



THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT



In Association
with the CWGC



News from the Front line

Remembrance Day - November 2008

Welcome to the 'new look' newsletter and TWGPP logo that has been designed by Proctor and Stevenson Ltd. of Bristol. The company have kindly offered to help us by designing new presentation banners and 'flyers' which are in print at the moment. The original WW1 photographer was popular but proved difficult to reproduce in a larger format or even smaller when trying to adapt to shirt badges so after some excellent ideas from P&S it was decided to go for something simple to reproduce that could be used in all circumstances. The photographer will still remain on the 'Home' page of the website.

We were quietly confident that we would make the million mark for images on site by this month as our 1st Anniversary is commemorated alongside the 90th Anniversary of the ending of WW1. We did in fact reach the million mid October so could not wait a further month to put them on. We now stand at 1,039,415 so are now on the downward slope with only about 700,000 to go!



After my enforced inactivity for 3 months I was literally itching to get out behind the camera again so Sandra and I went off to Brookwood in Surrey to make the most of the Indian Summer and do a 'revisit' on Australian graves where the originals were poor due to vivid sunlight. The maples over the Canadian Plots were turning red and worthy of a picture, many of which have been included on requests to Canada With the 90th Anniversary of the end of WW1 the BBC is commemorating this event by a series of programmes both on Radio and TV. I was fortunate enough to be invited to Canada House, in London, by



the CWGC to see a preview of Time Watch, 'Last day of WW1' which hopefully many of you will have seen on Saturday 1st November. The programme focuses on those killed on 11th November 1918, many of which have been 'captured' within the project. The producer of the programme mentioned that Michael Palin, the presenter, although having travelled extensively throughout the world had never been to the Somme. There he saw for the first time his relations name on Caterpillar Valley New Zealand Memorial and was visibly moved. Judging by the continued correspondence from photograph recipients this emotion still abounds even after 90 years.

I'd like to thank everyone who, over the last year, has contributed in many ways towards our ongoing act of Remembrance.

Steve Rogers
Project co-ordinator



In September I was lucky enough to be part of the group who went to Gallipoli. While there we stayed at The Gallipoli Houses owned by Eric & Ozlem Goossens (www.gallipoli.com.tr) One evening while waiting for dinner I overheard Eric talking to another of our group; he mentioned that he was going to be visiting England in October and would be going to the Lancashire Fusiliers and Manchester Regiment Museums. I told Eric that the Fusiliers Museum had closed in August due to it moving to new premises in Bury in spring 2009.

After exchanging a few e-mails on my return to England Eric advised me that he was going to be in the Fusiliers Association Club in Bury on 24 October and I agreed to meet him there. We were joined by another couple from Manchester who had also stayed with Eric in September.

Eric then started to talk about where he lived in Belgium and he mentioned the town of Geel. I interrupted him and asked him to repeat the name of the town. He confirmed that it was Geel and when he finished telling his story I told him that my father had been fighting in the Geel area in September 1944. I also mentioned that in May this year our group's trip to Arnhem was intending to visit the CWG Cemeteries at Kasterlee and Geel but we had to miss them out due to a lack of time.

I told how my father rescued one of his friends from the German side of a canal near Geel. This person had been shot through the chest and was lying in a doorway when my father found him. He got the injured man into a small boat and took him back across the canal to the British side where both of them were hit by shrapnel, but not too seriously. My father's lieutenant told him to take the injured man and himself to the nearest aid post to get attention.

Eric thought I was talking about the canal south of Geel, the Albert Canal, but I told him it was between Geel and Kasterlee. Eric's eyes widened in amazement and I said I thought the name of the small village on the canal was called Aart. It was then Eric's turn to interrupt as he said that that was where his family lived and he had mentioned Geel because it was the nearest large town.

We then talked about when I took my father and a couple of his army pals back to Belgium and France in 1994 for the 50th Anniversary Commemorations. We visited Aart at that time, which was the first time in nearly 50 years my father had been there. While we were there a local man, who would be about the same age as my father, saw us and I could tell he wanted to talk to us but none of us could speak his language. Eric thought he knew who it might have been as it is such a small place. He was going back to Belgium after his visit to England to see his family there and he said that he wished he had known about this coincidence sooner as he would have liked me to meet his family and he said that if possible I should try to visit him in Belgium next year when he goes back to see his family again as he would like us all to meet.

So ended a great evening and Eric was so astounded by the connection that he was even telling the steward in the club on our way out!

To conclude the story about my father and his rescue mission; my father and his wounded friend were separated at the end of the war and never met again until one day in 1997 when both men bumped into each other in Ambleside, where my father lived. His friend had decided to try to find my father and had found out he lived in Ambleside and had gone there to ask some people if they knew where he was. It was an emotional reunion for them both and they kept in regular contact from then until my father died in 1999.

Greenock Cemetery ... a bit of a story – Steve Palmer

There were four graves at Greenock which I was unable to find. The CWGC lists them as 'spec memorial' however no-one at the council cemeteries office, including the groundsmen, knew where this memorial was. I did a fairly thorough search of the cemetery myself and eventually gave up. The cemetery office had given me the location of the lairs where the servicemen were actually buried, but I had found nothing other than the family name on an incomplete stone.

Recently I was reading a biography of a singer/songwriter called Al Stewart. I have been an admirer of his music for decades, you may remember 'Year of the Cat' and other folk/rock music from the 60s and 70s. It would appear that his father was a pathfinder navigator on Lancasters and died as a result of an accident while on a training sortie, after he had completed two tours of duty. I knew that Al was a Scot but I was surprised to discover that he was born and lived for his first few years in Greenock. I began to think that maybe I had photographed his father's grave. Checking back, I discovered that his father, also called Alastair Stewart, was indeed buried in Greenock and his stone was one of the missing 'spec memorials'. The cemetery office had given me the location of the family lair where Al's father and other members of the family rest. His name was not marked on what was left of the stone.

I then did a bit of research on the pathfinder squadrons. One interesting website listed Alastair Stewart on their roll of honour, and even had a photograph of his 'spec memorial'. I was not surprised that I didn't find it the first few times I looked, as it is located in a new section of the cemetery. I had missed searching there as it is populated with people who had died in the last 20 years or so. I returned to Greenock and found and photographed the two stones with two names on each.



Editorial – Pauline Pedersen

Whilst I am having to write this a few days before Remembrance Sunday, Jim and I are looking forward to honouring this occasion when he marches past the Cenotaph in Whitehall. Whilst he will be part of the contingent of National Association of Retired Police Officers, his thoughts will be for his grandfather who was killed on the Somme in September 1916.

In September this year we had the pleasure of meeting Duncan Andrews, the Project's Australian Co-ordinator, his wife and mother. Originally from Yorkshire, they now live in Blaye, France and we stayed in the delightful gite which adjoins their home. It comes highly recommended as does their company! We were very pleased to be able to place a Remembrance Cross on the grave of Duncan's Great-Uncle, after whom he's named, when we went to Gallipoli a few weeks later.

The Operation Tribute Gallipoli supplement accompanies this Newsletter. Suffice to say that we had a great time and achieved our objective of photographing all the graves and memorials to those that died during that campaign of 1915. On behalf of the Project I would like to place on record my thanks not only to the team of volunteers but to Eric & Ozlem Goossens, our hosts at The Gallipoli Houses; to Burcu Turker Uke of KD Tourism and Travel; local historian Kenan çelik and our driver Mehmet Ali. Their advice and help in the pre-planning of this trip was invaluable, their hospitality and friendliness during it added to the fun. I think we dispensed with the myth that the British are quiet and stand-offish!

Since returning from Gallipoli, volunteer Peter Maguire has again met up with Eric Goossens and his story of that meeting is worth telling in this Newsletter, as is the one Duncan sent recently. It's not favouritism, just coincidence, but I feel sure you'll enjoy them.

Operation Tribute 2009 returns to France, based in Arras. Details and a Booking Form attached. Are you tempted?

My wife and I recently spent four days in Normandy, primarily to meet up with members of my old TA Company who were on a D Day Battlefield Tour. We arrived late on Sunday after stopping to take a couple of sites north of Nantes. As my pals were not arriving till late on the Monday we decided to visit Brecourt Manor near to Ste. Marie-du-Mont to take some photographs of the area for a friend in the States who served with the 2/506th Airborne in Vietnam.

It was an overcast day and threatened rain when we left the B&B but not bad enough to stop photography. We arrived in Ste. Marie-du-Mont to find the village busy with visitors but no place for coffee! Moving out of the village we drove along a straight road which gave a good view over the surrounding country and toward Utah Beach. After about 1½ km we turned left off the main road and followed a sign for La Grand Chemin, looking on the left for a sign to Brecourt Manor. What we found was to make my day.



A km down the road on the left we came across a memorial to the 101st Airborne Div – 506th PIR – E Coy ... (The Band of Brothers!).

Out of the corner of my eye I saw a tour coach just disappearing down a narrow lane and so after taking some photographs at the memorial I drove after the bus. The lane quickly narrowed and the banks got higher – we were in true Normandy Bocage, unable to see the fields to right or left for the high banks and hedges.

Coming round a corner we were at the Manor, the bus having just parked at the side of the road to allow its passengers to alight and explore the area a little. As they moved off I parked in front of the bus and was about to ‘wander off’ when I noticed a passenger sitting on the bottom step of the bus entrance – just looking into the distance. He wore a ‘Screaming Eagles’ cap, a waistcoat with numerous medals and was obviously a veteran. I bid him “*Good Morning*” and asked if he was enjoying his day to which he replied “*Yes, and thanks for askin*”

We shook hands and got talking. This was Fred A. Bahlau of the 101st Airborne Div - 506th PIR – 3rd Btn, Coy H. He had jumped the morning of D Day and had landed about 100 yards from his target – a wooden bridge over the River Douve near Carantan and had managed to secure it as planned.

I was privileged to have a long talk with Fred who told me about his landing on 6th June, his ‘acquisition’ of a camera with lots of film that he found around the neck of the first dead German that he rolled over

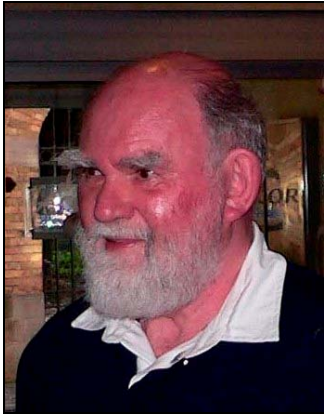
(they were not allowed to carry cameras on their mission) and he showed me copies of some of the photographs he had taken all those years ago, pointing out here and there members of his platoon who had not made it back after the war.

One picture was of him and a lady of about the same age, taken in Eindhoven in 2004. It seems that when he arrived in Eindhoven in 1944 there was a young lady handing out flowers to the Americans as they marched through the streets. When she got to Fred she had no flowers left so she kissed him. He got off a snapshot of her. In 2004 he was in Eindhoven for the celebrations of its liberation and asked someone at the reception if they recognized the girl in the picture? “Yes” was the reply – “And she is over there in the corner of the room”! The picture is so moving to see and I am so glad that I was able to share a moment with him.



What a great story!

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the death of two of our volunteers.



Peter Magnall who had been an avid traveller with our photographic tours in France and Belgium as well as Membership Secretary RAF Cranwell Apprentices Association, died after a short illness on 22nd September 2008.

Stephanie Borry lived near Oxford Road cemetery in Ypres and had battled with cancer for the last 4 years helping us complete the cemetery during episodes of remission. She died on October 28th 2008.



Condolences were sent on behalf of the project to both families.

Was I meant to be there? – Laurence Bertholet

I became a volunteer last year when I came across Commonwealth graves in Matignicourt and decided to send TWGPP the photos, without previously knowing the project existed.

On the 7th October 2008 something incredible happened. I was supposed to take a lesson in the afternoon but it had been cancelled the day before. As it was sunny I decided to take the opportunity of the fine day to go to the Robert-Magny and Rachecourt churchyards to take the photos.

While I was taking the photos in Rachecourt, a French veteran arrived at the cemetery with his flag and told me I was an hour too early? I wondered what he was talking about but he told me he thought I had come for the ceremony due to take place later on and that he thought I had seen the article in the newspaper. In fact it was the actual anniversary of the crash of the Lancaster whose crew I had arrived to photograph.



The village has paid tribute to the air crew every year on this day for the last 20 years. The veteran proposed that I wait and attend the ceremony an hour later which I gladly said I would do in order to get some pictures as I thought it would be nice for the families should anyone ever request the images.

It is such a strange coincidence. There are 365 days in a year and I went there that day. I did not know the date, did not notice the date of the crash on the listing (I only print the names when I go and take photos) and I do not read the regional newspaper ... Believe me, I did not invent this story. A new episode for the sixth dimension perhaps!!!

(Editors Note: Laurence is our French translator and assists in correspondence with all French speaking Volunteers. She lives in Villiers – en – Lieux)

Next Edition

Articles for the next edition should be forwarded to Pauline at pauline@twgpp.org. by the end of December 2008. Next edition will be out in January 2009.

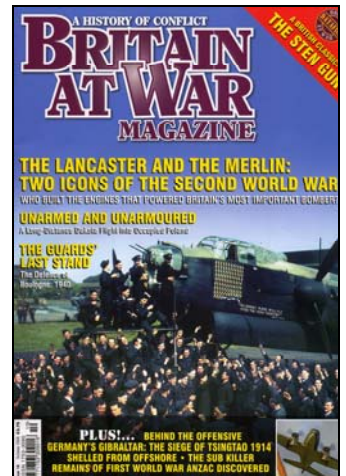
Another year another meeting! Once again we had a good attendance with 38 people present. As well as many of the 'Old Faithfuls' there were a number of new faces which proves the worth of being able to rotate the meetings throughout the country. We were also fortunate that Roy Hemmington of the CWGC was able to join us for the morning.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am with a welcome by Steve who went on to give an excellent presentation as a résumé of the Project's progress and events over the past year, all of which have been covered in our regular Newsletters. Alongside our on-going association with the CWGC, possibly the most significant events have been the launch of TWGPP website in February and adding our millionth image to it in October – an amazing achievement.

TWGPP continues to work closely with the CWGC both at home and abroad and are being considered partners for a recent Charter Mark Award (awarded for Excellence). TWGPP pages are being linked to CWGC Intranet.

The Project has featured in numerous magazine and newspaper articles and there is no let-up in requests for images. Donations from these have enabled the Website Development loan to be paid off and have funded the purchase of a PC with two Tera drives for storage of images; camera and memory sticks (currently in Greece); projector, speakers, screen and two banners to enhance presentations, all of which are Project assets. There are, of course, on-going substantial monthly costs to cover the upkeep of the website and its server.

We are most grateful to Proctors Design Company who donated the art work for the banners, flyers and logo which has been incorporated into a smart new Project sweatshirt. A few were available for purchase at the meeting; details for ordering will be elsewhere in the Newsletter.



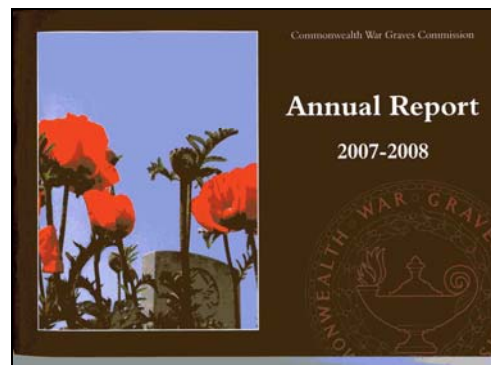
We were given a run-down on statistics worldwide of the coverage so far undertaken by volunteers and whilst it was agreed that there will always be some outstanding images, progress to date is remarkable. There were a few smug looks from the volunteers recently returned from Gallipoli when it was announced that Turkey was 99.9% covered, Operation Tribute Gallipoli accounting for 36,500 images! For the future we shall continue adding images, undertaking re-visits to some sites and during 2009 there may be the possibility that we can accompany CWGC on a stand at the 'Who Do You Think You Are' show at Olympia, 27th Feb-1st March. The 2009 Operation Tribute will be back to France, based in Arras.

Steve concluded his presentation with a short but very poignant video of Bella, the 99 year old New Zealander, for whom we recently supplied a photograph of her father's grave in France. She was overwhelmed. So were those at the meeting. That's what it's all about.

Next to speak was **Roy Hemmington of the CWGC** who is Archives Supervisor in charge of Digitisation of Archives. There are 3.5 million documents in 3400 boxes so it came as no surprise to hear that this is a massive project! Scanning will not begin until late 2009. Illustrated by examples from a member of his own family Roy took us through the records in the archives and the procedure involved before scanning can take place. This was a very interesting talk which lack of space in this issue means we can't expand on but Roy has promised to write an article about the digitisation for the next Newsletter.

He then brought us up to date on the CWGC plans for reburial of the bodies located in Pheasants Wood [Battle of Fromelles July 1916]. Recovery will begin in June 2009 and the new cemetery completed summer 2010; this will be located in Fromelles as the ground in Pheasants Wood is unsuitable. Another huge project.

There were further reports on the situation in Iraq, a sensitive area and not easy to access. More details on this and all other aspects of the CWGC work can be found in its Annual Report 2007-2008 available to order or view on line at www.cwgc.org. We were delighted to see that TWGPP features on page 24 complete with a photograph of volunteers at Reichswald War Cemetery, Germany.



Terry Denham then told us about his Project 'In From The Cold' which is separate from TWGPP but impacts on it. What Terry and his team are doing is finding those men and women whose names have been omitted from the CWGC records, for whatever reason. Not surprisingly the majority of those are WWI casualties.

It's a tedious process! The CWGC official list is compared against the General Register Office index of overseas military and naval deaths and 'Soldiers Died in the Great War' (though both lists contain errors too). After numerous cross-checks, when a possible missing name is discovered a death certificate must be obtained and, along with any other documentary evidence, forwarded to the CWGC who will then pass it to the Ministry of Defence to decide if a case can be accepted. In May the first sixteen submissions were accepted for commemoration by the CWGC. Once again, lack of space prevents a more detailed report but Terry, too, has promised to write an article for the Newsletter.

The meeting drew to a close at 1.30pm when Steve thanked everyone for attending and hoped that they would enjoy their afternoon browsing around the museum.

TWGPP RUGBY SHIRT

As mentioned earlier and due to a number of enquiries with regard to Project identity we have utilised the new Logo designed by Proctor & Stevenson Ltd of Bristol into a rugby shirt. These proved popular at the meeting and all but one (ladies small) was snapped up.



These are being sold at cost price to volunteers at £20 + £5 to cover postage and packaging.

At present these are being ordered as long Sleeve Rugby shirt, as illustrated, but in the spring 2009 T-shirts and short sleeve rugby's will be available. For orders please contact sandra@twgpp.org

Sizes are Ladies - Small, Medium and Large
Mens - Small, Medium, Large, X Large and XXL

He loves me really – Trieve Rolls (New Zealand)

As NZ volunteers for TWGPP my husband and I went for a very long drive and completed much of our assignment but ran into a bit of an obstacle with the only Maori Cemetery, at Ruatoria; they wanted a letter from the NZ WGC to say what we are doing. This 'Marae' (sacred place) was about 20km inland from Ruatoria which still doesn't even have power so you can imagine where we were! We actually travelled over 450km and still didn't reach them all; that gives you an idea of how remote some of these graves are; one we did was in the middle of a paddock with only about 10 graves. This is the Maori way, returning their dead to where they were born in most cases. It took a while to get used to the gravel roads but we saw some beautiful scenery and saw parts of the country we would never have visited.

My husband's comment to a friend recently: 'I'll bl.... know every bl....cemetery in the North Island before she's finished'. He does love me really!



Thank You – Excerpts from the mail box

Thank you very much for such a quick response. I have already forwarded the attachments onto my mother in Australia. It was a pleasant surprise today to find your volunteer website with actual photos of headstones available... My grandmother is now 91 years. I believe she will be most grateful to finally "see and visit" her brother's grave after almost 65 years. Once again thank you and keep up the great service. Regards, Michael

Thank you so much for the photos, my dad will be so pleased to see them. He still remembers the day when the telegram arrived to say that his favourite uncle was MIA and then a week or so later it was confirmed that he had died. Sue

Many thanks once again for an excellent service. It is much appreciated and certainly enhances the display of 'The Fallen' in our Parish Church. I have 12 more to add to the WW1 display and will do this over a period of time. Please offer my appreciation to those who assist by taking the photographs. Best wishes. Brian Boulton

Thanks , it is so lovely to receive the photo of the grave with the flowers and the article. We really appreciate all the work that you have done towards getting some closure for Bella. The video was very touching for her, but the whole family have been touched by the experience and photographs – as you can see from the extended family shots we are all very close, cousins, uncles, aunties and grandchildren. The photo is going around to all the immediate and extended family bringing tears and joy. We are also so happy knowing that William Lindsay is being remembered and his grave well kept and maintained –

Thank you so much!! My family have all the details of how the Llandovery Castle was sunk but no personal information regarding Michael. This means so much to us to see this as we are unable to visit the memorial itself. Kind Regards Vicki and all the Brennan family

I can't thank you enough for the photographs and all the help you and your colleagues have given us. Could you please thank the person who took the pictures we are so grateful, it's the first time anyone in our family has seen the grave. Keep up the fantastic work. Thank you so much Allyson, Rhiannan and the Mitchell family.

Many thanks for your email. The level of service that you provide is incredible and very much appreciated. Kindest regards Alan

Photos arrived safely this morning. Very pleased, absolutely marvelous, especially as they have included the actual cemetery which is such a beautiful peaceful spot. Am sure our two elderly survivors will shed a tear. Thank-you to all concerned.

Thank you so much for the photos of the grave of Captain Minot at Harlbeke. You have made an old man so happy. I cannot begin to tell you how grateful I am. I would love to know if the inscription at the bottom of the stone is a standard one. His elderly sisters will be so happy to see the photos. Once again my sincere thanks for the wonderful work you do. W Sullivan

Thank you for the reply about my uncle, I would like to say that you and your team have provided a wonderful service in obtaining these photos of all the War Graves. They will bring comfort to many people I'm sure. Regards. Jen

Thank you for the wonderful service you are providing. John William Goulstone was the only member of the NZ branch of the Goulstone family to serve in WW1 and unfortunately after only a couple of months in France was killed in action. No one from our family has ever visited his grave but it is something I am determined to do one day. He was never able to return home to New Zealand but I want to visit his grave to show that his family in New Zealand has never forgotten his sacrifice. These days many people scoff at such sentiment but I firmly believe that we owe so much to these men and women that it is our duty that they are always remembered. The internet is certainly a wonderful tool for finding information. Thank you again,
Roger Goulstone

I almost believed I would never be able to see my Fathers name on the memorial at Kranji and then I found your service, the photos you sent me are brilliant, thank you so much, I cannot begin to tell you how much it means to me to have them. Mrs P Chorley.

You are doing a sterling job with this service and your team of volunteers are deserving of many thanks