

# CHANNEL ISLANDS GREAT WAR STUDY GROUP



**The Battle of Messines  
7<sup>th</sup> June 1917**

**JOURNAL 14  
JUNE 2007**

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Hello All

Probably the hardest job in pulling this Journal together every two months is to find a suitable front page illustration, particularly one that has relevance to the period and if at all possible, to the Channel Islands. I have hopefully again been fortunate in that I have managed to achieve both in that with the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Messines just past, we recall that Islanders were serving with the Irish regiments in 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. We will probably never know whether some of those pictured on the front page came from St. Peter Port or St. Helier, since the original caption makes no reference to the involvement of our fellow Islanders.

Most of you will have seen the excerpt from the Times that I'd e-mailed in early June. With Her Majesty attending on 12<sup>th</sup> July, the Ypres Commemorations should certainly be highly visible in the press and on television. I haven't heard of anyone within the Group visiting the Salient during the next few months, save for Ned Malet de Carteret in August, but articles on any such trips will be greatly appreciated as ever.

On the next page is another Special Notice on the RGLI/Cambrai Exhibition in Guernsey in November. It would be excellent if Group Members who could make it, do attend, and it hoped that we can get together for an evening meal and a few drinks.

For this edition, we kick off in a nautical vein with Peter Tabb's account of his Uncle Dick, while I plug the gap with a brief analysis of a block of Jersey men who joined the Dorsets and then strayed into other regiments for reasons to be determined, all this followed by Liz Walton telling us how she followed in Latimer Le Poidevin's footsteps as a member of the RGLI. Paul Ronayne takes a look at St. Clement's war memorial in Jersey while Liz returns with another piece on Memorials, Now and Then in France. Meanwhile, I recount some of my findings from scanning the Jersey Evening Post for 1916 when last in Jersey in late-April. Ian Ronayne reports on the Ronayne family trip to Verdun, this year taking brother Peter and nephew Ben along as well as the ever present Paul. Lastly, Peter Tabb and I have contributed a couple of Book Reviews.

Finally, to promote some debate, I've included a 1918 letter from Lloyd George's Home Secretary to Guernsey which can be summarised as requesting more men, the provision of money, and the production of even more food from the Island. It would be interesting to see members' views on what must have been a very thorny issue during a period of great stress when Germany was pressing strongly on the Western Front, any immediate success on the battlefield was in doubt in certain quarters, the Americans not yet ready to take the field and the war expected to continue well into 1919. It would be interesting to hear what the views might be if today's UK government wrote in a similar vein to both States!

### **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. Just one item this month, a correction to photograph labelling in the last Journal.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Harold Ackroyd Memorial Lecture**

The picture on page 19 should read “Ned Malet de Carteret outside Harold’s rooms – Tree Court”, while the lower one on page 20 should read “Christopher Ackroyd commencing the Lecture”. The website version has been corrected.

### **Membership News**

We’re welcoming a few more members this month, the first of whom is Paul Dorey who writes:

“I became interested in this Group because of my research into my grandfather's Great War record. He was an officer in the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry, and as our family knew very little about that part of his life, I thought it would be an interesting challenge to see how much I could piece together. It was a great discovery for me to find some like-minded people (after much hunting around on the Internet), and I hope to be able to contribute something to the cause. I studied Mediaeval History at university, but have been teaching English since then, mostly in Japan, where I live now.”

Paul’s grandfather was Lt Edward Arthur Dorey who, for a period, was Assistant Adjutant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, and who would gain a MiD. Meanwhile, it’s good to see that website is being noticed.

The second member to report is Tony Murphy who has just joined. At the time of writing this, I have nothing to add on Tony, save that he has provided a great deal of information on another RGLI man, 672 Corporal Albert WE Neville. If I have more on Tony before closing the Journal, I’ll tack it on at the end as I will for Jeff Eker, whose Grandfather was 495 Private Alexander Eker, and Great Uncle was 664 Private Auguste Eker, and for whom I am awaiting confirmation that he is also signing up.

### **SPECIAL NOTICE 2**

Following on from the announcement in Journal 13 that the Guernsey Museum Service will be holding an exhibition entitled *Cambrai 1917* from 3<sup>rd</sup> November, it is been suggested that those Group members who can make it might want to meet up on the weekend that the exhibition opens, and perhaps get together for a meal, a few drinks and a chat about our shared interests.

Members who have to travel may want to start thinking about it fairly soon, so can I ask any of you who are interested to contact me asap so that I can get an idea of likely numbers and date preferences. Barrie has already put his name down for two attendees, preferably on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

Further details will follow in Journal 15

**From Liz Walton**

## **Uncle Dick** **By Peter Tabb**

I BARELY knew my Uncle Dick.

To tell the truth my mother rather disapproved of him. He was a grizzled old sailor with a fondness for rum. He was married to my father's eldest sister and the couple had married late and had no children although I believe Uncle Dick had a daughter from an earlier liaison but I never met her.

Uncle Dick died in February 1954 while I was still at primary school and I don't remember whether or not I attended his funeral. I probably did because my father was close to his sister, my Auntie Ada, and after Uncle Dick's death we (that is my father and me) used to visit her most Saturday mornings. Occasionally they would talk about Uncle Dick and that is how I learned that he has been at sea, under sail, since he was a boy and sailed, as a deckhand, on the last Jersey-built sailing ship, the topsail schooner Miss St. John, to embark upon the 'golden triangle' in 1912.

For those not familiar with the phrase, the 'golden triangle' involved a voyage from Jersey to northern Spain, usually Vigo or La Coruna, with general cargo, from northern Spain to either the West Indies or Pernambuco in Brazil with casked wine, from Pernambuco with balsa wood or from the West Indies with sugar and molasses to New England, from New England to the Grand Banks and one of the ports of the Gaspé coast, to load dried and salted cod for Spain. The voyage, more of a four or even five-sided triangle really, would last a year. The 'gold' came from the fact that such a voyage could often yield for the vessel's owners and skipper enough to retire. 'Cod houses', country mansions built on the proceeds of the trade, are still to be seen in the Jersey countryside.

Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, following the defeat of Napoléon Bonaparte, the victors declared 'freedom of the seas' which outlawed privateering. The Channel Islands had been very adept at privateering – a form of legalised piracy that allowed privately-owned ships armed with cannon and a 'Letter of Marque' to attack and capture the ships of the King's enemies (and gave the King a share of the loot) – and 'freedom of the seas' deprived the Islands of a major source of income. By way of compensation to the Jersey fleet the British government conferred exclusive trading rights to the Gaspé peninsular near the mouth of the St Lawrence River in eastern Canada. It was along the Gaspé that the teeming cod of the nearby Grand Banks were landed to be salted and dried for export to the Catholic countries of Europe so that their peoples could eat fish on Fridays. Jerseymen in particular had fished the Grand Banks since the 16<sup>th</sup> century and local families had established themselves, and profitable businesses, on the otherwise bleak Gaspé. Now thanks to the British government, all the fish caught and processed had to be carried in Jersey-registered vessels. There were fortunes to be made. Incidentally, since the trade had been established the dried fish not deemed of sufficiently high quality to sell in Europe was shipped to the West Indies and Southern States of America to feed the slaves on the plantations. For almost a hundred years, until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sturdy

schooners, brigs and barques were built in shipyards at West Park, Havre des Pas and Gorey to provide the vessels for this lucrative trade.

Miss St. John returned to Jersey just in time for the crew to join in the Great War. Uncle Dick remained in the Merchant Navy and had at least one of the vessels in which he served sunk under him by enemy action.

An abiding memory was going to St Helier harbour with my father. He was fascinated by ships, even the modest craft that plied between the Channel Islands and what we knew as 'the mainland'. Many times we watched from the pier-head as the mail-boats of what so recently had been the Southern and Great Western Railways were warped into their berths and (in those days before the harbours hosted hundreds of yachts in marinas) the cargo ships high and dry on the mud alongside the Albert and New North Quays. One in particular stood out for even in the 1950s she was an anachronism, the former three-masted topsail schooner now re-rigged as an auxiliary ketch, the Result. Her home port was Braunton in North Devon and she plied, at never more than a stately five knots fully loaded, between the ports of the Bristol Channel, principally Cardiff and Swansea and the Channel Islands with cargoes of coal and fertilizers.

"Your Uncle Dick," my father informed me, "Used to sail in her in the war."

The Result had been built in 1893 in Carrickfergus in N. Ireland. Her frames and plates were of steel and she measured 122 gross tons. At her launch she was described as the finest small sailing vessel ever built in Britain.



**The Result (pictured left, in the 1950s)**

Under the command of her owner Capt. Tom Welch she spent the Second World War in the Bristol Channel trade carrying coal from South Wales ports with my Uncle Dick as a deckhand, but in the Great War the Result assumed an entirely different role for, in January 1917, she was converted at Lowestoft into Q-23 and let loose to hunt German U-boats off the Dutch coast a week later. Q-23 was armed with two 18 cwt. 12 pdr. guns, one forward and one aft of the mainmast, in gunwells sunk in what had been the cargo hatches. She also had a 6 pdr. gun on the port side forward, two fixed 14" torpedo tubes aft, one on each quarter, depth charges and a 'cargo' of sand ballast to absorb enemy shellfire.

The crew, all volunteers, totalled 23 and were commanded by Lt. PJ Mack RN with her civilian skipper, Capt. J Reid, retained as sailing master. More than two hundred British coastal sailing ships had been sunk by enemy mines or U-boats and it was hoped that in her new guise, Result might even up the score a bit.

Q-23's career was a short – she was decommissioned in August 1917 - but eventful one. During this time she masqueraded as being both Dutch and Swedish, the hope being that U-boat commanders would not only not waste a torpedo on a neutral but, under the cruiser rules, venture close enough to allow the Q-ship to drop her neutral disguise and open fire. Despite several encounters with enemy submarines, Q-23 could claim no submarines destroyed although sustaining little damage herself in what were often quite prolonged gun duels. Nevertheless her activities earned a 'Mention in Dispatches' for Lt Mack and Capt. Reid.

Capt. Reid resumed command and, returned to her owners, Result resumed her role as a cargo carrier, the severe shortage of merchant shipping at this time meant that she was no less vital to her country's fortunes. I would have liked to believe that my Uncle Dick might have served in Result when she sailed under false colours as a lure to prowling U-boats but her complement, except for Capt. Reid, was made up entirely of RN personnel.

Back under the Red Duster and as a plodding cargo carrier, Result soldiered on, undergoing several changes of rig and acquiring a diesel engine to boost her stately five knots up to nine.

When my Auntie Ada died in 1980, my father inherited an old chipped and grubby Victorian ewer and basin which, having no room in his modern bathroom, he gave to me, being aware that my wife and I had a liking for such gaudy Victoriana. While cleaning years of accumulated grime from the ewer I discovered that amongst the miscellaneous debris inside were two medals – the British War Medal and Board of Trade Medal – awarded to Victor Turpin (my uncle has always been known as Dick for obvious reasons). Their ribbons were discoloured and frayed and the medals themselves has assumed the same grubby patina but diligent cleaning and latterly new ribbons purchased on E-Bay have restored both to a gleaming and framed pride of place on the wall above my desk.

Since the vast majority of merchant seamen who survived the Great War were awarded Uncle Dick's two campaign medals, the distinction is hardly unique and the experience of having at least one of his ships sunk from under him was not unique either. Nevertheless my Uncle Dick shared a unique experience with the 12,460 Channel Islanders (6,292 from the Bailiwick of Jersey and 6,168 from the Bailiwick of Guernsey) who rallied to the defence of their Sovereign to honour the pledge made to King Edward I.

**Editor's Note:** Looking for Peter's Uncle Dick in the Mercantile Marine section of JRoH&S it appears that he was listed as Turner, and not Turpin, unfortunately another error which does not help today's researches into family or military history! Fortunately in this case Peter has the evidence to prompt a change.

## **An Analysis of a Dorsetshire Intake By Barrie Bertram**

OK, it sounds as if I have got my anorak on again, but having been working on the Jersey RoS input for the website, one could not help noticing the numerous moves between regiments and corps. As a sample, I took some transfers between the Dorsets and the King's Royal Rifle Corps and built upon this, working backwards and forwards through the regimental numbering system to establish a block of some 66 (31131 – 31196) Jerseymen. This saw the addition of the Somerset Light Infantry, the Wiltshires and the Lancashire Fusiliers as destination regiments.

The workings are shown on an attached spreadsheet, but of the 66, there were 42 that had Dorset regimental numbers and another 13 for whom one of the other regimental numbers does imply prior Dorset membership, and seeming to confirm the original JRoH&S entries of Dorsets for individuals such as William Jehan (KRRC 45094). This leaves question marks over the 11 for whom I cannot find a link. Were they discharged as unfit, did they get sent to other regiments or corps such as the Labour Corps because of military unsuitability, or was it through poor paperwork that they are "lost" to our sight? I'm also particularly curious as to the Le Bretons (31138 and 31188) going off to the Wiltshires.

One, sadly, can only do so much with the Medal Record Index, and having contacted the Dorsets' Museum in Dorchester, I am somewhat disappointed to note that they do not hold their Recruiting Record (in Army Book 303) for the GW period. Perhaps the clue to this block of Jerseymen will be found in the JEP of the time and it may very well be that they were among the early conscripts in 1917? Some research for another day!

However, when one sees the numerous differences between the JRoH&S and current research, it does make me wonder whether the States of Jersey provided sufficient resource for the original compilation, or that they were an understandable consequence of the confusion and chaos in the aftermath of an awful war?

## **In Latimer Le Poidevin's Footsteps A Visit to Northern France in 2007 By Liz Walton**

The focus of this year's trip was the diary of Pte Latimer Le Poidevin, RGLI. I wanted to see the places that he mentioned, to place in context the events described by him.

The first stop was a visit to the grave of Captain Harry Easterbrook Stranger in Les Baraques Military Cemetery near Calais. Captain Stranger was one of three brothers all killed within a month in 1918, and there is a family memorial to them in the Vale cemetery in Guernsey. This cemetery is in the sand dunes near the beach at Sangatte, and is sadly in quite a poor condition. I have notified the CWGC. Captain Stranger won a MC for his actions at Cambrai, an event described thus by Pte Le Poidevin: "At this place we spent our Xmas and New



Year, and at the time we left this place there was still snow about, this being on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 1918. We got billeted in another village called Audincthun, near St-Pol. It was at this place that our Officer received military Distinction. This was the report given: "Lieutenant HEK Stranger of the First Service Battalion Royal Guernsey Light Infantry, he held an important bridgehead, during a period of strenuous fighting at close quarters. He collected and organised men of several units, and held the bridge successfully against the enemy efforts to break through. He set a splendid example of courage and determination." I was one of them that won this distinction for him."



The next stop was Marquise/Rinxent, where 321 and 329 Quarry Companies RE were based. Latimer remembered places that he passed through while travelling in an open horse truck, writing "One of the places was Etaples, also the Quarries in which we saw some of the Guernsey boys working". A bit of exploration revealed

some disused, water filled quarries, still with the remains of buildings and machinery, right next to the railway. The station is called Le Haut Banc, (the quarrymen's camp was called Highcliffe), and is on the Boulogne to Hazebrouck line.

The next couple of days were spent investigating the area where the RGLI were based while on GHQ duties after April 1918. The base for this was a hotel in Montreuil overlooking Haig's statue, which dominates the cobbled square where many pictures of the RGLI were taken in 1918/1919. The main GHQ offices were in the Ecole Militaire Préparatoire d'Infanterie, which was probably inside the Citadelle, which was closed.



The Chateau de Beaurepaire, where Haig himself was based, and the Chateau de Tramecourt, where King George V stayed were not the easiest places to find, and were both behind big gates warning of nasty things that would happen if you went in, but I did get photographs of the plaque outside Beaurepaire and the house at Tramecourt.



The next task was to track down the graves and memorial inscriptions of all RGLI men killed at Cambrai. The vast majority, (97 out of a total of 122) are on the Cambrai memorial at Louverval. One of the names inscribed there is that of L/Cpl Herbert John Le Poidevin, Latimer's younger brother. The memorial had been cleaned up, and names had been recut since the last visit. Then there are 10 named RGLI graves, all dated 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1917, and many more unnamed ones in Point du Jour Military Cemetery near Arras.

**RGLI Graves  
at Point-du-  
Jour Military  
Cemetery**



The cemetery is some distance from where the fighting took place, but the CWGC notes that the cemetery was used from April to November 1917, and again in May 1918, and contained at the Armistice only 82 graves. It was then enlarged when graves were brought in from the battlefields and small cemeteries north, east and south of Arras. There are now 794 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 401 of them unnamed. There are small numbers of RGLI burials at other cemeteries in places like Fins, Ribecourt and Flesquières, all of which are in the Masnières-Marcoing region. Another day was spent walking round Masnières, finding the factories, locks and bridges on the canal mentioned in all of the accounts of the battle. It is now such a beautiful, peaceful place and the weather was so fine and sunny that it is hard to imagine what it was like in winter 90 years ago. However the town has erected a large interpretation panel which explains much of what happened there in November/December 1917, just over the main bridge into the town and next to their own memorial.



**The view from the lock on the St Quentin canal looking towards Masnières**

The new Thiepval Visitor's Centre was most impressive, and time was also found to visit the Arras Memorial and the tank memorial at Pozières, with its wonderful scale models. However the highlight for me was seeing the newly refurbished Canadian memorial at Vimy. The sheer scale of it, along with its elegant design and its placement in an area still pock marked by shell holes and trenches makes it a moving experience. Incidentally it is the only memorial where names are listed alphabetically running over from one block to the next, with no listing of rank or regiment (or so I was told by a kilted Scots guide). The view from the memorial over the Douai plain is also impressive.

All in all it was a worthwhile trip in terms of research, and it was also most enjoyable. The weather was hot and sunny throughout - more like July than April, so no ploughing through the mud was involved. All the pavement cafés were open in the square at Arras, and a walk round the market with its heaped stalls of local produce was another pleasure. Incidentally for anyone else visiting, there is an excellent couscous restaurant – le Mamounia – in one of the side streets off the Place des Héros, and another excellent eating place is le Bistrot du Boucher, not far from the station in the bde de Strasbourg. For the return journey I decided to try a new route. The Lille to Quimper TGV stops in Arras. From here it is as possible to go directly to Rennes, a journey of just over 3 hours, without any changes. All seats are reserved, the train is very clean and quiet and there is plenty of luggage space in the compartments. From there it was a small local train to St Malo, then the final part was the dreaded Condor! This is a relatively cheap and comfortable route from the Channel Islands to this part of France, or on to Belgium. Now when can I find an excuse to go over again?

**Jersey Memorials**  
**St Clement's Memorial**  
**By Paul Ronayne**

Le Hocq on Jersey's south coast is steeped in local history. It's the place where the French forces landed on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1781, intent on occupying the Island after being guided through the notorious rocks and gullies exposed at low tide by a local traitor. The French were later defeated in the Royal Square in what would become the Battle of Jersey. A Jersey round tower stands near the sea, dominant and proud and Echo tower stands on an islet about 500 yards from the coast line, both built to repulse the next French invasion, thankfully an event which never occurred. Also found here is the St Clement Parish Memorial, across the main coast road and slightly to the west of the round tower. The Parish hall is located just behind the memorial, with the Parish Church being located some way away on St Clement's Inner Road.

There are 22 names of men listed on the memorial who gave their lives in the Great War and a further 13 names of men who died during the Second World War, an astonishing amount for one of the smaller parishes in the Island. The inscription reads:

**A La Memoire Des Paroissiens**  
**De Saint Clement**  
**Morts Pour La Patrie**

The memorial is made of granite with a central stone tablet having the inscription and lists of men's names on it. It also has the Parish of St Clement's emblem, an anchor carved above the inscription. There is a granite arm either side of the tablet, the design being circular. In the middle of the circle is a granite sun dial, a special touch in it's self. Flower baskets hang from both the granite arms, the memorial's design and appearance is really rather well thought out and cared for.



The following men are some of those remembered on the St Clement Memorial:

A particularly unlucky man listed on the memorial is one Frederick McClean Guillard. He had joined the Navy three and half years prior to his death and served throughout the war as a Joiner 4<sup>th</sup> Class, when on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1919 he was killed as HMS Penarth, the minesweeper he was serving with struck a mine off the Yorkshire coast. Frederick was only 20 when he died. The son of Mr. FJ Guillard, of Anchor Lodge, St Clement he is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. It's always surprising just how many men died after the War had officially ended, claiming lives months and even years after the Armistice.

Herbert Charles Noel was a Corporal in the Royal Marine Light Infantry serving aboard HMS Viknor when on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1915 it was lost at sea with all hands, very likely having hit a German mine after the north-west coast of Ireland. Herbert was the son of Mr and Mrs JE Noel of Greve d'Azette. He was married to Milly and living in Portsmouth at the time of his death. Herbert is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 9. Note that the JEP reported his rank as Lance Corporal.

The attack at Vimy Ridge on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1917 claimed a number of Jersey man's lives whilst fighting with the Canadians. One of these men was Anquetil Philip Norman, an acting Major with the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Infantry (British Columbia Regiment). The son of Francis and Anne Norman of Jersey and husband of Maud A Norman, of 1 Ricardo Villa, Samares, Jersey he was 33 when he died officially listed as killed in action. Philip is buried in the Arras Road Cemetery, Rolincourt.

One of the Jersey Overseas Contingent Ernest Alexander Vallois died on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1916. He was a rifleman with the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Royal Irish Rifles. Originally a member of 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Island of Jersey Militia Ernest died at the 33<sup>rd</sup> CCS after being wounded on the 19<sup>th</sup> April, and the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion's War Diary notes that two men were wounded by a shell on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April. Ernest unfortunately succumbed to his wounds the next day. He is buried in Bethune Town Cemetery, and was the son of Frank and Elizabeth Vallois, of 2 Beachleigh Lodge, Greve d'Azette, St. Clement. Ernest was 34 years of age.

Alfred George Richomme was just 42 days away from surviving the War when he was killed in action on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 1918. Alfred was the son of Pelagie Richomme of Ivy Lodge, Longueville, Grouville and the late Peter Joseph Richomme. He was a private with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Dorsetshire Regiment, having joined up in 1917. Alfred was 34 when he died during an attack on Levergies, France and is now buried in the Cerisy-Gailly Military Cemetery, after having initially been buried in the British Cemetery at St Helene, near St Quentin.

The memorial stands in a truly scenic and historically important area of Jersey with wonderful views out to sea and to the coast of France beyond. A fitting place to remember St Clement's fallen.



There is no climbing bedroom stairs,  
The beds are single, not in pairs,  
I notice how the soldier swears –  
At Sling.

There are no roads, it's only mud,  
It's always wind and rain, and flood –  
At Sling.

There is no church wherein to pray,  
Or sing "The green hill far away"  
"All we like sheep have gone astray" –  
At Sling.

Oh! Could I sling my hook from here,  
Enraptured would my heart appear,  
For thee I would not shed a tear –  
Oh Sling!

The JEP credited its submission to a Jerseyman – an R Stanley –but whether he was the poet, I cannot say. Incidentally his name was not listed in the JRoH&S, so there is more digging to be done!

**Deaths, Accidents and Suicide Attempts:** Sentry duties at the Dicq should have carried a safety warning not associated with German invasions! Two 3RMIJ Privates, Blampied (in early January) and Mourant (in late July) having heard noises on the shore fell from the wall near a Signal Station there onto the slipway. Meanwhile two incidents were reported of farm labourers separately being kicked by horses, with one man, a Mr de la Perelle, dying the other, a M. Maurice, pulling through.

As to suicides, a chap called Tisdale would be restrained in an attempt to end his life by jumping off the IbeX when en-route to Weymouth while a 44 year old French deserter, Martin, in St Ouen's would attempt to cut his throat since he feared being returned to the army. A Madame Cauvain with a husband in the French Army would, however, be successful.

A Mrs Hacon would receive 3 months hard labour having her child scalded and subsequently dying from the injuries, and a Mrs Grandin would die of a chill after having seen her visiting brother, Pte William Tapley of the South African forces off on the boat.

A boating accident would take place near Petit Port with three fishermen, Thomas Vautier, James Renouf and Sidney Benest drowning.

**Blanche Banques:** A substantial report on the funeral of Otto Fleschig appeared, similar to Paul Ronayne's piece on Carl Brundig (see Journal 13), and it is clear that the Germans could not complain at the British efforts that were put into the ceremony to honour their dead comrade. However, why should the Germans have complained when one Islander (a Mr F Barette of Bellevue, Samares after Willy Haustein's funeral – see next paragraph) was only too ready to do so, expressing his thoughts in a letter to the Editor that any dead Germans should be disposed of as quickly and as quietly as possible, and with the least ceremony!

Fleschig was not the only German to die on the island that year, as another, a Willy Haustein, would die as result of drowning whilst a member of a bathing party, 348 strong, in St. Ouen's Bay in late August. A piquet boat had been in-situ to respond to incidents and according to the Officer i/c, a Lt Tomkins, there were rollers although these were not considered dangerous.



**Shipping:** The SS Ibex and Vera appear to have done sterling work as mail-boats throughout the bulk of the war, though the journeys to Guernsey, Weymouth and Southampton could be fraught. At the beginning of January 1916, the Vera left St. Helier at daybreak and did not enter St. Peter Port until 9.30 pm that same evening, a voyage of 13-14 hours for 28 miles!

The dependency on ships getting through cannot be overstated, since in addition to the mail and passengers travelling between the English and French ports, there was also the need to get produce out, and food and coal in. The loss of a ship to enemy action (probably a U-Boat) en-route to Jersey from Goole, carrying 950 tons of coal caused a slight nervousness that it would be a cold, gas-free winter in some quarters. However, would comparatively less concern have been shown when the ketch Britannia was reported sunk with a cargo of guano?

Disruption was an occasional event, especially if there were major demands by the military to support operational needs, while it was also interesting to note that there would be many French schoolchildren attending the Catholic schools in Jersey travelling to and from their country at holiday time. French soldiers coming on leave would arrive from St Malo while the British forces would journey via Southampton or Weymouth.

**Comforts for the Troops:** Nothing seemed to be too much trouble for Island residents to provide for Tommy. A Jersey Contingent man, Rifleman Le Sueur (probably 8051), would ask for a razor and strop as his had been lost. This was quickly sent through to him in Dublin where he was in hospital, as would an accordion when requested by another soldier early in the year! A Jersey supplied gramophone for a hospital ward in Rouen would be similarly appreciated by a Pte F Browne, though any Jersey connection for this individual is not apparent!

**The Lieutenant Governor and the Military Service Act:** The departure and subsequent death of General Rochfort and the introduction of the Act have been two topics of frequent discussion, both in and outside of previous Journals. Looking at the Evening Posts with a Machiavellian eye, one could draw the conclusion that Rochfort was replaced because he had “gone native”! Consider the following:

- In early June, the States considers the introduction of the Act.
- In late July, the States having concluded their deliberations, submit the draft Act to the Privy Council.
- In late September, with the Army Council having reviewed Jersey’s draft Act, the Privy Council writes rejecting it for a number of reasons that were unacceptable to the Army.
- On 21<sup>st</sup> September it is known that Rochfort would be leaving in early October

The draft Act contained elements of Island control over its men-folk that would have tied the Army Council’s hands however, in its submission, would Rochfort have stressed the Island’s point of view with a vigour that his military superiors have considered unacceptable in the circumstances? Or indeed, was there a

medical condition that necessitated his sudden departure with his death occurring before the end of the year?

Either way, his forthcoming departure had clearly caught the Evening Post out since their "Notes and Queries" column of 22<sup>nd</sup> September stated:

".....came as a very great surprise, for it was altogether unexpected. It had been taken for granted that no change would be made while the war lasted, and it may be said with absolute certainty that the people of this island did not want a change."

**Answers to the name Fritz!** It seems that good food, excellent medical treatment and no mortgage to be paid was not a good enough reason to prevent Privates Paul Hauf and Walter Roloff vacating the POW Camp for a 24 hour period, apparently with the aim of wandering around St Brelades!

Of course, they might have been disappointed that they had not been selected for repatriation by the visiting Swiss doctors, who would visit to identify men considered to be no longer able to return to fighting duties.

**The Red Cross and other "Public Spirited Bodies":** It seems that this organisation did sterling work with Jersey's branch being formed on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1914. In a Report on proceedings up until the end of 1915, they were able to report on a considerable sum of money raised to cover, amongst other items, the provision of two ambulances, "The Jersey" and "The Duke of Normandy", and money for their running costs, and "106 ambulance carts for the transport of wounded in Jersey should the occasion arise." An interesting statement, and one wonders whether the Islands were perceived as a major casualty evacuation route from France had the Germans progressed further west? Do photographs of the ambulances exist?

As well as the efforts of the Red Cross, a number of other bodies would be hard at work, seeing that comforts were provided to Jerseymen who were Prisoners of War, those wounded and evacuated back to England, and individuals who would contribute cakes, candles, tobacco, writing materials and such like. However the JEP would comment in September that distribution was not all that it should be with some men at the front receiving an excess while others did not, this put down to four separate agencies!

Noting that gifts were being sent out to POW, wounded and the men at the front, I was surprised to note that Princess Mary gift tins were to be handed out to the Jersey Militia, and wonder how many remain on the Island.

**News From Across the Water:** An accidental(?) fatal shooting on Alderney would see a private soldier sentenced to hard labour, while from further away, the JEP carried the news of the bodies of two soldiers being recovered from the River Stour near to Wimborne in Dorset (or was it Hampshire at that time?). What made it so newsworthy was that it appeared to be a double suicide as both bodies had been tied together around the waist with puttees!

There would be a report on a boating disaster on the River Lune in August with seven dead (for me an interesting topic living in the Lune Valley, not least because of another reported drowning in the river only in the last week).

A boxing tournament in Camberwell would be suddenly disrupted, to the cheers of wounded soldiers attending, when police and armed soldiers with bayonets fixed burst in and started picking up young men described as shirkers.

**Phishing:** We think that electronic fraud is a modern day phenomena, not so! A deserter (not a Jerseyman I would stress) from the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Royal Irish Rifles was telegraphing families of the Jersey Contingent members asking money to be sent straightaway to a London address as their men-folk were stranded there. He was caught!

**No Need for the Away Goals Rule:** Possibly for the only time in their histories, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalions of the RMIJ and the RGLI played each other at football, home and away. In the first game, played at St. Peter, the RGLI narrowly squeaked in with a 3-1 win. It was noted that Lt. F Arnold (RGLI) was hospitalised as he had collided with a Sgt. Jeune (RMIJ), and then slipped and dislocated his collarbone. The return match did not quite go the way of the RMIJ either in that the RGLI managed to score ten lucky goals to win 10-0! (Who says I'm biased?).

However, the real benefits for that day went to Guernsey service widows for whom £35 was collected at the game.

### **The Ronayne's 2007 Annual Battlefield Visit - Verdun By Ian Ronayne**

After two years at Ypres, Loos and the Somme, we decided the time was right to go back to an old favourite for us: Verdun. Despite several visits during the last ten years, the darkly forested hills above the town still held great appeal, whilst a few more first-rate evenings in the bars and restaurants along the Quai De Londres would not go amiss. This year, to add some extra ingredients to the mix, we were taking along another brother, Peter, and his 17 year old son Ben. Both would be visiting Verdun for the first time; we were determined that they should enjoy the experience.

The trip started with a gruelling seven hour car journey up from St Malo. Fortunately, the new early service with HD Ferries meant an arrival in Verdun itself at about 3.30 p.m. It meant time to head straight up onto the Right Bank and a beeline for the Abri Des Pelerins, the only café/restaurant on the battlefields themselves. A cold beer in the sunshine was enough to put the monotony of the long drive behind us. There was time – and now enough energy – to head across to the Ossuary for a quick visit. Standing in the bright sunshine outside the main door, our “guests” were treated to the indelible view over the thousands of graves towards the modern Memorial De Verdun. Beyond was the hump that marked the location of Fort Souville – the high-water mark in the German offensive – whilst to the left, the flag flying on Fort Vaux could be just made out. It felt both good, and slightly odd, to be back. The day was concluded with short visits to the Ouvrage De Thiaumont and the Ouvrage De Froideterre.



#### **Paul at Colonel Driant's Command Post**

After a comfortable night at the Hotel De Cocq Hardi, Day One of the visit commenced. In view of Peter and Ben's presence, we had decided to keep the theme of the day high-level, with visits to principle sites of interest only, and try to loosely follow the flow of the battle. The command post of Colonel Driant up in the Bois De Caures was therefore the logical first stop. Fort Douaumont was next. Despite the battering in the war, the years of visitors, and some attempts to repair the superstructure, the Fort remains an awesome site. For first time visitors this is particularly true. We spent an hour or so on top and within, marvelling at the immense scale, the incredible damage inflicted, and the sheer courage of the men who had fought and died here. One of the definite highlights of the trip! From the Fort it was a short drive to site of Douaumont Village, one of the twelve erased during the fighting and never rebuilt. Lunch was followed by visits to Fort Vaux, the Damloup Battery and finally the Memorial.

Day Two started with a drive out of Verdun and down the road that weaves alongside the Meuse towards St Mihiel. The weather was superb; the countryside magnificent. Imagine fighting a war amongst the verdant hills of the Heights of the Meuse? At the location of our first visit that day, however, they did just that from 1914 to 1918. The site at Les Esparges must rank as one of the foremost on the whole Western Front today. The Germans had captured this narrow spur of land in 1914, and grabbed a fantastic vantage point over the French held parts of the Woevre Plain below. After several failed attempts to recapture the hill, the French turned to Mine Warfare to blast the invaders off. The Germans soon reciprocated. Before the end of the war Les Esparges had been the site of dozens of mine explosions. Its top had been literally blasted off! The whole place is now a

preserved site with footpaths laid out taking visitors to the monuments, around the craters and to sites of interest.

From Les Esparges it was on towards the St Mihiel Salient. The route chosen took us through the thickly wooded Heights, past monuments to French Regiments, and cemeteries containing the remains of the men who once belonged to them. At Hattonchatel, we stumbled across an interesting site dedicated to American lady called Belle Skinner who helped with the rebuilding of the communities in this area after the war. From there it was down on the plain and across to the amazing American monument on the Butte De Montsec. This magnificent creation was erected to commemorate the American victory in September 1918 during which the St Mihiel Salient was recaptured. There was, however, something slightly disconcerting about it. Perhaps it was because its scale was so grand compared to the many smaller, and frankly often tired looking, French memorials in the region. Was it something to do with the New World starting to dominate the Old? No matter; great place to visit all the same.

The day ended with a short stop in the woods above Apremont on the road to St Mihiel. There were a number of French monuments to commemorate the fighting here in 1915 when attempts had been made to reduce the Salient. There were also miles of former French and German trenches under the cover of the trees,



**One of the massive craters on the crest of Les Esparges today**

left for nature to reclaim at the end of the war. At a location known as the “Croix De Redoubtes”, mankind had been undertaking reclamation of a different sort. Volunteers have cleared and reconstructed a stretch of German and French front lines – amazingly only about thirty metres apart! Between remain the barbing wire posts and even the wire itself in some places. It was an enigmatic place to end out visit – for this year at least.



## Memorials Then and Now By Liz Walton

On my recent visit to France I managed to find the 62<sup>nd</sup> (West Riding) division memorial at Havrincourt. Despite its huge height it is well hidden down a tiny lane which finishes up as a farm track, on the edge of the village. I wanted to see it as my Aunt Ada was at the unveiling in 1922.



Ada's Photo, taken in 1922



The Havrincourt memorial 85 years on.

The 9<sup>th</sup> (Scottish) Division Memorial on the road out of Arras (see next page) was another place visited and photographed by Ada. Last time we were there it was impossible to get close to it as it was on a fenced off raised section between the carriageways of a busy main road. It has now been moved to an area of land next to Point-du-Jour Military Cemetery. Access is now the same as for the cemetery i.e. down a very long track from the small village of Athies-les-Arras. It is still next to the same very busy road but you don't have to cross it, and there is car parking for both the cemetery and the memorial.

This last one (see next page also) to the 56<sup>th</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> London) Division isn't a "then and now", but was found purely by chance, high up on a wall in the Boulevard de Strasbourg, a road between the station and the main square in Arras. I have found very few mentions of it anywhere, and no pictures. It is on the wall of a former convent and I don't know why it's there. Information welcome! (Editor's Comment: Refer to pp 98-99 of the latest edition of "Before Endeavours Fade", it maybe because of the Battles of the Scarpe in April and May 1917.)





The 9<sup>th</sup> (Scottish) memorial,  
9<sup>th</sup> April 1922



...and 85 years on  
(With Liz beside it)



**Editor's Note:** It may not be immediately apparent with their regional origins in the Divisional titles, but the 9<sup>th</sup> and 62<sup>nd</sup> Divisions have links with the Channel Islands.

Guernsey provided the 9<sup>th</sup> Divisional Ammunition Column from its Militia Artillery, while Old Victorian Lieutenant-General Walter Pipon Braithwaite was the Divisional Commander for the 62<sup>nd</sup>, following the Gallipoli campaign from 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1915 to 28<sup>th</sup> August 1918, when he temporarily became commander of XXII Corps before taking over IX Corps on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1918.

### Send more Men and Money, and produce more Food

Liz Walton found this letter from George Cave, the UK's Home Secretary in Lloyd George's government, to Guernsey's Lieutenant-Governor in an old States of Guernsey record of proceedings recently. It is a highly interesting document and clearly is on the limit of what a UK government could do politically, even an imperial one as it was in those days, in its relationship with a Crown Dependency.

In reading it at the time, one would suspect that people would have considered it as being very emotive. Liz points out that its date coincides with the period of the German's Operation Georgette that we know as the Battle of the Lys where the RGLI suffered such casualties that the Battalion ceased to be an effective fighting force, resulting in their subsequent role of being the GHQ Guard Battalion. I would presume that a letter, similarly couched, would have been received by Hart's opposite number in Jersey.

By including it to be read by a wider audience than Liz' original E-Mail address list, I would like to see it attract comments (to be included in the next Journal) for and against Cave's request.

Home Office,  
Whitehall,  
11<sup>th</sup> April, 1918.

SIR,

*His Majesty's Government think it necessary, in the present national crisis, to bring before the Island of Guernsey the urgent importance of their assisting, to the utmost extent of their resources, in the prosecution of the war.*

*They are not unmindful of what the Island has already done, particularly in sending a considerable body of men to join the forces of the Empire in the fields of war, but the time has come when all the resources of the Empire must be drawn upon if the danger which threatens it is to be averted.*

*The safety and independence of all parts of the Empire are alike and equally at stake in the present conflict.*

*The Island can help in three ways:*

*First, the Island can send more men to the Forces. The Government recommend that, as is being done in the United Kingdom existing exemptions under the present Military Service Act should be reviewed and closely scrutinised, and every available man of military age and fitness should be released without delay. To this end dilution should be carried out, and the services of women utilised, to the utmost possible extent. Moreover, as you will have seen from the public statement of the Prime Minister, His Majesty's Government consider it necessary to ask Parliament to authorise further measures to be taken immediately for the raising of fresh forces here. These measures, when passed, will be communicated to the Insular Government and the Government will invite Guernsey to take similar action. His Majesty's Government are aware that these measures may entail much sacrifice on the Island, as in the United Kingdom, but the need of men for the army is paramount, and they do not doubt that the sacrifices will be cheerfully borne. "Before this campaign is finished the last man may count."*

*Secondly, the Island can bear its share of the financial burden of the war. Hitherto, the Imperial Government has not asked the Island to do this, and except*

*for such special expenditure as was incurred in, the maintenance of the Militia for a time on a war footing no part of the enormous burden has fallen on the Island. How enormous that burden is will be well known to the Island. The amount raised by war taxation in this country alone already exceeds 1,000 millions, and the debt of the country has been increased by over 5,000 millions.*

*Not only has the Imperial Government hitherto not asked the Island to bear any share of the burden, but it has also taken upon itself the whole charges in respect of the forces contributed by the Island - so that not only has the Island been relieved since the passing of the Military Service Act of an cost of maintenance and equipment which it previously had to bear in connection with the Island Militia, but large sums are being paid to the Island in the shape of separation allowance, for the maintenance of the dependants of the men who have been recruited, and the future pension charges will also fall upon the Imperial Exchequer.*

*His Majesty's Government believe that the Island will feel that while it enjoys the full protection of the armies and navies of the Crown, it should bear an equal share of the heavy burden which rests upon the Country, and will be ready to take whatever measures may be necessary for the purpose. Whether these measures should take the form of adopting the same war taxes as have been adopted in the United Kingdom, or whether other arrangements will be found more suitable to the circumstances of the Island; is a matter for the consideration of the Insular Government.*

*Thirdly, the Island can increase its production of food. A communication on this subject has already been addressed to you and His Majesty's Government need not say more than that the question is of the greatest urgency and importance.*

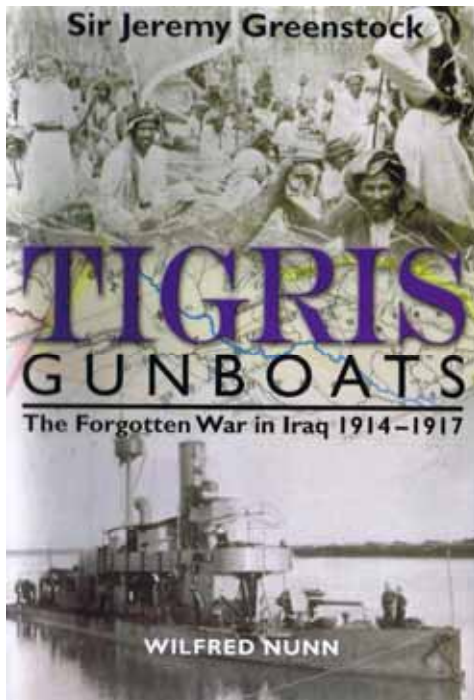
*The Government invite the Island of Guernsey to take its full share now in the defence of the freedom and safety of the Empire with which their own safety and freedom are inseparably connected. They feel sure that the people of Guernsey do not fail to realise the greatness of the need and will respond to the utmost of their power. The experience of the Government of the United Kingdom will be willingly placed at the disposal of the Insular Authorities in coming to a decision as to the measures to be taken, and any advice or assistance that they can render will be gladly given.*

*His Majesty's Government leave it with you to decide what steps you should take to bring the subject before the responsible authorities and the inhabitants of the Island. You may think it desirable, in the first instance, to call together for private conference with you the chief officials and leading representatives of the Island. They would only impress on you and through you on the Insular Authorities the importance of immediate action.*

*I am, Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,  
GEO. CAVE.*

*The Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey*

## Book Reviews



**Tigris Gunboats – The Forgotten War in Iraq 1914 - 1917 by Wilfred Nunn (Chatham Publishing) ~ £15.99**

**Reviewed By Peter Tabb**

Tigris Gunboats was first published in 1932 and re-released this year, presumably to highlight that the current war in Iraq was not the first (or even the second) that Britain had fought in Iraq. There is a modern foreword by Sir Jeremy Greenstock, one-time British Ambassador to the United Nations and UK Special Representative in Iraq in 2003 and 2004. Sir Jeremy has a unique perspective and refers somewhat pointedly to a war waged 'in a remote corner of the globe with little apparent relevance to the defence of the homeland and its immediate interests'.

That he is referring to a 'typical experience of British forces in an imperial age' is the only intimation that he is referring to a conflict almost a hundred years ago rather than the one that is still being waged.

When British forces invaded Iraq in 1914 (to displace Johnny Turk) they did so by sea and river. The tools of invasion were mostly Fly Class gunboats, possibly the ugliest vessels ever employed by the Royal Navy and actually assembled on the banks of the Tigris from kits sent out from Britain. Wilfred Nunn was the naval forces' commanding officer and in one of the book's generous illustrations is shown in naval uniform complete with sword and solar topee. Gunboat diplomacy largely consisted of proceeding at snail's pace up the Tigris towards Baghdad, blasting at all and sundry who often avoided conflict with the gunboats merely by riding out of range! Nevertheless domination of the twin rivers of the Tigris and Euphrates by the Royal Navy gave great impetus to the land forces and enabled their eventual success in capturing Baghdad from Turkish occupation.

Admiral Nunn is somewhat scathing of the region's native Arabs who, since they tended to take the side of whoever they thought was winning at any particular time, were very dubious allies. Many of his comments, had they been made today, would at best be politically incorrect and at worst the trigger for a holy war. The Turks are often categorised as less than worthy opponents for the highly trained British land and sea forces (a viewpoint that received a bloody comeuppance at Gallipoli) but Admiral Nunn pays tribute to an enemy that fought both cannily and courageously and who even managed to capture one of his gunboats!

In Tigris Gunboats the native population of Iraq barely figures as two foreign forces slug it out across their land, quite oblivious of whose land it might actually be. In his introduction Sir Jeremy Greenstock makes the very telling point that it is

no wonder that a deep xenophobia has built up over the centuries amongst the people of Iraq who have seen strangers come and go across their lands. He concludes that 'the silence witnesses of this Great War drama expressed their sentiments more directly when the British became their rulers from 1919 onwards; and that memory was fresher in the minds of the Iraqis in 2003 that it was in the West'.

Tigris Gunboats is a well told tale of when the Royal Navy truly did rule the waves and its right to be wherever it wanted to be, even if it was a couple of hundred miles up a foreign river, was enforced by gunboats (even as bizarre as the Fly Class) and men who didn't give a thought as to the rightness or otherwise of their cause. Admiral Nunn often gives the impression of surprise when his 'brown job' colleagues praise him, his men and the fleet of curious boiler plate gunboats, sternwheelers and other odd craft he pressed into service and led so well.

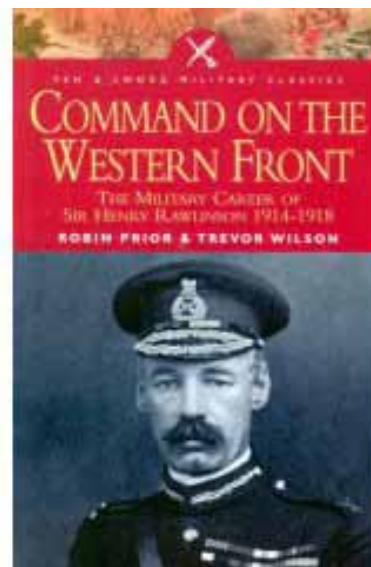
There are no mentions of Channel Islanders amongst the Royal Navy and military personnel that move across Admiral Nunn's record and it would be interesting to learn whether or not Channel Islanders were fighting in Iraq then as several are doing today.

The Royal Navy played a pivotal role in the Great War: Grand Fleet commander Admiral Sir John Jellicoe was, in the words of First Lord Winston Churchill, the only man who could lose the war in an afternoon. What Sir Wilfred Nunn tells very vividly is that even at the Great War's dusty periphery the Royal Navy was as pivotal there as it was on the high seas.

**Command on the Western Front – The Military Career of Sir Henry Rawlinson 1914-1918 by Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson (Pen & Sword Books) ~ £9.99**

**Reviewed By Barrie Bertram**

His eyes have been staring out at me from the bookshop shelves for the last few years and so in the end I felt compelled to buy it! At the outset the book has to be recognised as not being a "cradle to grave" biography of the man, rather, it looks at the evolving nature of the Great War as it applied to him, and he to the decisions that were made.



Prior and Wilson had spent several years producing the book and tend to focus, first on what were the lessons learnt in one battle and whether they were applied to the next. The authors also apply themselves to considering the quantitative and technical aspects of warfare, so that for artillery for example, they discuss the weight and quantity of shells necessary to destroy so many yards of trench, or the improvements in target engagement through aerial reconnaissance, sound ranging, shooting from the map and flash spotting.





















