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Channel Islands
Great War
Study Group
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Ready to Serve,
Red Cross Nurses from Jersey

Hello All

Rats may not be your normal editorial topic, but I have been plagued by them of late, albeit not in a biblical sense. As many members are aware, for the last few years I have been one of three judges in the WFA North Lancashire branch's annual Armistice competition whereby schoolchildren submit a piece of work on the Great War, and the best entries receive monetary prizes. This year has been no different but with a staggering 78 submissions to assess. But it was noticeable that a sizeable 60%, or more, had made reference to rats! There were brown rats, black rats and grey rats, there were gigantic rats and those which were as big as cats! While there were also plenty of the flesh-eating variety and those which scurried round. And, according to one depiction, there was also the rarely-spotted big-eared rat, modelled on Mickey Mouse!

As I mentioned, the number of submissions was 78, and this was a sizeable increase on the two previous years' figures which were around 10-15. So, rats were perhaps more noticeable, as indeed were the submissions of emotional poetry about the War. However, setting aside any badinage about rodent infestation, it caused me to ponder the question of 'What are children being taught of the Great War' today?

Looking objectively at the entries, the rats were just part of a wider theme regarding the 'horrors' of trench warfare, the starvation rations, Tommy Atkins being killed by a sniper's bullet. There was the poetry as mentioned, and efforts, some in fairness quite good, at writing a trench diary from an individual soldier's point of view. But, of the dates and events, there was comparatively little, and I can only suggest that today's history classes are focussed upon the emotions of the Great War rather than on the facts. For a teacher it may be far easier to trot out Owen's 'Dulce et Decorum Est' rather than to compare Alan Clark's view of Haig as a 'Donkey' with that of Doctor Gary Sheffield's more sympathetic offerings on the Field-Marshal. Or perhaps teachers are not at fault rather that they are obliged to follow a curriculum that is historically bland, and where 'Britishness' is off the agenda?

In commenting on this, I do have to remind myself that I am referring to the efforts of 14 and 15 years old, and that I opted out of history at the ripe old age of 13, more than 50 years ago, so I may not be best qualified to judge. But, while I would not necessarily expect a debate on the views of Clark and Sheffield, some understanding, coupled with analysis, of the events that led up to and during the Great War should have been demonstrated, along with the broad chronology. It might avoid howlers such as the British Army being mobilised for war on the day that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated, or the use of a sniper's round that was not introduced until 1989!

Yet, there is perhaps some light on the horizon with the recent UK government announcements regarding the forthcoming centenary commemorations of the Great War, and that an overhaul of the History curriculum for GCSEs (or is it for the new Baccalaureate?) is planned. One can only hope that the latter activity will be expeditious in its undertaking, and that it effectively addresses the element that deals with the Great War. However, it will take a number of years before the change can be fully implemented, and is unlikely to be in place until well into the 2014-2019 period when the UK government will fund an increased number of secondary school visits to the Western Front. While the Channel Islands can only follow any curriculum change resulting from the UK's efforts, what will the respective States do in terms of providing funding for 2014-2019?

Finally, returning to the Armistice competition, it may be of interest to note that, quite independently of each other (we don't see each other's marks until all three sets are collated by the organiser), a fellow judge, who is an ex-teacher, and I had each awarded our highest marks to the same two young ladies and that the third judge, a doctor by profession, had also placed one of them in first place. Given our quite different backgrounds it is fascinating to see that we all had placed the winner in first place. Oh that I could do that with the horses!

The Front Cover

What is the collective name for a group of nurses? I cannot say that I know, but thanks must to go to Ian Ronayne who provided this picture. It is somewhat appropriate after the article in Journal 45 on the Jersey Branch of the British Red Cross Society, and it is most likely that many of the ladies are already named on the Jersey Roll of Service.

The picture is 'hot off the press' and there has not been any analysis undertaken into the background nor as to the likely date when it was taken. Hopefully we can make use of a few more from that same source in the next Journal.

Obituary – Ron Norman
By Liz Walton

Guernseyman Ron Norman died at his home in St Saviour's on Saturday 6th October at the age of 80. Ronald Robert Norman was the son of 934 Pte JW Norman of the 1st (Service) Battalion, Royal Guernsey Light Infantry. Ron was born a few years after the Armistice, and he recounted how he grew up on the island at a time when although men who had been wounded in the war were to be encountered island wide, neither they nor his father would talk to him about it. However he retained a lifelong interest in the effect of the Great War on life in the Bailiwick. In 2009 at the age of 77 he published a booklet entitled "Guernseymen at War, The Royal Guernsey Light Infantry, France and Flanders, 1917-1919", which I reviewed in Journal 30, published in February, 2010. Ron said that it started off as:

"... an essay for deposit in the local Archives but felt it deserved wider exposure as so amazingly little had been written about those boys of ours."

Ron was aware of the existence of the Group and was happy to correspond with me by email but did not become a member as he felt that, to use his own words...

"*I have been profoundly deaf since childhood and can get or give very little to groups and clubs so I do not join any."*

He was a neighbour of mine when I was a child, when my mother packed flowers for him. He encouraged me to continue with the material that I am researching and writing, and followed all developments and news items to do with the Great War with a keen interest.

His funeral took place on the 17th October at St Saviour's Parish Church, Guernsey.

The 9th Divisional Ammunition Column
By Liz Walton

The 9th Divisional Ammunition Column (DAC) was one of the longest serving volunteer units in France and Flanders, spending nearly four years on active service. Raised in Guernsey in March, 1915, it consisted originally of officers and men of the Royal Guernsey Artillery and Engineers plus a considerable number from the Royal Alderney Artillery and Engineers Militia, totalling about 400 in all. They volunteered at the same time as the infantrymen who formed Guernsey's contribution to the two Irish Battalions. The original idea was that they would form a Heavy Artillery Battery, but the War Office refused the offer (as they refused the offer of an Infantry Battalion at that stage) so instead they were formed into the 9th DAC, Royal Field Artillery (RFA). Attestation papers refer to the unit as the Guernsey Artillery Contingent, 9th DAC.

The men of the 9th DAC went first to Scotland for training, then to Salisbury Plain, before moving to Bordon in Hampshire. In May, 1915 they left for France as part of the 9th (Scottish) Division which had been formed in late 1914 as part of Kitchener's New Army. *La Gazette de Guernesey*, the island's official newspaper (which was published in French) carried a photograph of the Officers who went with this first group of trainees. They were Lieutenant-Colonel HdeL Walters, Captains WR Powell and T Perry, Lieutenant RC Sowells, 2nd Lieutenants CJ Braye and RM Nicholls, all from Guernsey, and 2nd Lieutenants HF Ozanne and W Bainbrigge from Alderney.


(ARTILLERIE ET GENIE ROYALE DE GUERNESEY ET D'AUREGNY)

Qui ont quitté l'île pour service avec la 9ième Division, 1ère Nouvelle Armée, Colonne de Munitions Divisionelle.

2nd Lieut. H. ff. Ozanne. Auregny. | 2nd Lieut. C. J. Braye. Guernesey. | 2nd Lieut. W. Bainbrigge. Auregny. | Lieut. R. C. Sowells. Guernesey. | 2nd Lieut. Nicholls. Guernesey.

Capt. R. T. PERRY. Guernesey. | Lieut.-Col. H. de L. WALTERS. Guernesey. | Capt. W. R. POWELL. Guernesey.

They did well at their training camps. A report in the *Guernsey Weekly Press* of the 20th May, 1916 stated that:

News has been received by Colonel St Leger-Wood, DS.O, Acting Lieutenant-Governor, from Major Barlow, RFA, commanding the 45th Reserve Battery in which are the following passages which will be read with pride by islanders:

"We sent off yesterday direct to the 9th Divisional Ammunition Column 24 men who were the first batch of the men you sent here a short time ago. They behaved excellently while here, were very keen and picked up their gunnery at 4.5 [inch] Howitzers in a remarkably short time – 7 weeks! They were trained by one of my men, Mr E McCulley who is connected with the Islands, and both he and I would like to have some more like them if you have any more of the same sort who want to become Field Gunners."

More local men did join at a later date and followed this first contingent to France and Belgium.

The horse-drawn RFA was responsible for the medium calibre guns and Howitzers deployed close to the front line. All ammunition columns were part of the RFA and the men in the column were ranked as Gunners, Drivers or Bombardiers. The RFA was organised into Brigades, which were under the command of Divisions or higher formations. DACs had the dangerous role of delivering ammunition to the front line troops, and seeing that they were always fully supplied with what they needed. They also had to collect the valuable empty brass cartridge cases plus any unused ammunition from where they had fallen after an Artillery unit had moved on. They were often in considerable danger when they moved ammunition forward to Brigade dumps and to the men fighting in the front line. The Officers and men of the DACs didn't only work with their own Divisions but could be called on to supply any unit during an action. They were also called upon to replace casualties in the units they were supplying as were their horses, wagons and supplies. However as the Column suffered casualties, replacements came increasingly from outside the Bailiwick so by the end of the war there were some members of the 9th DAC with no link to the Channel Islands.

Although they were not front line troops in the usual sense, several of the contingent were killed in action or died of wounds in the course of the war. However of the 14 men of the 9th DAC who died as a direct result of enemy action (as listed by Eddie Parks in Appendix E of *Diex Aix)*, only two were serving with the Column at the time of their death. They were Gunner Henry Rupert Rabey, who died of wounds on the 9th November, 1916, aged 30 and who is buried at Bécourt Military Cemetery on the Somme and Gunner Thomas Charles Waterman who was killed in action, aged 33, on the 21st June, 1916 and is buried at Chipilly Communal Cemetery Extension, near Albert also on the Somme.

Many men transferred to other units, several serving with Trench Mortar (TM) Batteries. An Artillery battery is basically an organised unit of guns or mortars. TM Batteries were manned by members of the Brigade who undertook special training in the use of these weapons. By mid-1916 three main types of mortar were in use; the 3-inch Stokes Mortar ('light'), the 2-inch Medium Mortar (superseded in 1917 by the 6-inch Newton Mortar), and the 9.45-inch Heavy Mortar. The chief advantages that mortars have are flexibility, mobility and the fact that they are able to fire from the protection of a trench. They can be transported over any terrain and need little logistical support. Heavy mortars are

typically between 120 mm and 300 mm calibre and are usually towed or vehicle-mounted but are still easier to transport that Howitzers or conventional field guns. The British Army only developed their use later in the war, but by March 1916, most Divisions had three Medium Batteries, designated X, Y and Z. For example, in the 24th Division they would be X.24, Y.24 and Z.24. There was also a Heavy Battery, designated V, such as V.24. The Light Batteries took their number from the Brigade, so for example 123rd Brigade in the 41st Division included the 123rd TM Battery. Batteries designated with other letters (e.g. A, B, C) were straight artillery batteries, not specifically trench mortar ones.

Sergeant Thomas de la Mare went over with the first contingent and was killed in action on the 19th December, 1915, only three days after he was promoted to Sergeant and just over six months after he had arrived in France. The son of Thomas and Nancy de la Mare, of Les Messuriers in the Forest Thomas was a former Elizabeth College student. At the time of his death he was serving with C Battery, 53rd Brigade, RFA. This was a Howitzer Brigade which formed part of the 9th (Scottish) Division. There was a major phosgene gas attack to the North East of Ypres on the date of his death and he may have been caught up in this as he is buried at Ypres Reservoir Cemetery in Belgium.

Gunner Clifford Philip Baker, son of Phillip and Edith Baker, of St Martin's was killed in action at the age of 23 on the 14th November, 1916. He had gone to France with the first contingent of 9th DAC, but quickly transferred to 53rd DAC and at the time of his death was serving with B Battery, 51st Brigade, RFA. He is buried at Warlencourt British Cemetery in the Pas de Calais region of France. During the final stages of the Battle of the Somme, the Butte de Warlencourt was the subject of a number of costly and unsuccessful attacks by the British Fourth Army. It was eventually captured by the British after the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line in February, 1917. Gunner James Martin Keyho transferred to C Battery, 51st Brigade from 9th DAC. He was killed in action aged 20 less than a week after Gunner Baker, on the 20th November, 1916. He has no known grave but is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme. This bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before the 20th March, 1918 and have no known grave.

Many were involved in the fierce fighting in the Arras region in the spring of 1917. Gunner Alfred Bichard was in the first contingent and also ended up in 51st Brigade. He first transferred to 52nd Brigade in June, 1916 and then to D Battery, 51st Brigade. The son of Mr and Mrs James Bichard, of Les Gigands, St Sampson's, he was killed in action age 20 on the 17th April, 1917 in the Arras region and is buried at Athies Communal Cemetery Extension in the Pas de Calais, France. Gunner Stanley Slade Green, son of William and Annie Green of Fountain Street, St Peter Port and husband of Lily Maud Green (née Richard), of 11, St Clement's Road went to France with the second contingent of 9th DAC which left the island in June, 1916. He was serving with D Battery, 51st Brigade, the same unit as Gunner Bichard, when he was wounded. He died of wounds on the 21st April, 1917, a few days after Gunner Bichard was killed in action and is buried in St Nicolas British Cemetery on the outskirts of Arras. Bombardier Wilfred Hilary Nicolle aged 20 of C Battery, 50th Brigade, RFA was killed on the 29th April, 1917 and is buried in Athies Communal Cemetery Extension also near Arras. All of their units were part of the 9th (Scottish) Division and were involved in the battle of the Scarpe in April, 1917.

Gunner John Henry Luxon, aged 23 who started with 9th DAC but transferred to a Heavy Mortar Battery, was killed in action on the 20th April, 1917. He has no known grave but is commemorated on the Arras Memorial. Gunner James Bihet, son of Pierre and Marie Bihet of La Carriére, Vale was a First Contingent man who transferred to 50th DAC in August, 1915 but was serving with the 9th TM Battery when he was wounded. He died of those wounds on the 26th May, 1917, aged 22 and is buried at Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension near Arras, a cemetery which was used by several Casualty Clearing Stations. Gunner Wilfred James Tostevin originally of the 9th DAC but later serving with D Battery, 79th Brigade, RFA died of wounds a few days later on the 30th May, 1917 and is buried at Duisans Military Cemetery also near Arras.

Two other men from 9th DAC died as a result of enemy action. One was Gunner Arthur Hammond, son of William and Elizabeth Hammond, of High St, Alderney who died of wounds aged 21 on the 26th October, 1917 and is buried at Buff's Road Cemetery near Ypres. He was serving with D Battery, 155th Brigade, RFA at the time of his death. Gunner Charles Thomas Wallbridge of D Battery, 47th Brigade, RFA was killed in action age 31 on the 15th August, 1917 and has no known grave but is commemorated on the Menin Gate, Ypres.

Of those who survived, at least one was awarded a Military Medal (MM). Acting Battery Sergeant Major (A/BSM) Percy de Carteret was in the first contingent to leave the island. He joined up at the age of 20 as a Gunner on the 20th March, 1915, and was almost immediately promoted to Bombardier. Six months later he became a Corporal and eventually by 1919 had reached the rank of A/BSM. He received a gunshot wound on the 4th July, 1916 and was hospitalised in Rouen then Southampton. He had been awarded the MM (Gazetted 3rd June, 1916) and according to his service records the medal travelled some distance going to Southampton but arriving after he was back at the Front so it had to be sent on again, this time to Hemel Hempstead when it was kept in the records department. It was eventually received by his mother back in Guernsey in 1920! He was shot in the head, hand and leg on the 24th April, 1917, this time being hospitalised at Wimereux then London. In the meantime on the 17th April, 1919 when he could have been demobilised, he volunteered to stay on with the Army of Occupation in Alexandria, working in Prisoner of War camps there then in France. He finally came home in May 1920. The men who survived and remained with the 9th DAC were to be the longest serving local unit, serving on the Western Front for almost four years before returning to Guernsey for demobilisation in 1919. At the time of the Armistice they were resting in billets away from the front line.

Eddie Parks devotes Chapter 4 and Appendix E of *Diex Aix* to the 9th DAC but as more primary source material has become available on the internet it is now possible to fill in more detail and clarify some anomalies. I am in the process of updating this material, adding service numbers from the "burnt papers" archive, and also including details of men wounded in action, and any medals won. This should be available early next year.

Heroic Sacrifice: The CI and the Great War Tour 2013
By Ian Ronayne

'Should have brought a wreath', I muttered to myself while standing under the majestic vaults of Ypres' Menin Gate watching other groups placing their tokens of respect at the top of the stairs, that would have really made it a special visit. Ah well, there's always next year – assuming ,that is, I could persuade Go Tours to put it on again. But then

why wouldn't they? This year's First World War tour featuring key battlefields of the Channel Islanders was a great success.

Ian and Letitia (But, where's the Driver?)

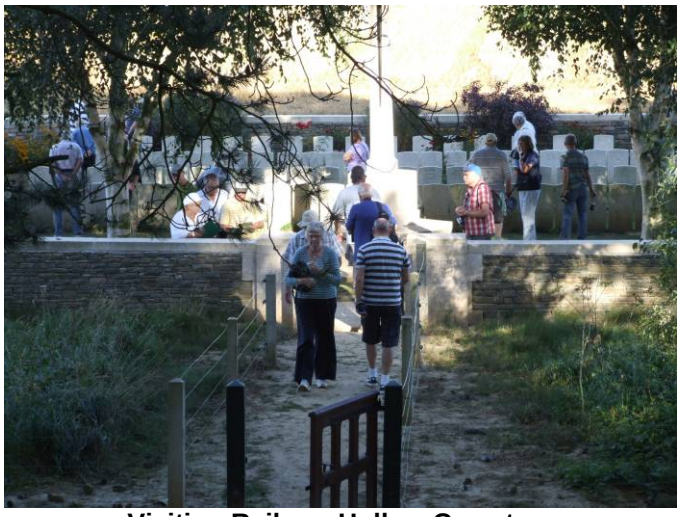
Despite an unfortunate late cancellation due to ill health, we still set off from St Malo with a very full coach – forty-five participants, with me as the tour guide, the Go Tours' courier, Letitia, and the driver Dominic. Sales had been helped by reader's offers in both the Jersey and Guernsey newspapers, but, clearly, the attraction of visiting locations specific to the islands had also encouraged people to sign up.

Many of the participants, in fact, had personal links to Jersey and Guernsey soldiers, with most visiting the locations where family members fought and fell for the first time. There were photos and letters aplenty, with stories of distant relatives heard over lunch on the first day and subsequently throughout the trip.

After a somewhat tedious haul up the motorway (thankfully made easier by a copy of the BBC's Birdsong) we stopped overnight at Amiens. Not, as I wrongly announced while negotiating the ring road, in the city centre nearby its magnificent cathedral, but in a motorway hotel located in an industrial park. No matter however, the hotel was fine and the location perfect for setting off quickly the next day. The fact it happened to be in a suburb called Longeau was also serendipitous – it was there at the start of September 1916 that the Jersey Contingent (and presumably the Guernsey Pals as well) climbed off the train bring them from the trenches of Loos to take part in the Battle of the Somme.

Setting off from Longeau on a misty morning, we headed to the first stop of the day.

I had thought the Sheffield Memorial Park would make a great place to introduce the Battle of Somme, given its open spaces, trench remains and battlefield cemeteries. The only thing I had forgotten was the hike needed to get down the track to the copses, especially for some of our less mobile participants. All made it, nonetheless, and most seemed overwhelmed by what they found there. It is easy to become too familiar with locations on the old battlefields if you visit regularly, so very rewarding to go with people for whom it is a first time.



Visiting Railway Hollow Cemetery
Near the Sheffield Memorial Park

Beaumont Hamel Memorial Park and Thiepval Memorial followed – jostling with other parties doing the same routine Somme battlefield tour. Albert followed, for a visit to the underground museum there and a rushed lunch (There is no such thing as a quick lunch in Albert where the few restaurants in the place seem exasperated by the arrival of so many paying customers!), and then on to the amazing site of Lochnagar Crater. Then Guillemont and Ginchy for a passing visit (The clock was well against us by then), and an obligatory stop at Delville Wood.

Discovering a long lost relative at Louverval

Finally, it was on to the Louverval Memorial to the Missing before the RGLI's 1917 battlefield at Masnières. Given a packed programme and tight time constraints, I had originally excluded Louverval, but realised this was an oversight.

Several people – from both Guernsey and Jersey – had the names of relatives on the panels there, and were very moved by the experience of visiting. If there is a little part of France that is forever Guernsey, then Louverval is close to being that place. By the time we then set off for Masnières, the clock was pushing towards half past five, however, and we needed to get to Arras for the night. It left time for a fleeting pass through the village in the coach – something that I subsequently regretted, although I think the enthusiasm for much more had waned by then. Ah well, next time…

Leaving Arras early the next morning, we headed for Vimy – too early as it turned out because the Visitor Centre at Vimy did not open until 10 a.m. As with the previous day, the weather was fantastic, which meant the views from the Vimy memorial were amazing with a silky mist gently rising from the Douai Plain from where a number of hot air balloons rose and onto which a number of skydivers descended. Some may have even believed me saying that it was all laid on just for their benefit!

At Vimy Ridge (Loos in the background)

A visit to the Loos Memorial followed and an explanation of the Jersey and Guernsey Contingents' first time in the trenches. On to Le Doulieu next, again for a passing visit

given the lack of a focal point to recall the RGLI's April, 1918 battle, and then to Bailleul for a lunch stop (It is better than Albert but still a frustratingly high number of restaurants were not open or not serving food!), before travelling to the Ploegsteert Memorial for another emotionally charged visit. A brief stop at the Irish Peace Park on Messines Ridge followed, and then onto the Passchendaele Museum in Zonnebeke.

Passing through Tyne Cot Cemetery

Very knowledgeable guides gave a conducted tour and explained the battles of the Ypres Salient, although I was heartened to be told by several participants that I had already explained it perfectly well. Finally, we spent a respectful hour at nearby Tyne Cot Cemetery before heading into Ypres for an evening meal and the Menin Gate ceremony, although not before we had negotiated that city's civic improvement programme, which seems to have all the roads outside and inside of the walls permanently dug up!

It was while at the Menin Gate that I reflected upon this year's tour and what I would change if it happened again:

- More time was definitely needed or less stops. Given what there is to take in, the latter seems impractical, particularly to do more justice to the CI battlefields.
- More time for lunch, especially given the vagaries of French hospitality!
- More flexibility to incorporate visits to individual cemeteries as long as they are en route.
- And a CI wreath at the Menin Gate would really create a poignant and very appropriate focal point.

So I am pleased to say the Go Tours have agreed to run another Channel Islands and the First World War Tour in 2013, and we will add an additional night to allow a less hurried programme and more time in those battlefields connected with our islands. The planned dates are 20th to 25th June, with an additional night in St Malo for those travelling from Guernsey. The price will be £595 per person from Jersey, £665 from Guernsey. In addition, there will be a tour in September taking in Verdun, the Maginot Line and the Battle of the Bulge. And, others in the pipeline include Brittany's Atlantic Wall and U-Boat Pens, Arnhem and Berlin. Watch this space!

CWGC Non-Commemorations

During the last two months, and in conjunction with the IFTC team, there has been some initial research into whether the names of three Jerseymen could be considered as Great War casualties and they have been added to the 'Pending' list. However, it may not be that straight forward in each case, for different reasons.

The easiest to deal with may be John Breban who had served in the RN for just over a year when he was medically discharged on the 9th December, 1914 suffering, it

appears, from MCF Tachycardia, while according to the 1919 JRoH, he died on the 8th May, 1917, apparently at a hospital in Lambeth. He had received a Silver War Badge in December, 1916 while his medals would be issued to his widow. The gap of 30 months may be a stumbling block unless his death certificate can show a continuous link.

Like John Breban, Samuel WT Lindsey was listed in the 1919 JRoH as having been killed on the 29th May, 1917 will serving as a Boatswain in the RN. But, this combination of rank and service might suggest that he may have been in the Coastguards. However, we know that he was discharged after 9 years in the RN in June, 1910 with appendicitis, and at the time of the 1911 Census he was living in Weymouth with his wife, while employed as a Seaman, presumably with the Merchant Navy. Thus, the Boatswain rank might have also reflected to that service. However, there is no indication, on Ancestry, of his death and it appears that his death certificate was issued by an authority other than the usual UK civilian registrar offices.

Also listed in the 1919 JRoH, Harold P De Ste Croix was killed on the 24th April, 1919 while serving on board the 'Egypt', and his death features in the Personal Columns of the Times for the 1st May. However, any submission to the CWGC depends on the role of the 'Egypt' which appears to have been requisitioned from the P&O shipping line in 1915 and variously used as a Hospital Ship or Army Transport continuously until June, 1919. Having looked into the National Archives, and also contacted P&O's Archive, there appears to be nothing that can support an argument based upon the ship's requisition. This is a similar situation to Alfred de Gruchy and his service on the 'Intaba', but in that case, the ship's log was available.

Further research on these will now be 'parked' until early in the New Year when more time can be devoted to it. Meantime, having frustratingly drawn a blank on Charles A Pirouet's 'military service', he has been placed in the 'Not Submitted' category.

Accepted
Norcott, Gerald *
Dustan, John
Cudlipp, Herbert
Blanchet, Jean
Warne, Alfred
Bailey, Alwyn C
Leopold, Archibald
Cheney, Walter A
Poingdestre, Alfred
Jouanne, Auguste F
Syvret, Edward H
Lihou, Joseph T
Le Breton, Wilfred J
Whittle, Thomas J D'A
Orange, Walter
Ellis, John
Marquis, Jack H*
Lander, Charles HR *
Asser, Verney – Non-CI

Accepted
Burton, Garnet C
Helman, John W
Le Noury, Walter
Logan, Lionel H
Ounan, Thomas P
Turner, William A
Mutton, Harold C *
Le Morzédec, Henri

Not Submitted
Syborn, George T
Raymond De Caen
Mourant, Sydney A
Surguy, Sidney
Pirouet, Charles A

Pending
Owen, Guy
De Ste Croix, Harold P
Lindsey, Samuel WT
Breban, John

TBA
Ferrer, Amant
Anderson, Frank B
Touzel, Walter H

Rejected
Adams, Frank H
Vibert, John E

With the CWGC
Rundle, Cubitt S
Godfray, Edwin de V
Vautier, Alfred P*****
De Gruchy, Alfred

* With assistance from the 'In from the Cold' Project Team

Troop train crash at Bricquebec
16 Dead, many more seriously injured

(**Author's Note:** The following is partially based upon information contained in an article written by Capitaine Michaël Bourlet, a Researcher/Lecturer at the Écoles militaires de Saint-Cyr at Coëtquidan in Brittany. His article was recently published in Issue 58 of *'14-18: Le magazine de la Grande Guerre'*.)

When can an accident, such as a train crash, be considered to qualify as a disaster? And if so, are there a generally accepted number of casualties used as a threshold? If one refers to the Times of the 24th May, 1915 and later, one can read of the 'Troop Train Disaster' at Quintinshill near Gretna Green that had taken place two days earlier and had cost the lives of nearly 230 soldiers while another 246 would be injured. These men, mainly from the 7th Battalion, The Royal Scots, were bound for Gallipoli, and have the dubious honour of being killed or injured in the United Kingdom's worst train disaster.

But, that number of deaths was far exceeded by an accident on the 12th December, 1917 at Saint-Michel-de-Maurienne in the Savoie *departement,* when a French troop train bringing men home from Italy for leave was derailed with the consequence that some 700 *poilus* lost their lives. However, this news does not appear to have been reported in the Times subsequently. If so, was this as a result of French censorship, quite understandable following the mutinies and the loss of morale in the French Army some six months earlier, or had the news been overtaken by events given the munitions ship disaster at Halifax in Nova Scotia that killed more than 10,000? It was probably the former, given that the Times would report on a 'Train Mishap' near Sheffield in January, 1918, when two coaches of a hospital train were derailed, and the 100 plus wounded soldiers fortunately suffered little more than being badly shaken about.

Given that, it is thus likely that little was revealed about the train accident that took place at Bricquebec in the Manche *department* on the 4th August, 1914, no doubt thanks to French censorship, because at this time the French were in the throes of mobilising their Army, having commenced three days earlier. Looking at when it occurred, it is also possible that the Bricquebec accident, which resulted in sixteen military deaths, was the first wartime related train accident and that the men were among the earliest French war dead.

The accident was the result of two trains travelling towards each other at a combined speed of some 20 mph, or more, on the same line in the middle of the night of the 4th/5th at the Pont d'Aizy, some 600-700 yards south of the station at Bricquebec. The line was single track, and connected Coutances with Cherbourg. The troop train consisted of 24 wagons taking reservists to their units in Cherbourg, while heading south was a train, consisting of 26 wagons, carrying either goods, or more likely military stores. The exact number of reservists is unclear, but ran into the many hundreds, and probably approaches a thousand given the *'8 Chevaux, 40 Hommes'* philosophy.

When the order for mobilisation was given at the beginning of August, the military had requisitioned more than 4,000 trains to move men to their correct assembly areas from their home stations. Mobilisation plans had taken note of the problems that the French had encountered during the Franco-Prussian War, and with very few delays, worked

well. Bricquebec was the exception. In this case, the reservists came largely from the Côtes du Nord region of Brittany.

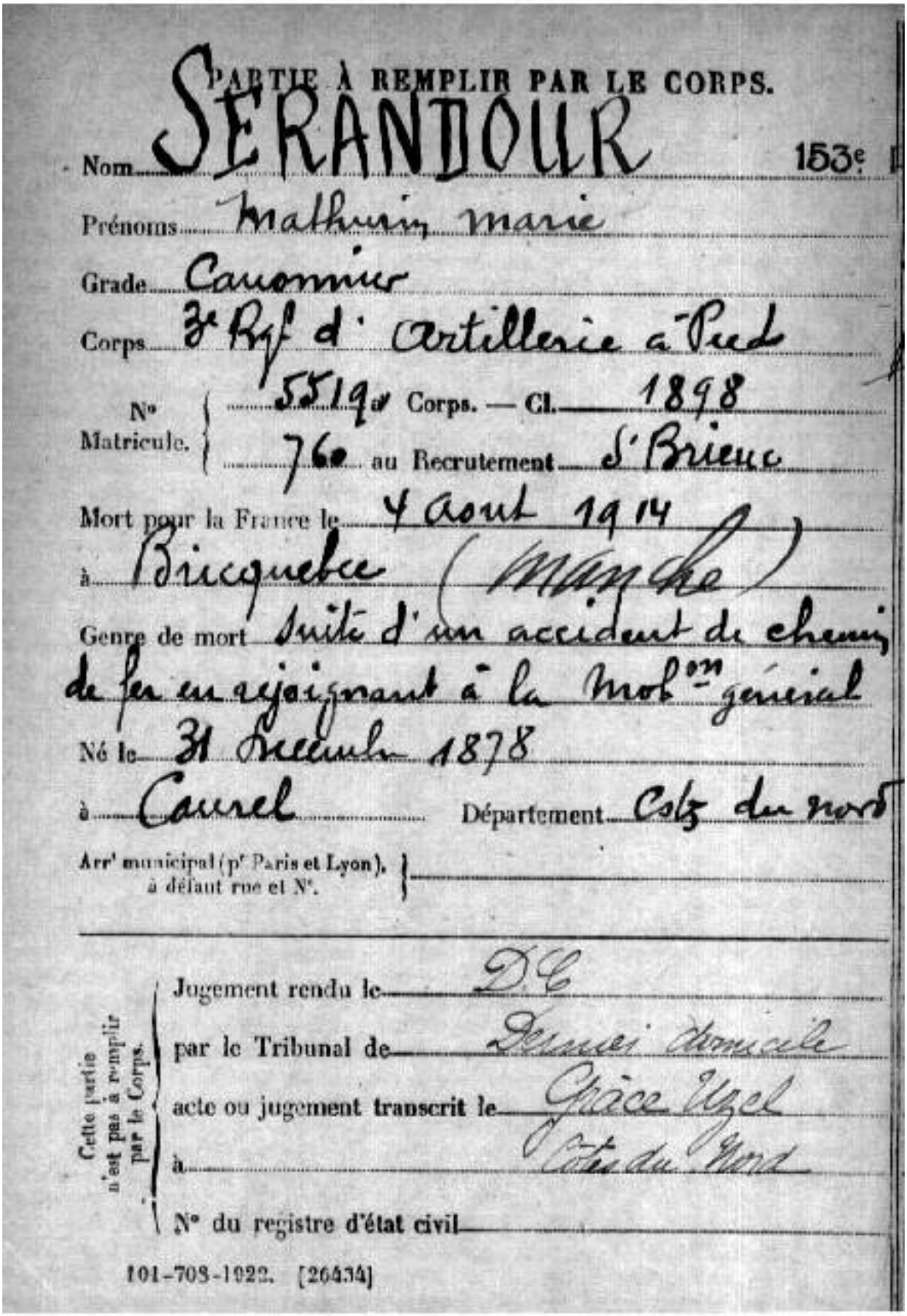
Une vue des deux locomotives qui se sont télescopées.
Coll. archives départementales Ille-et-Vilaine, dossier 11 R 792.

It does appear that, in this as it would be in many cases throughout France, the troop train's crew were not familiar with the line that they were on, and that there had been a violent storm, hindering visibility. As a consequence the troop train was running about three minutes behind its given schedule, and in normal times, there would not have been a northbound train running this late. It does seem to be the case that the Stationmaster at Bricquebec had been aware of the troop train's schedule, but gave permission for the other train to leave. He and another individual (a *facteur chef* – Head telegraphist?) would be held culpable in later investigations and proceedings.

The trains collided at around 00.36 hours, and townspeople who heard the noise soon came to help. However, there was some confusion as some had thought that the accident was simply a derailment of the southbound train, belatedly realising that it was, in fact, a collision. Treatment was given to the injured, and where possible, they were evacuated to hospitals in Cherbourg and Valognes, where at least one man, a Soldat Désiré Coquillet, would have an arm amputated. Of the sixteen dead, eleven would die on the spot, the other five over the next few days in hospitals in Cherbourg and Bricquebec. It is highly unlikely that the event was reported nationally given what would follow. But, the sixteen were regarded as having died in the service of France as the 'Death Certificate' for Mathurin Sérandour, overleaf, shows.

The story is interesting, because it is 'close to home', given that it is little more than 25-30 miles as the crow flies! Furthermore, as we look at a list, below, of fourteen of the dead, there are a few surnames, Carré and Talibard at least, that are to be found in the

CI today. But, there were ‘many hundreds’ on board, and given the regular flow of Breton workers to the Islands, it is probably that some of the troops had lived, or indeed were living there when the call came to mobilise. Given that, one might wonder whether there are families in the CI today who know of the accident!



PARTIE À REMPLIR PAR LE CORPS.

Nom SERANDOUR 153e

Prénoms Mathurin marie

Grade Canonnier

Corps 3e Rgt d' Artillerie à Pied

N° Matricule. 5519 Corps. — Cl. 1898

760 au Recrutement d'Brieuc

Mort pour la France le 4 aout 1914

à Bricquebec (Manche)

Genre de mort suite d'un accident de chemin de fer en rejoignant à la Mob.on général

Né le 31 Decembre 1878

à Caurel Département Cotz du nord

Arr.t municipal (p.r Paris et Lyon), à défaut rue et N.o

Cette partie n'est pas à remplir par le Corps.

Jugement rendu le D.C

par le Tribunal de Dennei Domicile

acte ou jugement transcrit le Grâce Uzel

à Côtes du Nord

N° du registre d'état civil

101-708-1922. [26434]

The Bricquebec Dead

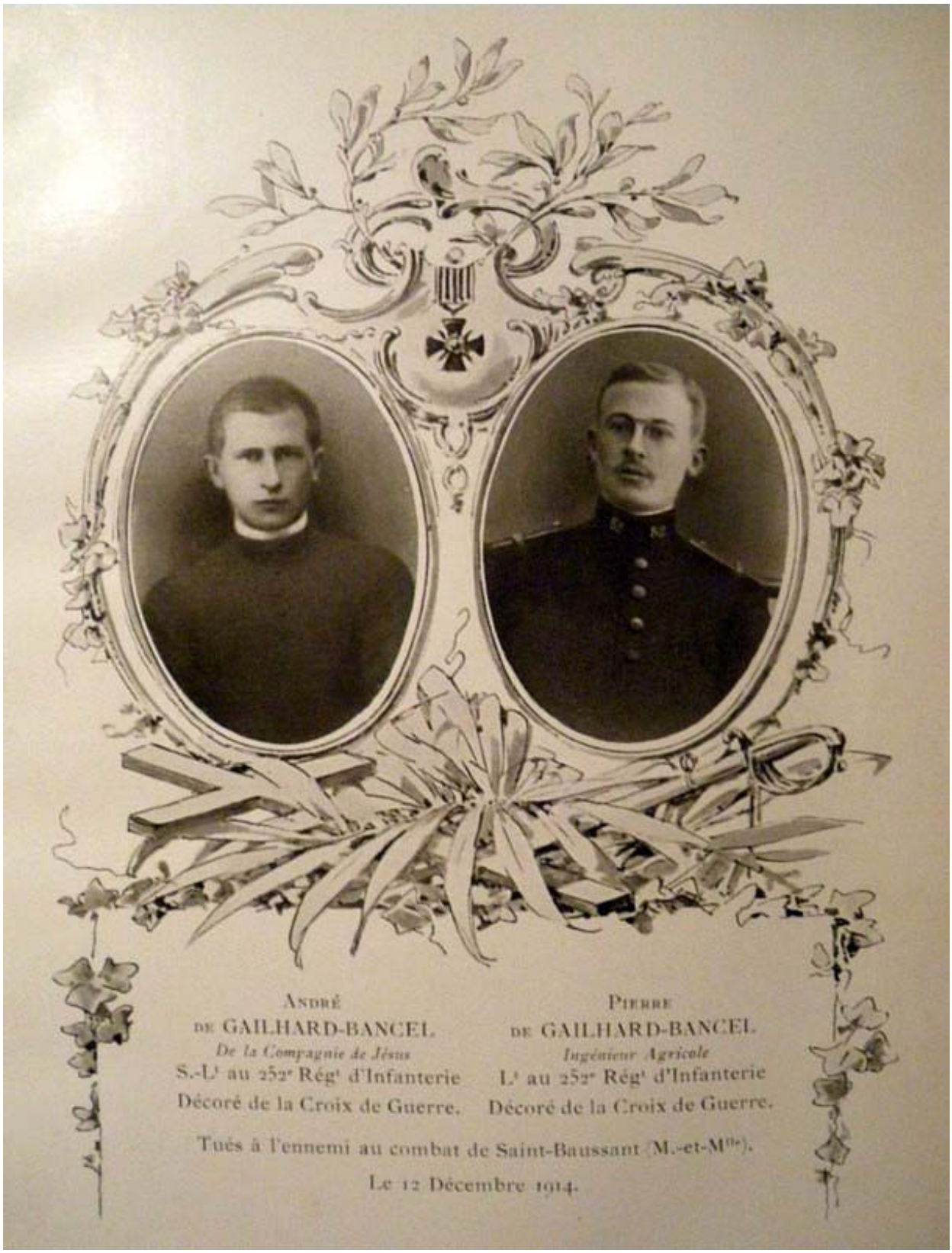
Surname	First Names	POB	DOB	Rank	Unit
CARRE	Joseph Mathurin Marie	Corley	17 Feb 1886	Soldat	1 RIC
CONAN	Léon Marie	La Rochelle[1]	1 Feb 1886	Soldat	1 RIC
DANIEL	Alexis Marie	St Gilles du Mené	8 Mar 1876	Canonnier	3 RAP
GABOREL	Alexis Mathurin	Saint-Véran	17 Oct 1877	Soldat	10 Terr Bn Ingenie
JOLY	François Jean	Hillion	8 Jul 1886	Soldat	1 RIC
LANGLAIS	Léon Joseph Jean Marie	Évran	24 Oct 1887	Matelot	Navy
LUCAS	Emmanuel	St Gilles du Mené	15 Dec 1887	Soldat	1 RIC
MAUTRAY	François Marie	St Gilles du Mené	11 Mar 1886	Canonnier	3 RAP
MELEUX	Joseph François Marie	Goméné	21 Apr 1885	Soldat	1 RIC
PASCO	Toussaint Marie	Gouarec	2 Jul 1886	Soldat	1 RIC
PRESSE	Eugène Jean Marie	Saint Gouéno	4 Jul 1887	Soldat	1 RIC
SAGORY	Joseph	NK	NK	Caporal	1 RIC
SÉRANDOUR	Mathurin Marie	Caurel	31 Dec 1878	Canonnier	3 RAP
TALIBARD [2]	Joseph Marie François	Hillion	7 Jan 1887	Soldat	1 RIC
Plus 2 - NK					

Notes:

1. **Was resident in Saint Brandon (CdN)**
2. **Surname spelt TALIBART in SGA database**

Faces Remembered

Our first Face Remembered is that of Sous-Lieutenant Max Eugène Marie Fresson who was killed serving with the 43^{e} Bataillon de Chasseurs à Pied on the 1st June, 1918. Max was born in 1896 and was a former student at Highlands, along with a younger brother. His death appears to have come as a result of the German Operation Blücher-Yorck, launched on the 27th May. According to the Bataillion's War Diary (JMO), they had been pulling back and taking heavy losses. On the day that Max was killed, the Bataillon had just 240 men, 25% of its establishment. Near Bussiares they were to hold a defensive position without established lines and their right flank totally exposed.



Now and again a little luck comes into our research and turns up new images, information and contacts that can open up further lines of investigation. Take André de Gailhard-Bancel who is pictured along with his brother on the Memorial Card above. Undertaking preparatory work prior to Verdun, I was revalidating the French names in both Rolls of Honour, to discover that his surname was misspelt Gaillard as opposed to Gailhard. While it appeared that there would be no grave to visit, one does not easily

forget a surname such as his. Then the September edition of the WFA Newsletter appeared, and among the items there was a piece on André and his brother, Pierre. A few exchanges of Email later and the above image appeared, along with further data about André which is summarised as follows:

André was born in Marseille on the 10th March, 1887, and was studying at the Jesuit College in Jersey when the French mobilised and from where he promptly headed off to join the 252e Regiment d'Infanterie on the 3rd August, 1914 as a Sergeant before being sent to the front on the 21st to the east of Nancy. Promoted Sous-Lieutenant on the 5th October, he would serve in the Regiment's 19e Compagnie with his younger brother Pierre, a Lieutenant, as his Company Commander. On the 12th December, the Compagnie was tasked to attack German trenches between Saint Baussant and the Bois de la Sonnard, and during which attack he and his brother would be killed. In May, 1915 a Divisional Order would record his 'admirable bravery and energy in undertaking his task' while the Livre d'Or for the French clergy would stat that, before the attack he called his section together, gave some words of encouragement, and then recited an act of contrition with them. He would be awarded the Croix de Guerre avec Palme et Etoile d'Argent and later, in 1920, would be recognised as a Chevalier in the order of the Legion d'Honneur as indeed his brother Pierre was also.

Some other details were provided and that has led to some interesting facts. The Livre d'Or stated that five brothers had been mobilised of whom three had been killed and another wounded, while André's father had been a Deputy for the Ardèche *departement*.

André's father Hyacinthe (1849-1936) had indeed been a Deputy between 1899 and 1924 with a two year gap from 1910, had married twice, the second time as a widower, having a daughter Marie (1875-1919) as well as the five sons mentioned. The third son who would die of wounds was Louis (1878-1918) and, as a Chef d'Escadron (the equivalent of a Major in the British Army), he would also be recognised with the higher Officer's grade of the Legion d'Honneur. The other two brothers were Henry (1884-1944) and Maurice (1885-1972), but which one was wounded cannot be identified. Maurice would go on to be a Doctor of Law, but Henry's circumstances prove fascinating, if not macabre.

In 1900 he entered the École Navale at Brest, and two years later would be commissioned. As far as can be seen, he did not rise above the rank of *Lieutenant de Vaisseau* (the equivalent of a Lieutenant RN). Between the wars he appears to have been a trustee of a co-operative syndicate for local farmers but, one cannot be in any way be definite here, during the Second World War he may have been a Vichy supporter or even worse, for on the 29th September, 1944, along with five other men, he was assassinated! In the aftermath of France's liberation in 1944, many of those who had cooperated or collaborated were subject to rough, sometimes summary, justice.

The six men were being held in a Detention Centre in Valence, having been tried as members of the Milice or as collaborators. Two had received death sentences, which were commuted to 20 years hard labour. One received an unspecified period of hard labour while another two were held because the Court Martial considered itself insufficiently competent to judge them. In Henry's case, it was still being assessed as to whether there was sufficient evidence to justify a trial. During the early evening, two men posing as Police turned up and were clearly there to distract the two guards. Not

long after, twenty armed men entered, menaced the guards who were obviously unwilling to offer resistance and the six were then taken out, bundled into four waiting cars which then sped off. The following morning the body of one of the men, who had been shot, was found hanging from a clock tower in a square in Valence with a sign saying 'So are punished traitors!' Not long after, a van would be parked in the same square and the bodies of the other five, including Henry's, would be found inside. A rather brutal ending for a 60 year-old man! Yet curiously, his intake at the École Navale was a year behind that of the future Admiral Darlan!

Having digressed far enough into the later War, let us return to André's fate. The SGA graves database does not list either him or his two brothers. However, the Livre d'Or does contain the statement that: 'His body was found and reburied in August, 1921'. One can probably assume that this is correct, and if so, does it suggest that he, along with Louis and Pierre, were buried in the family's grave?

Jottings from Verdun – 2012

Introduction: This is a potpourri of observations from my recent stay in the vicinity of Verdun. Apart from the Overview of the Battle that immediately follows, the items are not in any specific order as they have been juggled to fit the pages.

An Overview of the Battle of Verdun in 1916: Although the initial battle for Verdun that commenced on the 21st February, 1916 took place along a comparatively narrow front, it would eventually see a wider front and some 40 square miles of land taken by the Germans from the French before some of that was recovered later that year. But, of course there had been fighting on either side of what, in 1916, had become a salient for the French at Verdun both before and after that battle. Geographically the city was on the route of march from the east to Paris, and, whereas Louis Napoleon's Armies became trapped at Sedan and Metz during the Franco-Prussian War, in a situation that his General MacMahon would eloquently remark on as: '*Nous sommes dans un pot de chambre et nous y serons emmerdés!'* Verdun was not taken, and nor would it be handed over along with Alsace-Lorraine as reparations.

Verdun (the Romans had called it Verodunum or 'strong fort') had long been regarded as a vital position in the French defences, and even before the Franco-Prussian War the French engineer Vauban had provided plans for its defence in the late 17th Century. Thus in Verdun there is to be found the Citadel. However, after 1871 a new line of French defences would be established along the changed borders with Germany, and Verdun was to become the principal strongpoint in this line, and it fell to a French sapper, General Serré de Riviéres to undertake this task. His work would result in the construction of a ring of forts, some twenty in all, along with about forty *ouvrages* on the high ground around the city. As well as being positioned in terms of their height, they were located such that they were mutually supportive of each other in the event of an enemy attack. Should an enemy reach the forts then there were also machine guns and other weaponry to deal with them in the moats. Collectively they may have been like a bunch of immobile porcupines. Some of the forts such as Vaux, Douaumont and Siouville are rightly famous for the events that took place inside or around them during the battle, but all had a role to play.

Verdun was clearly a garrison town, and there is much evidence of that today in terms of the barracks such as at Thierville or the Caserne Miribel (pictured overleaf). Although

I am uncertain as to their dates of construction, it was certainly before 1900, and I suspect that it was at the same time as the forts were built.

If the French saw Verdun as the key to their defences, unsurprisingly, the Germans shared that view also. Thus, Moltke's replacement as the German Chief of the General Staff, General Erich von Falkenhayn saw that, come what may, if Verdun was attacked, the French would throw in everything that they could muster to defend their position. As a consequence, he did not see it necessary to capture Verdun itself, rather that a German attack would draw the French on, and through their response, the French Army could be 'bled white'! One could suggest that the concept of the battle was 'semi-attritional' if it was thought that that the Germans would not be 'bled white' also.

The German 5th Army was given the job of launching the attack however von Falkenhayn's concept for the battle appears not to have been shared with its Commander, Crown Prince William, and his staff whose plans were made with the intention of taking Verdun itself. Furthermore, the attack was limited to the right (i.e., the eastern) bank of the Meuse, and while the Crown Prince had nine divisions at his disposal, a further two divisions would be held back in reserve, under von Falkenhayn's very firm control.

Originally, the attack was intended to be launched on the 11th, but bad weather in the shape of snow and then ice caused the ten day delay. For the French who were now on alert and the Germans whose storm troops were in specially built shelters there was a nervous wait, while the Germans continued to bring up more and more ammunition for their 850 artillery pieces along the recently laid rail lines. Yet in the early hours of the 21st February those guns would commence their work blasting the French positions in front of them and even lobbing shells into Verdun itself, some 20 miles further on.

Al that day the Germans would attack, their storm troops seeking to infiltrate the French positions by advancing up the ravines (deep gullies), but although French casualties

were heavy the line of defences largely held and there were no great German gains. The following day the Germans again pressed forward and were now starting to make inroads as French units, with their ever increasing casualties, started to lose cohesion, and in some cases, just vanishing. It was felt that by the evening of 24th February, the Germans would have soon reached Verdun itself, while there would be worse news the following day with the loss of Fort Douaumont.

The Fort's loss was not as a result of an overwhelming force rather that it had occurred from the French military philosophy of *'l'attaque à outrance'*. In line with this, General Joffre had instructed that its defences to be reduced, along with the other forts, a process that was now under way. The infantrymen who were there to help defend the Fort were gone leaving the gunners to fend for themselves. Advancing on the 25th February, a number of separate parties of Germans found themselves in the Fort's outer works and little menaced by any defender, found entry to the Fort itself and captured the French still there.

On this date, General de Castelnau, sent by Joffre to assess what was a rapidly deteriorating situation for the French, arrived at Verdun, and, in a sense, squared the circle for von Falkenhayn's aim of 'bleeding the French white' by reversing what was becoming a demoralised rout and directing the French troops to defensive positions on the right bank. With this, and the subsequent appointment of General Pétain, any German ambition to capture Verdun itself was now dimmed. However, it is possible that both Joffre and Pétain would have adopted a policy of withdrawing to the left bank had they been given the opportunity.

Pétain, was not of the *'l'attaque à outrance'* persuasion but preferred to make greater use of artillery firepower. Organising his artillery on the left bank behind Le Mort Homme, in early March he started to hurt the Germans as they struggled to bring their artillery up in the muddy conditions caused by the thawing snow and ice. Casualties on the German side now quickly increased and it became apparent that the German plan for a limited right bank attack had its limitations, and it would now be necessary to launch an attack on the left bank. This was launched with six Divisions on the 14th March to take Le Mort Homme itself, while the Crown Prince now found that reserve Divisions were freely available! Later, Côte 304 would be attacked.

Le Mort Homme, Côte 304, indeed much of the right bank are now places that see actions between the opposing troops that can best be described as a slogging match. There are no trenches as depicted in the generally accepted images of the Western Front as men of both sides occupy shell holes and craters with little awareness of who is next door. By June the Germans had advanced to hold positions on Le Mort Homme and Côte 304, but were now being shelled by the French artillery on the reverse slopes of the Bois Bourrus ridge. Late June also saw the high water mark of the Germans on the right bank, by now having taken the *ouvrage* of Froideterre, Fort Vaux and the village of Fleury-devant-Douaumont (one of nine *Villages Détruit*), all of which saw bitter fighting and continuing heavy casualties. The Germans would not get any closer to Verdun than those few troops who, briefly in mid-July, reached the top of Fort Siouville from where they could see the cathedral towers a few miles away to their south-west.

The logistics during the battle should not be forgotten. As has already been mentioned, the Germans had brought up their shells by rail in preparation, the lines being especially laid beforehand. The French had a greater problem in terms of vulnerability for, given

that they were in a salient, with access obviously constrained on three sides, there was only one way in for men and *materiel,* and that was along the road from Bar-Le-Duc to Verdun, and the narrow gauge railway that ran alongside. It is to Petain's credit that he made sure that the road and the rail line were rigorously maintained by a force of some 20,000 men throughout the battle, thus allowing for virtual non-stop convoys of trucks heading in each direction. This was critical for the French to hold Verdun and not for nothing do they refer to it as *La Voie Sacrée.*

But, to the man in the shell hole, be he French or German, the logistics were of a more basic nature. Could the carrying parties travel there and back, to the quartermasters, the soup kitchens or the water tanks to fetch some form of sustenance forward to the troops? Many of these men would simply vanish in the shelling, and the fighting ability of both sides would diminish through thirst and hunger.

By the 23rd June, the German assault had almost run into the ground, and there was no prospect of Verdun falling to the Germans, although they were still close. Now the Germans also had other matters to consider, for the preparatory shelling had commenced on the Somme. However, German attacks continued to be launched and then repulsed by the French. All the while, the casualties were mounting. The French were indeed being 'bled white' as their casualty figure of 315,000 at the end of August indicates. But, the German casualties of more than 281,000 suggest that they were not so far behind in terms of themselves being 'bled' at the same point! And with Rumania's entry into the War on the Allied side, von Falkenhayn became the highest ranking 'casualty' of his original aim, when he was replaced by the Generals von Hindenburg and von Ludendorff, who, appalled by the state of the German Army at Verdun, now stopped any further attacks being launched.

The French now responded. Amassing more artillery pieces than the Germans, they planned to launch attacks to reclaim France's sacred soil, and on the 23rd October, Fort Douaumont was again under French control, while by the 15th December, a further advance by the French brought them to Bezonvaux and Louvemont-Côte-de-Poivre (two more *Villages Détruit*), where effectively the battle now concluded. But not without cost, and not only in terms of casualties that were probably in the region of 375,000 to 400,000. There were signs of French military morale starting to become frayed, and at it was at Verdun that formations going up to the line first started to bleat like sheep! Meanwhile Petain, who had held the line together, found that his star was waning and a new name, that of General Robert Nivelle, which was on everyone's lips!

The Germans had fared little better, their casualties not too dissimilar to those suffered by the French, although their morale, which had also decreased, did not result in any acts akin to bleating. But, we should not forget that the number of casualties that they also suffered on the Somme totalled another 400,000 to 450,000. So, 1916 was an expensive year in lost manpower for Germany.

It was Wellington who said that: '…next to a battle lost, the greatest misery is a battle gained', and so who won? That the French had lost ground to the Germans is obvious from maps that show where the front line was at the beginning and at the end of the battle, but that ground had little, if any, strategic value. Von Falkenhayn had caused France 'to bleed', as he had sought, but so had Germany 'bled' in similar quantity, and he had no interest in the ground actually gained anyway. Over the period from February

to December, 1916 neither side won, but as we look at subsequent years, it may be that Verdun was the first event that would influence the eventual outcome of the war.

In conclusion, this is an over-simplistic overview and may contain some minor errors, not least in casualty numbers which can vary, dependent on which source is used. It is suggested that those interested should seek books that can offer far greater detail of those ten months in 1916.

Maps and Guides: A very useful map for navigating the area by car or on foot is the IGN Top 25 'Forets de Verdun et du Mort-Homme' map at 1:25,000 scale, numbered 3112 ET and variously priced at around £15.00. My copy is about 15 years old (!), but there is a more recent issue available.

Major and Mrs Holt's Battlefield Guide: *'The Western Front – South'* is useful to have, especially if it is the first visit being made. That said, I would still not go without my copy, as it remains a vital reference.

The other handy guide is that for: *'Fort Douaumont - Verdun'*, published by Pen and Sword Books, and written by Christina Holstein. My copy is ten years old, but there is a 2010 version at around £12.99. Incidentally, according to its Visitors' Book, Christina visited Chattancourt Cemetery a few weeks before I was there.

Douaumont Today: Douaumont is the highest point on the Heights of the Meuse and, on the Right Bank certainly, was the piece of ground that was most bitterly fought over by the two protagonists. Unsurprisingly, it became and, indeed, remains the central focus of the Verdun battlefields. It possesses an almost mystical quality in drawing people there, and seems to lie along whichever route one takes (a deliberate piece of road planning perhaps?). That focus is maintained by the awesome presence of the Ossuary, coupled with a Cemetery that contains the graves of 15,000 French dead. The Ossuary, built between 1919 and 1932, contains the remains of a further 130,000 men, French and German that were recovered from all parts of the battlefield. It is not clear as to whether the French government of the day funded any part the Ossuary's construction, but subscriptions were received from far and wide, not least from Jersey's '*Anciens Combattants*' whose contribution is acknowledged on an engraved stone immediately to the right of the chapel as ones stands with their back to the main entrance.

However, as can be seen from the photographs on page 42, the Ossuary and the Cemetery are at present undergoing major renovations. The Ossuary stone-work is being cleaned (as can be seen by the 'before and after' photograph) while every headstone in the Cemetery is being replaced, and the grass re-seeded. The areas have been fenced off. It is likely that all this work, clearly geared towards 2014-2018 commemorations, will not finish before June or July next year, this projection being based upon the lady toilet attendant's advice. The plan of photographing the headstones of the four CI Frenchmen buried at Douaumont has been clearly put off until next year. What I did find disconcerting however, were the pallet loads of white crosses. That somehow seemed ominous.

Access to the Ossuary is currently via the small visitor centre, and a 5 Euro ticket enables one to see the 20 minute film show, as well as climbing up the 150 foot lantern tower, in addition to inspecting the Ossuary and Chapel. The view from the top is

probably marvellous on a sunny day, but, although there are orientation panels, I am not too sure that one gets a true feel of the terrain, given that most of it is now well-matured forest. Conveniently, there is a large café, of a size similar to the one at Notre Dame de Lorette for those who know it, a few hundred yards from the Ossuary car park.

La Voie Sacrée Today: Many who come to visit Verdun from the west will soon find themselves driving along *La Voie Sacrée* if they had left the A4 auto-route. It should be quite obvious to them given the presence of the route markers (below right) that are located every one kilometre towards Verdun, and indeed in the other direction towards Bar-Le-Duc. For years the route was the only one that was not allocated a *Route Departementale* in the way that was applied throughout the rest of France. However, perhaps thanks to computers now running our lives, the road has been allocated the number D1916.

One afternoon we headed down to Bar-Le-Duc, and although we did not count the markers, we wondered what other evidence there was of the road's role. At our destination, there was another large cemetery, undoubtedly filled with men who had made it this far, but sadly no further, while at the top end, i.e. Verdun, there is a monument. In between, Souilly is noticeable for the Mairie, Pétain's HQ for part of the time, while it is also twinned with Laclede in Missouri, General John Pershing's birthplace thus giving reason for the 'Stars and Stripes' fluttering above.

There was however, a bit of a visual surprise for us as we headed down *La Voie* with life-size 'cardboard cut-outs' of vehicles and *poilus* at two spots along the road. As can be seen from the accompanying photograph, they do look effective. One might wonder at their survival rate had they been located at a lay-by in the UK?

Along with the Ossuary and Cemetery at Douaumont, *La Voie Sacrée* is getting a makeover on the stretch of road from the auto-route into Verdun, and given that there is also the TGV station a few miles along *La Voie* beyond the A4, it is highly likely that work is being carried out very much with the forthcoming French national commemorations in mind. Given that, on a broader front, should representatives from the CI not be invited to attend?

Fort Douaumont: I am somewhat ambivalent as to what the French might do with the Fort. Having visited for about the third or fourth time (currently it is 4 Euros to enter), it remains a largely empty structure with just a few bunk beds in the barrack rooms to show purpose. Otherwise, fittings are slowly rusting away. One half of me says that the Fort should be equipped to reflect how it might have looked a hundred years ago, but the other half reminds me that it is also a war grave with several hundred Germans entombed in a bricked up chamber. In any case, there would be a considerable cost of renovation. Photographs are on page 44.

Visiting again, I was struck by the compactness of the inner structure with just two floors, the main transverse corridor little more than a hundred yards long. The main weapon is the 155 mm gun, and that is lodged in the firing position. But, the gunroom is quite impressive with the gun's elevation and retraction mechanism still in place along with the counterweights. It is a pity that there is no access to the counterscarp batteries, but I expect that it is because the galleries to them are blocked, or at least unsafe to the casual visitor.

However, it appears bigger on the outside, although standing on top, thanks to the trees it is difficult to gauge what the observers would have seen back in 1916.

Frank Luke: A beautiful sunny Saturday afternoon would find me visiting the US Meuse-Argonne Cemetery, and it was a particularly appropriate day, as it was the 94th Anniversary of Frank Luke's death in 1918. I had 'discovered' him back in the 1960s, when I first hit on a book describing his exploits in an all too brief flying career, and then my interest was soon reinforced by making a Revell 1/28 plastic model of his Spad XIII (It originally cost 19/6, but I now have another that I acquired from E-Bay, for much more than that original price a few years ago and have yet to assemble it! One day!).

As can be seen from his headstone pictured left, Frank Luke was a winner of the US Congressional Medal of Honour having become America's second ranking ace during the Great War, while he epitomised the reckless and undisciplined 'loner' image of a fighter pilot. He would go after the toughest targets, the heavily defended German artillery observation balloons, and would become known as the Arizona Balloon Buster.

Over a period of seventeen days in September, 1918, in just nine days of combat flying, ten missions, and only thirty hours of flight time, he shot down fourteen enemy balloons and four aircraft (seven planes according to some sources).

(**Note:** The engraving on the headstones of MoH winners are picked out in gold).

Of German extraction, he came from Phoenix in Arizona, and would enlist in the US Army on the 25th September, 1917, joining the Signal Corps' Aviation Service, soon departing for flight training in Austin, Texas, and then in San Diego. The following is a brief summary of his subsequent career prior to that fateful month:

- First solo flight – 12th December, 1917
- Commissioned Second Lieutenant – 23rd January, 1918
- Sailed from New York – 4th March, 1918
- Arrived in France – By 19th March, 1918
- Attended US Aviation Instruction Centre at Issoudun - April, 1918
- Joins 27th Aero Squadron at Saints – 25th July, 1918
- First combat flight – 27th July, 1918
- Claims first victory, but not substantiated – 16th August, 1918
- 27th Aero Squadron moves to Rembercourt – By 7th September, 1918

Then, a week later he began to get his eye in, and during that last month he brought down:

- A Balloon at Marieulles – 12th September
- A Balloon at Buzy – 14th September
- A Balloon at Boinville – 14th September (Shared)
- Two Balloons at Boinville – 15th September
- A Balloon at Chaumont – 15th September
- A Balloon at Reville – 16th September
- A Balloon at Romagne – 16th September (Shared)
- Two Balloons at Mars la Tour – 18th September (Both Shared)
- Two Fokker D.VII at St. Hilaire – 18th September
- A Halberstadt C at Jonville– 18th September
- A Balloon at Betheniville – 28th September
- A Hannover CL at Monthainville – 28th September
- Three Balloons at Avocourt – 29th September

The final claims are a bit odd, for on that date Avocourt was in American hands, but if not quite, the Germans would not be placing balloons so close to a front line a few yards away. There were also reports that he dropped a message to an American balloon company near Souilly, but that is on the *La Voie Sacrée.* But, one would think that in a Spad XIII, it was little more than 10-15 minutes flying time from Souilly to a German balloon line, an interesting figure when the aircraft endurance was 90-100 minutes. Whatever the truth regarding his final hours, perhaps the following affidavit is the best information available:

'The undersigned, living in the town of Murvaux, Department of the Meuse, certify to have seen on the twenty- ninth day of September, 1918, toward evening, an American aviator, followed by an escadrille of Germans, in the direction of Liny, near Dun-sur-Meuse, descend suddenly and vertically toward the earth, then straighten out close to the ground and fly in the direction of the Briere Farm, near Doulcon, where he found a captive balloon, which he burned. Following this he flew toward Milly-sur-Bradon, where he found another balloon, which he also burned, in spite of an incessant fire directed against his machine. There he was apparently wounded by a shot fired from rapid-fire

cannon. From there he came back over Murvaux, and with his machine gun killed six German soldiers and wounded many more.

Following this he landed and got out of his machine, undoubtedly to quench his thirst at a near-by stream. He had gone some fifty yards, when, seeing the Germans come toward him, he still had strength to draw his revolver to defend himself, and a moment after fell dead, following a serious wound received in the chest. Certify equally to having seen the German commandant of the village refuse to have straw placed in the cart carrying the dead aviator to the village cemetery. This same officer drove away some women bringing a sheet to serve as a shroud for the hero, and said, kicking the body:

"Get that out of my way as quickly as possible." The next day the Germans took away the airplane, and the inhabitants also saw another American aviator fly very low over the town, apparently looking for the disappeared aviator.

Signatures of the following:

Perton, Leon Henry, Rene Colin, Cortlae Delbart, Auguste Cuny, Gabriel Didier, Henry Gustave, Camille Phillipe, Eugene Coline, Voliner Nicholas, Odile Patouche, Vallentine Garre, Richard Victor, Gustave Garre

The undersigned themselves placed the body of the aviator on the wagon and conducted it to the cemetery: Cortlae Delbart, Voliner Nicholas

Seen for legalization of signatures placed above:

The Mayor, AUGUST GARRE,
Murvaux,
15th January,1919
[Seal of Murvaux]

The Americans subsequently recovered and identified his body which had been placed in an unmarked grave, stripped of footwear, leggings and money, although a wrist-watch that he was wearing had been missed.

I know the village quite well, and a few of the present-day residents also, including Auguste Cuny's daughter-in-law on 'nodding terms', having stayed in a small cottage that my brother owns there! He did not know of the Luke link when he bought it some 20 years ago. A plaque erected in Frank Luke's memory was stolen some years ago, but was replaced in November, 2000 as shown, while in the photograph overleaf, the field that he was forced to land in was beyond the tree line in the foreground where a stream runs. Finally, as an aside to visiting the US Meuse-Argonne Cemetery, for such a large one, it is surprising that there was nobody else there looking at the graves.

Frank Luke and his Spad XIII

Cemetery Visits: With the continuing need to add headstone photographs to the Rolls of Honour, the trip was little different to those on the Somme or in the Salient area, with the requisite amount of preparation and planning ahead of the trip. So far it has not been possible to locate a Nécropole Nationale directory so it is a case of cross-referencing the cemeteries with the Michelin atlas before going. And, whereas the CWGC provides cemetery plans on its website and at the cemetery itself, there appears nothing similar for the French. However, a list of graves can generally be found in a hinged receptacle at the gates, and in one instance, it proved to be a life-saver.

The trip down to Verdun presented the opportunity of taking a slight diversion to the cemetery at Rethel, where Gratien Harel is buried, however the town is larger than I'd expected, and new by-passes seemed to further complicate my navigating (gyro topple had occurred!). Frustrated, hungry and annoyed with myself, it seemed sensible to grab lunch at the MacDonalds that loomed into view, and with that, out popped the memsahib's IPad to help find where we were in relation to the cemetery. One burger and chips, and two right turns later we were there! Now, to my thinking, Rethel was off the beaten track in terms of the British Army. However, I was surprised to discover several rows of British graves, 110 in all. From what I can now gather, it is likely that the men had been captured having been injured and had succumbed.

Having been unable to do anything at Douaumont, there were nonetheless a number of cemeteries nearby where Channel Island French were buried. It is clear that those cemeteries which are in the outskirts of Verdun, i.e. Bevaux, Faubourg Pave and Glorieux, were for the wounded brought down from the battlefield, dying before they could be moved rearwards. Puzzlement was the order of the day at Bevaux as there seemed to be no consistency in the numbering of the graves, and without trying to sound flippant, I started to think that a bingo caller had been at work. One could read a number on one headstone, and the number preceding or succeeding it was, say, five headstones along! Now, some of the intervening headstones lacked identity plates, so it may be that the Cemetery had been visited by vandals or souvenir-hunters.

As to Avocourt, Chattancourt and Esnes, they lie behind the ridge line that ran from Vauquois through Cote 304 to le Mort-Homme and Cumiéres (another *Village Détruit*), and would have received the dead from those battles, both during the battles and afterwards. The map overleaf was photographed (albeit a little wonkily!) at one of the cemeteries, and hopefully that helps to give an idea of the locations.

Vadelaincourt and Les Souhesmes lie just off *La Voie Sacrée,* very clearly on the line of casualty evacuation rearwards to Bar-Le-Duc, and they were visited so that I could photograph Jules Roulland and Louis Herauville respectively! The effort at each was quite contrasting! At Vadelaincourt, I very quickly found that the headstones were not numbered! With some 2,000 graves, it seemed simple, count the number of graves to a row, and work out the number of rows to get to the grave number, 1295 in Jules' case! Off I headed, 1, 2, 3, 4 and so on, 1295, no Jules. Start at the other end, 1, 2, 3…, yes, you've guessed it! A row by row search was now thought of, but fortunately before I set out, the light went on in a leaden brain and I then remembered the hinged receptacle. A few graves later I had my photographs and was off, and, in looking back I noted that the rows tapered and that the headstones per row became fewer! Now off to see Louis, I reached the cemetery, walked in through the gates, looked half right and there he was, just two yards away!

Nécropole Nationale 'La Harazée'

Given that I was to visit Avocourt, two cemeteries, St-Thomas-en-Argonne and La Harazée, both off the Verdun battlefield, were not too far beyond to reach and heading through Varennes-en-Argonne (where King Louis XVI and Queen Marie-Antoinette were arrested, and from there sent for an eventual appointment with Madame La Guillotine!), and the beautiful Argonne Forest, they were soon reached. Now, although they are well-maintained, I am often critical of the starkness of the French war cemeteries, but La Harazée, pictured on the previous page, struck me as very attractive in its surroundings that beautiful morning, with the graves set out on three levels.

In total, twelve cemeteries were visited and sixteen graves photographed. It does not sound much, but we are dealing with a small percentage of the overall number in the Rolls of Honour, and the effort is no less valuable. As I am in the area again next year, I hope to extend the range of travel to visit the graves in the Champagne region.

Mémorial de Verdun: There are small exhibitions of equipment and material in the Ossuary and also in the Citadel in Verdun itself. However the Memorial, with its two *'soixant-quinze'* artillery pieces to protect the entrance is the main Museum for the battle. Over two floors it has an excellent range of exhibits that range from Nieuport and Fokker Eindekker aircraft suspended from the ceiling to a Berliet truck that travelled along *La Voie Sacrée.* There are also a number of artillery pieces, a German field cooker and the usual collection of small arms.

Trench art, uniforms such as that of General Charles Mangin, everyday items also feature, while I was particularly taken by the Fuse Setting device (shown left) for the 75 mm shells. It appeared to be an excellent piece of precision engineering that I would have been surprised to see so close to the front. I would have expected a more basic and far less expensive device. The centre piece of the ground floor is a tableau that tries to convey the conditions that prevailed, and it shows churned up ground littered with the detritus of war, rather than neat and tidy trenches. Admission is 7 Euros, and to my mind it is worth it. There is a cinema showing film of the battle, while the Museum now organises temporary exhibitions. The information boards are in French, German and English, and to the Memorial's credit, do not attempt to put a 'spin' on what is explained.

Although it is on a much smaller scale in terms of floor area than the Historial at Péronne, I would rate it as being equally comparable in terms of content. If there is to be a criticism, then it has to be the fact that the aircraft are suspended against a dark concrete ceiling, and it might be an idea to create a sky by some means of painting, panelling or subdued lighting. Further photographs are on page 43.

Finally, there is an excellent shop, although most, if not all, of the literature is in French, while *poilu* fridge magnets are readily available! To my delight, I was again able to get some more back numbers of *'14-18: Le magazine de la Grande Guerre'* to add to my growing collection.

Accommodation and other things: Finding a place to stay for a fortnight does appear more difficult in the Meuse *departement* than the Somme or Normandy. In our case, the memsahib spent more than two days researching. But her effort was worth it, for she located our gîte in Charny-sur-Meuse, which turned out to be first class in every respect. It very much hurts me to give you the website link which is as follows:

http://rives.et.terrasse.free.fr/

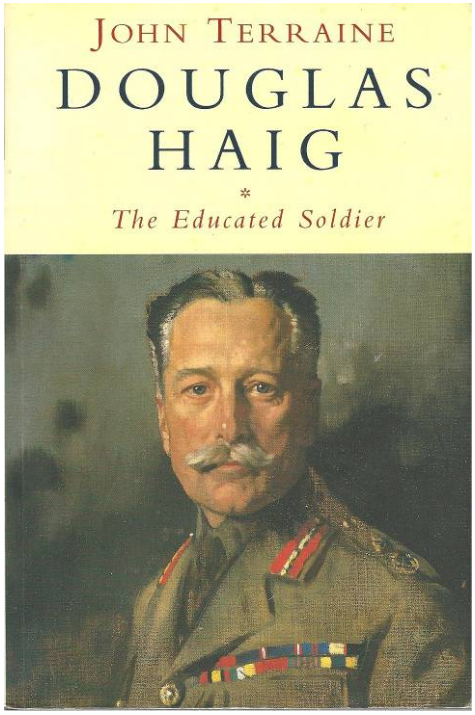
But, I console myself with the fact that I have already booked it for the same two weeks next year!

The journey from home was not without incident, having to make a diversion, via the Medway area, to reach the Channel Tunnel, this due to the M20 being closed at Ashford. However, I found myself passing Broome Park, Kitchener's estate, and I was very likely passing through villages that the RGLI had marched through in 1917. Quite a strange coincidence.

Journeying down the A26 auto-route on the Saturday, I swear that the car was twitching nervously when we had passed the Arras junction and we were abeam of Roclincourt! It clearly remembered the near disastrous cross-country hunt for the Roclincourt Valley Cemetery and the hundreds of cyclists heading in the opposite direction two years ago (see Journal 34)!

As if our travel difficulties were over that day? Having left the auto-route for Rethel, I succeeded in getting pulled over by the prettiest gendarme in France for doing 71 kph in a 50 kph zone at Asfeld. Disappointingly she did not arrest me, but the plus side was that, having been suitably chastened, I somehow managed to avoid a 60 Euros fine! On the trip back home we returned a different way!

Book Reviews



Douglas Haig – The Educated Soldier
John Terraine
Review by Ned Malet de Carteret

Douglas Haig was no ordinary soldier. He brought extreme professionalism to his chosen career. Son of a Scottish whisky distiller, he was educated at Clifton College, Bristol and Brasenose College, Oxford. He passed out first in order of merit from Sandhurst Military College. He excelled in everything that he did, books, drill, riding and sports. He was a strict disciplinarian.

His early army service saw him as a cavalry officer in India. He then spent 1893 visiting the French army and in 1894 he then spent a long visit to Germany meeting the Kaiser and watching the German army at work. 1895-7 saw him at Staff College. It produced three Field Marshals including Plumer (who was one of his examiners) and Allenby.

Haig saw action at Omdurman and South Africa with the cavalry. After another brief spell in India he became ADC to Edward VII as a Major-General. At the outbreak of WW1 he was a Corps Commanded in Sir John French's BEF and took part in the retreat from Mons, the Battle of the Aisne and 1st and 2nd Ypres. French was dismissed after the Battle of Loos in late 1915 and Haig became Commander in Chief in December of that year.

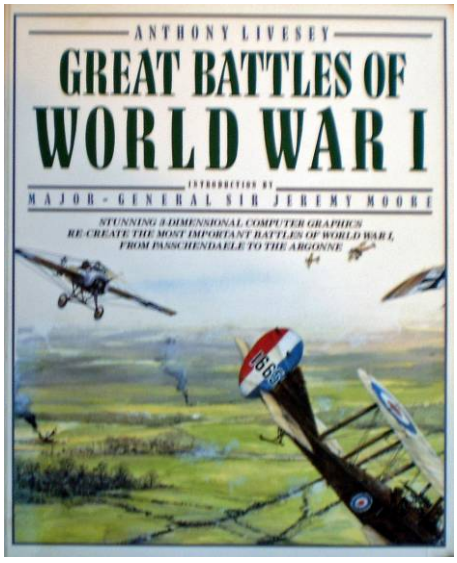
John Terraine's book is not a biography of Haig but it follows the years of the War in chronological order. It is both fluid and crisply written and provides the reader with a very good insight into the minds of the major players – Haig's unflinching support of his Army Commanders – his regard and support of his French counterparts – Foch, Joffre and Pétain. Foch was eventually appointed as Supreme Commander of the Allied forces.

The reader also obtains a good understanding of the politics of war – the supreme indifference of the Prime Minister Lloyd George and his lack of support of Haig and his subordinate Army commanders. We also observe his relationships with Wilson and Robertson who were both CIGS.

Haig is portrayed as an exceptionally competent leader, with a fine grasp of detail and a keen supporter of new weapons and tactics. He however often had difficulty in articulating his vision of the conduct of the War to his political masters. He offers his resignation at various times in 1917 and 1918. His main great concept throughout was that the War would not be won until the German Army was defeated on the Western Front. We get a very good idea that it was very much touch and go in March, 1918 with the German breakthrough. Particularly so, as the Government had been deficient in increasing front line troop manpower after the attritional Battle of Passchendaele in the second half of 1917. After the War, Haig devoted his time to the founding and work of the British Legion, dying at the age of sixty-seven in January, 1928.

John Terraine has provided us with a sagacious insight into Haig and I can only recommend that this book should be regarded as essential reading for the serious student of the Great War.

Great Battles of World War I
Stunning 3-Dimensional Computer Graphics re-create the most important Battles of World War I, from Passchendaele to the Argonne
Anthony Livesey
(Greenwich Editions - £19.95)
Review by Peter Tabb



This book is one of a series, I have the companion volume *Great Battles of the American Civil War*, while I have no doubt that on other bookshelves there will be found *Great Battles of World War II.* (**Editor:** Thank you Peter, you've reminded me that *Great Battles of World War I* is on my bookshelf also. Now I must look at it!)

Few students of the Great War are going to find a battle they were probably unaware of but this large format 200-page paperback covers all those we know well. Where it differs from most other 'histories' is contained in its rather lengthy sub-title, for indeed it does contain three-dimensional computer graphics which can well be described as 'stunning'. Those graphics are well supported by photographs, plans, drawings and maps as well as reproductions of paintings by many famous war artists including Paul Nash, Arthur Burgess and Claus Bergen (he painted Germans).

The book does not confine itself to the Western Front because also covered are the Battle of Jutland, Caporetto, Megiddo and the East African campaign. A critical critic might perceive that the coverage of the individual battles are essentially summaries of the actions involved and this is inevitable since eighteen 'battles' are addressed, each one lavishly illustrated. Naturally most of the photographs are in monochrome but the computer graphics are in full colour. A team of experts has researched every aspect of each battle – from topography to troop strength – and using the latest computer capabilities has reconstructed the battlefields in vivid detail and analysed how the winners won and why. From a standard two-dimensional map, the computer constructs a sophisticated three-dimensional graphic of the battle site. Then artists overlay all the details of the battle: troop movement, weapons deployment, the state of the terrain, even the exact weather conditions. The result is an overview that had the generals possessed these graphics, history might have had different outcomes.

The narrative starts with the incidents that led to the Great War and closes with the Armistice and its Aftermath with its inevitable introduction to the Secord World War that rendered the Great War into the First World War. In between there are the aforementioned eighteen conflicts which shaped the titanic struggle between the Allies and the Central Powers.

Despite devoting a few pages to battles which, in the hands of other authors, have created entire works, the serious historian is not going to be disappointed and, thanks to the computer graphics, will have an insight that is often missing from other, more comprehensive in other ways, histories. Notwithstanding, the author does go into much technical detail particularly in areas such as communications and also – and this is where the computer graphics really score – such developments as the war in the air which, in 1914 was a very hit and miss affair with the earliest manifestations of the flying machine struggling to stay aloft let alone get involved is a scrap, to the sophisticated air battles of 1918 between aerobatic fighters whose techniques and technology had changed little at the outbreak of war again in 1939.

For a book so battle oriented, the author also includes such snippets as a panel, ostensibly under the heading of 'The Somme' about conscientious objectors whose numbers soared following the introduction of the UK's Conscription Bill of 6th January, 1916. He explains that most 'conchies', once the panels set up for the purpose had excused them military duty, were allocated to jobs on the land although some, such as the Quakers, volunteered for dangerous duties as stretcher bearers. But the category still carried a stigma and those legitimately excused often wore an official armband proving this fact. This article is illustrated with two photographs – one showing what is clearly a happy crowd of 'conchies' digging a field and the other an upstanding bowler-hatted type who, without his official armband, would certainly have been handed a white feather.

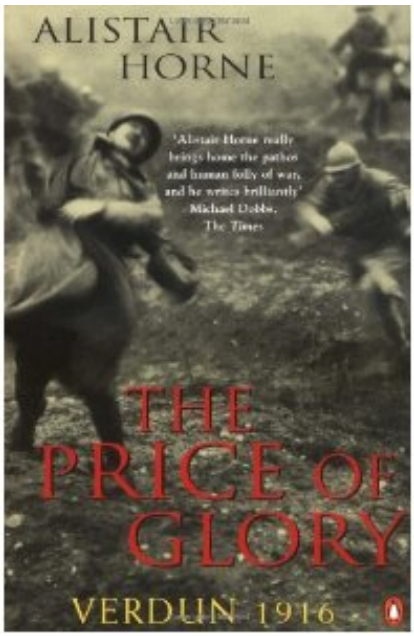
I also enjoyed the various pen pictures of the participating generals and particularly that afforded to General Sir Herbert Plumer, the 'soldiers' general' who, having replaced Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien as commander of the Second Army, at the Second Battle of Ypres displayed great decisiveness and coolness of mind. With his stocky build and bushy white moustache General Plumer was almost a creation of cartoonist Bruce Bairnsfather, but he is probably the only British general to emerge from the Great War as a great and universally revered commander. His preparations for the action at Messines were, in John Buchan's words: 'carried to the pitch of genius'. Like Nelson, his prime concern was the wellbeing of his men and his faith in his subordinates. There were no jealousies under his command: subordinates could and did contribute to his planning, yet every decision and responsibility, in the end, was his alone.

When I first came across this book (at Waterstones in Plymouth – I've not seen it in Jersey) I was inclined to dismiss it as something of an adult's comic but I am glad the title (and the cover illustration of an air battle that no camera had yet captured) swayed me to part with my honestly-earned shillings.

The Introduction is penned by Major-General Sir Jeremy Moore KCB OBE MC, the victorious commander of the British Land Forces in the Falkland Islands in May-July 1982. He concludes his introduction by pointing out that these battles:

'are concepts to be studied; some as stupid as is usually supposed, some less so given the context in which they were conceived, some bright, some even brilliant. This book gives us new insights into the many and varied lessons to be learned from World War I'.

While there are more comprehensive studies of the Great War, *Great Battles of World War I* is worthy of a place on the bookshelf of any serious student of the era, particularly one who wants a very easy on the eye source of reference.



The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916
By Alistair Horne
(Penguin Books, £14.99)

It somehow seemed appropriate, given that I was revisiting the battlefields of Verdun after a gap of more than five years, that I also re-read and reviewed this book, originally published in 1962 but only lightly revised in 1993, having first read it with a less than critical eye some fifteen years ago. This time around, I paid more attention and I have a number of points which do detract from the book. However, unusually, let us first look at the early years of the author's background as it may help explain some of my criticisms.

Born in 1925, Sir Alistair (as he is now) served with the RCAF and RAF in 1943-1944 before commissioning in the Coldstream Guards and serving 1944-1947. Military service was followed by 3 or 4 years at Cambridge where he gained an MA, this being followed by a stint as Foreign Correspondent in Germany for the Daily Telegraph during

the period 1952-1955. During the next seven years before 'The Price of Glory' was published, another three books had been written. We can safely assume that he is a clever man, and during the period of ten years up until 1962, certainly a busy man also.

It was useful, metaphorically speaking, to have his book tucked into my knapsack, reading it as I went to the various places mentioned. His description of the terrain was outstanding, and his journalistic style provided a solid understanding of the various battle stages. However, the book starts in 1870 with the Franco-Prussian War, and the consequences for France, both in the short-term and also long-term. The French Army changed through this period, and had certainly recovered from its demoralised and weakened condition by the late-1880s. But, it was riven by factions, the Republicans on one side and the Monarchists and Catholics on the other, a situation not helped by *L'Affair Dreyfus* which itself was divisive. Promotions were made on the basis of a General never attending Mass! On one hand militarily, the policy was for a line of forts to defend the revise borders with Germany and the annexed Alsace-Lorraine, hence Douaumont and other forts, on the other it was *'l'attaque à outrance'* with its shining swords, and the fierce bayonet charge by the men in their red pantaloons. Yet, the Army was a potent force in 1914.

The opposing French and German Commanders in Chief, Joffre and von Falkenhayn, are compared. One does find that the author drifts away somewhat from a careful analysis of the individuals, and it seems that he is now depending on their appearances in photographs to determine their characters. Thus we read of von Falkenhayn that he does not have the mouth of a determined leader, while his: 'sensitive, dimpled chin confirms the implications of weakness'! The portly Joffre meanwhile, is not a strategist, but a 'good republican' who is a very good organiser, although in fairness, the analysis of Joffre does have more fact to back it up.

It is interesting to read that von Falkenhayn that 'sells' the battle of Verdun to the Kaiser, playing on the latter's antipathy to his English cousins. Similarly he does not allow the facts to get in the way of his intentions, for example suggesting that the British were about to attack near Arras, when the reality was that the British were totally unprepared to undertake an offensive at the time. Given that Crown Prince Wilhelm, commanding the German 5th Army, is not aware that the strategy is to 'bleed the French white', the author suggests that this was a cynical ploy, and not ruthlessness *per se*.

When the author just sticks to the battle, a far better account is provided, although the focus is on the key events such as Colonel Driant's stand, the loss of the Forts Douaumont and Vaux, and the start of the fighting on the Meuse's left bank. And of course, anecdotal stories and the accounts from some of the battle's participants add colour. In no way can every unit's story be told, but there is a reasonable cross-section.

There are a number of irritations in the book the first being that he frequently makes comparisons. However, it is not so much that these are numerous in themselves, but that they might be regarded as 'future comparisons', harking forward in time to events of World War 2. Frequently reference is made to El Alamein, and one is left wondering whether the author is sucking up to Field-Marshal Montgomery who, coincidentally, offers the comment that the book is 'Brilliantly written…'? To a simpleton like me, a comparison should be made to events in the past rather than events that are yet to occur in the future.

The British were clearly on the sidelines as the French and Germans slogged it out, and as the author readily states, were not of sufficient strength to launch yet another attack in late-1915/early-1916. However, not infrequently, the British, and more so Douglas Haig, attracts criticism from the author for not attacking sooner, to the point that it becomes tedious. Are these his own, well-researched views? I think not, for I would suggest that his thinking had been unduly influenced by Basil Liddell-Hart, a chap who was not exactly enamoured with Haig.

Setting aside the interviews and quotes from former enemies, much of the research that went into the book appears to have been secondary as opposed to primary, so that little time went into ploughing through archives. Given that it was originally completed in 1962, many such sources were not available, so that cannot be a criticism, while the effort that would have to go into studying French regimental histories and their German counterparts would have been monumental, not least because of the many regiments that fought at Verdun. So, it may indicate from his career up until 1962 that he could only read, inwardly digest and write about Verdun over a two to three year period.

Yet, the book has continued to sell over the last fifty years, so perhaps it is not so bad? Overall it is not, though I believe that *'The Price of Glory'* has limitations that only a journalistic writer can bring to the table. However, I would commend others to read it, so that thy can get the feel of the battle and the command decisions made on either side.

Towards 2014-2019

In late September, a few Group members, including Ian Ronayne, Daniel Benest and Howard Baker, sat down with staff from Jersey Heritage and the Jersey Archive to 'brainstorm' possible activities to commemorate the Great War. As a result, the following have been seen considered as likely activities:

1. Daniel Benest, on behalf of the Great War Study Group, is undertaking research towards updated the 1919 Roll of Honour, to be published by 'After the Battle' - funding to be sought
2. Jersey Heritage is keen to commission and publish an authoritative account of the period from the Jersey perspective
3. Jersey Heritage is considering a fixed display of some kind, possibly to be located at Elizabeth Castle, which would concentrate on a number of representative accounts that would embrace experience at home and abroad
4. Jersey Archive will lead a community collecting initiative to scan letters, diaries, photographs etc across the Parishes
5. The aforementioned photographic material will be consolidated for the purpose of projection in a venue to be decided
6. Jersey Archive will scan all the Great War Travel Permits (passenger lists 1915-19) and make them available online (this may apply to other material in the form of diaries etc)
7. Jersey Heritage will potentially work with the Jersey Arts Trust to commission a play on the subject

For want of a better name, I've nicknamed them as the 'Seven Strands', however, my concerns are that they are all 'indoor' activities and that they are largely data collection and presentation in nature. To my mind, there should be some 'outdoor' stuff that engages with Jersey's public, and not simply to use them as data providers. That said, I

should stress that I'm also not advocating that Howard and Peter Tabb are engaged in digging trenches across Jersey for the next five/six years! Meanwhile Peter writes:

'The JEP have allocated one of their senior feature writers (Diane Simon) to how they are going to commemorate the Great War and, since I know her well as I used to work alongside her, she has asked me to act as a historical consultant on her project. As soon as I know what this is likely to involve I will be keeping the Group in the picture.'

Centenary Edition of the Jersey's Great War Roll of Honour
An update
By Daniel Benest

So far I have written to all of the Jersey parish constables and I have submitted pieces for eight of their newsletters. I have contacted numerous individuals and organisations and I have joined the WFA prior to submitting an article for 'Stand To!' and advertising the Group's project on their website.

I am currently formulating 'my version' of Jersey's Roll of Honour on Excel, without the CIGWSG macros and Internet links. In the workbook, I have a separate worksheet for each letter of the alphabet, a worksheet listing the abbreviated 'ranks' employed in each service and then stating alongside what these shortened terms stand for and finally, at this stage, I am formulating a statistics worksheet, firstly listing the abbreviated regiment/service name, alongside their full name and then stating the numbers that enlisted in each regiment/service (per letter), with the total amount hopefully tying up to the final Jersey Roll of Honour figure (per website). I anticipate putting together a further statistics worksheet, to ascertain how many Jersey individuals fought for which nation.

- Column 1: Roll of Honour number, with unique number 1 to 1,625
- Column 2: Surname
- Column 3: Forenames
- Column 4: Awards (campaign medals are not included)
- Column 5: Rank (abbreviated)
- Column 6: Nation
- Column 7: Service (abbreviated)
- Column 8: Unit
- Column 9: Casualty, e.g. KIA, DOW, Died etc.
- Column 10: Death Date
- Column 11: Photo of individual, Y/N *
- Column 12: Photo of headstone or memorial inscription, Y/N *
- Column 13: Principal CWGC cemetery or memorial
- Column 14: CWGC cemetery or memorial reference (where applicable)
- Column 15: Also commemorated at …
- Column 16: Family comment
- Column 17: Date checked *

* These columns will be hidden in the final draft

Perhaps Column 16 is too liable for pitfalls and onerous. I may not get round to completing this detail satisfactorily.

One obstacle to overcome is the number of inevitable TBAs, which indicate missing details to individuals' service records. Another is that of our 'problem' Frenchmen where sufficient information is lacking. I need to compile a list and submit it to the French 'powers-that-be' so that headway can be made.

Until I have made adequate progress with the above main phase I don't feel able to approach publishers with a book plan which they would be able to cost accurately. In addition to the details directly involved with the Roll of Honour, I feel that individuals of note (an obvious example being the VC winners) should be highlighted and their photographs submitted for inclusion in the book as well as pictures of local Great War memorials.

Perhaps fellow Group members might be called upon to write pieces on the significant memorials and cemeteries, e.g. Thiepval Memorial to the Missing, The Menin Gate, the Loos Memorial and the Arras Memorial and maybe the part the city of Mons played on the Western Front. I hope that Ian Ronayne will contribute something in relation to the 'Jersey Pals'. These additional appendages should be of a similar length to one another, say 500 words each?

Finally at this stage, who will be up for proof-reading?

Jersey Archive
'What's your Street Story' Talks

The final talk for this year will take place on Saturday, 17th November commencing at 10.00 a.m., the subject being St Helier's Bath Street. If you are looking to attend, you will need to book by ringing 01534 833300.

Jersey's Militia Pay Lists, 1914-1917

Work on this project has currently paused, this being largely due to effort going towards more pressing needs to update the JRoH and the JRoS. I intend to apply some effort at this in November.

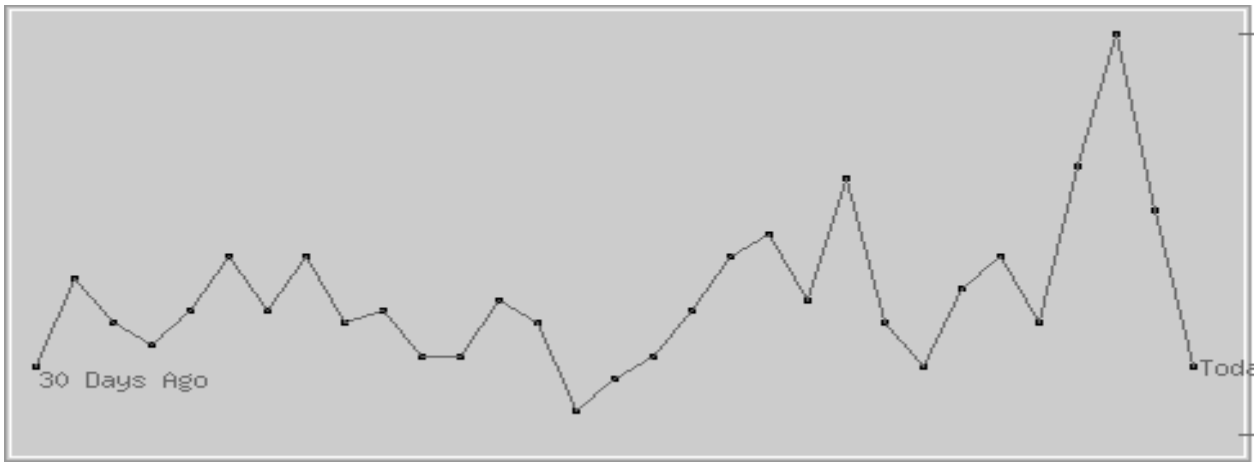
Out and About

Looking Back: There has been Ian Ronayne's Go France tour and my trip to Verdun, both of which have been covered elsewhere.

Looking Forward: I will be visiting Kew at the beginning of December, where I want to look out for the service files of George Francis Le Vée, Padre Simon Stock Knapp, and now, Captain Basil Howard Spear(-)Morgan as well gleaning some long overdue records to undertake Naval Gazing.

Website Workings
By Roger Frisby

Website visits are now approaching 28,100 with very noticeable spikes following mentions in the Jersey Evening Post, the Guernsey Press and Channel Television. The particularly large spike in the graph overleaf follows Channel TV's news report, with Liz Walton and Ian Ronayne, about preparations for the centenary of the Great War.



Press articles proved their worth as they included mentions of our website and subsequent letters and telephone calls have provided us with many personal details and photographs of those included in our Rolls of Honour and Service. Where appropriate, these details have been incorporated or have enabled us to correct our records. With the centenary approaching, I'm sure we will be able to repeat this occasionally.

A recent contact gave us information about a Frenchman whose name was said to appear on the Grouville Parish Memorial. On checking this, I found that it didn't! Further checks revealed that he did appear but that when I had transcribed the memorial names, I had completely missed the memorial panel listing French names. This has now been corrected and also thrown up the names of some men who we had not included in the JRoH. Barrie is now investigating them.

Our site also includes a number of videos. When we first launched, Internet Explorer was the web browser of choice for most and so the videos were configured to suit that. That situation is no longer the case as Google Chrome, Firefox and others have become very popular. I have now uploaded most of our videos to YouTube and embedded those in our site. That gives cross-browser compatibility. I still have a little more work to do on them and will welcome comments.

Finally a few statistics about our Roll numbers:

- Guernsey Roll of Honour – 1463 names
- Guernsey Roll of Service – 5074 names
- Jersey Roll of Honour – 1625 names
- Jersey Roll of Service – 7330 names

The Guernsey Roll of Service, having only been started earlier this year, is still very much "work in progress" and is expected to grow considerably

Odds and Ends

Administrative Matters: As ever, it would be of help if changes to Members' Email addresses are notified as they occur. This will enable me to keep the distribution lists up to date and for members to receive prompts on particular matters. I have been notified of a few more changes recently, so thanks to those members who have submitted their information.

Captain Geoffrey de Gruchy Barkas: Geoffrey Barkas' name jumped out of the Times newspaper at me a few weeks ago! In it, former Army Colonel, author and columnist Alan Mallinson had reviewed a book written by a Rick Stroud, titled: *'The Phantom Army of Alamein: How the Camouflage Unit and Operation Bertram Hoodwinked Rommel'*. We had first 'met' Geoffrey in Journal 28, having briefly covered his career from the Great War to Alamein, while referring to his later work on camouflage. Published by the Bloomsbury Press at £16.99, it may be of interest.

Chester Cecil Church: Having touched base with Doctor Peter Jones, the DNA specialist scientist for Fromelles, I am advised that the sample kits for any Australian soldiers will be posted out to present day relatives in the next few weeks. Hopefully there will be further progress to report in Journal 47.

Philatelic Matters: Well, as far as aviation stamp issues go, one Crown Dependency has certainly it right! What better than the Isle of Man with its set of six stamps issued to commemorate the Royal Flying Corps centenary by making simple use of the aircrafts' side views?

It is a very attractive set. Although well-intentioned, both Jersey and Guernsey too often clutter their aviation stamps with a background of airports, churches and the sea. They could apply the KISS principle more often.

Captain Basil Howard Spear(-)Morgan: Looking for something totally different in the Times digital archive, I recently chanced upon the death notice of Captain Morgan who died in Jersey on the 16th September, 1919 from a brain abscess and meningitis. This was very likely as a result of head wounds received at Arras, probably in April, 1917. His death at 1 Hampton Villas in St Helier was reported by an Esther Day(-)Luce. Esther was, at some stage, a nurse and was very likely employed to look after Captain Morgan during his convalescence.

He would be buried, subsequently, in Finchley in London and is commemorated by the CWGC. The JROH does not include his name, and I have been so far undecided as to whether it should. But it is obvious that he was a resident when he died. Hopefully I can find out more about him at Kew next month before deciding.

French Military Records: It appears from brochures that I picked up advertising the 2014-2018 commemorations in Verdun as well as throughout France, that there is a digitization exercise under way to enable 8.5M French military records to go on line. I have no further details at present, but will be looking through other material over the next few weeks. This is certainly good news although I suspect that searching for CI links will be like the proverbial needle…

Acknowledgements: I have made use of material in a few articles in this and the previous Journal where I have forgotten to acknowledge the source in the text. The item on André de Gailhard-Bancel depended on the memorial card and some background information provided by WFA member, David O'Mara. Similarly Max Fresson's picture was provided by Madame Bérangère Barbou who incidentally also provided the photo of his grave at Chateau-Thiérry and which appears on the website. Finally, thanks also to Rob Thompson, another WFA member, and some of whose thoughts were behind the article: '1917 – The year that Germany lost the Great War' in Journal 45.

Enfin

As ever, my thanks to those who contributed to this Journal for their inputs, both large and small. Everything helps! Apologies for the few days extra delay, which unfortunately may have resulted from a flu jab. Well that is my excuse!

Regards
Barrie H Bertram
23rd October, 2012

Journal Issue Dates For 2012 and 2013

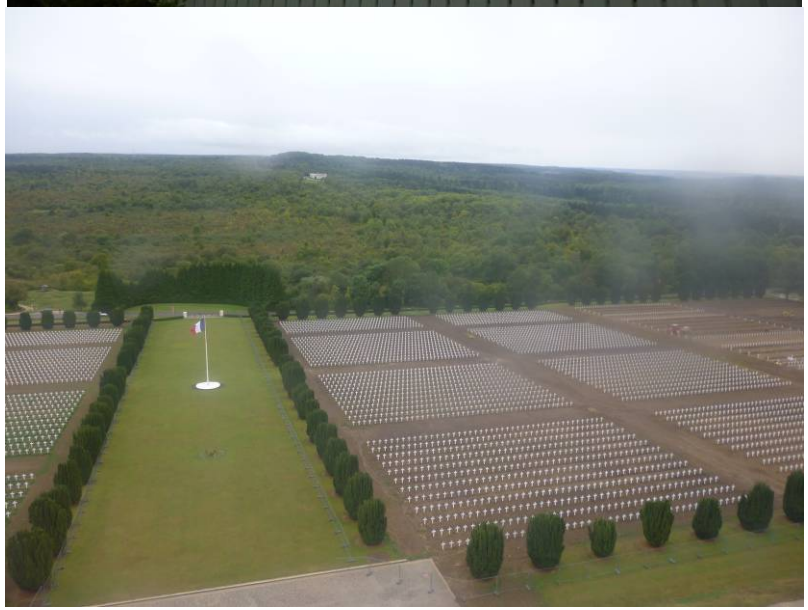
The final Journal for 2012 is planned for the 15th December, so I will be looking for articles by the 10th December.

As yet, the planned issue dates for 2013 have not been determined.

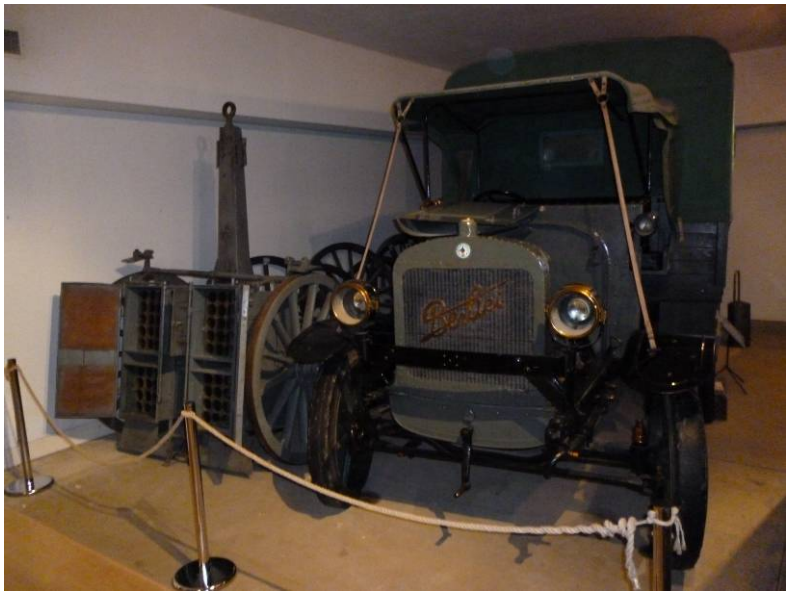
I am currently giving thought to whether the current six issues per annum rate of publication can still be effectively sustained, or that it should now drop to a four issues (nominally 15th Feb, 15th May, 15th Aug and 15th Nov) per annum rate.

There are several reasons for this assessment, one being my intellectual stamina after nearly eight years doing the job, while another is the need for effort of a number of us to be applied to commemorating the centenary of the Great War in conjunction with other organisations.

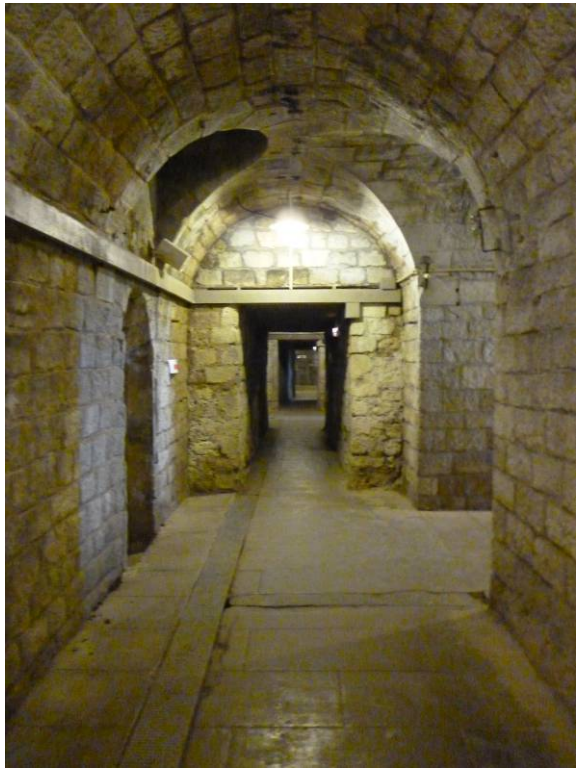
I will be 'speaking' to a number of Group members about this over the next month or so, and I will advise on the outcome in Journal 47.



Work in Progress at Douaumont



Le Mémorial de Verdun



Fort Douaumont