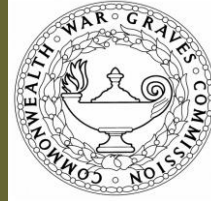




# THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT



In Association  
with the CWGC



## News from the Front line

April 2016

I hope this latest newsletter finds you all well in the early part of 2016. I am spending much of the Easter weekend compiling it as the forecast is not exactly great to be out in the garden having early Bar B Q's. No decorating to be done as most of that was completed a couple of months back when my daughter Sophie moved out. I was accused of being too quick as if I was itching to get her out but those of you with late teen / early 20 daughters will know rooms can only take so much makeup detritus before they too need a makeover.



### Battle of Jutland - May 31<sup>st</sup> - June 1<sup>st</sup> 1916

The project is starting to prepare for what we hope will be a busy 2016. On the Naval front we commemorate the Battle of Jutland in May and this weekend the Easter uprising is remembered in Ireland in which many died. It is good to know that reconciliation has taken place since those days a hundred years ago. Thousands of people are expected to line the streets of Dublin for the parade on Easter Sunday, which will feature over 3,700 members of the Defence Forces.

This year includes the big centennial anniversaries like the numerous individual battles that made up 'The Somme'. The likes of Delville Wood, High Wood, Pozieres, Thiepval and Ancre Heights to name but a few.

A part of our preparation for this year was to ensure we do not have repeats of last year's issues with the site being down over ANZAC Day and Armistice Day. You may recall the frustrations I had with our original web hoster who was totally unreliable, uncontactable and charged a fortune for the privilege. These issues have now been resolved with the site now being hosted on another server at far less cost.

The chap sorting it, 'Jez', sat down with me and went through some of the things we need to do to update the site. I never knew Google was able to conduct such 'Big Brother' operations but Jez was able to see, via their 'search facility', all sorts of useful information. It appears that over 60% of people accessing our site are using iPad or similar. Our demographic plot indicates that most people accessing the site are between 55 and 65. Now if you are anything like me the two do not go hand in hand, iPad and eyesight don't mix. Jez pointed out that when viewing our site on an iPad (or similar) there is a lot of spreading of fingers on the screen to make it visible then a lot of flicking a finger left, right, up and down to see the bit you need to see which has now been increased in size enough to be visible.



**Longer Arms?**

To that end we are making the site iPad / smart phone friendly. Jez is a Website designer by trade (young) and is modifying the current site to make it user friendly on today's mobile devices and we are hoping that this will be live in May / June.

I have at last succumbed to owning a smart phone, having been given one as a Christmas pressy. After a couple of weeks wanting to throw it through frustration, I am now learning to live with it. I have not grown the ET like fingers / thumbs with which to operate it properly so it tends to shut down before I have finished anything but I am getting there.



**Thiepval Commemorations**

Having lost out on the lottery to attend the Thiepval Commemorations on July 1<sup>st</sup> this year, I am pleased to say that I am now going. No, I have not pulled any favours- no one is owing me any. But when applying for the tickets I did not have the forethought to apply for tickets for me and then apply again for Sandra.

Two stabs at the pie! I was a little disappointed at not having thought of this myself but two canny volunteers did and guess what? They came up trumps with both applications! So Sandra and I are now attending as their guests after their very kind offer to join them.

At the time of application we did not know that there would be a considerable amount of royalty attending so security is going to be very tight especially after recent events in Brussels and Paris. From the details we have received so far it is being organised like a military operation and if you have not got a ticket or miss the allocated time slot for transport you will not get in. It appears there is not going to be much access at all around Thiepval from as far away as Albert so if you are thinking of going to the area as an individual around the 1<sup>st</sup> July, best check access.



Sandra and I will be staying over the whole weekend having travelled out very early on the 1<sup>st</sup> July and plan to visit Amiens where there is an event 'Pipers for peace'.

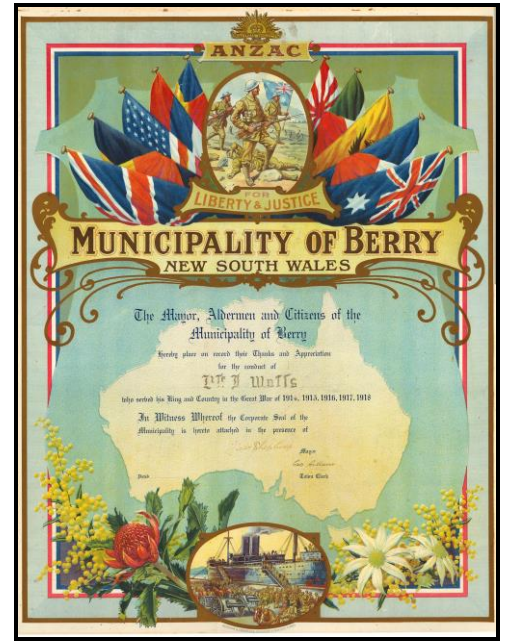
<http://www.unitedpipersforpeace.com/p/program.html>

Phillipe Drouin has informed us about the event in which over 21 Pipe bands from around the world will be taking part in a march through the centre of Amiens to commemorate the opening battles of the Somme.

We will also take the opportunity to lay a wreath on the grave of Private Bertram William Rogers of the Hampshire Regiment whose grave we literally stumbled across exactly 20 years ago on the evening of 30<sup>th</sup> June 1996. Finding him started my interest in war graves. He would have died the following morning on Redan Ridge on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916.

## ANZAC Appreciation

A recent request from Australia for a photograph of the headstone for Private JW Watts of the 1st Battalion AIF was met with a follow up e mail from Alan Patterson of Kurrajong, NSW. He has copied us in on a certificate that was provided to all the families of the men in the municipality of Berry in New South Wales to commemorate their loss and the gratitude from the community for their ultimate sacrifice.



## Latest submissions to the archive

We still receive updates on a weekly basis from UK and around the world from new volunteers and the existing team who are keen to update the archive with up to date images.

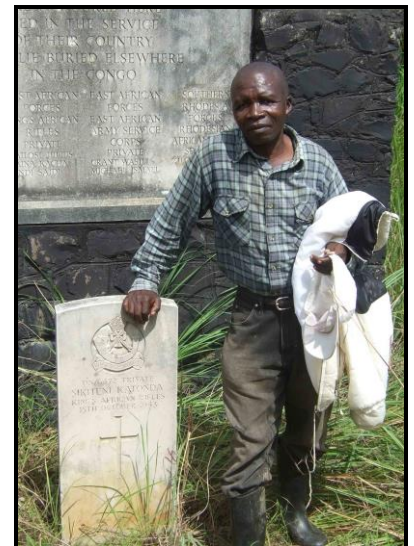


In recent weeks we have been fortunate to get help in Indonesia where Rana and Sadia have completed the majority of headstones in Ambon war cemetery. The site is one of those where it is recommended that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office be contacted before visiting to get an update on the security situation so we appreciate Rana and Sadia's help there.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) John Lauderdale managed to get the help of a local gentleman, Jean-Pierre Mwangwe, to guide him through the bush to the site of Lubudi African cemetery and Memorial. Without the help of Jean-Pierre, John said he would never have found the site.

Back home I have been working through UK counties and replacing default images with 'actuals'. This takes an inordinate length of time so a slow process that is fitted in around other project activities. We have recently completed the whole of Herefordshire and Derbyshire and currently working on Staffordshire.

If anyone out there is bored, we still need help in compiling spreadsheets for German casualties. We have literally thousands to go up on site but without the details being compiled from reading the headstones we cannot upload to site. If you can help, please contact Steve.



## Civilian Casualties in Nottinghamshire - Richard Macfarlane

On the very day that Britain declared war in September 1939, the liner SS Athenia was sunk by a German U boat. The 65 British deaths were the first civilian casualties of WWII. By 1945, 67,000 civilians had been killed as a result of enemy action or in war related accidents. Fabian Ware, the founder of the Imperial War Graves Commission in 1914, wrote to Winston Churchill on the 18th September 1940. 'The deliberate slaughter of civilians by the enemy was creating a new category of normal war casualties' and that their sacrifice should be honoured. Churchill agreed and in January 1941 the Commission resolved to keep a record of all civilian deaths caused by enemy action.

A couple of years ago TWGPP decided to create a pictorial record of WWII civilian casualties and I volunteered to cover Nottinghamshire. The county suffered comparatively light casualties with only 301 deaths recorded from 1939 -1945, the majority of which occurred in 1941 during the 'Nottingham Blitz'. In total, 301 deaths were recorded in the county and they are buried in 32 different locations, one as far away as Hertfordshire.



**Civilians at Wilford Hill Cemetery**

### Detective Work

The CWGC civilian records differ from the military ones largely as a result of how they were collated and the fact that the dead were not under military jurisdiction when they died. Ware's main priority was to keep a record of casualties, not to record actual burial sites. This results in a problem for those wishing to find a grave – there is no record on the CWGC database. As the war progressed casualty statistics were collected from local councils who had responsibility for recording deaths. Therefore, only the district where the person died is recorded, there is no grave plot or even cemetery named. However, the address of the deceased, their next of kin and sometimes other basic information about the cause of death is recorded. The task is also made more difficult by the fact that many of the councils mentioned no longer exist after amalgamation in 1974. In Nottinghamshire 11 separate councils recorded deaths, ranging from 2 in Mansfield Municipal Borough to 182 in Nottingham County Borough. The other key point is that the death was recorded where the person actually died rather than where the air raid was. For example, Rose and Philip Foster were both in the same house in West Bridgford when it was hit in an air raid. Philip died at the scene and so his death was recorded by West Bridgford Urban District Council whereas Rose was taken to hospital in Nottingham where she later died; therefore her death was recorded in Nottingham.

The main problem is finding the cemetery where the casualties were buried. Through some trial and error I have found two ways of doing this – the deceased online website will allow you to do a free search for cemeteries but not actually plot numbers. Councils are increasingly selling their records to this company and Nottingham went online about 18 months ago. The other way is far more labour intensive – looking through microfiche of old newspapers around the dates of the main bombing raids- there is often a funeral notice relating to the person you are trying to trace.

Once I have the cemetery I contact the relevant cemetery officer and explain my research, without fail they have been enormously helpful and if the person is in that cemetery they will have a plot number even if there is no actual headstone. A couple of councils even put all their records online which is a massive help. If a cemetery is now closed the records are usually held at the County archives office. Often, this will be a microfiche copy of the original register and so the grave can often be located by knowing the date of death.

The CWGC database also records the address and next of kin of the deceased. If no trace can be found in the larger cemeteries I will try and find the nearest parish church and contact them to see if there is a record. Once again, this is a bit hit and miss but can produce surprising results. For example, in response to an enquiry about Derek Needham, the vicar at Breaston church told me that their organist remembered the young Derek and his family from 1941!





**Derek's grave – aged 17**

## Graves and Memorials

Unlike military deaths, there was no uniform approach to burying civilians and it largely fell on the families themselves to provide headstones. On two occasions, local councils did provide some assistance to bereaved families. The first of these came after a raid on Newark's Ransome and Marles ball bearing factory in March 1941 when 41 people were killed and the Town council provided some headstones. On the 8th May 1941 Nottingham was heavily bombed and 159 people lost their lives. The council provided headstones for 36 identified and 6 unidentified casualties. Apart from these two incidents, funerals and headstones were arranged by the next of kin. For the poorest, this meant a 'paupers grave' with no marking. This is perhaps the most poignant aspect of this research – at least 75 have a record of a grave plot but there is nothing at the actual gravesite. Clearly, at the time their families were unable to afford a headstone which is rather at odds with the democratic process put in place in both wars for military deaths by the then Imperial War Graves Commission.

For the remaining 200 graves that do have a headstone or marking there is often little clue apart from the date to the fact that they were the victims of an air raid. A few do state 'killed by enemy action' but these tend to be the exception. Understandably, not all families wanted this to be recorded on the grave. There are also several memorials to those killed – mainly instigated by the firms who employed them. The largest is the Co-operative memorial in Wilford Hill cemetery which commemorates the 48 workers who died when the Co-op bakery was hit on the 8th May 1941.

## Accidental Deaths

The roll of honour also includes accidental deaths, largely as a result of allied planes crashing into houses or accidents involving the armed forces. There were 16 of these deaths, including the Brumpton family from Balderton whose house was destroyed when a Hampden bomber on a training exercise from the local RAF base crashed into it in August 1941. The parents survived but lost 6 of their seven children who are now buried in the local churchyard.

**Six Brumpton children buried in St Giles' churchyard**



## Future remembrance?

Civilians seem very much to be the forgotten victims at the time and now. Remembrance of them seems haphazard and largely depended on whether the family could afford a headstone; quite a few are in unmarked 'pauper' graves. This seems to be at odds with the equitable way military deaths have been treated since 1914. At present, the CWGC has no plans to update their records to include individual plots and so the details recorded on the TWGPP are the only reference for those seeking out graves.

If you need any help researching civilian graves – my email address is [macfarlanefamily13@gmail.com](mailto:macfarlanefamily13@gmail.com)

Richard Macfarlane

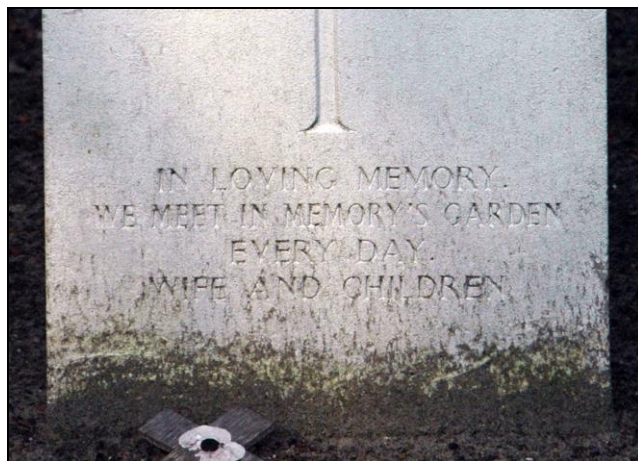
## That little extra effort can help

In December we received the following e mail having sent out a photographic request.

Dear Steve,

Today I received the photographs you sent me of James Hancock's war grave and I just wished to thank you very much. I think this is an amazing service you offer and must touch so many people's hearts. On the headstone it does mention 'wife and children' and I wondered if there is any way of trying to find a contact so as to get in touch with the family? Do the War Graves have such a list or service?

My reasoning is that Jimmy Hancock was one of the crew my father piloted as a young Lancaster pilot volunteering from Southern Rhodesia in Africa. He was only 19 when he created his crew and flew his first op completing his tour before he was 20 and a half. Sadly Jimmy had one more op to complete as he had missed one with the rest of the crew. This was his last operation and he never returned, he was lost at sea just a few weeks after my father and the rest of the crew had completed their tour. My father is nearly 93 and over the past 10 years has spoken more about his time in the war than ever before.



He attended the Bomber Command unveiling here in London and we tried to find out what had become of the rest of his crew but there was no help available. On the day he had Jimmy firmly with him in his thoughts. He knew that the Lancaster and all the crew had been lost at sea. I discovered where Jimmy Hancock had been laid to rest and that is why I contacted you and asked for a photograph. I will take it to my father in Cape Town and I am sure he will be relieved to see where he lays. Having treasured the memories of their friendship and felt strongly about the loss, I was wondering if there was any way in which I could let the family know just how strongly my father has remembered Jimmy. I understand he was the only married member of Dad's crew and also a father.

My parents married during the war and returned to Africa when Dad was demobbed. Distances prevented them keeping in touch and I do believe in many ways the veterans a distance away did not have the same support and associations as was available in this country so communications of keeping in touch were difficult. This has been sad for my father especially now as he fondly remembers and talks more about the crew which became his 'family' when he was so far from home all those years ago. He is a hero, they never talked much about their lives in the war.

Kind regards, Diana

My response:

Hi Diana

I am afraid we do not have any further details of Next of Kin other than that displayed on site.

However, I have just googled 'Mary Hancock Houghton' - his wife's name and where she was living at the time of his death and got a hit here at 192.com:

<http://www.192.com/atoz/people/hancock/mary/dh5/908819068/>

Looks like the person is over 65 so may well be his wife still living or even one of the children. No email address I'm afraid but may be worth a letter by snail mail as they may be related?

Good luck - Steve



In Response:

*Thank you so much for your contact. Firstly I received the really good quality photo which I knew would please my father, knowing where his Navigator lay. With your suggestion I joined 192 and found the address you had mentioned. I wrote a letter and posted it. Immediately the son called me and we have had two really good and heart-warming conversations. I am so pleased to be in touch with him and he seems to be pleased to know of my Dad. In fact his words were 'we feel we are friends, almost related' just because of their history. He had not been born when his father died yet has felt very close to him since having a son himself. His mother used to talk of my father and fortunately Jim also met two of the crew so I have a little news of them to tell my father when I see him in a few weeks.*

*So thank you so much. I just wished for you to know (I am sure you already do!) just what wonderful work you do by keeping this project alive and helping people like me, thank you.*

*Wishing you and your team all the best this Christmas time!*

*Kind regards, Diana*

## A Woodland Burial

Natural burial sites are increasingly common these days but in the not too distant past it would have been difficult to get permission to be buried in the countryside unless that is of course you owned the woodland. Anyone visiting Croft Castle church in Herefordshire would note two large commemorative plaques. One, to Sir Herbert Archer Croft who, as a Captain in the Herefordshire Regiment, was killed in action in Gallipoli and now commemorated on Helles Memorial.



The other plaque is to his son Sir James Herbert Croft who served as a Captain in No1 Commando during the Battle of Norway. He was unfortunate to have been killed in a training exercise in Scotland but now lies in the forest around Croft Castle, the ancestral home, in Herefordshire. His woodland grave is planted with daffodils which must be quite a sight at this time of year.

## A Trip to Chaumousey – Patrick Kearney

At 21.18 hrs on 28th July 1944 an Avro Lancaster bomber (serial no. PB253) took off from RAF Elsham Wolds, Lincolnshire, piloted by New Zealander Jimmy Archibald. The remainder of the crew comprised of Sergeant / Flight engineer John Rowland Cuthbert, Sergeant / Wireless Op and Gunner Leslie Fielding, Bomb aimer Peter Joseph Biollo, Warrant Officer / Air Gunner Terence Patrick Barry and Sergeant / Air Gunner Alexander Milne. The oldest member of the crew, and the only one to be married was the Navigator, Sergeant John Edward Kearney, my father. Jimmy's Lancaster was one of seventeen from 576 Squadron to leave Elsham Wold that night they were scheduled to join almost 500 other aircraft for an attack on industrial targets in and around Stuttgart. At about 02.30 on July 29th the Lancaster was attacked by a night fighter, piloted by Oblt. Fritz Brandt of Stab. II/NGJ3 and shot down crashing in heavily wooded countryside close to Renauvoid, a small town in the département of Vosges in north eastern France. Jimmy Archibald was miraculously blown out of the aircraft by an explosion, somehow managing to pull the rip-cord of his parachute and surviving the action despite suffering serious injuries. The other members of the crew all died and were eventually laid to rest in the Cimetière Municipal of Chaumousey. I was ten months old.

## The Trip to Chaumousey



The impulse to visit my father's grave didn't occur until late in my life and at a time when the journey would be far from easy. Until 1983, I'd been living in London. Geographically France was reasonably accessible and I was forty years old. By 2010 I was not nearly so spry and had relocated to Santa Rosa, California. My resolve however, was strengthened with the knowledge that my paternal grandparents had taken the trip from London in 1960 and I reflected on the coincidence, if such it was, that they had been almost the same age as myself when we'd finally felt the need to make the pilgrimage.

Planning for the trip proved easier than I had anticipated. I was able to interest two cousins, Margaret and Jane Norbury, daughters of my father's sister Kathleen, in accompanying my wife Karren and I. Margaret generously provided a bed for us both in her home in Wandsworth, South London, when we arrived from California. My daughter Emma, who lives in Milton Keynes was also anxious to make the trip, and proved extremely efficient at finding an affordable hotel in Strasbourg, and good rail reservations for us all. Her boyfriend at the time, Ian Rice, would accompany her.

I'd also made the acquaintance of Hervé Fageot who lives in Girmont, not too far from Chaumousey, who was involved with the Fédération Nationale des Sous-Officiers (FNSO). Hervé generously agreed to make himself available as our guide when we arrived and to show us both the graves of my father and his crew. He also took us to a memorial to them that had been built at the site of the crash. Little could we anticipate what Hervé and his comrades in the FNSO had in store for us?

After briefly considering – and as quickly discarding – plans to rent a van in Paris to self-drive to Strasbourg we decided to make the trip by train instead. However, the problem of getting from Strasbourg to Chaumousey remained intractable until I recalled a book-collector friend of mine named Dominique Paillard. As we'd only corresponded by email, I didn't know for certain where he lived but I had a nagging feeling that he'd once mentioned he worked in Strasbourg and so it was. When I mentioned our situation he at once volunteered to secure a van big enough for the eight of us, including himself and his wife, and to drive us to Chaumousey.

On Sunday May 9th 2010 we all left Strasbourg on the seventy mile drive to Chaumousey with Dominique's wife, Marilène, at the wheel of a comfortable 9-seat van. Passing through some beautiful countryside I began to feel unaccountably nervous or uneasy. The feelings eased a little when we met up with Hervé at the rendezvous point we'd arranged with him and I briefly entertained the thought that my worries were because I feared we'd somehow miss our connection with him and wouldn't find the grave.

However, as he guided us to our destination and the walls of the cemetery came into view my nervousness grew again. I still can't account for these feelings with any certainty but I have a suspicion that it was a combination of guilt at not having made the trip earlier and a fear that I'd be overcome with emotion and make a fool of myself in front of everyone. I was not alone though; Karren, my wife, has the enviable ability to freely express her emotions and cast her thoughts back to her own father who had served in the US Navy in WWII. He had survived but she felt and shared my sorrow that mine had not been so fortunate.





Once at our destination, however, all was well. Situated at the v-shaped junction of Rue de Darney and Rue des Tilleuls, Chaumousey Communal cemetery is a small, well-kept, walled cemetery situated on a small hill looking out over the countryside. In one corner, enclosed in a neat stone border filled with white rocks was the military plot. I noticed that each grave had fresh flowers on it – not for our benefit either; I'd seen photographs taken at different times and there were always flowers. Clearly the people of the area still felt strongly about the sacrifice these airmen had made.

Photographs were taken, and I took the opportunity to place on my father's grave a photograph of him and my mother on their wedding day in 1939 which I'd had laminated. I covered it with a handful of the white rocks to keep it from being blown away. At the time of writing these lines (December 2015), I am told that it is still there.



Following our homage at the cemetery, we clambered into our van and Hervé led us to the place where the Lancaster had crashed. This proved more difficult than any of us anticipated, including Hervé. Heavy rain the previous night had made the more direct approach to the isolated location quite impassable and a more circuitous route was taken. This too proved difficult but we managed it scrambling through dense woods and up a muddy hillside until reaching a large clearing.

Hervé's surprise was then revealed. Around the memorial, which is made up of a large boulder to which is affixed a plaque engraved with the names of the crew, was grouped a number of people in uniforms of various sorts, presumably the F.N.S.O. To one side was a WWII-era Jeep in amazing condition, evidently belonging to a tough-looking man in an American military uniform of the same vintage. There was also a small brass band, which played the Marseillaise and one or two other pieces of marshal music. After a brief ceremony I was introduced to the local Mayor and also to an elderly local resident who, as a child, had been present when the Lancaster crashed and was witness to the events that followed. His English was non-existent and my French is weak at best, but with the assistance of my friend Dominique and his wife I was able to learn that after the crash the local people had wanted to bury the airmen at the spot where their 'plane had crashed but that the Germans, who had arrived to secure the site, insisted on a proper military funeral. This information tended to contradict what I'd heard from other sources, but I nevertheless found it comforting and felt the touch of a ghost of gratitude to an enemy for whom I'd long held a bitter enmity.

The most emotional part of the whole day then occurred. The man in the American uniform had surreptitiously secured an envelope from his Jeep which he solemnly presented to me. Puzzled, I took a look inside and found a small piece of burned and twisted aluminium which, he explained, was a fragment of my father's 'plane. There weren't too many dry eyes in that forest clearing at that moment, mine included.

The afternoon was drawing to a close when the final part of Hervé's plans came into play, and we were escorted to the nearby F.N.S.O. clubhouse, for a simply huge, multi-course dinner; it was the nearest thing to a medieval 'groaning board' that I'd ever seen. The generosity of these wonderful people was quite breath taking, but an additional surprise awaited us as the day drew to a close when I was presented with a certificate indicating that I'd been made a membre d'honneur of the F.N.S.O. "*en souvenir de son père tué tragiquement dans les Vosges le 29 Julliet 1944 | En combatant pour la liberté et la justice.*" It was signed by both the National President and National Secretary of the Conseil d'Administration de la F.N.S.O.

Perhaps I could have made the pilgrimage earlier but it would not have been the same. Doing so later in my life in the company of my wife, daughter, cousins and with the assistance of my friends Dominique, Marilène and Hervé, made the trip a far more emotionally satisfying experience.

## Epitaph Template

Continuing from Patrick's article about visiting his father's grave, Patrick forwarded copies of the document that was sent out to next of kin on which details could be recorded. It was titled 'Form for Verification of Name and other Particulars' and appears to have been pre-completed on lines where service particulars were known by the authorities like Burial location, name, official number, unit and date of death. The family were then asked a number of questions like:

1. Age and Birthplace
2. Parents (both) names
3. Widows name
4. Public and military distinctions

These questions were followed by a note mentioning that the next two questions are only to be completed if a place of burial had been recorded on the top of the sheet.

5. Do you desire to have engraved on the stone.
  - a. The Cross (the Christian sign).
  - b. The Star of David (the Jewish sign).
  - c. No Religious sign.
6. If you wish to have an inscription or text chosen by yourself engraved on the headstone write it in the space below. Not to exceed 60 LETTERS in length.

**FORM FOR VERIFICATION OF NAME AND OTHER PARTICULARS**

1. Name of Burial Ground: CHAMOUSSEY COMM. CAMP. FRANCE

2. Surname: KEARNEY (BLOCK LETTERS) (3) Rank or Rating: SGT. (NAV)

4. Christian or forenames: JOHN (BLOCK LETTERS) (4) Honours: V. DWARD.

5. Regimental or Official number: 1584132 (6) Honours: Battalion

7. Branch of Service: H. A. V. (NR) (8) Squadrons, Battery, etc.: 576 SQDN.

9. Regiment or Ship

10. Date of death: 29-7-44 (11) Age and Birthplace: 31 YEARS. BORN IN PORTHOOTH, IRELAND

12. Names of both parents: JOHN KEARNEY  
EDITH KEARNEY

13. Name of widow: BETTY CHARKE

14. Public or Academic distinctions of sailor, soldier or airman

N.B.—Questions 15 and 16 are only to be answered if the Commission has inserted the place of burial at 1 above or if you are able to do so.

15. Do you desire to have engraved on the headstone  
(a) The Cross (the Christian sign) Yes CROSS  
(b) The Star of David (the Jewish sign)  
(c) No Religious Sign?

16. If you wish to have an inscription or text chosen by yourself engraved on the headstone write it in the space below (not to exceed 60 LETTERS in length) see instructions overleaf.  
"THEY SHALL NOT GROW OLD AS WE BAPT ARE LEFT GROWN OLD R.I.P."

WRITE IN BLOCK LETTERS

N.B.—Questions 17 to 21 need only be answered if the grave is known to be in the British Isles.

17. Do you own the grave or burial rights?

18. If not, give name and address of owner

19. Do you wish the Commission to erect a headstone on the grave? 24 NOV 1953

20. Do you know of any objection to the erection of a headstone; is there, for instance, a memorial on the grave already? CONTRIBUTION LETTER SENT.

21. Is there more than one burial in the grave?

22. Signature: B. Blakie Relationship to deceased: Widow.  
Address: 26, Portland Road, Southale Middlesex. (Note change of address.)

(10/50) 4/22/74 (10/10/74) 1/17 Form (2) J.C.A.S. 702 11 JAN 1949



There is then a section referring to headstones being placed on graves where the casualty has died in UK. These include:

1. Do you own the burial rights.
2. If not give the name of the owner.
3. Do you wish the Commission to erect a headstone over the grave.
4. Do you know of any objection to the erection of a headstone. For instance is there a memorial on the grave already.
5. Is there more than one burial in the grave.

Then follows the signature block of the person completing the form.

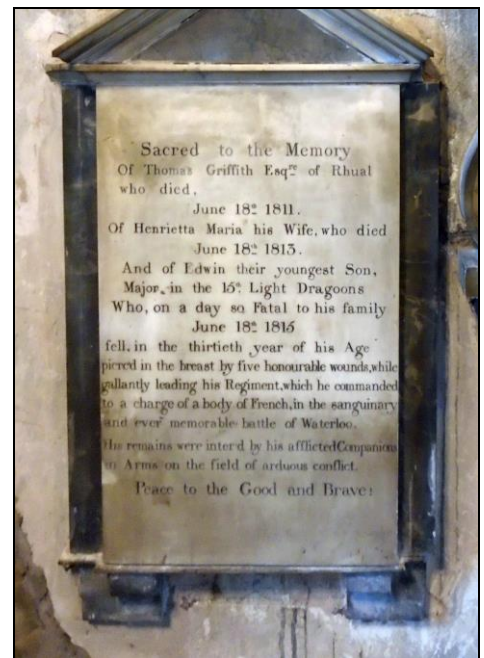
The form was accompanied with an example of what the headstone would potentially look like once erected.

Judging by the next of kin details we see within the CWGC records we can only assume that many of these forms either never reached the Next of Kin or were never completed and returned, as a large proportion of casualties have no further details. These shortfalls are being addressed by the CWGC as and when they receive notification, with proof, from living next of kin.



## 18<sup>th</sup> June – Not a good anniversary

Having read the articles on Waterloo casualties in previous newsletters, Mike McQuaid sent us a memorial plaque erected in Mold St. Mary the Virgin Church. This commemorates the death of Major Edwin Griffith who “*Fell in the 30th year of his age pierced in the breast by five honourable wounds while gallantly leading his Regiment, which he commanded, to a charge of a body of French, in the sanguinary and ever memorable battle of Waterloo.*”. The date of his death was **June 18<sup>th</sup> 1815**. He had been pre deceased by his mother who had died on **June 18<sup>th</sup> 1813** and his father who had died on **June 18<sup>th</sup> 1811**.



## Visiting the Battlefields of France and Belgium - 1921

As I have mentioned earlier in the newsletter, I am intending to ‘pop over’ to France on the morning of the 1st July this year. These days we do not give much thought to a couple of hour’s drive, 45 minutes in a tunnel and then an hour down the empty French motorway to be in the heart of the Battlefields. About a hundred years ago it was a different story but still many families travelled from as far away as Australia and New Zealand to visit their loved ones graves. Just a couple of years after Armistice The Salvation Army was arranging visits for families which included finding the location the grave, where possible, and providing accommodation and guides.

Colonel Albert E. Powley of the Bunbury branch of the Salvation Army in Australia requested a report of his visit to France be published in the Melbourne Herald on 7th September 1921 so that families could be aware of situation for visitors travelling from all parts of the world.



“— Serried ranks of white crosses in countless cemeteries, fragrant with all the flowers of Spring; shell-torn fields now covered with grass, but still telling graphically the story of four years' conflict — this is the picture of France and Flanders painted by Colonel Albert E. Powley, of the Salvation Army, who has returned to Melbourne after a visit to the French battlefields.

Colonel Powley went to London in connection with the International Social Council, and accompanied a party which visited the battlefields under the guidance of the Salvation Army.

*For the service of The Army did not cease when the Armistice was signed. A work which is as great in its way as any during the war is still being carried on, and it is known as The Army's Pilgrimage of remembrance.*

*Aptly-named Hostels of Consolation have been established by The Army at Boulogne, Calais Ostend, Le Havre, Rouen, Ypres, Arras and Amiens, and The Army acts as guide, philosopher and friend to those who desire to visit the of their soldier relatives. 'It is a work of great magnitude, for there are 4000 extra cemeteries in the battle area, and around Ypres alone there are no fewer than 250,000 graves'.*

*Explaining the system under which The Army works, Colonel Powley said that those who desire to visit the graves communicated with Mrs. Commissioner Higgins at the Headquarters in London, and then parties were formed and personally conducted to the area which the party desired to visit. By inquiring at the War Office or, in the ease of Australians, at Australia House, they would know in which district to find their relatives' graves, and the parties were arranged accordingly. The army did all that was possible to facilitate the pilgrimage, and arrangements were even made for passports and baggage. On arrival at one of the Hostels the party was accommodated, and assistance given in finding the graves. Finally the people were sent home, still under the guardianship of The Army.*

#### *SERVICE AT CEREMONY.*

*Colonel Powley said that many people travelled across from England, and as a special privilege to poor mothers, the British Government had made available £25,000, which The Army had been asked to administer. Colonel Powley was with a party which visited the Hostels at Ostend and Arras, and with the party he walked from the Menin road across what was Polygon Wood to the memorial to the Australians, which was then about to be unveiled.*

*A short service was held in the Australian Cemetery, at the foot of the memorial, and the Australian was pleased to find that great attention was being paid to the graves. Some of the cemeteries were really beautiful and the authorities seemed to be determined to do all they could.*

*The Officers of The Army, continued Colonel Powley, were very successful in their efforts to find the graves. Sometimes the clues were rather misleading, but everything possible was done, and success generally followed. It was the business of the Department to unravel the tangle and find out all particulars, such as the location of the grave and its number, with the name of the fallen soldier.*



*Although there' are 4000 of these cemeteries scattered on the battlefields, there is still a great deal of work to be done, and bodies are still being found at the rate of 600 a month. It is said that it will take ten years for the War Graves Committee to complete its work. Most of the visitors who have placed themselves under the care of The Salvation Army are from Britain, but people have also found their way from Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand, and Belgium and northern France, it is expected that next Spring the number from overseas will be much larger. Australians who intend to make the pilgrimage will receive every assistance if they apply beforehand at the Headquarters of The Army in Australia.*

#### *MENTAL ATTITUDE OF VISITORS*

*Arrangements will be made for their reception in England and for their pilgrimage to the cemetery which they desire to visit. Many impressive scenes are witnessed on these battlefield pilgrimages.*

*When Spring had turned one of the larger cemeteries to a scene of pathetic beauty, a hushed party stood beneath the monument while an Australian sent out a message to the dead. It was a simple "Coo-ee" and over the plains of Australia's dead came back the answering echo. Referring to the battlefield pilgrimages, the Times said recently: 'It must be plain to every right thinking man that, unless our tourists start upon their journey in the spirit of the pilgrims, they had better be anywhere in the world than in the devastated districts of Belgium and Northern France.*





*There can be no joy riding there. Once across the frontier the only passport that will be demanded of the traveller is a reverent spirit in his scrutiny of the pages of the noblest chapter in the history of the British race. All who would see where their sons fought and died and triumphed should go to the battlefield if the opportunity is theirs and they should go soon. Before the war the British people, more than any other in Europe, delighted in learning history at first hand in those Continental holidays. But there is a vital difference between the pre-war trip abroad and a battlefield tour in the grimmer world of to-day. In the one, we were merely spectators at a drama long played out. In the other we have a direct personal interest, and too often an intimate share of sorrow.'*

*It is the claim of The Salvation Army that their Hostels of Consolation help to lessen this sorrow.*

## Somme100 FILM - The Battle of the Somme Centenary Tour

For anyone that might be interested in viewing the original monochrome film of the Somme, that so shocked cinema goers a hundred years ago, it has been reinvigorated with a new music score by Laura Rossi. A press release is copied below:-

We are delighted to announce that the Somme100 FILM project now has over 50 live orchestral performances confirmed for 2016. These are all live screenings of the iconic film *The Battle of the Somme* with Laura Rossi's acclaimed score. There are many more performances in the pipeline, which we will be announcing soon, but we still need a few more orchestras to help us reach the target of 100.

Your orchestra can help *The Battle of the Somme* film reach audiences on a national scale, in the same way it did 100 years ago: In 1916 it was shown in 18 countries and watched by half the adult UK population - a box office record not beaten till Star Wars in 1977. The tour will get a huge amount of publicity as *The Battle of the Somme* will be a key part of the National Centenary Commemoration events.

The Imperial War Museum is offering the film free of charge for performance with Laura Rossi's score up until 15 July 2017, so it's not too late to schedule a performance with your orchestra, or if you are an organisation we may be able to help find an orchestra at your venue. The participants already confirmed include a host of professional, amateur and youth orchestras, who will be performing to the 74-minute film in a wide variety of venues from cathedrals and concert halls, to schools, theatres and community centres worldwide.

Please visit [Somme100FILM.com](http://Somme100FILM.com) for more details and email the team on [somme100film@gmail.com](mailto:somme100film@gmail.com) to sign up to this exciting international project.

Signed up performances <http://www.fabermusic.com/repertoire/battle-of-the-somme-the/performances>

Articles for the next newsletter, due in July 2016,  
should be sent via e mail to [steve@twgpp.org](mailto:steve@twgpp.org)



THE WAR GRAVES  
PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT