# CHANNEL ISLANDS
# GREAT WAR STUDY GROUP


**150th Anniversary of the Victoria Cross**

# JOURNAL 6
# FEBRUARY 2006

Hello All

As you will see, this is the first Journal of 2006 and I trust that everyone enjoyed their Christmas and New Year.

You will have noticed the new front cover! In response to some recent electronic exchanges in connection with Number 5's "Looking Ahead To 2006" article, I am trying to achieve some improved presentational aspects starting with this Journal having a different cover picture for each issue. I will also be trying to look at regularising some features. However, I will cover that detail in the "Looking Ahead To 2006 - Feedback" article which comes later.

With regards to this month's picture, Ned Malet de Carteret has sent me an article and a number of photographs related to his great-grandfather Captain Harold Ackroyd VC, MC, MD, RAMC, of which I have used the medal set to remind us, indeed if we need to be, of the 150th Anniversary of the Victoria Cross' institution. It has been celebrated by the issue of a £2 Jersey stamp while Guernsey will similarly commemorate the event in the next few weeks.

Meanwhile Ned himself has been quite actively recently in dealing with members in the Victoria Cross Society, as I understand it, to help better document the background to some of the winners associated with Jersey. This has been coupled with another Channel TV appearance on the subject.

Also, some excellent pieces from Elizabeth Morey and Ian Ronayne are featured.

I was both interested and curious in Elizabeth's mention of Brocton and Sling Camps. The Brocton area I knew from orienteering events in Cannock Chase area of Stafford and it was the home for a sizeable camp as part of the Training Reserve along with nearby Rugeley. It was a Prisoner Of War camp also. Today there are two cemeteries of note, one of which contains over 2100 German POW from the Great War. Sling Camp was more puzzling, but after some "Googling", I've discovered that it was at Bulford and that a large kiwi was cut into the chalk hillside of Beacon Hill there at the time. It would be interesting to find out if it still is. I vaguely remember something in the area from military training there in the late 50s but what? I have added photographs of both camps as she does not have a scanner to send her own.

Ian addresses the French mobilisation from Jersey at the War's outbreak, and looks at events that appear never to have enjoyed any deep and meaningful research. Both he and I have been in touch on this with the Association des Combattants Ancien and it seems that any information regarding those events have long since vanished along with the French consulate. It is a great pity.

## New Members

I am pleased to say that a further two people from Jersey have expressed an interest in being involved to a greater or lesser degree with the Group.

First, Gary Godel who, while possessing an interest in the Great War, has also done a considerable amount of research into Jerseymen serving in the Second World War. You may have seen a recent Temps Passé article on Richard Hogg, an Old

Victorian and Battle of Britain fighter pilot that was produced by Gary. Gary's grandfather, Edward Cornelius McLinton served, and was wounded, as a Rifleman with the Jersey Contingent (D Company, 7th Royal Irish Rifles), with his regimental number 4177. It should also be noted that the JRoH&S is completely incorrect regarding Edward. Meanwhile Gary's great-grandfather Cornelius McLinton served with the RFA, and a great-uncle, Geoffrey Gavey, served with the KRRC. Gary will be off with Holts' Tours to Gallipoli in late-May.

Secondly, Freddie Cohen who tells me that he is particularly interested in the Boer War. In a number of respects the Boer War influenced the Great War. It clearly led to a number of changes and reforms in how the British Army subsequently operated, a case of "lessons learnt", and in a diplomatic way, in the support provided by Germany to the Boers. Freddie's wife is also the great-grand-daughter of Sir Herbert Plumer the Second Army Commander at Messines and the later stages of Passchendaele.

In welcoming both, I have ensured that they are aware that like the rest of us, the extent of their involvement is as much or as little as they wish.

## A KIWI SOLDIER
## By Elizabeth Morey

To make a pilgrimage to the grave of a relative for the first time 80 years after the relative's death, is a very emotional experience. To make a pilgrimage to the grave of a relative on the other side of the world, 80 years after his death while fighting in a war in a foreign land, and to be the only member of his family ever to have been able to do so, is an emotional experience that is magnified many times. In 1998 I had the privilege of being party to just such an experience. In 2005, I again visited the grave, which was another very special occasion. The relative in this case was Private Charles Gillard, the great uncle of my brother-in-law.

When my sister and brother-in-law, Heather and Brian Stonestreet, and I were making our plans for a forthcoming trip from New Zealand to the United Kingdom in 1998, a tour (my second) of the battlefields of Flanders and the Somme was also included in our itinerary without a split second's hesitation. In 2005, a dream came true when I was again able to spend time on the battlefields, this time with two friends from Auckland, John and Betty Scrimshaw, fellow WFA New Zealand Branch members. Rather than a trip of a few days, this last trip was for a wonderful two weeks.

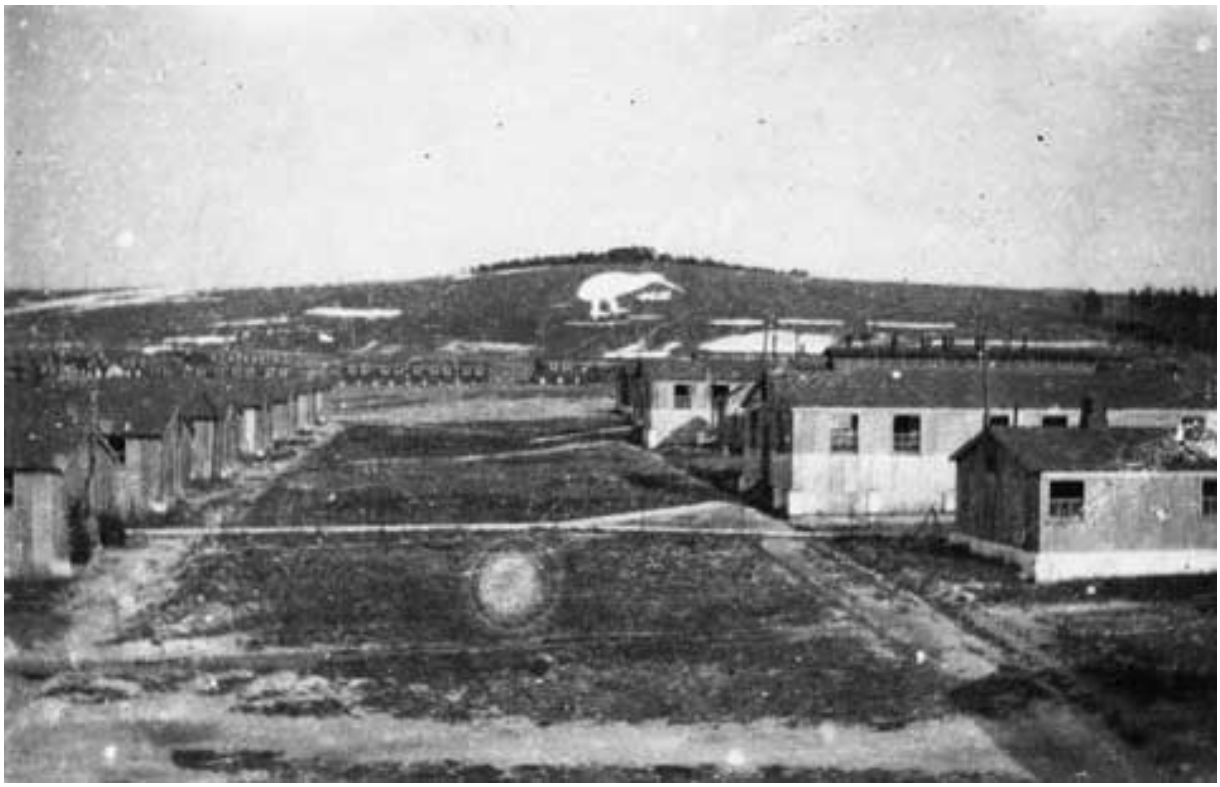
**The Pursuit to the Selle:** Charles Everett Gillard was born in East Tamaki, near Auckland, New Zealand, in 1887, the youngest child (and only son) of Arthur Gillard and Susanna Knox. Charles and his father were farmers in East Tamaki, breaking in new farm land and endeavouring to make a living off the land. Charles married Annie Kathleen Farley in August, 1915, one year after the outbreak of the First World War.

In June, 1917, Charles enlisted in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. His regimental number was 70266 and he sailed with the 34th Reinforcement from New Zealand in February, 1918, to join the thousands of other young Kiwi soldiers in the trenches in Belgium and France. Charles would have left the country of his birth with a very heavy heart. Not only was he leaving behind his parents and three sisters, but

his young wife, Annie, had died in childbirth after little less than a year of marriage. Oral family history indicates that Charles had told his family that he did not expect to return to New Zealand after the war. It was a prophetic expectation.

**New Zealand Soldiers at Brocton during the Winter of 1917/18**

After disembarking at Liverpool, Charles spent time at Brocton Camp in Staffordshire and Sling Camp on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire and he arrived in France in May 1918.



**Sling Camp**
**(Ed: I'm not sure how anyone could miss the Kiwi!)**

Charles had only been in France a month or two when he contracted mumps and had a spell in hospital at Rouen. Finally, after being discharged from hospital and further training at Etaples during August, 1918, he rejoined the 1st Battalion of the Canterbury Infantry Regiment, in September, 1918, and was posted to the 13th Company.

The Canterbury Regiment was one of the South Island regiments and Charles was a born and bred North Islander. However, men of the New Zealand Division were placed in whatever regiment required reinforcing, irrespective of where the soldier hailed from, as was the case with the reinforcements for many British regiments.

The Hindenburg Line was broken at the end of September 1918, and in early October the New Zealand Division was also involved in the corresponding movements to develop and exploit the previous successes. Speed was essential, not least because the summer season was running out – at midnight on 5th/6th October 1918 the clocks had been put back one hour, which heralded the end of summer. An attack was planned to begin on Tuesday, 8th October, on a seventeen mile front in an area between Cambrai and Le Cateau. The final objective was a line two or three miles to the east, on the western edge of a plateau bounded by the Scheldt and Selle Rivers.

The night of 7th/8th October started cold and wet, but fortunately the rain cleared in the early hours, in time for the attack to open at 4.30 a.m. on 8th October. The enemy's artillery response was immediate and heavy, machine guns swept the open ground, but from the outset the attack moved rapidly forward. For the New Zealand soldiers, the first day involved the taking of Esnes, and then it was the hard slog to the area northeast of Esnes.

The night of 8th/9th October was clear and the early morning very cold with the first frost of autumn. At 5.20 a.m. on 9th October, the barrage started, the troops stamped their feet to get their circulation moving, and continued moving eastwards. They over-ran Longsart and carried on to the La Cateau-Cambrai railway line and the road to Fontaine-au-Pire. German machine guns firing from Fontaine-au-Pire caused very severe losses and it became necessary to suspend the excellent progress until dusk, when a patrol of the 1st Battalion, Canterbury Regiment succeeded in entering the outskirts of Fontaine-au-Pire. Later, under cover of darkness during the cold night of drizzling rain of 9th October, patrols pushed forward and found that both Fontaine-au-Pire and Beauvois-en-Cambresis (two small villages almost joined together) had been evacuated.

At 3.30 a.m. on the morning of 10th October the advance eastwards from Beauvois-en-Cambresis continued without a barrage. The 1st Battalion, Canterbury Regiment met heavy resistance at Herpigny and Aulicourt Farms, and the 13th Company in particular at Aulicourt Farm. Both farms were located on a road just northwest of Bethencourt, running northwards to Quievy from the Le Cateau-Cambrai road. By 10.20 a.m. Herpigny and Aulicourt Farms had been taken, and by 2.00 p.m. the road to Quievy near the farms had also been won.

From mid-afternoon on 10th October, the 2nd Battalion, Canterbury Regiment led the advance east to Viesly and on to Braistre. The next day the final objective of the Selle River was reached and the river crossed.

At 10.00 p.m. on the night of 10th October, the men of 1st Battalion, Canterbury Regiment, tired and worn out after their long, hard days of fighting, moved back in exuberant spirits, singing and whistling, to houses at Beauvois-en-Cambresis for a well-earned rest.

However, one Kiwi soldier who had started the day with the 13th Company of the 1st Battalion, Canterbury Regiment was not with them to enjoy their rest. At some time during the day of 10th October, 1918, Charles Gillard had been killed, possibly at Aulicourt Farm or along the Quievy road.

**The pilgrimages to St Aubert British Cemetery:** Charles Gillard's personal records from the New Zealand Army show that he was buried at Les Bevillers, a village a short distance from Beauvois-en-Cambresis and very near Herpigny and Aulicourt Farms. St Aubert British Cemetery was begun by the 24th Division on 12th October, 1918. The cemetery was enlarged by other units until 23rd October and after the Armistice, 374 graves were added from small cemeteries in the area. The body of Charles was one of those to be reburied in St Aubert British Cemetery after the Armistice.

In July, 1998, while on a Holts Tour of Flanders and the Somme, and as arranged by Holts Tours and the hotel at Peronne, Heather, Brian and I visited Charles' grave at St Aubert British Cemetery. In the late afternoon, at the end of a day of unforgettable visits to the battlefields of Flanders and the drive south to the Somme battlefield, a taxi was waiting at the hotel to take us the 80 km or so to St Aubert. The hotel had packed us a picnic meal to eat in the car, so armed with cameras, food, maps etc we headed off on our own special pilgrimage.

The taxi driver spoke next to no English but we managed to communicate by sign language and lots of smiles and laughter. In complete contrast to the noise, confusion, terror and horror of a First World War battlefield, our trip to St Aubert was very pleasant. I must admit, though, that I needed to shut my eyes on occasions as the taxi hurtled along the road at 120 km/hour, the driver with one hand on the steering wheel and the other clutching a map. He had one eye on the road and the other on the map - and drove on the "wrong" side of the road! (New Zealanders drive on the left hand side of the road.)

St Aubert is a small village a couple of miles to the northeast of Cambrai. The immaculately kept and beautiful cemetery is situated amid cultivated fields, a short distance from the village. The cemetery is bordered by a stone wall, there are several trees around the edge, and the Cross of Sacrifice is at the entrance. It is a lovely quiet, peaceful place and a cemetery that is probably not often visited.

We very quickly found Charles' grave as we had a map of the cemetery from the office of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in New Zealand, and details of Charles' plot and grave number. Brian placed a small plaque in front of the headstone that he had made in New Zealand and taken to France, which read: "You didn't come home to us, so we have come to see you. Never forgotten." Along with Charles, there are seven other New Zealanders buried in the cemetery. I located all of the graves and placed a New Zealand poppy at most of the headstones.

In September, 2005, I spent two weeks on the Western Front battlefields in the company of friends and keen Western Front enthusiasts from Auckland, John and

Betty Scrimshaw. We hired a car in England and drove to Ypres for a few days and then spent a couple of days driving to the Somme where we were to be based for nine days (and I even shared the driving on the "wrong" side of the road!). On the way from Ypres to the Somme, we visited many wonderful places, including Le Quesnoy, a town very much close the heart of New Zealanders. One of the things high on my "wish list" of things to do during my time on the battlefields was to try and trace the footsteps of Charles from the time he left Esnes to the time of his death. Driving in a car and being restricted to modern roads, we knew it would not be possible to actually follow in Charles' footsteps, but we determined to do the best we could.

Our starting point was Esnes, from where Charles started out on 8th October. After stopping at the small CWGC cemetery in the Esnes Communal Cemetery on the outskirts of the village, we continued on to Fontaine-au-Pire and Beauvois-en-Cambresis, the two villages that just run into each other, where Charles and his mates met heavy opposition from German machine guns. From here we attempted to find the two farms that featured largely in Charles' world on 10th October, i.e. Herpigny and Aulicourt Farms. We found a road sign "Herpigny", but no farm that we could identify, and no road sign or farm "Aulicourt". However, it was enough to have seen what we had, and we then continued along the road to Quievy before having the pleasure of again visiting Charles' grave at St Aubert British Cemetery. Brian had made a cross for me to take from New Zealand to place at Charles' headstone. It was an honour to be able to do so.

Charles, along with thousands of other Kiwi soldiers, will never be forgotten. The pilgrimages to the battlefield and to a relative's grave all those years after his death (albeit, in my case, an "in-law relative"), will also never be forgotten.

**Footnote:** The Battle carried out over the period 8th to 12th October, 1918 is known as the Second Battle of Le Cateau, to distinguish it from the much more widely known and documented battle of August 1914. The attack is also referred to as the Pursuit to the Selle. Later in the month, troops from the New Zealand Division also took part in the Battle of the Selle.

**Further reading:** The New Zealand Division, 1916-1919 by Colonel H Stewart and The History of the Canterbury Regiment, NZEF, 1914-1919 by Captain David Ferguson, both published by Whitcombe and Tombs Limited, NZ, 1921.

## WHAT HAPPENED THEN?
## By Barrie Bertram

As most of you know, I have been looking at the Jersey Roll of Honour and Service (JRoH&S) for some time. During the last month or so I have been able to borrow a combined CD-ROM version of the "Soldiers who died in the Great War" (SDGW) and "Officers who died in the Great War" (ODGW) publications from the early 20s. As may be expected from data that was largely scanned in, some data corruption has happened and it is occasionally interesting to note that St Helens is in Jersey or that there is now a Port Regent! A little lateral thought is often required to circumvent these errors.

On the plus side, however, the search engine allows for detailed searches based on regiment, battalion, forename and regimental numbers as typical examples – far less

coarse than the search engine with the CWGC, while the data is more comprehensive.

Amongst the regiments that are listed, the Channel Island Militia is featured and by further selection, a list of the 321 and 7 men who died with 1st and 2nd Battalions respectively of the RGLI can be generated and printed off. Similarly, the same can be done for the RJGB and the following is a simple list of the four deaths recorded:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 668 Pte ROBERT | Henry G | Died, Home | 29th October, 1918 |
| 892 Pte BRIERLEY | Guy | Died, Home | 31st October, 1918 |
| 998 Pte BAUDAINS | George | Died, Home | 25th October, 1918 |
| 1026 Pte ECOBICHON | Sydney W | Died, Home | 19th October, 1918 |

Like me, you will have noticed that these four men died within 13 days of each other and with the possible exception of Guy Brierley, who had joined the RJGB from the Manchester Regiment (regimental number 32125), these deaths were not as a result of wounds received in action.

Hence my questioning title. It seems to me that these four deaths were too close to each other to be a coincidence. Had the Spanish Influenza pandemic hit the island at that stage? Had the four men been in a poorly ventilated barrack room and succumbed to the fumes of a coke fire? Had they got hold of a dodgy bottle of Calvados??? Was age a factor, according to the CWGC Baudains was 27 years old, Ecobichon 30, Brierley 34 while Robert's is at present unknown?

Well, at this distance I can only speculate. However, hopefully a scan through the microfiche contemporary Evening Posts and Morning News when I am over in Jersey at the end of February will shed light on these deaths.

## CAPT H ACKROYD VC, MC, MD, RAMC (1877-1917)
## By Edward F Malet de Carteret (Great-Grandson)

On the 11th August, 1917, a German sniper's bullet prematurely ended the life of Harold Ackroyd. He was about his normal daily business that day of attending to the wounded men of his battalion dodging from shell-hole to shell-hole in the front line.

According to his batman, Pte A Scriven, who was in charge of the Advanced Dressing Station that day, Harold was about 150 yards in front of him visiting each company and attending to the wounded, when he was shot through the head by a sniper. Scriven didn't actually witness the deed, but says that upon hearing the news, "I immediately took a party of stretcher-bearers, but on arrival found that he was dead. There were six other poor fellows in the same shell-hole who had met the same fate. It was a perfect death trap."

Harold Ackroyd was born on 18th July, 1877 in Southport, Lancashire and was the younger son of Edward Ackroyd who had made his living from textiles and was Chairman of The Southport and Cheshire Railway Co. He was an intelligent boy and was sent to Shrewsbury and from there he gained entrance to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. He completed his BA there in 1899 and continued his studies at Guy's Hospital where he achieved his MB in 1904, finally gaining his MD in 1910. Harold had house appointments at Guy's, the General Hospital in Birmingham and the David Lewis Northern Hospital in Liverpool. After this he secured a British

Medical Association Scholarship, and became a research scholar at Downing College Laboratory (Dixon's Laboratory) in Cambridge, where he pioneered the research into the discovery of vitamins. During this time Harold met Mabel Robina Smythe at The Strangeways Hospital in Cambridge where she was matron and they married on 1st August, 1908. They had three children - Ursula (born 14th June, 1909, died 1993 (my grand-mother)), Stephen (b. 29th April, 1912, d.1964) and finally Anthony (Tony) (b. 20th October, 1914 d.1988).

**Harold as a Houseman with Nursing Staff at Guy's Hospital 1905**

Harold was commissioned as a Temporary Lieutenant on the 15th February, 1915 and was attached as Medical Officer to the 6th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment which formed part of the 53rd Infantry Brigade, part of the 18th Division.

After training at camps in Colchester and Codford St. Mary on the edge of Salisbury Plain, the Division sailed for France on 25th July, 1915. It was posted opposite Carnoy and Fricourt on the Somme Front and took over a portion of the Front Line held by the 5th Division on 22nd August, 1915. By the end of 1915 the Division had suffered 1,247 casualties, the quietest four months in its history.

On 15th February, 1916, Harold was promoted to Temporary Captain. The first half of 1916 was a stalemate between the Allies and the German forces, and was spent by the British in the build up to the First Battle of The Somme. The 1st of July saw its commencement. The 18th Division was now part of Fourth Army under Sir Henry Rawlinson. By the end of the first advance, the Division had advanced 3,000 yards on a 2,500 yard front and had seized Montauban Ridge, the west end of Montauban village, Pommiers Redoubt, Caterpillar Wood and Marlborough Wood. 695 prisoners had been captured and the Division suffered 3,707 casualties. Harold's letter to Ursula from the rest area away from the front of 9th July, 1916 describes how the

battalion fared. This is one of twenty-three letters written to her, all in pencil, which survive.

*"Dear Ursula,*

*Mother will have told you many things that have happened here and I could tell you more, but the less said the better. The battalion I am with did splendidly and now am with them a few miles to recoup and refit. A few days ago where we are was under constant fire but now is as safe as Royston though in the distance we hear guns always firing and everywhere are funny balloons watching the enemy. Tell mother that daddy is very well and very happy though there is much to make one sad.*

*We were right in the middle of the first day's great fight and our battalion was in the front line. I can tell you I was very proud of the officers and men I have known so long.*

*Now we rest on what a few days ago was a bare hill side - nothing but mud - now covered with funny little shelters against the wind and rain and we are all very happy and contented sleeping on the ground while at last the sun shines and it does not rain.*

*You would be so interested to see it all with funny little cages for the German prisoners to stay in for a few hours before leaving for England.*

*Give my love to mother and the boys.*
*Your loving father*
*Harold Ackroyd"*

I will now proceed to give an account of the 53rd Brigade's part in the fight to hold Delville Wood, in order to give the details of the action for which Harold was to receive eleven recommendations for the VC. He was later to be awarded the MC for this action. Delville Wood was the 'graveyard' of the 53rd Brigade as it was constituted when it landed in France. On the morning of the 19th July, 1916 under the command of Brigadier-General Higginson, the Brigade fought its way into the southern half of the wood where the South Africans had been forced out and for two days and two nights remained dug in and held the ground they had gained against furious and continuous counter attacks and under appalling shell fire.

The general scheme for the recapture of the wood was as follows. The 8th Battalion, Norfolk Regiment was to clear the wood south of Prince's Street, a drive that ran east to west through the wood and as soon as this was done, the other three battalions of the Brigade were to attack northwards - the 10th Battalion, Essex Regiment on the right and the 6th Battalion, Royal Berkshires Regiment in the centre. The 8th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment were to clear Longueval on the left.

It was arranged that the Norfolks' CO should inform Brigade HQ of the hour at which he would be ready for the artillery barrage to be put on. The hour was provisionally settled for 6.15 a.m. on 19th July, 1916, but subsequently this had to be altered, and it was not until 7.15 a.m. that the attack could be launched. A message to this effect was sent to Brigade HQ, but it was not received until 7.51 a.m., consequently no artillery support was arranged for, and the attack proceeded without it.

There was only one entrance into the wood on the south side, and the way from Longueval to this entrance was under direct machine-gun fire, which became so intense that the Norfolks who were in front, could not at first get into the wood, although subsequently they managed slowly to clear the ground south of Princes Street and work as far eastwards as Buchanan Street. The holding up of the Norfolks delayed the Essex men, who were behind them. Colonel Scott commanding the Essex, pushed on through the Norfolks with his Battalion HQ party and got into the wood. His Signalling Officer, Lieutenant E Bird was shortly instructed to join him in the wood with six runners. There was such a galling fire to be passed through at the cross-roads at Longueval that Lieutenant Bird arrived with only one runner, two having been killed and three wounded.

The other Battalions followed the Norfolks and the Essex into the wood and the men had to run in singly under withering machine-gun fire and shelling, which increased in intensity once the attack had been launched. Capt NB Hudson, who was at that time a Company Commander with the Royal Berkshires (Ed: He survived the War and became Bishop of Ely) said, "I did not, however, see a single man falter." The tremendous shell-fire having cut off the Battalions from communication with Brigade HQ, General Higginson sent Major JC Markes, his Brigade Major and Lieutenant Neild, the Brigade Intelligence Officer, to investigate the situation. Major Markes was, however, hit in the chest and killed soon after passing through Longueval.

The fighting was of confused and individual nature that had characterised the struggle in Trones Wood. The Norfolks pushed on east of Buchanan Street and a considerable number of the enemy were killed by Lewis Guns and grenades, the remainder retiring to the south-east corner of the wood. By 1.30 p.m. the Norfolks had cleared the whole of the wood south of Princes Street, and the Essex, Royal Berkshires and Suffolks started to attack northwards. Little progress was made with this advance owing to the exceedingly heavy machine-gun fire, and at 5 p.m. all four Battalions were ordered to halt where they were and dig in.

In Longueval the Suffolks had not been able to progress farther than the crossroads in the middle of the village. So the Battalions dug themselves in, and for two nights held onto what they had gained. It was two days and two nights of the grimmest kind of warfare, for the Boche shelling did not cease, and the enemy poured in reinforcements in desperate attempt to recapture the stretch of the tangled undergrowth and shell-smitten trees that he had lost. The wood was littered with wounded and dying men, hundreds of them - men of The South African Brigade as well as 53$^{rd}$ Brigade men, and Germans too.

Colonel Scott was hit in the head by a piece of shell and was caught by the Adjutant, Captain RA Chell, as he fell down the steps of the dug-out; Lieutenant JD Archibald of the Essex was mortally wounded; and Lieutenants Byerley, Bird and Pinder-Davis were hit. The Essex lost 200 other ranks in this engagement and the other Battalions of the Brigade lost as heavily. Capt Hudson of the Royal Berkshires, in Private's uniform, was talking to the RSM; a Boche sniper saw them and killed the Sergeant-Major. Captain Hudson had a second escape when a bullet passed through his tin hat. The Royal Berkshires had one of their men taken prisoner for the first time in the war. They claim that they only lost nine men in that way during the whole war.

Captain Ackroyd, the Royal Berkshires MO, was a heroic figure during those two days. The fighting was so confused and the wood so hard to search that the difficulty

of evacuating the wounded seemed unconquerable. But Captain Ackroyd, bespectacled and stooping, a Cambridge Don before he joined the forces (Ed: Not true!) was so cool, purposeful, and methodical, that he cleared the whole wood of wounded, British and Boche as well. It was a shattered 53rd Brigade that was relieved on the night of the 21st-22nd July, 1916 by the 4th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers and other Battalions. The whole of Delville Wood was not yet in British hands; almost a month passed before it was completely cleared of Germans. But the 53rd Brigade had hung on to the ground it had gained. The losses sustained during the battle were 12 Officers killed and 39 wounded, and 181 other ranks killed and 773 wounded.

Harold, of course, also rescued many wounded of the South African Brigade, and he is remembered in the room commemorating Delville Wood at the Fort Beaufort Historical Museum, near East London, South Africa, where a matt oil picture of him hangs today, a copy of the one which hangs in the VC Room at the RAMC HQ in Milbank, London.

Harold left the Battalion on 11th August, 1916 and did not return to France until the middle of November. He returned to England on sick leave and was in fact given six weeks leave by the Army Medical Board. He convalesced in Cornwall with the family. According to the only account that I have, a posthumous letter to Mabel from Alfred J Clark dated 13th August, 1917 reveals;

*"We were all half sorry when he returned after getting blown up last July, for we knew that if he came back, he would go on taking appalling risks and that the end was almost a certainty, he of course knew this equally well."*

This confirms that Harold indeed was injured in some form, because when he returned to the front he took to wearing goggles. However, he seems to have recovered quickly because in a letter to his brother Edward dated 4th September, 1916 he can't understand why he has been given so much sick leave, and he calls the Army Medical Board, " a bunch of old fossils!" He also says, "I would hate the Battalion to go into action without me." Harold was passed fit for service on 3rd October, 1916 and on the 20th October, 1916 he was awarded the MC for his actions in Delville Wood.

The engagements of the Division between September, 1916 and July, 1917 were numerous and included Thiepval, and the Schwaben Redoubt, The Ancre, Boom Ravine, Irles and Cherisy. It is fair to say that the Division saw a good amount of the fiercest fighting during the whole war. The Division was now attached to General Jacob's II Corps of Sir Hubert Gough's Fifth Army. It is also fair to say that only those who fought through and survived the Flanders summer and autumn campaigns of 1917 probed the war's awfulness to its depths. From the beginning of the Battle that became to be known as Passchendaele until the taking of that village on 6th November, 1917, British losses totalled 268,000.

July, 1917 was a month of preparation for the offensive in Flanders. The 53rd Brigade was to spearhead the attack by the 18th Division. During the month they remained in training at Steenvorde, finding billets in farm buildings. Trips were made to a field between Ouderdom and Poperinghe where a vast model of the area to be attacked had been prepared and many explanatory lectures were given regarding the battle tactics. The German shell-fire barrage persisted during the build up and of

the 2,000 men of the 54th and 55th Brigades engaged in digging, and fetching and carrying in the preparing of the front-line system the losses were frightening. During the eighteen days of preparation, 90 Officers and 171 other ranks were killed and 29 Officers and 655 other ranks were wounded. Ninety-five per cent of the casualties were caused by shell-fire.

**Captain Harold Ackroyd in his garden at "Brooklands" in Royston**

Harold's last known existing letter, written to Ursula on the 19th July, 1917 does not mention anything of the forthcoming Third Battle of Ypres.

*"Dear Ursula,*

*I was so pleased to get your letter today. It is really so nice for you to be able to write all by yourself. I suppose you have got the letters which I sent home on the way and when I got back to the battalion they are still where I found them in quite a peaceful village where one might easily believe there was no war on.*

*Tell mother that a year ago today we were in Delville Wood; it was such a dreadful place and now a year later all is quiet and peaceful.*

*I did remember my birthday although I was not at home and thought of you all.*

*Tell mother that I received the clothes and the cake and will write to the bank.*

*I suppose today you are on the way down to Devon. I do hope you have a good time.*

*Much love to you all*
*Your loving father.*
*Harold Ackroyd."*

I will now turn to the action of the 31st July, 1917, the first day of Passchendaele.

The role of the 18th Division was to leap-frog the 30th Division after that Division had taken what became known as the black line. Deep behind enemy territory and 700 yards behind Glencorse Wood, the immediate objective, lay Polygon Wood which was to be the 18th Division's final objective. The High Command's plan was to strike with Fifth Army between Zillebeke and Zandvoorde Roads and Boesinghe on a front of seven and a half miles in length.

However disaster struck. By a tragic mistake 30th Division's infantry wheeled to their left and assaulted Chateau Wood instead of Glencorse Wood. The misleading information, that Glencorse Wood was in British hands, caused the 53rd Brigade to plunge into a fatal gap. For the rest of the 31st July, 1917, the 53rd Brigade was fighting against a fully-prepared enemy for the ground which the 30th Division should have taken. This fateful error caused the offensive in Glencorse Wood to be held up for several days. For the 6th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment first the sticky, shell-broken slope from Sanctuary Wood to the Menin Road had to be carried; then the road itself taken; then a chain of pill-boxes between the road and Glencorse Wood.

Headway was gained dearly, a few yards at a time. The method was by sharp rushes from shell-hole to shell-hole under cover of Lewis Gun fire. Before 10.00 a.m. the Royal Berkshires, on the left of the Suffolks, had taken Jargon Switch and the cross-roads north-west of Glencorse Wood; touch had been made with the 2nd Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment; the Surbiton Villas' line had been consolidated, with a support line in shell-holes; and Battalion HQ was established in the Menin Road tunnel. And in all that hellish turmoil, there had been one quiet figure, most heroic, most wonderful of all. Doctor Ackroyd, the Royal Berkshires' MO, a stooping, grey-haired, bespectacled man, rose to the supreme heights that day. He seemed to be everywhere; he tended and bandaged scores of men, for to him fell the rush of cases round Clapham Junction and towards Hooge. But no wounded man was

treated hurriedly or unskilfully. Ackroyd worked as stoically as if he were in the quiet of an operating theatre. Complete absorption in his work was probably his secret. When it was all over there were twenty-three separate recommendations of his name for the VC. Harold came through the 31st July, 1917 unscathed but died eleven days later in Jargon Trench without knowing that the VC was going to be awarded, for it was not gazetted until 6th September, 1917.

There are approximately twenty letters of condolence written to Mabel, the most moving being that of Captain (?) JN Richardson who was I believe the closest of Harold's comrades in the Battalion. Curiously it is dated 9th August, 1917, two days before his death.

*"Dear Mrs. Ackroyd,*

*I can't in the least way express my sorrow or offer you enough sympathy about your husband and our M.O. It's the biggest loss this battalion has ever suffered and its nothing more or less than a tragedy for us all.*

*As you have probably heard before he was the most fearless man imaginable and to see him in his cool way picking up wounded and sending them off was a sight no one can ever forget. The hottest shell fire never stopped him going to a wounded man and the men used to simply stare in wonderment at his bravery. In all fights he was worth a hundred men to us for morale's sake. Doubtless it will make you extremely proud of your gallant husband, but on the other hand his loss may be still harder to bear.*

*Sympathy I know is of little value in such cases, but I am so very grieved for you and your little children, especially Ursula whom I seem to know in a sort of vague way.*

*I remain,*
*Sincerely yours,*
*J.N. Richardson."*

Harold was buried in Birr Crossroads Cemetery, Zillebeke, near Ypres. His headstone, on the right of the entrance gate is one that reads "Believed to be buried". The whole family returned to Jersey after the War and Mabel died in 1947 and is buried in St Ouen's Churchyard with Ursula.

Harold's name appears on the following memorials:

1) Shrewsbury - on the statue in the chapel.
2) Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge - in the chapel.
3) Memorial plaque in Room C9 Caius College, Cambridge.
4) Royston, the War Memorial a road name, and a plaque on his old residence "Brooklands".
5) Southport War Memorial.
6) Guy's Hospital Memorial.
7) The British Medical Association - House Memorial
8) The RAMC Officers HQ, Milbank, London – matt oil painting, and replica medals on display in the VC room. Also VC Role of Honour board in the foyer. Now at Army Services Museum, Aldershot
9) Fort Beaufort History Museum, South Africa - copy of RAMC picture.

10) Birr Crossroads Cemetery, Zillebeke, Nr Ypres, Belgium. His headstone is one that reads "Believed to be buried"
11) There is also currently a troop in the RAMC named "Ackroyd Troop."
12) On Mabel's & Ursula's gravestone in St Ouen's Churchyard, Jersey

**Acknowledgements:**

Capt GHF Nichols - 18th Division in the Great War.
C Ackroyd, MA, MD, BChir, FRCS.

## Book Reviews

### Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters 1914-1918 (Edited by Gary Sheffield and John Bourne)

Never having reviewed a book before, I am jumping in at the deep end with one that needs to be reviewed in two halves! First, there is the editorial approach to be commented on, since it is the means of selecting the appropriate (or not!) material, and secondly the material that is published.

In the case of Bourne and Sheffield, they have gone back to the source, i.e. Haig's manuscript diaries that were written at the end of each day. That seems strange to say, but, Haig would have them despatched back to his wife for typing and frequently passed to King George V for his reading. Later on, after the war, Haig revisited these manuscripts and for many entries had them amended, updated or changed in some form. They have been consistent in using the original manuscripts and have additionally referred to the later changes where appropriate.

In editorial terms, they trimmed Haig's original work of some 750,000 words down to 200,000. A considerable effort undoubtedly, but one wonders what is not published and whether this would have painted Haig in a less sympathetic light? It is clear from their Introduction that they do see Haig sympathetically and not as a "donkey". Clearly they bring out his views, his paternalism and his efforts at making use of the available technologies.

The editing is very good in "topping and tailing" entries providing the wider context for a particular day. Also, the use of footnotes is widespread to amplify what Haig would have known when he wrote it but today's reader may not. A favourite of mine is where after a dinner on 20th July, 1917 with Pershing and his immediate staff, Haig states "The ADC is a fire-eater and longs for the fray". The editors point out that the ADC in question was a Captain George Patton!

Additionally, they have added a number of pen pictures of the key individuals, the politicians such as Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Asquith, The Army Commanders, Allenby, Byng, Plumer etc, Haig's staff, not least Charteris. In overall terms, however, the editorial effort has been very good.

With regards to the use of Haig's material, it largely presents him sympathetically, yet there are times in reading it one cannot be uncritical. I felt that there were times recounted when he should have been more assertive with what he required of his subordinate commanders, and in particular, for the Somme battle where Rawlinson should have been less inhibited. On 2nd July, 1916, he "directed Kiggell to urge

Rawlinson to greater activity in the direction of Longueval" (from the Montauban area). By then, it was probably 24-36 hours too late! Rawlinson had not previously impressed Haig, for in 1915, he had nearly been replaced for "passing the buck" on a failed action.

A clear picture of Haig as "piggy in the middle" comes through. For must of the War his forces are subordinate to French wishes, and his criticism of the French are well interspersed, even to the point of describing them in September 1917 as a race of usurers for charging the British 1.75 francs per ton of stone quarried (by the British) to be used on repairing French roads! While Pershing is regarded as unusually gentlemanly for an American, his unwillingness to let US troops being used to help in March 1918 merits criticism. Politicians also attract comment, and Haig points out that Asquith would get "exhilarated", a euphemism equally appropriate to Charles Kennedy today, while Lloyd George was not someone he had a high regard of.

Haig emerges as a firm disciplinarian and did not shirk from the responsibility of approving death sentences, regarding these as essential in the interest of military discipline. Yet, it is clear that the court-martial death sentences as in the cases, referred to, of Poole, Goggins, McDonald and Stones were given due consideration, while the editors remind the reader that some 89% of such death sentences were commuted by Haig and his predecessor Sir John French. At the same time, Haig's diary frequently reflects his caring side and references are made to officer and soldier care post-war, a forerunner to British Legion effort.

The aspect of him being a "royal favourite" does not appear strongly supported. He clearly had written to George V throughout, but there was a strong element of "When the King commands….." The "stab in the back" to Sir John French is also clearly covered, but again it is covered as being for the greater good of the British effort.

Overall, the book proved highly absorbing and not easily put down even though one knows that the next day the Battle of the Somme is launched so to speak. If there is a disappointment, it is in the 550,000 words that are missing and which would have completed the picture. For my own part, it is a book that I shall undoubtedly read again in 2006 and use it as a ready reference.

**Bloody Arras (Slaughter In The Skies Over Arras 1917)**
**Peter Hart**

Having met Peter Hart several times, I can assure people that his virtual perception of the Great War is solely from the Artilleryman's standpoint! In that sense, he emphasises the key roles of the RFC before and during the Battle of Arras as photographic reconnaissance and artillery spotting. The fighter aces, Albert Ball on the British side, and Manfred von Richthofen for the Germans were there to protect or prevent the aircraft sent to perform those roles. As in the Sheffield/Bourne book, Peter makes use of contemporary diaries and letters. However, he skilfully intermeshes the material with his own words and presents a cohesive picture, even though some material is not necessarily from a particular day during the Battle.

In reading the excerpts from diaries and letters one gains the impression that flying an obsolete and basically flimsy aircraft at 60 knots into a headwind of 20 knots required courage of the highest order where the continuing requirement was for such flying to take place over German-held territory. Observers in FE2bs seemed to have

a particularly hairy task in standing up in the front of the aircraft to load and fire rearward facing Lewis Guns over the upper wings! To his credit, the German effort, aerial skill and courage is also given due consideration.

Peter points out that the loss in aircrew and machines was accepted at the high command level, but from the point of offsetting these losses against the much larger losses that could have resulted to the ground troops. Certainly artillery was far more successful thanks in part to the RFC.

## POUR LA PATRIE
## The Mobilisation of the French Reservists in Jersey: August 1914
## By Ian Ronayne

*In the last Journal, Barrie noted that one of his forebears had left Jersey in 1914 to fight with the French Army. Given that the subject of France in the First World War is one that interests me, I have taken the opportunity to look into the mobilisation of the French Army in August, 1914, and its effect on the Island of Jersey. Of course I need to make it clear from the outset that the history of the French community in Jersey, and the impact of the war on it, is a subject worthy of a far more exhaustive study, and a far larger record. However, I hope this "limited" work will at least prove interesting, and who knows, may lead to that more comprehensive effort one day.*

In July, 1870, Napoleon the Third, the ailing French Emperor, was goaded into rashly declaring war on his Prussian neighbours. At the time, it was not an unpopular decision. Whilst Paris went into raptures over the prospect of at last bringing these "upstart" Germans to heel, the French army confidently began to mobilise for what was expected to be a glorious war of conquest.

Unfortunately, it soon became clear that not all was going to plan. The mobilisation, which was planned to swiftly bring the maximum number of men to the border with Germany, turned out to be a shambles. Soldiers recalled to the colours were being shunted around France in search of their Regiments, whilst exasperated officers on the frontier waited with growing despair for the arrival of their allocated units. "Have arrived in Belfort", one General telegraphed to his superiors, "Cannot find my Brigade, cannot find my Divisional Commander. What shall I do? Don't know where my Regiments are".[i] As it turned out, this was no way to commence a war with one of the most formidable armies ever assembled. It was quite understandable therefore, that within six weeks, the Prussian army and its German allies had surrounded, captured or killed ninety percent of the French field army, and paved the way for an inevitable crushing victory in 1871.

When the debris of defeat finally settled, one outcome was a steely determination that the chaos of mobilisation would not be repeated next time – with most having no doubt there would be a next time. Accordingly, the deficiencies of 1870 were meticulously analysed, and a number of sweeping changes instigated to prevent them occurring again. One of the key provisions was laws that established a true universal military service.

Under the "Three Year's Law" of 1913, all nineteen-year old able-bodied Frenchmen were liable to start a military service that would last for the next twenty-eight years. The first three of these were served with the Active Army, in a full-time capacity. At the end of this period, they were released from the army but retained for the next

eleven years as a member of the Active Army Reserve. At the age of thirty-three they became a member the Territorial Army: part-time soldiers intended for more static duties. Seven years with the Active Territorial and seven with the Territorial Reserve followed, until at last, at the age of forty-eight, a man was released from his obligations to “La Patrie”.

Given these demands, it was practical – and undeniably reasonable – for most men to carry out their military service with a Regiment based in their immediate region. In the event of a mobilisation order being issued after they had served their first three years, they were legally obliged to report for duty at their Regimental Depot prior to being despatched to the front. This obligation was extended to those French nationals living or working outside of the country, with severe penalties awaiting those who disobeyed.

By the summer of 1914, a sizeable population of French nationals were living in the Channel Island of Jersey. For the most part, they worked in the Island’s agricultural industry, which had developed a considerable export market based on its cattle, and more significantly, the Jersey Royal potato. Needing to supplement local labour, the Jersey farmers had turned to nearby Brittany where there existed a willing pool of impoverished agricultural workers. Not surprisingly, once in Jersey, they were expected to work long hours and put up with fairly basic living conditions. In his memoirs, Edward Le Brocq recalls that: “On the farm a “doméstique” was nearly always a Frenchman. He had a pretty rough time of it; getting up early to milk the cows, working all day, go to bed late.”[ii] But this did not seem to deter them coming - or staying in the Island: by 1911 there was some 5,610 French nationals present, representing almost eleven percent of the population[iii]. Of course, given that their principle purpose was manual labour, a considerable number of these would have been men within the Military Service age bracket; ready for the call up, if and when the need arose.

**Farm workers in late 19th Century Jersey (Société Jersiaise)**

It was four o'clock on the afternoon of Saturday the 1st August, 1914 when the first poster appeared in Paris announcing the French government's decision to mobilise their army. In view of the deteriorating situation in the east, and the obvious signs of German belligerence, they could wait no longer. Whilst Parisians crowded round to take in the momentous news, the order was being telegraphed out to communities throughout France and the wider Empire. French embassies and consulates throughout the world were also to be notified: the war that everyone expected – and many longed for – was starting.

In Jersey, there was a palpable sense of anxious anticipation amongst the French community. The threat of war had increased considerably over the last few days, leading to the Island's Militia being called out on the 30th July, 1914 - as a precaution "in view state of feeling amongst the European Powers". To many French it seemed only a matter of time before their government's order to mobilise was issued; others were more sanguine, trusting that it would all blow over. On the afternoon of the 1st August, 1914, both camps were represented in the crowd of foreign nationals gathered outside the offices of the Jersey Evening Post in St Helier's Charles Street waiting for the news to arrive – and hoping it wouldn't. It had been a warm day in the Island, and when by five o'clock nothing was heard, most were glad to slope off and celebrate with a cooling drink.

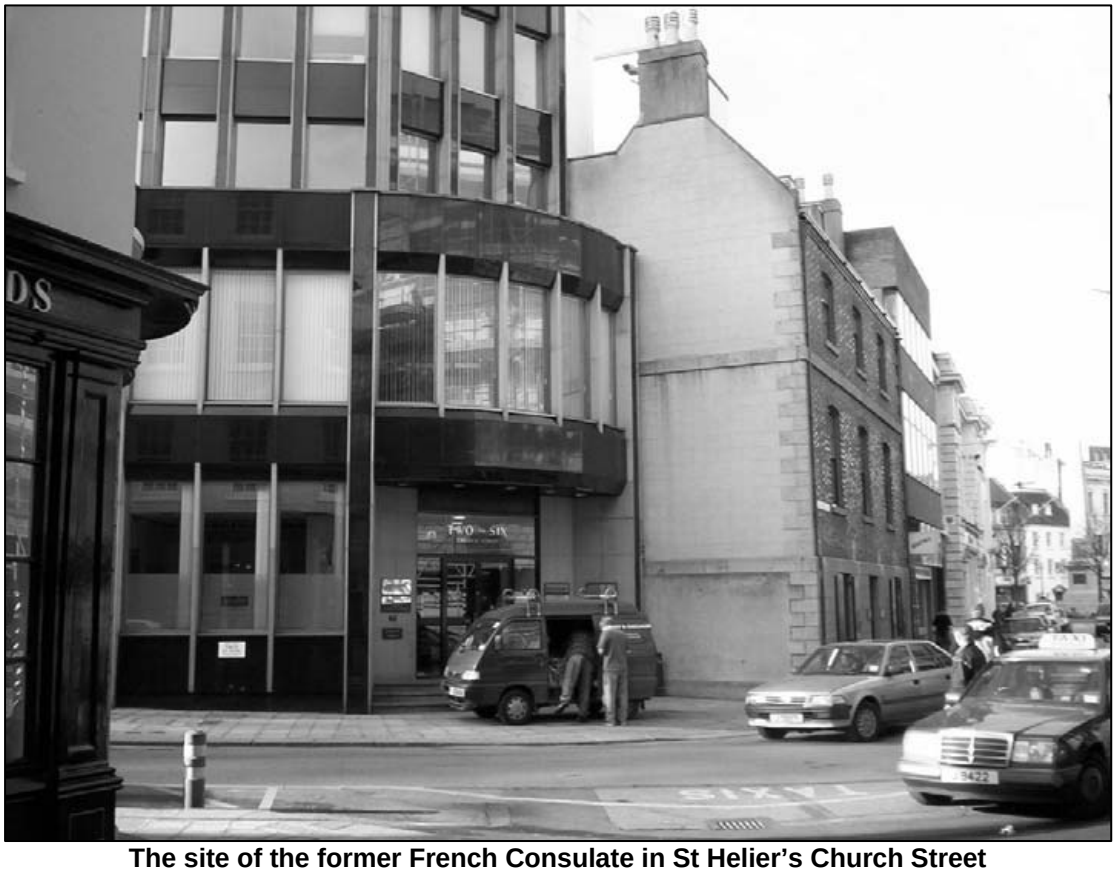
But any elation was premature. Just after six that evening, the office telegraph flickered into life, and the widely anticipated mobilisation order arrived. Recognising the gravity of the news, it was relayed without delay to the home of the Island's "Consul de France."

Monsieur Jouve was the French Consul in Jersey, and a well-known figure in the Island's establishment. He must have received the news with a heavy heart – despite it not being unexpected. His duty however was clear, and he set about exercising it immediately. Notices were placed throughout St Helier: at newspaper offices, in French cafes and at the Town Hall. At the same time, the news was relayed to priests administrating the Island's French Roman Catholic churches with a request that it be read-out at mass that evening, and again at Sunday's services. But most importantly, he sought the assistance of the Island's Parish Constables. Understandably, most French lived in the country, and help would be needed to make sure all were made aware of the news. So, throughout that evening, and into the next day, Parish officers went from farm to farm passing on the news to all they found, and informing them of their obligations.

The instructions were unequivocal: starting the next day, all eligible Frenchmen were to present themselves at the offices of the French Consul without delay in order to obtain passports and arrange passage. Furthermore, they were to be ready to leave the Island immediately if necessary.

In 1914, the French Consulate building was located in St Helier, at No 2 Church Street. It stood on the junction with Library Place, opposite one of the entrances to the Royal Square.[iv] By 10.00 a.m. on the morning of the 2nd August, 1914, the road outside, and the thoroughfare opposite, was packed with an excited and noisy crowd. Several hundred people were present: a mix of reservists, their families, and curious onlookers. More were arriving all the time. It was a spectacle "not to be forgotten", reported one newspaper, "young and middle-aged Frenchmen, filled with the fire of enthusiasm, all anxious to rejoin the colours and, if necessary, to fight for

the honour of their country had assembled there."[v] Whether they were all "full of fire" is perhaps questionable, but nevertheless, they were admitted to the office in batches and emerged shortly after clutching the appropriate passports and travel documents. St Helier's Harbour was only a short walk away from Church Street and many of the reservists went straight there after leaving the Consul. At noon, the first group of 88 departed for France on board the SS "Laura", bound for the port of Granville, and in the afternoon another party left on the SS "Jersey" for Carteret.



**The site of the former French Consulate in St Helier's Church Street**

It was clear however that the majority of men would leave the next day, having packed and settled their affairs. To cope with the anticipated exodus the harbour authorities laid on an extra vessel: the SS "Alberta". But they weren't the only ones making plans for that day. Monday, 3rd August, 1914 was a Bank Holiday in Jersey and many Islanders decided to come down to the harbour in order to watch the reservists depart. By midday they packed the upper walkways of the Albert Pier, and also gathered in great numbers on the quay itself around an area cordoned off to allow the men to board the ship.

Regrettably, no plans had been put in place to separate the curious from the families of departing men, and as a consequence, the reservists were forced to share their final intimate moments amongst the jostling crowd. This was a shame given the poignant circumstances, as reported in the Jersey Evening Post the next day:

*"Many pathetic scenes were witnesses on the quay. In several cases a man had to say goodbye to wife and family, or the aged parents all dependent on him, and these partings were of such a tender nature and were accompanied by so much emotion that but few of those in the crowd could watch them unmoved… In one instance a father had to say goodbye to his wife and seven children…In another case a reservist had to leave his wife who is seriously ill. There are, of course, numerous*

*cases where husbands are separated from their wives, and these partings, as can well be understood are heartrending to watch."*[vi]

But there was to be no exceptions. The issuing of passports and the departures continued throughout the day, and into the next. By the time the final men left on the 4th August, 1914 the news had come through that war had been declared between Germany and France. For the French families left behind in Jersey, the news must have dashed any hopes of a quick, safe, return for their loved ones. They could now only wait for a letter or telegraph, and pray that it was not from the War Office.

How many reservists left Jersey in those frenetic early days in August is not certain, but a report in December, 1915 states that 2,450 Frenchmen had left to rejoin the colours by then.[vii] Given the nature of their work, it would be reasonable to assume that most Frenchmen in the Island would have been of military age; it would seem likely therefore that the majority of this number left at the start of the war.

The impact of this mass departure on the Island as a whole was mainly an economic one. At a stroke, the farming industry – the mainstay of Island business - was deprived of over two thousand of its key workers, and the effects of this were to rumble on throughout the war. Although the farmers got by, and indeed actually managed to increase yield, they continuously cited the loss of imported labour as being one of the reasons why their sons should remain on the Island rather than join the forces. This kindled a sense of injustice: why should the town dwellers be forced to carry the burden of war whilst the farmers got rich on the proceeds? As the years passed, and the demand for manpower increased, the arguments became more divisive. *"Take a bike and ride round the country, you will never credit that Jersey has conscription."* one commentator remarked scathingly in August, 1917: *"Any Saturday afternoon you will meet dozens of young men in civilian clothes airing themselves…"*[viii] In defence of their position, farmer after farmer appeared in front of the military exemptions tribunals in 1917 and 1918, claiming that without the help of their families, they would be unable to meet the quotas placed on them. Looking back now, it is obvious that the truth of the matter probably lies somewhere in between the two camp's views, and it was the Island overall that suffered due to the missing labour.

The impact on the Island's French community was, of course, far more profound. A memorial established in the French Consul after the war was inscribed with the names of 165 Frenchmen from Jersey who fell "Pour La Patrie".[ix] It is however possible that figure is too low. During the war the French nation suffered sixteen percent of the men mobilised killed, and a further thirty-seven percent wounded.[x] Applying these percentages to the figure of 2,450 suggests that as many as 400 men from Jersey could have lost their lives, whilst a further 900 would have been wounded. Whatever the final figure, it would have been a truly terrible toll.

Of course, these are just cold figures on a page. Who now can know the anguish and suffering behind each percent? An anecdotal account of what it might have meant to the families left behind in Jersey was provided by 101 year old "Pop" Newman[xi], who has lived for virtually his whole long life in Jersey's St Brelade's Bay. When talking about the Island in the First World War, he recalled slowly, but lucidly, that an old French couple had lived a few doors away from him at the time, in a farm house that later became the Le Marquanderie Pub.[xii] They only had one son, who had gone off to fight in the French Army. One day a letter arrived, but because they

couldn't read, they asked young Newman to tell them what it said. It contained the news that their son had been killed in action; but he shied away from telling them, saying instead that their son had been wounded. Leaving them upset, but at least relieved their son was alive, he made his excuses and left. Later, the couple asked someone else to read the letter to them, and the awful truth was revealed. "Pop" Newman didn't say what they thought of him for trying to cover up; but he did recall that within a month, both of the parents had themselves passed away. It was his view that they had died of broken hearts.

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[i] Alistair Horne, *The Fall of Paris*, The Reprint Society London, 1965

[ii] Edward Le Brocq, *Memoirs*, Societe Jerseraise

[iii] From the 1911 Jersey Census. A point to note is that the Breton population in Jersey appears to have been proportionally larger the sister Channel Island of Guernsey which had a French national population of just under 5%.

[iv] Today, the site is occupied by a modern office block which spans Numbers 2 to 6 Church Street, the original building having been long since demolished.

[v] *Jersey Evening Post*, August 3rd 1914

[vi] *Jersey Evening Post*, August 4th 1914

[vii] *Jersey Evening Post*, December 15th 1915

[viii] Observer, *Jersey Evening Post*, August 25th 1917

[ix] The memorial was moved to St Thomas's Church at some point after the war – presumably when the Consulate was closed - and now resides in a small side chapel dedicated to French war dead. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, access to the chapel and the memorial is closed whilst the church is being renovated.

[x] Anthony Clayton, *Paths of Glory: The French Army 1914-18*, Cassell 2003

[xi] Interviewed in 2004.

[xii] It has recently changed name again to "The Landmark Inn"

**Editorial Footnote:** Ian's article as ever makes for interesting reading. As an additional point of interest, I'm currently reading Hew Strachan's "The First World War Volume 1: To Arms" and in it he states that the French expected a 13% failure to report/desertion rate. The actual figure was only 1.5%, and to quote: "…many of these proved to be vagrants, mentally deficient, or Bretons who could not read French"!

Ian may also give us a clue into post-Great War island attitudes that may have continued way past the 1920s with hostility between families whose sons served and those who did not. Using the 1911 census as a rough benchmark, there were only some 21,000 British males in Jersey, and I would estimate that some 10,000 would have been of military age. Allowing for those from the dominions, some 6,000 of those probably served overseas. However, quite coincidentally, just after receiving Ian's article I was loaned a 1913 Black's Guide Book to Jersey, Guernsey, Herm, Sark, Alderney and Western Normandy, a real collector's item. Apart from lines like *"…the peasantry use a sort of Norman patois among themselves"*, it states:

*"Jersey is almost entirely agricultural, and is divided up into numerous small farms which have to be intensively cultivated to repay the high rent; an industrious farmer will raise three crops in succession off the same land in one year ……."*

With the French farm-workers going off to France, Jersey volunteers likewise, there must still have been considerable pressure for the farming community to produce for consumption by the UK population and troops at the front, not least because of continuing German submarine activity. As Ian implies the question of whether a man served or not could not have had a simple answer in every case, and there are apparently no accounts of fitness levels.

## Looking Ahead To 2006 – Feedback

As you will recall, the last Journal carried some thoughts as to the way forward. For the benefit of those who do not have E-Mail and for the new members, I have tried to accurately summarise the views of the others. By and large, they present a way forward which we can progress towards. There is a for example a considerable amount of work required before a web-site could be installed, not least the design, funding and population with data.

**Journal:** General agreement that it is pivotal and that it should go to a wider audience, The Sociéte Jersiaise (via Anna Baghiani) will be on the distribution for example, and others will be added throughout the CI. I've received suggestions from Heather and Elizabeth, and will develop a list.

With regard to publication, this year I aim for bi-monthly issues starting in mid-February. I am starting at presentational improvement beyond the original basic issue as well as better "topping and tailing" as evidenced by this issue. I'll be getting out "back" issues to new members and the additional distribution once I've done some "back engineering" I have started adding copyright caveat. Looking ahead some better covering and binding is needed.

Ian made a very good point on regular features. I'm starting in this issue with "Out and About", "Welcome New Members" and "Book Reviews". Any other ideas welcome. With regards to Ian's suggestion that individuals identify list their resources, the ball is in your court if you would like to generate your lists. I'll make a tentative start.

With regards to covering of costs for this Journal, since we're not "properly" constituted, there cannot be membership fees. So, I'll leave it up to you if you chose to make a personal contribution or not. There is no coercion and whatever you choose to do is a private matter.

**Study Group Aim:** Ian made a good point on a need for one, I suggest:

*"To improve understanding and knowledge of the impact of the Great War on the Channel Islands and its peoples"*

Whatever aim is chosen, as Liz implies, it should be all encompassing, namely: at Home, Emigrated or Serving, Male and Female, Jersey and English/French/Other foreign nationals. Similarly it should carry the sense of communication.
Need to address the bigger picture beyond "pure" CI issues.

**Widening Interest:** Partly achieved through a wider Journal audience as mentioned above. Communication via BBC Jersey and Guernsey, Channel TV, JEP etc. That

has to be a function carried out in the CI. Ned and Liz know the key players and maybe could kick off some contact?

Ned's point on a wider membership – re: board/rules/etc – need for "Communication Officers"? Where/How/Why/When do we move from "Group" to "Society"? In the short term, the workload is probably to great for us collectively and outweigh the benefits. No silly constraints on new members, e.g. "Non WFA Members need not apply"

Need to see if there is a bridging role into schools? Again, Heather has made some suggestions about linking into the "Jeron" web-site. Could we generate some States interest? Could we generate further WFA support? Elizabeth has suggested that a further item publicising our efforts is submitted for a future Stand To or Bulletin.

**Website:** There is a need for "top-down" structured design to ensure sense, ease of maintenance and update, relevance etc. This is needed so that we can agree the contents. Copyright would also need to be addressed. Where appropriate links to others (Liz has achieved some of this in her "Ada's War" web-site, though she has just been "bitten" by a CWGC change!)

The costs for start up, running, licensing for 2 years, size, etc are c. £200 as advised by Liz. Whilst we could collectively afford it, perhaps there is scope for sponsorship? Are there some household name organisations in Jersey or Guernsey that might chip in £1K or £2K? Would that be possible if we are not a Society (chicken and egg), lack of accountability, visibility, and all the other business–ilities you can think of!

**Finally:** I have parked the Seminar idea, since it was "a bridge too far" at this time. However, any further thoughts are welcome to help communicate improve the appreciation of the CI's contribution in the Great War.

## Out and About

As mentioned above, new member Gary Godel will be visiting Gallipoli with Holts' Tours. According to the brochure that will be during the period 25th to 29th May.

Paul and Ian Ronayne have a longer trip to France following the route of the Jersey Contingent planned for May, allowing them to spend more time at Ypres and possibly also a day at Verdun.

Liz Walton is currently busy putting together a 12,000 word, social rather than military, history of Guernsey's Lost Generation for the Societe Guernesiaise, which hopefully will appear in pamphlet form. By the time this goes out she will probably be visiting the Portsmouth Naval Memorial at Southsea Common. During April she will very likely be in the Cambrai area visiting RGLI sites and graves, though a quick count of the latter shows that about 65% of the 320+ RGLI dead have no known grave.

For my part, I'm in Jersey 18th to 25th February, spending about three to four days in the library and the rest of the opening hours at the Archive and Museum. I will be

spending the back half of March on the Somme renting an excellent gite at a very acceptable price and taking in more of Ypres over two days. A brief return there will follow in May when I conduct a few friends and acquaintances around the sites.

I'm sure that all of us would be happy to try and take photos of features on our visits for others, and I hope that people will give a heads up of anything relevant and interesting in their diaries.

## Odds and Ends

**Internet Developments:** As Liz has found out to her great inconvenience, the CWGC website has been overhauled and links have been changed. The home page from which the Debt of Honour can be accessed is:

http://www.cwgc.org/

I am personally delighted that Victoria College now has its WW1 Book of Remembrance on the web and can be accessed via:

http://www.vcj.sch.je/

Meanwhile, the National Archive is now providing access to Naval Records via their website, and I have been able to download the service records for two Courcoux for the princely sum of £3.50 each. Much better VFM than the Medal Roll Index cards. In the next issue I will probably do a quick update on the Courcoux following the piece in Journal 4.

Liz recently highlighted to me that the SDGW and ODGW CDROM data would be going onto:

http://www.1837online.com/

This has happened, albeit that the "one-off" data sample I looked at retains the same typographic errors as previous.

**A Jersey Death:** The JRoH&S mentions Pte Samuel George Churchill RAMC as being KIA 19th August 1916. In correlating data on him, the CWGC states that he was attached to 2nd Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers. As many of you know, that Battalion's experiences were documented in Capt. JC Dunn's book "The War the Infantry Knew". Churchill's death gets a mention as *"In the morning a shell killed the RAMC orderly attached to the infantry aid-posts in those days"*.

**Lieutenant-Governor – Guernsey:** The drawing overleaf (Can I say cartoon in today's climate?) below was spotted in a recent Daily Telegraph (supporting letters discussing the risks of present-day military involvement in Afghanistan) showing the young Reginald Hart winning his VC.

As is well known, he was Guernsey's Lieutenant-Governor throughout much of the Great War, and was the driving force behind the creation of the RGLI.

Lieutenant Reginald Hart winning the VC during the Second Afghan War in 1879

**HMS Viknor:** Is it relevant you may ask, but my WFA Branch had a talk this week about the 10th Cruiser Squadron winning the Great War, an interesting look at the Blockade mounted by the RN who used some 20+ Armed Merchant Cruisers (really liners and banana boats!).

The Germans had, before the outset of War, recognised that they would be fighting on three Fronts, i.e. Eastern, Western and economic. The Blockade, and their submarine warfare, clearly fell into the last category and Britain did all that it could to achieve the victory through preventing Germany receiving food, munitions and material reaching it via the neutral countries of Scandinavia and Holland. It proved successful, since when coupled with the start of the defeats on the battlefield in August, 1918, German morale soon broke down.

The AMC were used because of speed, sea going capabilities and economically capable of using half the coal of regular cruisers and were to maintain a patrol line in the seas between NW Scotland, Iceland and Greenland, and off Norway also. Neutral ships were intercepted, and in many cases sent to Kirkwall for detailed cargo examinations, an action not liked by the ship owners since lost time at sea meant lost profits.

From the list of AMC provided, I noted that one of these was HMS Viknor, a name that I had recalled seeing in the JRoH&S (I think that I have become an anorak!). This ship was formerly a Norwegian cruise ship of some 5,386 tons called the Viking and built in 1888. The name Viknor was used since the RN already had a ship named Viking.

It appears that the Viknor sunk with all hands on 13th January, 1915. Prior to that, it had detained a neutral and had escorted part the way back to Kirkwall. The escort responsibility was handed over to a destroyer, and the Viknor headed off to Liverpool to coal up. It reported in by radio on the morning of the 13th and then no more was ever heard. Viknor had hit a German mine that had been recently laid off the NW coast of Ireland, and it was about a week later that a small number of bodies were washed up on the Antrim shores and which are buried in local cemeteries there.

Returning to the JRoH&S, there were two Jerseymen who died when the Viknor went down namely Cpl Herbert Charles Noel, RMLI and AB William Thomas Stokes, RN and who both are now commemorated on the Portsmouth Memorial.

**Inky Bill:** Ned has been providing input for the JEP *Temps Passé* feature page on VC winners with Jersey associations with the count currently at 10 through birth (i.e., Ingouville and Le Quesne), education (e.g. the Sartorius brothers) and long-term residence (Jack Counter). In his research and subsequent contacts, he has discovered that Major General EC Ingouville-Williams, GOC 34th Division on the Somme, had a Jersey mother, hence the Ingouville. Hopefully I can persuade Ned to write a little more of this area of research for next time.

**Hot Off (In?) The Press - *Temps Passé*:** Mentioning *Temps Passé* earlier, Ian has just had a feature put in regarding the 16th (Irish) Division's Memorial dedication at Guillemont in 1926, using one or more pictures we have had in the Journal. Mention of our existence as a Study Group was also made as part of that article. Hopefully that is the start for some wider publicity in achieving our aim.

## Enfin

Well, it's time to close on another bumper Journal. Thanks again to the authors for the articles supplied which invariably bring different perspectives to our understanding of the War. I had hoped to add more photos but the text got in the way! If there is less text available for the next issue, I have a number of photos that can be added.

I hope that with forthcoming trips planned, articles can follow, and one on the RGLI memorials and graves would be welcome. Book Review contributions also, hopefully I will have read Charles Messenger's "Call To Arms" by then and be able to comment.

Lastly, I'm looking forward to my trip to Jersey on the 18th February and hopefully will have the chance to see some of you during that week.

Regards
Barrie H Bertram
13th February, 2006

**Postscript: Fully Revised and Renamed as a Journal on 12th June, 2008.**