for his wife Maggie Chookomolin and their young daughter Louise who had been left behind. The daughter Louise, my grandmother, had a difficult life as she ended up as an orphan when her mother died soon after John left in 1917. On top of that the family never heard from John again and had no idea what had happened to him. They were not informed of his death or the circumstances of his passing and his location until the 1990s.

John Chookomolin, spelled Jakomolin in his war records, at the age of 22 when he was taken from Attawapiskat in 1917.

The newly engraved headstone of John Chookomolin, now includes the proper spelling of his name and a Cree inscription which reads iKi-na-ka-ta-o Ta-ni-s Ne-s-ta Ni-wi-ka-ma-ka-n Na-meh-ko-si-pi-k O-ma Ma-shi-keh-wi-ni-k O-chiï, which translates to English as **‘I left my daughter and my wife at Nahmehkoo Seepee (Trout River) for this war’**



Missing Norwegian Pilot



A call for help on Facebook has yet to come to fruition for help in finding the grave of a Norwegian Pilot who flew with the RAF.

Sandra and I had gone for a walk around Stansted Forest in Sussex before the rain set in and came across a laminated piece of paper tied to a tree in the middle of nowhere. It intrigued me as there was a photo of a Spitfire on it so I got Sandra to read it as yet again I had forgotten my glasses!

It appears that the tree marked the spot where a Norwegian Flight Lieutenant, Sigurd Jenssen crashed his Spitfire on 19th August 1942 after his squadron was in support of the Dieppe raid.

“At approx.. 1630 hrs a single seater fighter plane crashed in Stansted Forest map ref. Sheet 132 1” to 1 mile 178308. It appeared that the pilot was attempting a crash landing, as he landed in a narrow avenue bordered on either side by dense forest.

The plane was a complete wreck and the pilot was killed instantly. The local police and C.T.S were notified and a guard placed on the site of the accident."

His body was handed over to a Flight Lieutenant based at Thorney Island and his death registered at Chichester in Sussex.

I guessed we would have his grave somewhere on site as he was flying with the RAF albeit Norwegian. Nothing found! He was apparently taken back to Norway and buried in Kristiansand cemetery. We have all of those graves but not Sigurd's. Very unusual for an RAF pilot not to be remembered on the CWGC site.



We did ask for help on FB and were sent a link to a photo of Sigurd. We know that the message has gone into circulation in Norway but, to date, no grave has been found. We'll have to find him as a piece of laminated paper is not good enough. Anyone live in Kristiansand, Norway?

More progress in South Africa

We have had a recent boost to numbers of graves in South Africa with help from Gavin Cobb, Glen Swemmer and John Lauderdale. Gavin recently went on a tour of South Africa Battlefields and has submitted this article below for the Newsletter.



Back in February of this year I had been reading the article by Steve in the January issue of "Forces War Records" which prompted me to think that it had been some time since I did any photography for the Project since the passing of my wife. As I had, for a second year, just booked a holiday to South Africa to visit the Zulu and Boer War Battlefields this time I thought it would be ideal to start again.

Having contacted Steve and asked if there were any gaps in the records he highlight about 400 that he thought were near my itinerary route which was to include, Isandlwana, Rorke's Drift (did not see Michael Caine), Spion Kop and due to a travel rearrangement a bonus of Talana Hill near Dundee.

In January 1879 Isandlwana was the worst defeat inflicted on the British Army by a Native Force and until WW1 the greatest single day casualty total. Over 1300 out of 1700 were annihilated by a force of nearly 20,000 Zulus. The General in Command (Lord Chelmsford) split his force because he underestimated the fighting capabilities of the Zulus and went searching for them. Looking out from the site, in the direction of the attack, where the column had camped overnight it is not possible to see the depression in the land where the Zulus hid in total silence as he marched away to search for them. Approaching from the opposite (attack) direction the depression is all too evident. The Zulu warriors must have been ruled with iron discipline and it is incredible that such a huge number of men could be unseen and unheard. From reports by the few survivors the first that was known about the attack was a soft swishing sound as the Zulu Army approached running in bare feet over the grass. The camp was just stirring for the start of the day and they were taken completely by surprise.

After battle reports state that it was nearly one month before the British Troops returned to bury the dead. Any wearing a Red Coat had been disembowelled by the Zulus who believed that their coats gave them great strength and therefore it would be transferred to themselves. Imagine the state of the corpses after this time in the blazing African Sun, the wild animals scavenging and a treeless landscape offering no shade.

This is why there are only cairns of white stones marking mass graves on the site. The day I was there the temperature was in the mid 30's in early April which is Late Summer / Early Autumn. A Website which includes details of this battle is www.britishbattles.com

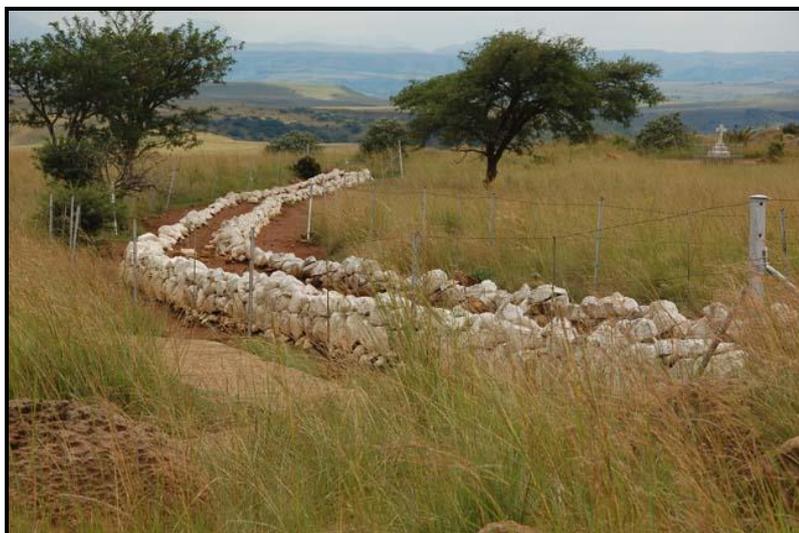
Close by is Rorke's Drift which was attacked by a force of about 3-4000 who were believed to be the main battle reserve and in the euphoria of victory wanted to share in it and, against orders, proceeded to attack with the known result and the awarding of eleven Victoria Crosses, seven to the 2nd Battalion, 24th (2nd Warwickshire) Regiment of Foot, one to the Army Medical Department, one to the Royal Engineers, one to the Commissariat and Transport Department and one to the Natal Native Contingent. A website, about the decorations awarded, is www.rorkesdriftvc.com



The name Spion Kop (The Kop of Liverpool FC fame) is associated with that team as it was the Lancashire Brigade who climbed the hill which was a barrier to the relief of Ladysmith. Colonel Thorneycroft (Who had been a Major in the Royal Scots Fusiliers when he raised one of the few units named after an Officer) said that he had looked at the hill and identified a route to the top by which an attack could take place. As he had never been on top of Spion Kop he falsely believed that the area he observed and had mapped out was the top but in actual fact was meters short. Critically the use of an Observation Balloon had not been used which would have shown the top of the hill and his mistake. The attack was during the night of 23-24/January/1900 and carried out in silence and darkness. A picket of 15 Boers had been left on top but because of mist they assumed that they were safe and had all slept. One woke early and saw the attack causing them to retreat and join their comrades at the other side of the hill.

While the Infantry then slept the engineers in the attack party dug entrenchments but due to the rocky nature of the ground could only make them about 16" deep in the short time before dawn. When the mist lifted the British realised they were exposed on ground short of the summit and when Boers reappeared they were fired on from above. The Boers also managed to manhandle artillery to Tabanyama Hill adjacent to the Kop and used it to great effect. The most senior fatalities on the British side were Major General Edward Woodgate, Colonel Blomfield of the Lancashire Fusiliers and Brigade Major Captain Vertue, 2nd Buffs, (Who is named on the Rare South Africa Memorial, Dane John Gardens, Canterbury, Kent) leaving the force with no senior leadership. The Boers previously had been busy preparing their defences which were dug to shoulder height.

After the battle the Boer trenches were used as mass graves for all the casualties and outlined by white stones. There are also a number of individual ones and memorials erected by family members. The most recent memorial (Only erected this year and as of April 2017 not officially unveiled) is to all the non-combatants who served on both sides with the notable name of the Pacifist Mahatma Ghandi who it is thought formulated his non violent protests while serving as a stretcher bearer during the war. Sir Winston Churchill was also involved in the action as a runner between the Commanding General and the battle site.



The final site visited was Talana Hill near Dundee (Also known as the Battle of Glencoe) which although it was a British victory again there were mistakes which cost lives including the Commanding General, Sir William Penn Symons. Because of bad communication at one point when the attacking British Infantry were near the top of the hill they were fired on by their own Artillery who did not know they had reached that point. In all engagements there seemed to be high ranking fatalities because the Boers were using recently developed smokeless ammunition which did not betray their positions and German made Mauser rifles which were very effective at long range. The Boers had nearly all grown up with firearms from a very young age and were excellent marksmen. They also had horses which were used to the climate unlike the British Cavalry ones which were not given time to acclimatise after long sea voyages from all over the world.



Various reports put the number of horse casualties into the range of 3000,000- 500,000. Another web site to look at is www.AngloBoerWar.com

Having been twice, South Africa is certainly a country to visit for sunshine and lifestyle but I could not live permanently behind electric fences, barbed wire and armed guards. It is estimated that there are more people employed in security there than serve in the South African armed forces!

Glenn Swemmer and John Lauderdale have also been to CWGC and Boer war cemetery sites in South Africa. 'Rumour control' some years back mentioned that the CWGC might be taking on the maintenance of some of the Boer war sites but this does not appear to be happening yet with many of the old Iron crosses being barely legible to read.

What is interesting to see though is the amount of regimental memorials erected at the time on which the names of the casualties are engraved. I could not find any other site on which these names are recorded so many hours have been spent to make up a spread sheet of details extracted from the memorials so that they can be included on TWGPP Pages. This is an ongoing process as there are a lot of memorials!!

POW's in Russia

During a visit to a concentration camp cemetery at Amersfoort in the Netherlands we did photograph all of the Russian graves of those that had perished in the camp before the Canadians liberated it in May 1945. I must admit that having photographed these 700 headstones they remain in the archive untouched as I have not mastered the 'Cyrillic' keyboard. Therefore, renaming and making up the spreadsheets is proving a challenge to say the least

I was reminded of these recently when Irina Letyagina made contact from the Saratov region in Russia. Yes, I had to look it up as well and it is about 400Km north of what we knew as Stalingrad, now Volgograd.



Irina informed us about work of activists who are trying to save the war graves of Austro Hungarian POW's who were interred in Russia during WWI. Since 2013, a young historian from Khvalynsk, Alexey Naumov has been working to save a unique cemetery of prisoners of war. He tried hard. He wrote a lot of articles in blogs, worked with authorities, military memorial societies, foreign embassies, whose citizens are buried in a foreign land. None of these actions resulted in any help.



The destruction of the cemetery was stopped only by the end of 2014 because the historian found some names of buried POWs in the archives. In March 2017, Alexey created the heritage conservation fund "Pine Island" and organized a project to create a memorial to the soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army on the cemetery.

In late May reconstruction work was begun in Khvalynsk which is a small town near the Volga river. In the spring of 1915, during the start of the WWI, the first part of prisoners of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman armies arrived.

Hungarians, Germans, Austrians, Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, Italians, Turks were transferred from the Military Department under control of the local district authority.

A population reduction caused by mobilization of a large number of employable men was covered by former soldiers and officers. The town tried to solve the problem of a shortage of workers by employing prisoners of war working on landlord's and peasant farms. The POW's also built schools, and hospitals. The locals were friendly to the foreigners and some of these married Russian women and stayed in the Soviet Russia. Their descendants still live in Khvalynsky district. Approximately 1000 prisoners of war were sent here during the war. More than fifty died because of illnesses and accidents and were buried on a special site near the Orthodox cemetery of Khvalynsk. The former soldiers made gravestones with their own hands using a mixture of concrete and gravel with an image of a cross and a place for a name. Nowadays, instead of the soldiers' necropolis there are only three dozen nameless stones.

By Steve – I have said to Irina that if the headstones are restored with the names of the Austro Hungarian soldiers we will include them on site. This all sounds very much like the German and Italian POW's who worked the land near the NT property at Basildon and then remained after WW2 marrying local girls!!

OPERATION BULBASKET – Jim Foulds

One of the renowned, opening, actions of the D Day Invasion was the capture of what is now known as Pegasus Bridge. The precision landing of the Ox. and Bucks. Light Infantry Glider Force of the 6th Airborne Div. is now, rightly, a place of pilgrimage. Equipped only with hand-held weapons the attacking force, led by Capt. John Howard, effectively sealed the Eastern flank of the invasion pending the arrival of reinforcements.

Less well known is the equivalent heroic guerrilla containment actions at the Western flank. Here, in operations under the collective code - name "Bulbasket", the responsibility for denying the Germans any effective reinforcement of the defenders at the invasion beaches was allocated to the SAS **Captain, John Tonkin**, of "B" Sqdn. In this vital role he had the support of French Resistance groups, with intelligence supplied by the Special Operations Executive.

Capt. Tonkin and other SAS officers and SOE agents - including the heroine Violette Szabo - were variously delivered by parachute from the same Halifax aircraft to French destinations, on the night of 5/6 June. The SAS drop-zone, in the Vienne area, was near to Poitiers.



A small reception committee collected the Tonkin party and took them on to safe houses overnight.

Following discussions with “resident” SOE officers, Tonkin’s group occupied bases he had already identified. Wooded cover, and a reliable water supply, was vital. On the 7th and 11th June, Tonkin’s force was strengthened with reinforcements sent to landing strips, and including armoured jeeps, vehicles similar to those developed by the SAS earlier, in the North African desert campaign. The range of operation, behind enemy lines was now significantly extended, and the threat of discovery by the German defenders minimised.

The prime task allocated to Tonkin was the repeated disruption of road, rail and telephone communications. Local knowledge, supplied by French Resistance, was of real value here. No less significantly than the “Pegasus Bridge” operation, the SAS effectively stifled German activity in the Vienne Departement. The rail line, Bordeaux northwards was effectively sealed off.

From its rest and re-fit location at Toulouse, the ‘Das Reich’ SS Panzer Division was called to strengthen invasion beach defences. Their journey north was continuously disrupted and delayed by guerrilla attacks. SAS identified a massive fuel dump in a secluded siding at Chateauroux intended to fuel the ‘Das Reich’. Intelligence was then supplied by the SAS to RAF contacts and a subsequent raid by Mosquito aircraft totally destroyed the dump. The journey of ‘Das Reich’ to the Normandy beaches should have taken about 3 days. It actually took 2 weeks, at a critical period of the landings. During this offensive period, the SAS had been joined by an American pilot, Lt Bundy, whose aircraft had been shot down and who had been rescued by resistance sympathisers. Bundy proved to be a fighter!



Security-conscious Tonkin repeatedly moved base to minimise the threat of discovery in German – held territory. However, almost inevitably, their presence became known more widely, and their location, became known to the Germans. In a dawn raid of their Verrieres campsite, the SD (SS security police) surrounded the base, and after a day-long action fought almost to the end of ammunition, the majority of the occupants were captured. A small party, led by Tonkin, did manage to escape. For those captured, savage reprisals followed: Lt. Tomos ‘Twm’ Stephens, was bludgeoned to death at the Verrieres camp site by German troops whilst tied upright to a stake. Three wounded SAS troopers, originally taken to hospital for treatment by local Wehrmacht doctors, were given lethal injections. Their bodies were never recovered. The remaining portion of the captured, including Lt. Bundy, together with French Resistance fighters were compelled to dig their own communal graves in the nearby Forest of St. Sauvant.

On July 7th, all were summarily executed by firing squad. Some months later, after the fighting fronts of the war had moved off to the east and a degree of normality had returned to the Vienne region, their burials were discovered by French forestry workers. All were exhumed and appropriately re-interred. All the SAS (with the exception of Stephens), and Lt Bundy, were laid together in what later became a Commonwealth War Graves plot in the Commune Cemetery of the village of Rom.

Lt. Stephens body was removed from his execution site by a sympathetic French family and was interred in secret in their family vault in Verrieres village cemetery where he lies to this day.

To signal the significance of French support for 'Bulbasket', their Government erected a marble statue "La Couarde" on the edge of the St. Sauvant forest.

Almost adjacent is the SAS Memorial to their fallen. Nearby, in the forest, small stone memorials (called fosses) identify individual original burial sites.

Most poignantly is the SAS woodland camp site at Verrieres where the captures took place. In a central position is a Scots pine tree, where messages were left.

The sterling efforts of all involved in 'Operation Bulbasket' is deserving of wider recognition. For a period of 6 weeks, before their withdrawal to the UK on July 11th, their efforts were pivotal in the eventual success of the invasion. With my son Steven and nephew Anthony we paid our respects in a visit during March 2017. An SAS wreath was laid at their forest memorial, and poppy crosses on the graves in Rom Cemetery (including one for Lt Bundy) and for Lt. Stephens at Verrieres.



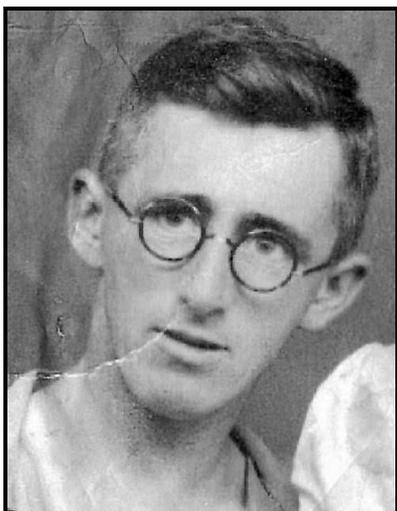
I cannot claim that my story is either full, or definitive, but the effect of our visit was utterly moving and totally memorable for us all.

"..at the going down of the sun, and in the morning we will remember them..." Jim Foulds

Reginald Pearson - killed by enemy action – Lee Hatfield

Lee Hatfield who lives in Canada recently requested photos of his relation, Thomas King, who fought during WWI with the 9th Battalion, Norfolk Regiment and died in France on 14th October 1918. He was so impressed with the service we provide "*Your Service is Awesome , swift and efficient*" that he volunteered to help photograph Ottawa Beechwood and Notre Dame Cemeteries in his home city. Lee is also a follower of genealogical Facebook pages and gave us a recommendation on these so naturally, on occasions, I 'visit' and point users to our site.

Lee had added an article on one page about the coincidence of having a relation, Reginald Pearson, killed during a bombing raid in 1941 but actually knowing who the German bomber crew were!



'Reginald Pearson, was the husband of my Great Aunt Jessie and lived in Boston, Lincolnshire. He worked at an ammunition factory in Grantham, which was about 25-30 mile away from Boston.

On the 27th January 1941, Reg went to work as usual and at the same time many miles away in Germany, the crew of a Junkers 88A-5 (coded 4D+CT of 9/KG30), was being flown by Oberlt. F. Rinck, Obergefr. E Stiller, Oberfw W. Reuter and Uffz. F. Wissing. They were apparently flying their 100th sortie, so had a choice of targets. Oberlt. F Rinck allegedly chose the ammunition's factory in Grantham as he had flown in the area, and actually had visited the area before the war. (This is apparently called a 'Pirate sortie).

The bombing was successful from the German's point of view as the bombs they dropped killed 16 (Reg included), wounded 15, destroyed 4 homes and damaged 20. However, on their return to Germany, the aircraft was shot at and damaged by a Home Guard light A.A. Fire.

Oberlt F. Rinck realised that his aircraft was so damaged that he knew he had to crash land, and he did so, in a field just on the outskirts of Boston.



Once he had crashed, the crew, who survived, were arrested by the local police but not before destroying the aircraft so it wouldn't fall into 'enemy' hands.

Reg is commemorated on a memorial situated in Boston cemetery to 'Civilians' who lost their lives by 'Enemy Action'

(The amount of times i passed this memorial, and never knew that i had a relation on it)'.

By Steve – As we are including civilian war dead within the TWGPP archive now, I checked to see if we had Reginald but he was 'missing'? I then found him on the CWGC site incorrectly recorded as Grantham Civilian war dead so have made a note on his page that he is actually in Boston Cemetery.

<https://www.twgpp.org/photograph/view/4264697>

Visiting her father's gravesite after 70 years



Readers may recall a couple of articles we have had in the past referring to Linda Bodestyne who had been searching for her father's actual grave for over 70 years.

https://www.twgpp.org/downloads/news/twgpp_centenary_new_sletter-2014.pdf

<https://www.twgpp.org/downloads/news/TWGPP%20Newslette%20Spring%202017.pdf>

TWGPP had assisted in this search and via our world wide contacts managed to give Linda information where her father was most likely to have been buried albeit 'officially' commemorated on Singapore Memorial as one with no known grave.

The actual bronze memorial above his grave, and others that had been executed by the Japanese army, had been stolen. However, I am glad to be able to report that a new Memorial has been erected on the plot and Linda, now in her 80's, has travelled from Australia to visit the site and see her father's name on a new plaque commemorating the war dead from the village of Miri in Sarawak.

It was a pleasure to play a small part in helping Linda fulfil a lifelong quest. To read her full story please go to this link:

<http://www.theborneopost.com/2017/06/18/a-filial-daughters-life-long-quest-fulfilled/>

75th Anniversary –Patricia Braga

Way back in 2012 we ran an article in a newsletter about the untimely death of Pilot Officer Beaufort Petter and members of the crew of a Hudson aircraft which was in a mid air collision with their Hurricane escort. You can read the story at this link.

https://www.twgpp.org/downloads/news/TWGPP_Newsletter_Winter_2012.pdf

Patricia Braga, the niece of Beaufort, has been in contact this week with an update at the 75th anniversary of his death.



“This gold R.A.F. sweetheart brooch was given by Beaufort Petter to his friend, Hermione Firth on 20 February 1942, nine months before his death on 3 October 1942.

Hermione married some years later, but she wore Beaufort’s brooch every Remembrance Day, 11 November, for more than seventy years. She died in 2016, and earlier this year it was given to me by her son, Marcus.

I shall be wearing it on 3 October and again on 11 November, in honour, not only of Hermione and Beaufort, but also to remember those who died with him”.

Beaufort and the rest of the crew now lie in Karachi Cemetery

New Facility on site

When we launched the new site last year I was asked if would be possible to reinstate the complete cemetery search. This has now been achieved with the same limitations as before in that only the first 1000 names will be displayed. Anyone wishing to search for more will have to start including an initial of a surname within that cemetery . Use the BROWSE BY CEMETERY function at the bottom of the Refine Research facility

..and finally

And with trade agreements as part of the BREXIT negotiations in the news I thought I would end with this ‘Sea dit’ (*story told by a member of the Royal Navy – not always true but always a shame to spoil it with the truth*). However, this one is true and from one of our volunteers.

“I once worked for a German company in their London offices, the second largest engineering contractor in the world at the time. I took representatives of a Cheshire based steelwork fabricator over to Frankfurt as they were bidding for a huge order for supply to Germany.

At one point in the meeting, the German Head of Procurement asked- “Do you have any previous experience of delivering to Germany?” The chairman of the Cheshire company had been a Squadron Leader flying Lancaster’s in WWII, and replied that he had made regular ‘deliveries’ between 1940 and 1944!!

They secured the contract nevertheless!

REFINE SEARCH

SURNAME

FORENAME OR INITIAL

COUNTRY

FORCE

NATIONALITY

UPDATE SEARCH

CLEAR FILTERS

BROWSE BY CEMETERY

CEMETERY OR MEMORIAL

BROWSE