

CHANNEL ISLANDS GREAT WAR STUDY GROUP



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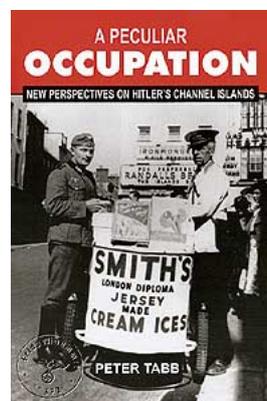
Hello All

Vimy, Arras, Messines, Passchendaele, Cambrai! Place-names in France and Flanders that should occupy as much space in our Islands' collective history as they do in those of the United Kingdom. Throughout the year there will be numerous celebrations at these locations, kicking off with a large Canadian ceremony at the Vimy Memorial, it having been under wraps while being renovated these last few years. In many respects, the Canadians see the Great War as a key factor in their nation's building, and who can argue? But, British emigrants contributed to that process, not least Channel Islanders. One Jersey name always stands out to me on the Memorial, and that is the name of Sgt Ernest Amourette who died during the Canadians' assault on 9th April 1917, while serving with the East Ontario Regiment. My mother's family were Bretons and originally lived in St. Lawrence as tenant farmers, and in the close knit farming community that then existed, were good friends of the Amourette family. In the early 50s I can remember going to tea with them at their cottage, at the junction of Six Rues in St. Lawrence, and getting walloped by my mother that night because I had discovered a liking for ham when told I should not do so! The cottage by the way was called Vimy Cottage – undoubtedly an everyday reminder to the family.

I hope where people have the opportunity, they do attend one or more of these ceremonies during the rest of 2007.

Membership News

We're welcoming another new member this month, namely Peter Tabb, whose contact details were included in the recent updated list. Peter has a longstanding interest in the history of the Channel Islands and both World Wars, and at the risk of teaching people to suck eggs, is the author of a recent book on the Occupation – "A Peculiar Occupation", and which is published by Ian Allan. Peter has also kicked off and contributed an article for this Journal.



Postscripts

This is a brief section to tie up some loose ends from the earlier Newsletters and Journals and to add some photographs in support if appropriate.

Plumer

The last Journal carried Ned Malet de Carteret's review of a biography of Lord Plumer by Geoffrey Powell. Since then, I have read it, and found it quite a good read, but I felt that it lacked a little as to his personality, though he was undoubtedly a first-rate commander in the field. And I still don't know where he lived in Jersey as DAAG!!!

However, I happened to find the following picture in an old magazine produced between the Wars showing troops studying a scaled layout of the Messines area sometime in the early summer of 1917. Certainly this gives a small indication of the degree of preparedness that was a major feature of Plumer and Harington's staff work.



Headstones Showing the Jersey Militia Badge

Journal 10 carried the following comment: "Meanwhile, in the case of Pte Guy Brierley, the CWGC appear to have got it wrong at Almorah Cemetery in St Helier, Jersey, by showing the RGLI badge. As previously published, it was

highlighted that he was a member of the RJGB having formerly been in the Manchester Regiment.”

After their investigations, I'm delighted to say that I received the following E-Mail from the CWGC on 9th February:

“Your enquiry regarding Pte Guy Brierly's regiment was passed to me for investigation. I can now confirm that the correct unit for this man is, as you stated the Royal Jersey Garrison Battalion. I will be amending our records shortly, and Pte Brierly's regiment will appear on our website as Royal Jersey Militia and the unit as Royal Jersey Garrison Battalion. I will arrange for his headstone to be amended, and in keeping with other members of this unit, the headstone will show Royal Jersey Militia. I have discovered that Pte Leamon, another member of this unit, is also buried in St. Helier (Almorah) Cemetery, and his headstone also shows the details Royal Guernsey Light Infantry. I am arranging for his headstone to be amended as well. His website entry is already correct. Thank you for bringing this error to our attention.”

A satisfactory conclusion and a surprisingly quick one, when one takes into account the large number of commemoration sites that are handled by this excellent organisation.

A Change of Lieutenant-Governor

The changeover of the Jersey Lieutenant-Governors (again Journal 10) and the character of Hart (in Guernsey) when compared to Rochefort is of great interest to me. As part of a presentation to my WFA branch in July, I will be exploring this, and I have been very kindly provided with photos of Rochefort and his successor by the L-G's staff at Government House in Jersey!

Mrs (Mabel) St Clair Stobart



Members will also recall Journal (Newsletter) 8 of last June that carried a copy of a certificate awarded to Mrs St Clair Stobart that Liz Walton had found in a local antiques shop in Guernsey. Another picture find – this time Volume 8 of The Great War by HW Wilson. Liz was going to offer the certificate to the IWM so that it could have been displayed with Mrs S's awards, but they were not willing to do so. A shame, but the IWM is so overloaded with resources that it cannot easily display. They do a good job, but one of my favourite bleats is that they have failed to come up with the goods at the IWMN, being more focussed on the “in your face” symbolism of the Daniel Libeskind-designed building.

Mr Stobart's maiden name was possibly Boulton, and the 1901 Census has a 35 year old Ada Boulton living in St. Peter Port. A possible relative?

The Great War – A Costly Business for the Channel Islands

By Peter Tabb

It is tempting to assume that since their experiences in the Great War were so different from those in World War II, the role of the Channel Islands in any history of World War I is not writ large.

However the Islands paid a high cost for a conflict that while they would never ever have opted out of it were under no obligation to participate until the very body itself of their 'Duc' – currently King George V - was under dire and immediate threat.

In purely financial terms, during the course of the Great War Jersey contributed £100,000 (circa £3 million at today's values) to the war effort but in 1923 the British Government suggested that Jersey might like to contribute an annual contribution of at least £275,000 towards the running costs of the British Empire. This suggestion was politely declined and instead the States of Jersey offered a single payment of £300,000 (circa £10 million at today's values) towards the cost of the Great War which was eventually paid in 1927. Guernsey too contributed £100,000 to the war effort and in 1927 the States also made a single payment of £220,000 towards the cost of the war to end all wars.

Many years later the Channel Islands made generous donations to the Falklands Islands as an expression of fellow-feeling with British Islanders who had suffered an enemy occupation. Once again the British Government suggested that the Islands might like to turn this munificence into an annual contribution only this time the government of Margaret Thatcher wasn't going to take no for an answer! Jersey's gift of £5 million to the Falklands became an annual contribution to the British Government to fund a Territorial Army unit (appropriately titled the Field Squadron of the Royal Militia Island of Jersey) while Guernsey's one-off gift of £250,000 became an annual commitment to maintaining several British Government installations in the Bailiwick including Alderney's continually crumbling breakwater.

But when the guns finally fell silent at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918, the Islands would count another cost in human lives and family anguish.

Unlike in the Second World War when the Western Front came to them, in the Great War the front stayed quite firmly far to the east of the Channel Islands in a broad strip of mud, shell-holes, ruins and corpses that stretched largely immobile from the Belgian coast to the Swiss border.

Nevertheless 2,298 young men of the Islands gave their lives in the conflict from the 12,460 (6,292 from the Bailiwick of Jersey and 6,168 from the Bailiwick of Guernsey) who rallied to the colours.

Traditionally Channel Islanders have not been subject to conscription or what was later known as National Service although they are pledged to defend the

body of the Sovereign him or herself in the event of that body being threatened by an enemy. Despite an immunity from service, following the outbreak in hostilities both Island governments waived it and in both world wars, Islanders volunteered to defend their Sovereign in a significantly greater proportion relative to the population of the Islands than any community in Britain, even when countrywide conscription replaced Lord Kitchener's plea that Your Country Needs You! Both Islands maintained Royal Militias, and it was this early version of the Territorial Army that provided young men already trained in the use of firearms and familiar with basic military drills.

The term 'militia' is defined a 'body of citizens enrolled as regular military forces for periodical instruction, discipline and drill but not called upon for active service except in an emergency'. In 1337 King Edward III sent a commission to levy and train the men of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark into 'militias'. In 1814 the Jersey and Guernsey Militias were designated 'Light Infantry', the Royal Jersey having six regiments (later battalions) and the Royal Guernsey four. In 1831, on the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Jersey, the entire Channel Island Militias were granted the 'Royal' prefix by King William IV and by General Order of 1881 Queen Victoria granted the Battle Honour 'Jersey 1781' to the 1st (West), 2nd (East) and 3rd (South) Regiments.

By 1902 these battalions had been reduced to three in Jersey and two in Guernsey although by the outbreak of war in August 1914, these had been augmented by artillery, engineer and medical units as well as garrison battalions. Uniforms, arms and equipment was supplied by the British Government and, curiously, the Channel Islands were the only pieces of the British Empire where there was compulsory Militia service since, following the Militia Act of 1906, all males between the ages of 16 and 45 years were obliged to serve, the 16 to 18 year olds carrying out 40 days of compulsory drill per year.

More than two decades earlier, in 1883, the Lt Governor of Jersey, Maj. Gen. Henry Wray CMG, had formed a Militia Cadet Corps which was attached to the South Regiment of the Royal Jersey Militia but it does not seem to have been a success and the Cadet Corps was re-established at Victoria College (Jersey's boys' public school) in 1903 attached to the East Battalion of the Royal Jersey Militia. Two years earlier the Elizabeth College Cadet Company was formed in Guernsey, parading for the first time in January 1902. Like Victoria College in Jersey, Elizabeth College was (and still is) the boys' public school. The Elizabeth College Cadet Company was originally attached to the Royal Guernsey Artillery and Engineers but in 1908 was separated from the RGA&E to become an Officer Training Corps. The Victoria College Cadet Corps also included a band of bugles and drums and shooting practice was undertaken with the Jersey Militia. There were annual shooting competitions between the Victoria College and Elizabeth College cadets and they regularly represented the Islands at Bisley. In 1908 the Victoria College Cadet Corps also became an Officer Training Corps and was no longer attached to the East Battalion of the Royal Jersey Militia.

During the Great War the OTC was on active service assisting with the manning of the Islands' coastal defences and by 1917 the Victoria College OTC provided guards for the Albert Pier (the Island's principal harbour) and Government House. No fewer than 631 former members of the Victoria College OTC served in the Great War of whom 126 were killed. They served with distinction throughout the war and the Victoria Cross was awarded to former cadets Lt WA McCrae Bruce and Temp. Lt (Acting Capt.) AMC McReady-Diarmid.

Lieutenant William Arthur McCrae Bruce (24) of the 59th Scinde Rifles, Indian Army, was killed on 19 December 1914 near Givenchy, France, after leading a night attack which captured one of the enemy trenches. In spite of being wounded in the neck he walked up and down the trench encouraging his men to hold out all the next day against several counter attacks until he was killed.

On 30 November/1 December 1917 at the Moeuvres Sector, France, Acting Captain Allastair Malcolm Cluny McReady-Diarmid (29) of the Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own) led his company through a heavy barrage, immediately engaging Germans who had penetrated the British position and drove them back at least 300 yards, causing numerous casualties and taking 27 prisoners. The following day the Germans attacked again and drove back another company which had lost all its officers. The captain called for volunteers and, leading the attack, again drove the enemy back and it was entirely due to his skill at throwing grenades that the ground was regained before he himself was killed by a German grenade.

Altogether 212 decorations for gallantry were awarded to Islanders.

For the Islands themselves the Great War had little direct impact although for more than two thousand families, the arrival of a telegram from the Minister of War would bring the horrors of the Somme and Passchendaele devastatingly home.

Initially the garrisons on the Islands were substantially increased, with men of the 2nd Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment being posted to Guernsey to boost the local Militia and men of the 1st Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment being posted to Jersey. The troops were brought by the steamers of the Great Western and London & South Western Railways and billeted in barracks, many of which had been built at the time of the wars against Napoleon. However it was soon realised that these soldiers would better serve the cause fighting at the Front rather than guarding communities where the likelihood of attack or invasion was negligible or even less and a little over three weeks later they were all taken away again, the defence of the Islands entrusted to the men of the Militias and, in Jersey's case, a special reserve unit, the 4th Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment.

Although trained men and boys were employed in the Islands to guard them, the Islands were never the targets for enemy action although the seas around them were not without incident and Jersey, in particular, played host to men in

feldgrau, providing an unwitting preview of what would be a norm a quarter of a century later.

In August 1914 the War Office ordered the immediate construction of a temporary prisoner of war camp in Jersey. Within a month the Royal Engineers had converted the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society's showground at Springfield, St Helier, for the purpose. However the site was never used as a POW cage and instead housed the South Staffords before becoming the Army Service Corps Supply Depot, a role it was also to fulfil for a different army in a different conflict some 30 years later. Since 1905, Springfield stadium has been the venue for the annual inter-Island football battles for the solid silver Muratti Vase, named for a long forgotten (at least in the Islands) brand of cigarettes. And it still is, albeit now in public ownership, and they still do.

In December 1914 the War Office changed its mind and decided upon building a permanent prisoner-of-war camp in Jersey capable of housing 1,000 inmates in rows of wooden huts. The site chosen was Blanches Banques, an area of sand dunes in the parish of St Brelade, on land conveniently already owned by the British Government. The camp thus created was about 300 yards square and surrounded by a ten foot high barbed wire fence with buildings for the guards outside the perimeter.

The first prisoners from the Western Front arrived in March 1915 and despite being planned for 1,000 inmates by July it was guarding 1,500 of them. The camp remained in being until October 1919 and during the time it was open there were a number of escape attempts including at least two tunnels which were defeated by the soft sand on which the camp was built. Among the inmates was a private soldier taken prisoner as the armies lurched backwards and forwards across the churned and scarred earth of the Western Front in 1915. A quarter of a century that private soldier, now *Hauptmann*, Erich Gussek, would exchange a straw-filled palliasse on a wooden bunk in a draughty wooden hut at Blanches Banques for the starched sheets of Government House. *Hauptmann* Gussek's tenure as *Feldkommandant* of Jersey lasted just a few weeks but whatever his experiences as a POW in Jersey for more than three years were, they did not manifest themselves and most Islanders were unaware of their (very temporary) new overlord's previous acquaintanceship with the Island.

Several inmates died during their incarceration at Blanches Banques and were buried in a corner of St Brelade's church cemetery, although the first to die, Seaman Carl Brundig from the cruiser SMS Mainz sunk at the Battle of Heligoland Bight in August 1914, was buried in St Peter's Church's cemetery having died in the sickbay at St Peter's Barracks. In the Second World War, the occupying forces requisitioned much of the cemetery so that the fallen of WWII could lie alongside their *kamaraden* of WWI.

Sea services were maintained between the Islands and the United Kingdom throughout the war (although the services to France disappeared) albeit with much reduced passenger numbers, which was just as well since many of the

railway companies' vessels had been requisitioned for war service, those remaining performing their principal duty, as in peacetime, of carrying the Royal Mail.

However, within days of the declaration of war there had been naval activity around the Channel Islands for on 6 August a French warship had captured a German steamer scurrying for home off Sark, twelve days later another French vessel captured an Austrian cargo vessel near the Casquets reef and a week later French cruisers intercepted a neutral vessel, the Dutch SS Orange, with a number of German reservists on board.

In 1903 the Wright Brothers flew the first aircraft just a few yards but by 1914 the potential of aircraft and airships as weapons of war was already recognised and the possibility of aerial bombardment – even on targets as far away from the Front as the Channel Islands - could not be discounted and the Militias were issued with airship and aircraft recognition cards.

During the First World War the power to make Defence Regulations was the exclusive preserve of His Majesty's Government in London and these Regulations were sent to the Islands by post which, of course, came by sea for, although the new-fangled aeroplanes were already being employed to carry the mails, no such services existed to the Channel Islands and it would be the late 1930s before proper aerodromes (other than the beaches and the sea) were created. Thus the mail came by the 'mailboat', either from Southampton or Weymouth, depending upon which railway company the Royal Mail was using on any particular day. There was an ever-present threat of an attack by German U-boats but in practice submarines, although they haunted the coasts and harbours of the English Channel much more than they would in the Second World War, were still very vulnerable in the comparatively shallow waters around the Channel Islands. The Royal and French Navies maintained a presence in the Islands throughout the Great War, although for most of the time they had very little to shoot at. Nevertheless a detachment of the South Staffords was stationed on Herm to prevent the landing of spies and saboteurs by submarine. Quite what a spy would have found on Herm worthy of reporting upon or a saboteur find to blow up is not recorded!

In fact German U-boats were occasionally spotted in the English Channel near the Islands and to counter this threat the French Government established a sea plane base in Havelet Bay in the shadow of Castle Cornet at St Peter Port in May 1917. A sea plane base was also considered for St Catherine's Bay on Jersey's east coast. Before radios were fitted as a matter of course, patrolling sea planes sent messages of sightings to their base by carrier pigeon, although they often arrived back home before their messengers.

Altogether 110 men of the Aviation Maritime Française were stationed in the Guernsey and one Légion d'Honneur and several Croix de Guerre were awarded to these aviators for in January 1918 a U-boat was sunk by two seaplanes while lurking off Guernsey's Les Hanois reef, in April another U-

boat was attacked off St Martin's Point, Guernsey, and on 31 May a U-boat was destroyed 30 miles west of Guernsey while it was attempting to sink the sailing ship Dundee by gunfire.

Alongside the seaplanes was a flotilla of French torpedo boats. These too earned the Croix de Guerre in the autumn of 1918 in recognition of no fewer than 25 attacks on submarines and the discovery of three minefields between August 1917 and August 1918.

Altogether 179 Jerseymen served in the Royal Flying Corps or the Royal Naval Air Service of who eight died. One of these was Lt Charles Stanley Mossop DSC who, in August 1918, landed his seaplane in St Helier Harbour in order to pay an unofficial visit to his parents' home in nearby Commercial Buildings. He had been awarded the DSC for sinking with bombs the German submarine UB32 in the English Channel. Two days after greeting his parents he was killed landing his damaged craft at Port-en-Bessin near Cherbourg.

The cost of the Great War to the Channel Islands was high. However little that happened between 1914 and 1918 could have prepared the Islands and Islanders for what would happen in the next global conflict.

Editor's Note: Peter brings to our attention the financial cost that the Islands also had to address, and this is an area that must, at some time, merit greater study. The £100K in his third paragraph clearly excluded a not dissimilar amount that was disbursed in paying the Militia throughout the War, though it is unclear whether that covered the RJGB, some of whose soldiers were formerly from "English" regiments such as the Manchesters and the York and Lancasters. Furthermore, one wonders whether today's financial contribution from Jersey at £9 per head (if I have analysed the States budget correctly) for their defence is adequate when the equivalent UK figure stands at around £550. Perhaps there might be a need to dust off the *Loi de Milice!*

Getting The Teeth Ready For Action!



As a bit of light relief after several pages of text, a photo of NZ soldiers having their teeth seen to before action! Now, I am not going to suggest that they were going to bite the Germans to death or surrender!

But, reviewing Andrew Rawson's book "British Army 1914-18 Handbook" (see below), it was interesting to note that 70% of recruits required dental treatment, and that otherwise physically fit volunteers were rejected for serving because of their bad teeth! Soldiers held back in the UK for dental treatment rose to 130,000 per month. A number larger than today's army!

Regret to Inform. . .
The Story of Lieutenant Ernest FV Briard
By Ian Ronayne

It was on Sunday 23rd August 1914 that the British Expeditionary Force under the command of Field Marshal French fought their first battle of World War One. For most of that day, in and around the small Belgium town of Mons, the smaller British Army had fought doggedly to hold their positions in the face of a fierce German onslaught. As evening set in however, it became clear that French forces on either side were giving way under heavy pressure: the Field Marshal was left with little option but to also order his army to retreat. Now, giving the order was one thing; actually carrying it out in the face of a determined enemy was something else. French knew that it was going to require excellent organisation, leadership and discipline to be successful. And, perhaps above all, it would need some determined rear-guard actions to be fought.

One of these actions took place on 24th August near the Belgium village of Elouges. Assembled were assembled two battalions of British Infantry, the 1st Norfolk Regiment and 1st Cheshire Regiment, supported by some artillery and a brigade of Cavalry. Their task was to prevent a far larger German force from swinging round to cut-off the retreating British. In contrast with future battles on this day there would be no trenches or barbed wire for protection; all that would come later in the war. For the most part, the British soldiers would have to fight in the open and facing a determined enemy. Nevertheless, stoically they held their ground. From late morning and into the afternoon the German attacks were repulsed, although at one stage a desperate cavalry charge was needed to ensure they maintained their ground. At last, with the main British army now successfully disengaged and out of danger, the order was given at around 4 p.m. for the rear-guard to retreat. Their endeavours have been successful – but at a heavy cost. Whilst the Cheshire Regiment was virtually wiped out, the 1st Battalion, the Norfolk Regiment is forced to leave behind some 250 of its men. Amongst them was one Lieutenant Ernest Briard.

Ernest Felix Victor Briard was born in the Island of Jersey on 4th October 1888, the eldest of the five children of Ernest and Maud Briard. Mr Briard senior was a shipping agent - a good business to be in during the late 19th Century given the boom in the exports of the famous Jersey Royal Potato – and the family appears to have been prosperous. By the time young Ernest leaves the Island's Victoria College



**Ernest Briard (Victoria College
Book of Remembrance)**

in 1900, they have moved to the rather grand and prominently positioned Bulwark House in the popular village of St Aubin, and he is being packed off to spend the next seven years at the prestigious Felsted School in Essex. Upon finishing his education, he chose a career in the military. In 1907, on the eve of his nineteenth birthday, he applied for, and was accepted into, the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, passing out a year later ranked 88th in the order of merit as a Second Lieutenant in the Norfolk Regiment.



The family home: Bulwark House, St Aubin as it is today

His motive in choosing the Norfolk Regiment is not know, but he appears to be a competent soldier, gaining a promotion to full Lieutenant a year later. He served with the 1st Battalion of the regiment which was stationed in the years before the war in Belfast. Garrison life may have been slow, but Ernest busied himself pursuing a natural passion for sports, playing cricket and football for the regiment, and even representing the army in Hockey. But this life was slowly coming to a close: in Europe the war clouds threatening to gather for some time were finally to burst in August 1914.

In Jersey, Maud Briard, widowed now after the death of her husband in 1906, waited at home in St Aubin to hear from her son. Ernest had last written on 17th August 1914, the day the 1st Norfolks had landed at Boulogne and begun their march towards the war in Belgium, but nothing had been heard from him since. By the end of August, the first reports of the Battle of Mons filled Island's newspapers, followed invariably by the first lists of casualties. But still nothing was heard from Ernest. Then, on 1st September, a War Office

telegraph had arrived. In a terse, but shattering, fashion it conveyed the news that every mother must have dreaded:

*Regret to inform you that:
Lieutenant EFV Briard, Norfolk Regiment, is reported missing.*

“Regret to inform” telegrams were the most common way in the First World War that families first learned of a loved one’s fate. Some were better received than others because they at least offered hope with statements such as “Wounded”, or “Prisoner of War”. Others, however, firmly and forever closed the door by stating: “Died”, or “Killed in Action”. In the middle, and in some ways the most distressing, were those containing the statement “Missing”. And this was especially true at this early stage in the war. At this time formalised processes were for passing information on prisoners were yet to be established between the belligerents, and departments to deal with family enquiries still needed setting up. Nevertheless, seeking more news on the fate of her son, Maud Briard quickly despatched a number of letters and telegrams to the War Office. To her great relief, they seem to have had some success because on 28th September another telegram arrived in Jersey:

*Regret to inform you that:
Lieutenant EFV Briard, Norfolk Regiment, has been wounded and captured*

The welcome news had purportedly come from an un-named Corporal in the Norfolk Regiment who had been captured at the same time but later managed to escape. No further information was however available on the extent of Ernest’s wounds, or where he was now being held. His mother swiftly and purposely set about finding out.

In reviewing the correspondence between Maud Briard and various departments of the War Office at this time, one thing apparent is that the means of obtaining information available on Prisoners of War is limited. Officially, captured men should have received registration cards to fill in and return through diplomatic channels in order to provide details on their status. In practice, however, and certainly at this time in the war, it was a process adhered to in a limited fashion only. Given this, a number of other less conventional methods seem to have been created. One of the most widespread – and remarkable - was the use of personal cheques. Once in Germany, captured British officers were permitted to cash low value cheques, presumably for personal items. On the back they wrote their names and those of men being held with them in the knowledge that eventually the cheque would find itself back to a bank in England. Many were drawn on a London Bank called “Cox & Co”, who seized on the opportunity and established a semi-official “prisoner of war information bureau” using their connections.

Sometime in late 1914, or early 1915, Cox & Co was asked by the War Office to try and establish exactly where Lieutenant Ernest Briard was being held, and what the extent of his wounds was. Ominously, the form is returned “unknown”.

As 1915 wears on, and no further information is forthcoming, Maud Briard searches desperately for possible explanations. One possibility seeming to offer most hope is that her son's rank has been incorrectly identified. Seizing on a revelation that this has occurred elsewhere, in March 1915 she writes to the War Office:

Dear Sir

Your communication re Lieutenant EFV Briard received recently. I am much disheartened at their being no news of him. Is it possible that he has been classed as a Private and interned as such? My son's is an unusual name, and if you could very kindly find out if there is a private interned anywhere in Germany or Belgium, of that name, it would probably be he and if there is a prisoner of war of any such name it almost certainly is him

I should be so grateful if you could make that enquiry, as I do not think there is another Briard in the English Army.

*Yours
Maud Briard.*

But it wasn't long before the reply came back: "Beg to inform that no Private or Non-Commissioned Officer is reported as Prisoner of War under the name Briard."

It was another dead end. But still, it kept the pressure on the War Office, which responded by sending out requests for information to a number of units in the field and agencies involved in Prisoner of War welfare. Initially most prove to be fruitless; but then in November the first concrete information of Ernest's fate is finally received. A Private Henry Grigglestone of the Norfolk Regiment was located – probably via the Red Cross – in a German Prisoner of War camp near Wesel in the Rhineland. In August 1914 he had been serving in the same section as Lieutenant Briard and was present with him during the battle near Elouges. In early 1916 he writes to Maud Briard to explain what happened once and for all:

Dear Mrs Briard

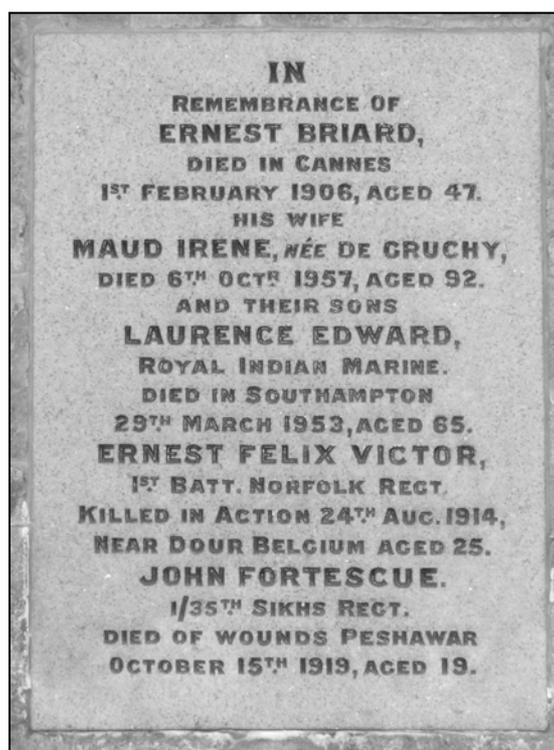
I was in the same section as Lieutenant Briard was in charge of on the 24th August 1914. He was directing operations and I stayed next to him. I saw him killed about two minutes before I was captured. It is impossible for the corporal you mentioned to have seen him on the 25th of August. I cannot tell you any more, but all I can say is "He died a Hero". I will let you know more about him when I return home. I have said about all this time.

*Yours sincerely
HP Grigglestone*

It would seem that at last the search for Lieutenant Briard had finally come to an end. Any lingering doubts were removed a few weeks later when a fellow

prisoner from the Norfolk Regiment wrote to corroborate the testimony of Private Griggstone. At roughly the same time, in a remarkable development, someone in the War Office also recalled that the name Briard had appeared on a list of casualties received from the Administrative Communale d'Elouges after the battle. It seems that once the fighting was over near their village, the authorities of the small Belgium community had recovered a number of bodies from the field of battle and buried them in the local cemetery. From the identity discs on the deceased they made a list of names. There were 24 from the Norfolk Regiment: amongst them was "Briard, EF (Lieut). There was now no doubt about its: Lieutenant Ernest Felix Victor Briard had been killed in action on 24th August 1914 – and so gained the dubious honour of being the first Jerseyman to lose his life in the First World War.

At last, Maud Briard was able to bring closure in respect of her son. She had suspected for some time that this would be the outcome, and was now anxious to settle his affairs and move on. The military authorities procrastinated for a few months, and then agreed that, based upon the evidence presented, Ernest Briard had been killed in action on 24th August 1914. All that remained was some confusion over his rank: during the time he was officially "missing", the army had, by virtue of time served, promoted him to Captain. And so that was the rank that eventually appeared on the Rolls of Honour, and the gravestone that now stands in the small communal cemetery at Elouges.



In his home of Jersey, Captain Ernest Briard is remembered today on a memorial tablet in his family's parish church at St Brelade. He shares it with his predeceased father, his brother John, who was killed fighting in India in 1919, and his other brother Laurence who lived until 1953. The tablet also contains the name of Maud Briard, who in dying aged 92 in 1957, managed to outlive them all.

References:

1. National Archive, Kew. Document: WO 339/7248 268550
2. Jersey Library: Evening Post: September 1914
3. Jersey Archive: Family History Section
4. Victoria College Book of Remembrance
5. Mons 1914, Jack Horsfall and Nigel Cave, Leo Cooper 2000

A Silver Kettle By Barrie Bertram

Working on Jersey Roll of Honour material a few years ago, I came across the name of Captain Coutart de Butts Taylor of the Royal Irish Rifles, who died of wounds on Christmas Eve 1918 at the age of 49, and who is buried in Brighton. An Oxford MA and the son of an Army padre, the CWGC record showed that he had also served as a Sgt C Collins of 17th Bn, Royal Welsh Fusiliers and had gained the MM. His widow was a Lillian Blunden Taylor. It struck me as a strange affair at the time, only partially explained last February when I saw a snippet in a Jersey Evening Post (of early 1917), saying that he had been cashiered in September 1916 for going AWOL.

His name popped up again, when I recommenced developing a piece I have planned for the website, tentatively called "Officers and Gentlemen", which looks at Jersey's Militia Officers between 1903 and 1922, and examines their progression through the Militia and then into war service where appropriate. He had been listed in nominal roll papers for 1st (West) Bn held by the Jersey Archive. Subsequently, searches using the London Gazette website enabled the build-up of a picture of his progression from being commissioned in the Militia as a Lieutenant in April 1902 until being removed from his commission, having become a Temporary Captain with the RIR in March 1915. Unfortunately, nothing could be found before 1902, other than a Times piece referring to the award of his degree in 1891.

However, by chance, a JEP *Temps Passé* article recently appeared which referred to enquiries being made about a silver kettle in the possession of former Jersey residents living in Lincoln. The kettle was engraved "To Mrs C de B Taylor from St John's Company, RMIJ" and dated 1906. Finding his wife in the 1901 census by the simple expedient of keying in Lillian Blunden, she lived at the time in Brighton and would have been 21 in 1906. Clearly the kettle had been a wedding gift, and that somehow it became separated from the family's ownership subsequently – stolen or as the result of a house-clearance maybe? Her address in the CWGC is shown as Clifton in Jersey.

Having been cashiered in 1916, it is also strange that the CWGC shows him buried as a Captain in 1918. This can only be partly explained by two subsequent London Gazette entries during 1919, the first which restores his commission on a date in January 1919, while the second, an amendment, changes the first's date to 23rd December 1918, the day before he died!

It is clear that Coutart de Butts Taylor was a brave man, and the award of an MM at the (comparatively) advanced age of 48 or 49 more than demonstrates that. Going AWOL seems to be inconsistent with the character and his previous career and one must wonder why, taking into account the "death-bed redemption". Is there more that can be found ninety years on?

As a separate note, Sue Le Ruez at the JEP and her grandmother know the family who now have the kettle. Hopefully when Sue is back at her desk, I can get a photo of the item, though I'm not sure if the engraving would show.

**An Innocent Abroad?
By Liz Walton**

I met recently with Mr Ron Quesnel, whose father was 292 Pte AJ Quesnel, RGLI. Pte Quesnel was taken prisoner of war on 13th April 1917, but his date of return to England is not stated in *Diex Aix*, although others taken prisoner on the same date returned between late November 1918 and early January 1919. Others whose date of return are queried include 1283 Pte FE Brehaut, 1210 Pte W Briggs, 2510 Pte OJ Naftel, and 1476 Pte JD Stern.



Pte AJ Quesnel

Mr Quesnel said that the reason his father's date of return isn't listed is that on release from prisoner of war camp a little group of them "went for a wander", travelling through Holland and Belgium "having a few drinks" until they were eventually rounded up and brought back by the Military Police. However as yet I have no firm evidence for this and would welcome any further information.

The Wight Converted Seaplane



One or two members have said that their research can easily lead to subjects that they had no plans to look at, and I am no different. In my case the starting point was to look at the VCBR to see that Henry Biard's name was listed. Knowing that he had won the Schneider Trophy in part led me to produce the website article, and from there to identifying the Wight Converted Seaplane in the picture on the web.

I had not heard of Wight aircraft and there was some electronic debate with Peter Tabb as to whether it was Wight or Wright, only confirming the former when I re-discovered the above stamp in my collection. Researching further, I discovered that if we remember the "Caesarea" and the "Sarnia" from the early 60s, we all know the aircraft manufacturer, J Samuel White and Co Ltd from Cowes on the IOW, the builder of those two ships, who had operated an Aviation Department between 1913 and 1919. However, the debate between Peter and myself was not too far off the mark, because White employed, as a Chief Designer, a Howard Wright, on the IOW, and hence the name was seen as a clever combination of all three!

During the period Wight designed and produced a number of aircraft, at the Admiralty's behest, and looking at the pictures contained in reference 1, some certainly were of exotic design, not least the Quadruplane with its four wings. Most did not seem to stay around long after being produced either, their No 1 Seaplane was completed in early-May 1913 and crashed during its first flight on the 13th of that month, with a similar result for their No 2 Seaplane two months later on 10th July 1913! Not very auspicious.

The "Converted" Seaplane resulted from their 1916 Landplane Bomber design to compete with a Short's aircraft with Admiralty support. Flight trials of the Landplane Bomber could just about be considered an improvement since the prototype crashed during its second flight! Sadly the crew were killed and the cause was attributed to a sheared bolt on the kingpost that held the upper wing bracing wires. Notwithstanding this accident, Wight and the Admiralty agreed to change the contract to converting the Landplane order into one for Seaplanes, hence the "Converted". The kingpost problem was resolved by the "goalpost" configuration that can be seen on the upper wings

The Seaplanes performed well operationally and were more highly regarded in comparison to the Fairey Campania and the Short 184, though there was a high rate of attrition, they served from mid-1917 until mid-1919. Of the original batch of 20, there were 11 left on 30th April 1918, dwindling to 7 at the end of September and 1 on 31st December 1918. The two later batches were less successful as they had been fitted with Sunbeam engines as opposed to the original RR, and of an original combined order of 60 only 25 were delivered to be used as trainers from Calshot with the possibility that a further 5 were delivered as spares.

Reference 1 contains a number of brief extracts from the crews' patrol reports as they operated out of Portland and Cherbourg, and in seven months there were at least 11 contacts, of which Mossop's sinking of UB 32 was clearly successful. Many more U-Boats must have avoided detection, but seaplane facilities all along the French and British coasts, and in Guernsey, were vital in the protection of shipping. Not just for the food that was necessary to keep the British population from starvation, but also for the US forces which were coming into France via the western ports of Brittany.

The Wight Aviation Department closed down in July 1919 with aircraft production having ceased 6 months earlier, and quickly vanished out of sight and out of mind. However, aircraft production did resume in WW2 with fuselages and components being built for Spitfires, Mosquitos and Lancasters.

For anyone interested to found out more about Wight, it is possible that the Southampton Hall of Aviation has information.

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Guernsey's Zeebrugge Hero By Liz Walton

John William Helman was born in Satara, Bombay, India on 27th June 1896, according to his service record, but nothing has yet been found in the army or regimental birth records. He was the eldest son of Colour Sergeant Ernest William Helman of the Middlesex Regiment, and his wife Mary née Delany, of Southampton, who married in Gibraltar in 1891, according to army marriage records. The parents came to Guernsey while their son was "quite young", probably in about 1900, and the family lived at 2, Trent Cottages, Castel Hill. There appears to be no family connection with the island, but CSgt Helman's regiment had been posted to Guernsey at an earlier stage. After the family's return to the island, Mr Helman was employed as a gardener at Les Queux

Manor Vineries, Castel, while a local newspaper report described John as having been “a promising pupil at St Joseph’s RC School under Mr McDade”.



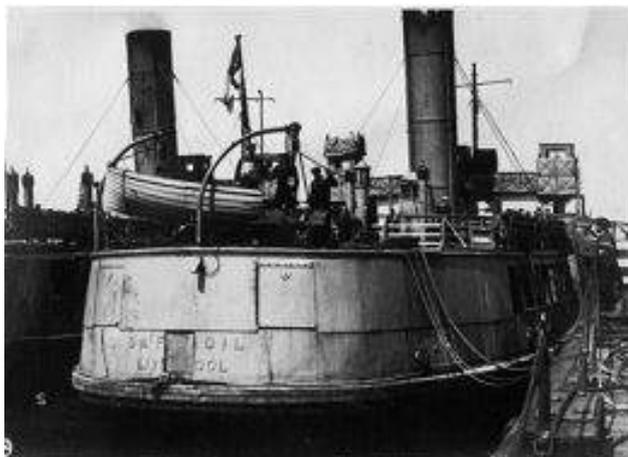
Helman’s service record (service number J26947) indicates that he started as Boy, 2nd Class on HMS Vivid, on 20th September 1913, and he is described as being 5’2” tall with a 32” chest. HMS Vivid was the RN shore barracks at Plymouth, and was later renamed HMS Drake. He was promoted to Boy, 1st Class on 13th January 1914, and was then appointed to HMS Victory as Ordinary Seaman on his eighteenth birthday. He stayed on Victory until 22nd November of that same year, when he moved to HMS Excellent, the gunnery school for the Portsmouth area.

Helman was promoted to AB on 24th August 1915, on HMS Emperor of India, an Iron Duke Class Dreadnought Battleship, completed in 1914. On 23rd February 1918 AB Helman was one of six seamen from HMS Emperor of India who volunteered for special services. His service record also shows that he went AWOL at about this time, but was recovered and sent back.

Helman was sent to HMS Hindustan, an old battleship moored inside Chatham Docks where Captain Halahan and his two hundred sailors were joined by a detachment of Royal Marines under Colonel John Elliot for special training which took place during February and March of 1918 near the village of Wouldham just outside Chatham. To make it more realistic, a model of the Zeebrugge Mole was built in a disused chalk pit and soldiers from the Middlesex Regiment acted as the German opposition. At no time during their training were the sailors told where or when the “stunt” might take place, and it was not until a few days before the attack, when they were aboard Hindustan that full details of the plan were explained to them by Admiral Keyes himself.

Their task would be to block the key Belgian port of Zeebrugge, thus stopping access for the German Navy’s coastal U-Boats to the docks used for shelter and repair. Vindictive was to land two hundred troops at the entrance to the Bruges Canal (at the mile-long Zeebrugge mole), so that they could destroy its shore batteries. Even at this late stage, they were given the chance to withdraw from the operation, but none did. A local newspaper notes “That he (Helman) apprehended the grave risk of such an undertaking was apparent for his mother states that he wrote to a relative: “Don’t tell mother I am going to Zeebrugge; the Captain says we are undertaking a terrible thing, and I may never see mother again”.

For the raid itself, Helman served on HMS Daffodil, a former passenger ferry across the River Mersey in Liverpool. It and its sister ship Iris were considered to be ideal for the Zeebrugge raid, not only because of their large carrying capacity, but also because of their shallow draft which would allow them to sail over the top of mine fields and navigate the shallow waters close to the Mole. Their double hulls made them almost unsinkable and they had an added advantage, in that as ferries they had been built to withstand constant bumping into quaysides. To explain their disappearance the people of Liverpool were told that the vessels were to sail across the Atlantic to collect American troops to join the war effort.



Iris and Daffodil prior to the Zeebrugge Raid

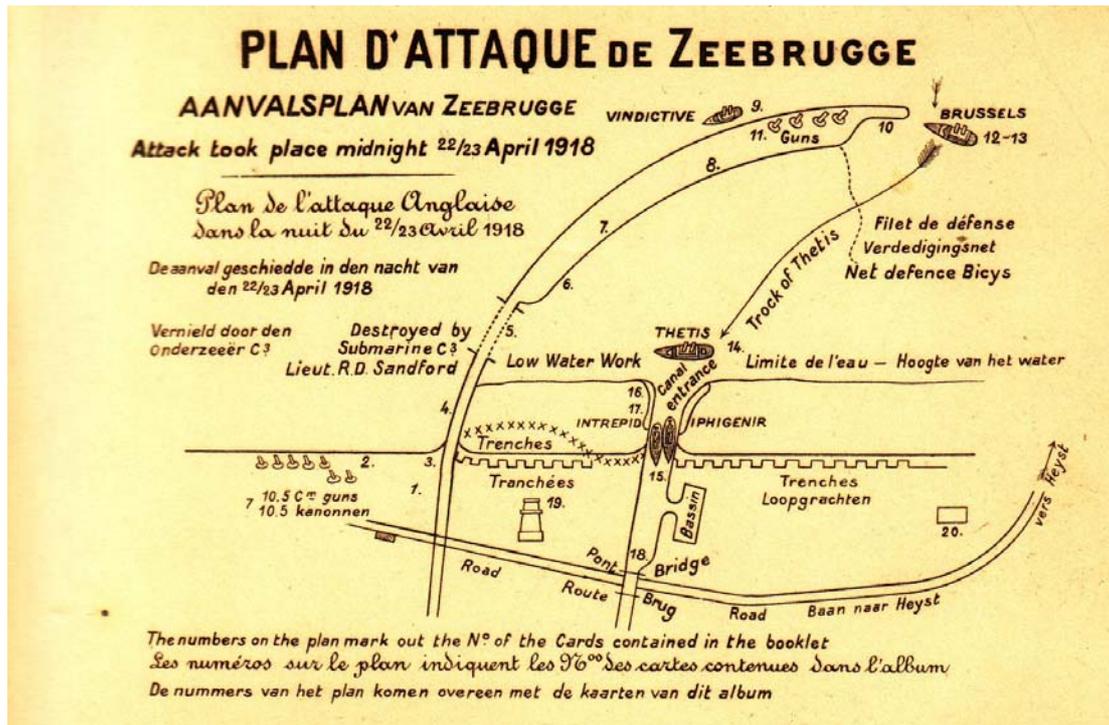
Both ferries were to survive the Zeebrugge Raid and return to a hero's welcome in Liverpool to resume their peacetime duties.

Iris and Daffodil sailed to Chatham dockyard where they joined the Vindictive and the other old cruisers which were all being stripped of their furniture, fittings and any useful pieces of equipment which would not be required on their final voyage.

Having assembled in the Swin, south of Clacton, the fleet sailed for the Belgian coast at 5 o'clock on the afternoon of the 22nd April 1918. Seventy six vessels carrying over one thousand seven hundred men, formed up in three lines with Vindictive commanded by Capt Alfred Carpenter as the lead ship, towing the ferries Iris and Daffodil. As the fleet approached the Belgian coast, fast motor launches began laying a huge smoke screen in front of the Mole. Initially the wind blew in the right direction and the smoke completely hid the British ships. But at the last moment, the wind changed and the smoke cleared. The Germans sent up a series of star shells which lit up the whole area. Heavy guns immediately opened fire on the Vindictive which by this time was less than 100 yards from the Mole. She also opened fire, but the German guns on the Mole had an easy target and their shell fire was devastating.

Vindictive arrived alongside the Mole at one minute past midnight on the 23rd April - St George's Day. Having come alongside, Captain Carpenter had difficulty in holding the ship's position and the cruiser started to drift away from the Mole before she could be secured. Daffodil's captain, Lt-Cdr Harold Campbell, quickly realised the situation and manoeuvred his vessel into a position from which he could push the cruiser back against the Mole with the nose of his own ship. It proved impossible to secure Vindictive to the Mole using grappling irons, so Daffodil had to hold her in position throughout the raid. Despite the fact that two German shells exploded in her engine room her engineers managed to maintain full steam with her old coal-fired boiler. Some sources state that the assault team on Daffodil could not get on to the Mole

and none of them were able to take part in the raid. However it is clear that Helman was involved in the action, as the official report on the raid, now in the National Archives, states that his officer, Cecil Dickinson, reported: "On the Mole I was joined by three or four of my own Company from the Daffodil.....After returning on board, I noticed Able Seamen Davies and Helman and others of my party assisting wounded on the mess deck." In addition, the local newspaper reported that Helman's companion on the raid, William Mudge, told his mother that "Jack picked up one of his wounded chums and when he came on board he noticed that the head had been blown off the body".



One hundred and sixty one men had been killed on the raid, seventy five of them by one shell which hit the ferry boat Iris soon after she left the Mole to return to Dover. In addition, three hundred and eighty three were wounded, of whom twenty eight died. Sixteen men were reported missing and thirteen were taken prisoner, having been left behind on the Mole. Admiral Keyes knew that great bravery had been displayed and he asked Captain Carpenter, the commander of the Vindictive and the most senior officer present, to recommend who should be awarded the Victoria Cross. However, Carpenter found it impossible to choose, since he felt that all his men had shown great courage. Keyes was still determined that several Victoria Crosses should be awarded and his solution was to invoke Clause 13 of the Victoria Cross Warrant. This allows those present at an action to choose one of their number to be awarded the VC to represent them all. Clause 13 can be used only when the combined effort of the whole unit is worthy of the Cross.

Following the strict divisions of the time, Naval and Marine officers each voted for their own candidates while naval ratings and marines voted for candidates from the ranks. This produced four nominees and Keyes added four more,

together with a request for 21 DSOs, 29 DSCs, 16 medals for Conspicuous Gallantry, 143 medals for Distinguished Service and 283 names to be mentioned in despatches. He also submitted 56 names for immediate promotion for service in action. His recommendations were put to the Admiralty but they felt that awarding eight VC's for one action might be seen to be lowering the standard of the award and they objected to the ballot Keyes had held, even though it was quite legitimate. Eventually they rejected his recommendations on the grounds that he had asked for too many awards for gallantry and that the proportion of officers to men was too high. Keyes refused to accept their decision, and the Lords of the Admiralty eventually gave in.

William John Helman's Service record states that he participated in the ballot for the VC granted for operations against Zeebrugge, 22nd and 23rd April 1918 (London Gazette 23/7/18). However he did not receive any award, and despite Dickinson's mention of his bravery he wasn't even officially mentioned in dispatches. After his return to Guernsey, a local newspaper reported that "... hundreds of islanders must have seen the grim but treasured mementoes of a great deed – the cutlass and revolver carried by Seaman Helman at Zeebrugge, in the window at Mr Freeman's antique shop, Pollet. He was honoured and fêted by the highest officials. For instance His Excellency General Sir Reginald C Hart VC, KCB, KCVO, the Lieut Governor of Guernsey, accompanied him on two motor car rides and sent his car on 11 other occasions. Mr E. Chepmell Ozanne, Bailiff, also entertained him." However, the same newspaper also notes that he entered Haslar hospital and was a patient for some time at Sanitoria at Frimley and Brompton. This is listed on his service record as being on a shore base. He was eventually sent home with his King's Certificate on a pension of £2 per week on 12th November 1919.

John William Helman died at home in Guernsey of a lung condition on 28th February 1920, age 23. The editorial of the *Star* of March 1920 makes very sad reading. It is headed "Zeebrugge Hero's Funeral – an unfortunate blunder". It describes Helman's funeral procession from the Castel Hill to St Andrew's Cemetery as consisting of an uncovered coffin borne by four carriers, with seven followers. It goes on to state that "Seaman John Helman was one of those brave lads who volunteered to take part, at the risk of almost certain death, in the Zeebrugge expedition. He came back with his life but has since succumbed after a long and painful illness to the effects of "Gassing" then received. "The reason for the poorly attended funeral is given as the fact that "His parents, trusting the promise of someone in authority that full military or naval honours should be accorded to the dead sailor, made no arrangements whatever for a private funeral.....The parents and relatives justly feel enraged. Their boy, a dearly loved son, was accorded hardly a decent burial and their resentment and sorrow run deep. So far as we have been able to ascertain, this much regretted error appears to have been due to the miscarriage of an order. Captain Cowley, CRO had made arrangements whereby a gun carriage and a party of soldiers would have been present, but although the funeral was delayed for a considerable time they did not arriveWe understand that a letter of apology for this unfortunate oversight has

been sent to the bereaved family. Seaman Helman took a gallant part in the famous Zeebrugge raid, and his sad death has brought to an untimely close a most promising naval career.”

An imposing memorial to John William Helman, designed and made by Mr E Henry, Monumental Sculptor and Mason, of the Bordage, stands in St Andrew's Parochial Cemetery, in Guernsey. It was erected by the London Channel Islands Society Comforts Fund, and says: *“RIP. In grateful memory of Able Seaman John William Helman of HMS Daffodil. Oldest son of Colour Sergeant EW Helman, who died on the 28th of February 1920 at the age of 24 years and 6 months as the result of exposure during the famous naval raid on Zeebrugge, April 22–23 1918. This memorial is presented by the local committee administering the Comforts Fund of the London Channel Islanders Society.”*



A photograph of its unveiling on the front page of the *Weekly Press* of 6th August 1921 is entitled “Our Zeebrugge Hero”, and an article inside the newspaper carries a report of the ceremony, which contrasts sharply with his funeral. It was attended by” a number of leading islanders and servicemen, all anxious to be present and to honour the remains of a Guernsey hero”.

The Bailiff, Sir Edward Chepmell Ozanne, KBE unveiled the memorial, described as “.....a marble cross on a pedestal. Before the cross is an anchor, entwined by cordage to the central pillar.” Also present at the ceremony were the Bailiff's wife, various local men of importance such as Messrs Gervaise F Peek, SA Candon, RJ Collins, H Britten and Al Le Patourel, the Douzaine, the Poor Law Board and Churchwardens of St Andrews and representatives of the London Channel Islands Society. The military was represented by Lt F Boxall, RN (coastguards), Captain E Cowley, MBE, (Army, the same Captain Cowley who made the unfortunate “blunder” at Helman's funeral), and Sgt J Ryan, Lance Corporal L Phelan and Private T O'Brien (Garrison Military Police), and Bugler MJ Cryan. The Vauxbelets choir, under the direction of Frère Cels, was stationed on the lower slopes of the cemetery, and Reverend Father Thomas Hickey, D.D., PhD, Roman Catholic Dean of Guernsey, conducted the ceremony. The Bailiff was invited to unveil the memorial, in a speech which described the late AB Helman as

“...one of the volunteers for service when that daring feat (the Zeebrugge raid) was performed, and his bravery on that occasion was so marked that he was one of several recommended for the highest honour that can be conferred on a soldier or sailor – the Victoria Cross.”

The Bailiff then made “a brief but very impressive address, which visibly affected the parents”, before recalling his meetings with Helman. After describing the raid as “a hell upon earth”, he went on to say that “It was important to remember that the men were volunteers, and that each man had been warned that he would go to almost certain death.” He then unveiled the memorial, which had been covered with a Union Jack, saying “Their name liveth for evermore”. After some items by the choir, prayers and a hymn, the ceremony concluded with Bugler Cryan sounding the Last Post.

However the “blunders” seem to have continued. Despite the fact that AB John William Helman is commemorated on the St Andrew’s Parish memorial and on the Bailiwick Memorial in St Peter Port, a search of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records reveal no entry for him. He qualifies for official recognition, because he died as a result of illness caused by his war service, within the prescribed time limit. Thus “our Zeebrugge hero” did not receive any awards in his lifetime, nor did he have the funeral with military honours, or an official war grave to which he was entitled. The Admiralty, on the recommendation of the CWGC, is now investigating his case and it is hoped that he will eventually get the recognition that he deserved. This would also mean that his now neglected headstone would be maintained in perpetuity by the Commission.

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St Ouen’s Parish Memorial By Paul Ronayne

St Ouen’s Parish Memorial is to be found outside the Parish Hall on the main road leading up from St Peter’s. The memorial has a central stone with the names of the dead from the Great War inscribed on it with steps leading up to it. On either side there is an arm each with a panel, one with the names of the men who died in the Second World War, the other with the name of a civilian. From the front the arms either side seem to have the effect of some how protecting the memorial and the men remembered on it, and hence the memorial gives the feeling of been solid and strong.

The memorial is unique in a very special way, in so far as it is the only Parish memorial to list a civilian among its names. Louisa Mary Gould died in Ravensbruck Concentration camp in 1945 and I have decided to write a brief account about her tragic fate in this article. The memorial also records the names of some thirty-seven men who died in the Great War and six names of men who died during the Second World War.



St. Ouen's Parish Memorial

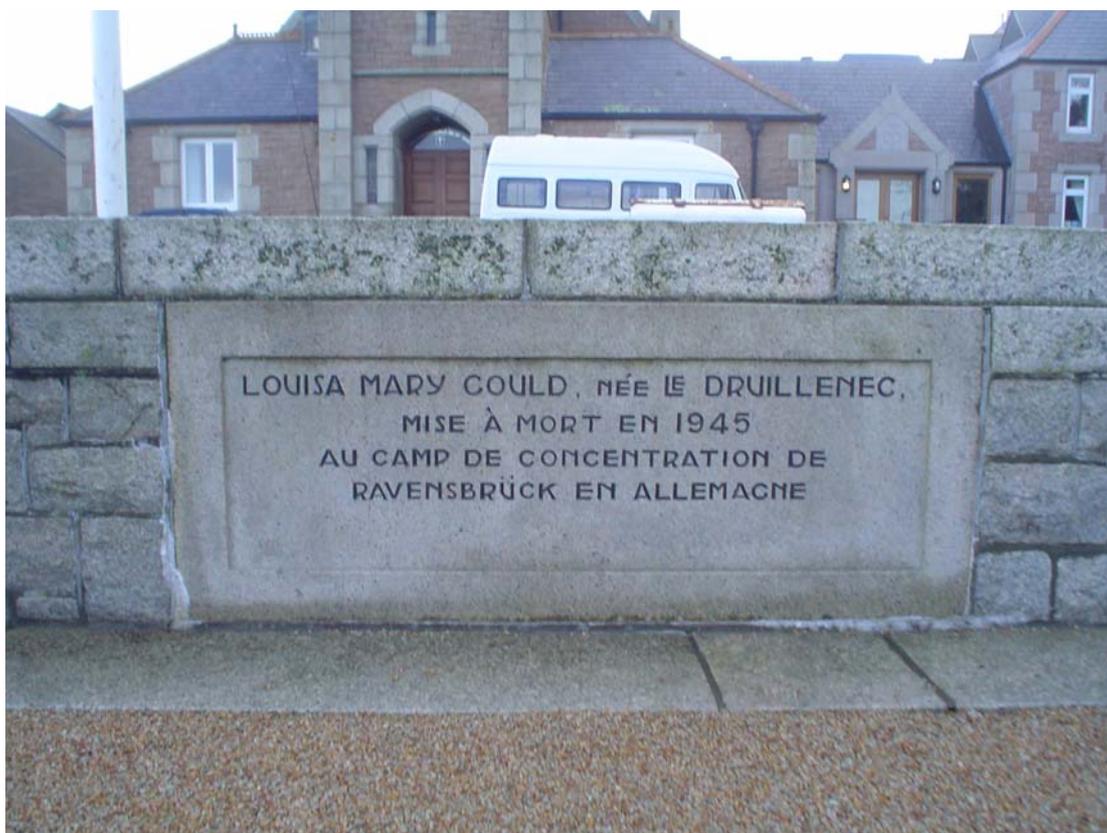
William George Risbridger was the son of Henry and Elvina Celestine Risbridger, of Romsley Villa, St. Ouen. He was formerly a gardener for Mr Watkins of The Poplars, Milbrook, and one of the first boys to join the St Ouens Boys Brigade before the war. William's father was an old soldier and had three sons who served during the Great War. Before the war William lived at Mossigiel, Les Landes. He had joined the 7th Bn, Royal Irish Rifles serving as a Rifleman and was killed in action at Third Ypres on 16th August 1917. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the missing.

The son of ex-Centenier and Mrs Hamon of Portinfer, St Ouen, Frank Hamon had left Jersey for Canada in the spring of 1914 in search of a new life. Whilst in Canada he had joined the Canadian Garrison Artillery becoming a Gunner. Unfortunately for Frank he was never to leave Canada again, succumbing to influenza on 20th December 1918. He is buried in Paspébiac (St Peter's) Cemetery, New Brunswick.

Arthur John Syvret is remembered on the memorial even though technically he could have been an Australian. The son of Captain John and Louisa Syvret of Yeo Street, Semaphore, South Australia, it is reported that the family had

left the Island some thirty years before Arthur's death on the 25th December 1916 at the age of twenty eight. Therefore it is possible he was born in Australia but this not recorded, either way he is remembered as a Jersey man who died in the war. The family had previously lived at Maison Neuve, St Ouen. Arthur was a Lance Corporal with the Australian Pioneers he had previously served in the Gallipoli campaign and died in Northern France after a shell blew his left leg away. He is buried in the Etaples Military Cemetery.

As previously stated I thought it would be appropriate to tell the story of Louisa Mary Gould also remembered on the memorial, her death possibly being one of the most shameful episodes to occur during the German Occupation of Jersey 1940-1945.



Feodor Burriy also known, as Bill was a Russia prisoner of war brought to the Island in 1942 having been captured after his plane was shot down in October 1941 over Russia. He escaped from his POW camp in late 1942 and was taken in by a St Ouen farmer, a Mr Le Mottee who looked after the escaped Russian for some months before he had to leave the farmer. Bill was introduced to Mrs Gould whom without hesitation took him into hiding. It is said she treated Bill like a son having already lost a son in the war (her son is also remembered on the St Ouen's Memorial) and she sheltered the Russian for eighteen months. During that time Bill learnt English and became part of the community in St Ouens, even doing the shopping and going to the back for Mrs Gould. Then one day she received an anonymous warning over the telephone in Jersey French that an informer had been at work. The message warned, "Get rid of Bill and destroy all traces". Bill escaped, but Mrs Gould

received a visit from the Polizei who found a Russian-English dictionary and a photograph of Bill.

After some intense questioning Mrs Gould, her friend Miss Pitolet and her brother Harold Le Druillenec were deported to Germany. Louisa Mary Gould died in 1945 at Ravensbruck Concentration Camp where the work load was too much for her, Harold was the only British national to survive Belsen Concentration Camp and Miss Pitolet escaped from a prison in Rennes when part of her cell wall was blown down in an Allied air raid. As for Bill he was fortunate that there were so many other brave people in Jersey who sheltered him to the end of the Occupation, he was then repatriated to Russia after the war.

We will probably never know who informed on Mrs Gould but as we have seen the consequences were dreadful. Also we don't know why they did it maybe for money or food, or maybe just as a vendetta against her, I suppose it is easy to judge some sixty years later but at that time under those difficult circumstances people act differently. So it is good to see a brave woman remembered along side all those brave men, and it leaves me with one final thought; as you lose faith in some people, the informer, others will restore your faith in people, Mrs Gould and her brave friends.

Book Review

British Army Handbook 1914-1918 – Andrew Rawson (Sutton Publishing (2006)) – Barrie Bertram

This is a book that is intended to address a gap in the WW1 market by explaining the structure and complexity of the British Army as it developed and grew, and it is exceptionally well-illustrated, and contains much useful information to “old and new” Great War hands alike. However, it does not quite achieve the author's very praiseworthy intent. At a guess, I would say he has achieved about 80% of that intent.

To start off with the illustrations, he has made very good use of the IWM photographs library and selected those that he needed to illustrate the text. So for example, in dealing with medical evacuation along the recovery chain, photos showing Advanced Dressing Stations, casualty transportation by train and barge, and of casualties being removed by ambulance at Charing Cross are used. Overall, the selection is excellent while contemporary sketches of such items as grenades or defensive wiring also serve to amplify the text.

Where the illustrative quality drifts is with the (virtually) full range of regimental badges, medals, and divisional signs being provided in black and white. This may be the publisher's constraint, and for the medals, the ribbons are not shown. However, the lack of colour in this detracts from the implied value of a Handbook, requiring reference elsewhere to complete the picture. Having provided divisional signs in black and white, he then describes the corps signs in text.

Another of my *bête-noirs* surfaces with books like these in that the author has shied away from organisation charts and again lists in a text that a section consists of so many corporals, lance-corporals and so forth. This type of data can be better presented in a chart, and it saves the reader being diverted from reading to doing mental arithmetic in determining the size of an infantry battalion!

The book contains a great deal of information, but in some cases, does not go far enough. Divisional movements throughout the Great War are covered, but there is nothing on the brigades and lower units who also moved, sometimes, between divisions and many, not least the 7RIR, of the battalions who disbanded. Perhaps too much reliance was placed on the internet for the reader to gain that information. Similarly, he has not sufficiently explored some of the less well-known types of organisations that the Great War caused to be formed. In part, I suspect that Charles Messenger's "Call To Arms" might have got in the way of his writing intent! Occasionally, his description goes so far and the reader can be left wondering where to learn more.

Those criticisms apart, there is much to be gleaned and I will certainly use it as a reference from time to time. At £25 RRP in the UK it is at the edge of being over-priced (I bought it for £20!), but with better colour illustrations, the use of charts, and more depth of information in certain areas, would be worth double the RRP. In conclusion, it is an excellent idea for a book, on that is long needed, yet doesn't quite make the finishing line.

Website Workings **By Roger Frisby and Barrie Bertram**

As visitors to the website will note, the material on the site is steadily growing and effort is continuing behind the scenes to develop further input. Some of the projects that are under way are as follows:

- The development of the Jersey Roll of Service which I have in hand with the aim of completing the first pass up to the "Ms" by mid-March and the complete alphabet by mid-June. There will then need to be a look at how the Militia can be addressed, along with the French forces component. The Militia data is not as robust as I would like and I'm currently stumped as to how to get French information. Ideas anyone?
- Liz Walton is looking at including material on Able-Bodied Seaman Helman, the unsung hero of Zebbrugge (see the earlier article), while she has just received copies of the police files on the murder of Jersey girl Nelly Rault in May 1919 to work through, kindly provided by Roger Frisby who visited the National Archive on her behalf.
- A Discharge Badge/Silver War Badge List (From the official Channel Islands List and others), especially those awarded to the RGLI. Mark Bougourd has a 2-3 page article on the Discharge badge itself, and intends to follow this up with an actual Appendix list of badge recipients.

- For the RGLI, first, an updated nominal roll listing some 3,500 men with various details, still quite a project to complete. It is supported by Casualty Lists (1,132 casualties on 32 official pages), fully typed up, produced in Excel and Adobe PDF format. It's possible that this could be drip fed into the Journal as the Battles occurred in that particular month or just published on the website in its entirety? This list is typed from the handwritten battlefield Casualty List and Mark still trying to obtain the Part II Orders version for a comparison, as this would have been typed up by the Orderly Clerk when better information was to hand. Lastly, there is the RGLI War diary, with Operational Orders, Movement orders etc, and Mark has just started typing this up, with 2-3 pages in so far, so a long way to go yet.
- A list and details of all the Bougourds who served during the Great War, One was awarded the Military Medal for France, another, the 1914 "Mons" star with Clasp and Roses, and another the Meritorious Service Medal for France.

Meanwhile on the "technical" side any offers of help to Roger Frisby will be most welcome. Suitable software will be provided along with help to get you going and a final proof reading and technical check.

As promised in the last Journal, the Rolls of Honour are now available in a searchable form and these are providing a valuable public service. Several contacts have been made using the contact forms requesting information and these are also leading to us gaining access to photographs and other documents. It's amazing how many close relatives of those who served in the Great War are alive, well and keen to help.

One recent contact involved a lady who hadn't been able to find the memorial to her grand-mother's brother though normal channels but had been successful by using our site. Our record included a photograph of the memorial inscription. The reason why she had been unlucky was the CWGC had wrongly transcribed his name when their records were prepared. As luck would have it, Roger had contacted the CWGC about the error in October and has just received a reply. The official record is now correct.

For those with a technical interest in how this is done, it all starts with a single table Excel spreadsheet. This is converted by a free PC program (all in German!) and uploaded as a table to a server based MySQL database provided by our web site host. We are allowed a single database, free of charge, but there appears to be no limit to the number of tables. Currently we have 13 of these. A few web pages of PHP script allow the search terms to be defined and entered, whilst other hidden scripts interrogate the correct table and display the results. Thanks must go to Roger's son Jon who patiently worked out how to do this and provided sample scripts to get Roger on the right track.

The original spreadsheets are now only available for download by members and are always kept up to date. They, or in the absence of a laptop, printouts

from the search results are a great aid when visiting France and Belgium as they contain cemetery/memorial details plus references. They will certainly be with both of us on the Somme when we conduct our respective visits.

We also have our first video on the site so readers can search it out!

The page called "About the web site" has been re-worded to strengthen our copyright protection. One that subject, an enquiry made to the IWM about using pictures provided by them, has been disappointing. Even for our educational purpose they require a fee of £35 per picture, so please find alternatives!

Out and About

I'm off to Verdun and the Somme once more in France, the former to look anew at that Battle and to prepare for a possible return visit with friends in September. Meanwhile the Somme sojourn will probably see me going around hitherto unvisited cemeteries with CI graves to take further photos for the website. Roger Frisby will also be visiting the Somme in April.

Ian and Paul Ronayne's May trip this year is a return to Verdun.

Liz Walton has prepared a presentation on her aunt, Ada Le Poidevin, that she plans to offer to Guernsey local history groups and the WIs there, while I'm giving a presentation on the Channel Islands and the Great War to my local WFA branch here in North Lancs in July.

Ned Malet de Carteret will be at Ypres in August, with particular regard to commemorating the 90th anniversary of the death of his great-grandfather, Captain Harold Ackroyd VC (see Journal 6)

Odds and Ends

Ian Ronayne's efforts on the Jersey Contingent

Ian is working away at his book on the Jersey Contingent and I am presently going through first drafts of Chapters 8-10, finding that he is recounting an interesting tale balancing the activities in France and Flanders along with the decision making back in Jersey. Coupled with his piece on the Contingent on the website it is useful to correlate the members' details and their fate with the JRoH&S. Furthermore a query came in via the website in the last two months, only for me to discover that my great uncle Ernest Bertram was in fact 4063 Rifleman E Bertram of the Contingent. I had never made the connection!

CWGC

If you are discovering errors on the CWGC database, do let them know as they are only too happy to correct as Roger found out albeit slowly because of the back-log. The problem resulted from their introduction of IT and scanning documents, a process that always introduces errors.

Enfin

We've again managed to put together a sizeable Journal with some excellent and timely pieces of work from the contributors for which many thanks. Hopefully there is plenty to interest everyone. Pleasingly, we are beginning to get recognised as a source of Channel Islands' Great War information to those seeking it, and I was particularly delighted to note that the Jersey Archive had pointed people in our direction. Meanwhile, the website has generated a number of queries and interest. Liz' small piece on the errant Pte Quesnel, exemplifies this showing that there are still memories of the Channel Islands' Great War heritage to be tapped into, along with some excellent photographs.

Noting that a number of people will be going out on various trips to France and Flanders this year, and maybe further a-field, do remember that your "visit report" is greatly appreciated and can help highlight new places of interest. Having the latest version of "Before Endeavours Fade" I shall no doubt be giving it a test run!

Sorry if I'm repetitive, thank you again contributors for your excellent articles.

And hopefully I have discovered how to number pages at long last!

Regards
Barrie H Bertram
15th February 2007

Journal Issue Dates For 2007

Proposed dates remain as follows. I'll try to keep to the schedule but will have the table on the website so that you can read any updates that might arise. At this stage the most likely candidate for change will be Issue 16.

Issue	Month	Articles To BB	Posted Web/Mail
12	February 2007	10 th	15 th
13	April 2007	10 th	15 th
14	June 2007	10 th	15 th
15	August 2007	10 th	15 th
16	October 2007	10 th	15 th
17	December 2007	10 th	15 th