



THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT



In Association
with the CWGC



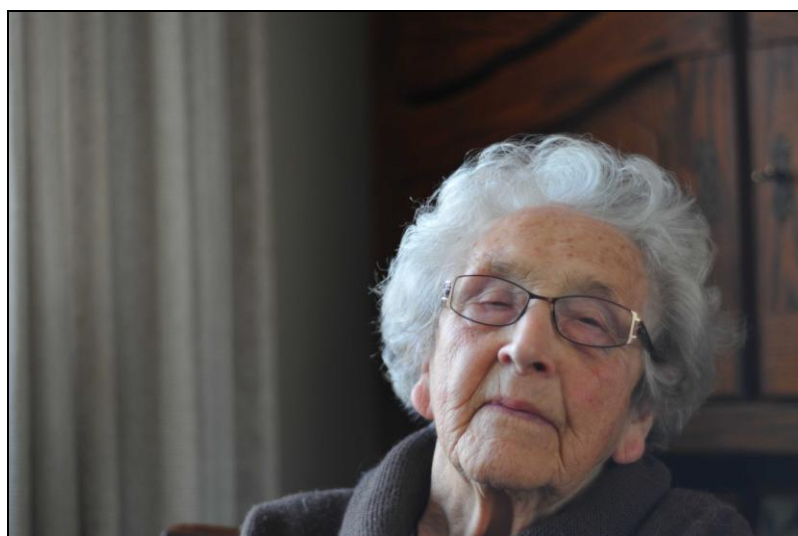
News from the Front line

April 2012

Yesterday (5th April) was the 30th Anniversary of Royal Navy ships leaving Portsmouth to head to the South Atlantic to a campaign that most never thought would materialise. Serving at the time I can remember that day vividly and the build up to it with Portsmouth dockyard in overdrive to get ships ready and the number of lorries arriving full of 'Paras' ready to embark. The following weeks are similarly etched on my mind and I still have the newspaper announcing that HMS Sheffield had been sunk which to many in the Royal Navy at the time was unbelievable yet true. Now 30 years ago is ancient history to many and there are probably people in the country who had never heard of the Falklands campaign and now wondering why it is suddenly in the news again.

If I roll back the years to 1974 when I actually enlisted in the 'Senior Service' I had effectively just left school and had been content that World War 2 was seen through my eyes via 'Commando' comics, the World at War on TV and the numerous films being shown in the 70's about that period of 'ancient' history. It struck me just this year that just 30 years previous to 1974 troops were landing on the beaches of Normandy to liberate Europe and these memories would have still been etched on the minds of those that lived through that period of conflict when I was more concerned about travelling to exotic lands.

One such person who still remembers the Liberation of the Netherlands as if it was yesterday is Mrs Thijssen who lives near Milsbeek war cemetery. On Christmas Eve Paul Ten Broeke (a volunteer in the Netherlands) came across this lady laying flowers on the grave of Lance Corporal Harold Ewan of the Kings Own Scottish Borderers who was killed on 16th February 1945. Mrs Thijssen, now aged 92 has been visiting this grave three times a year on Liberation day, All Souls Day and Christmas for over 64 years because she felt grateful for his sacrifice so that she, her children and grandchildren can live in freedom.



She told Paul that she remembers young German 'soldiers' aged 16 or 17 crying through being forced to the front by their officers holding guns to their backs. The sounds of the Allied forces planes are still vivid and the dropping of paratroopers around Groesbeek before her family had to flee the area due to the ongoing fighting.

She thinks it is important to take care of a grave of a fallen serviceman just as if it was her own brother or child and because she felt that it would be important for his mother and family to know that Harold was being looked after.

Unfortunately Mrs Thijssen told Paul that she has never been able to make contact with any of Harold's family to let them know about the care that his grave has been given and feels that now at her age it might not be possible to find any living relative to inform.



Therefore, I am hoping that via our network of volunteers, many of whom are amateur and maybe professional genealogists or researchers, we may be able to find a living relative who we could put in touch with Mrs Thijssen.

Information is scant but Lance Corporal Harold EWEN 3189524 is recorded as being born in Edinburgh but lived in Dumfriesshire. His parents were George and Martha Ewan.

He is commemorated on the local war memorial at Dunscore in Dumfries and Galloway so the family, or he alone, may have moved there from Edinburgh?

He died taking part in Operation "Veritable". The KOSB's role was to take Broederbosch Wood near Afferden. He was in 'C' company which suffered six casualties when a 'Moaning Minnies' barrage landed amongst them as they entered the woods.

We have no age at death but there was a Harold Ewen born in Portobello, Edinburgh in 1919.

If anyone can help to try and find his family I am sure Mrs Thijssen would appreciate it. Paul, who is in contact with Mrs Thijssen, can be contacted on paultenbroeke@cs.com

Discovering lost war cemeteries in the Desert

Andrea Mariotti, an Italian living in Egypt has been in touch to inform TWGPP about an organisation set up in Bologna (Italy) in 2011 called the Association of Independent Researchers Western Desert (ARIDO). Their aim is to rescue and recover all the abandoned cemeteries and single burials all over North Africa where WWII was fought that are currently being threatened by the Oil business and property speculation.

He has joined forces with another researcher Dr Daniele Moretto. They are now based in Egypt and have so far found 18 abandoned and forgotten war cemeteries in the desert around El Alamein. Their website can be found at this link www.arido.eu

One such site is the Cemetery of the Greek Brigade (MAKABER GEISH YONANY). In the area of El Mourbat Ahza they were able to discover this cemetery with absolute certainty that it was the cemetery of the Greek Brigade.



Original memorial

What remains today of the Greek Brigade Cemetery is a clear visible perimeter where the memorial stone had been erected and a central wooden cross (there is a piece that protrudes from the memorial stone for about ten centimeters). Sand mounds that were removed when the remains of Greek soldiers were transferred to the Commonwealth war cemetery are also clearly visible.

Destruction of War Graves in Libya

TWGPP has had quite a bit of correspondence about the destruction of war graves in Libya and a number of requests for pictures of the graves now that these cemeteries had been highlighted in the Press. Fortunately for us David Milborrow had visited the cemeteries a couple of years ago so we hold good copies in the archive. Many people thought at the time that there may be a 'copycat' process where other cemeteries in the Middle East may experience similar vandalism so it was good to see that this did not occur.

The CWGC are now in the process of engraving new stones to replace those that had been destroyed and having seen the work going on around the world to replace stones through erosion I am sure this will not be too long in coming to fruition.

Although not one of the cemeteries directly affected, a request came in from New Zealand for a grave in Tripoli cemetery for peace of mind that it had not been desecrated.

"I recently ordered a photo from you of a grave in Tripoli.

This was a picture of H Durbin, who was my grandmother's half brother. We did not have very much information about where he was buried, being under the impression he was in Tunisia.

After hearing about the destruction of some of the graves in Libya I thought I'd look at the War graves commission site and read more about their work. It was there I saw I could view photos of war graves. Using the small amount of information I had I searched for H Durbin and then his name came up in the screen. When I clicked on his name a photo of his grave came up. I have to tell you I just sat there staring at it, overwhelmed.



So the purpose of this email is to thank you, which doesn't seem a strong enough sentiment. You enabled us to find him and solve our puzzle. When it arrived a few short days later I showed a friend. She noticed that not only had you sent me the photo of his grave, but of the cemetery as well.

I gave this to my father last night. He did not know I had ordered it, and when he opened it he just looked at it in disbelief. It was a very emotional moment for us all. Dads mother died 3 years ago not knowing where her half brother was buried. We all felt sadness for that, but the feeling was one of gratitude to your organisation. And so we would like to thank you, which really doesn't sum up how we really feel. We are so grateful to you for giving us the opportunity to see his grave. It's very location means we will probably never get to see it in person, and so you have provided us with something very special. We will treasure this photograph.

We are so utterly grateful to you for your work. It has brought us closer to a family member lost a long time ago, but remembered again today thanks to yourselves.

Kind regards Helen Cook

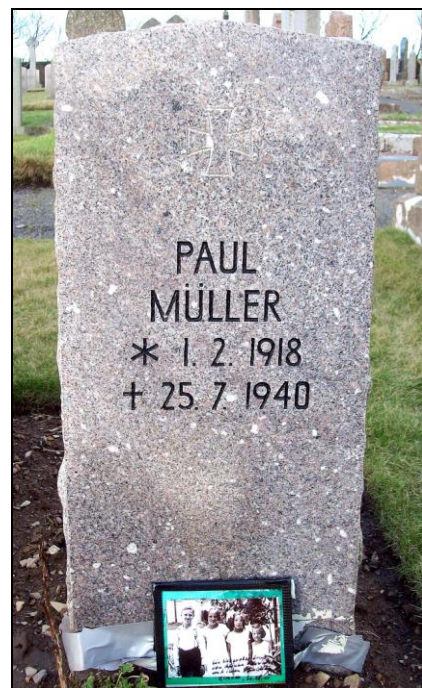
Similar comments can be found from those receiving images from us around the world on our thanks page <http://twgpp.org/thanks.php> but I personally would like to thank those of you out there photographing cemeteries in all areas and making the TWGPP an exceptional resource of which families are so appreciative.

Tanks rolling through Acton, Middlesex

Travelling around the cemeteries it is becoming increasingly common to see mementoes being left by the gravestones some of which are very poignant, others not so! David Ayling was recently conducting a revisit to a cemetery in Acton and it would appear that a local school had run a craft project building model tanks. These must have been laid at the graves at some point, perhaps Remembrance Day and were still there some months later.



A little more poignant was the photograph of children left at the grave of Paul Muller, a German casualty, who is buried at St Olaf's in the Orkneys. One can only guess that this might show Paul and his sisters in the family group and perhaps it is one of these sisters that has managed to get to the Orkneys to visit his grave after all this time. Pictures by Richard MacDonald.



The next newsletter will be out in July 2012.

Anyone wishing to contribute should contact Steve on steve@twgpp.org



THE WAR GRAVES
PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT

A More Prominent Position

For those of you that regularly use the CWGC site you will have noticed that the latest version went live in January earlier this year.

The new site gives additional search filters which can aid those looking for a particular casualty and also the ability to download a cemetery listing which I know for some will prove popular.

With the addition of a 'Photographic Request' tab

The screenshot shows the CWGC website header with the logo and navigation menu. The main content area displays the 'Casualty details' for Bertram William Jubilee Rogers. A red arrow points from the 'Photographic Request' tab in the left-hand menu to the 'View certificate' link in the 'Casualty Details' section.

Casualty details

ROGERS, BERTRAM WILLIAM JUBILEE

Rank:	Lance Corporal
Service No:	20840
Date of Death:	01/07/1916
Age:	29
Regiment/Service:	Hampshire Regiment 1st Bn.
Grave Reference:	A. 23.
Cemetery:	REDAN RIDGE CEMETERY No.2, BEAUMONT-HAMEL

Additional Information:
Son of Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, of Hayling Island, Havant, Hants; husband of Adelaide Myra Rogers, of 65, Portnall Rd., Harrow Rd., Paddington, London.

under the 'Casualty Details' tab this has given the project more prominence and allowing people to find us easier with a link to our site when clicked.

The screenshot shows the CWGC website header with the logo and navigation menu. The main content area displays the 'Photographic Requests' page. A red arrow points from the 'Photographic Request' tab in the left-hand menu to the 'Photographic Requests' section.

Photographic Requests

THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT

We receive many requests from members of the public asking for photographs of headstones and memorials. Unfortunately, due to the numbers of casualties, the Commission does not hold photographs of each of its commemorations.

However, our partners, The War Graves Photographic Project, are a group of dedicated volunteers who have undertaken the immense task of recording, archiving and making available to the descendants, images of the graves or memorial listings of every service casualty since the outbreak of the First World War.

So far they have been able to photograph and record over 1.6 million named graves and memorials. To learn more about the project, search the online database or request a photograph please visit www.twgpp.org.

**"STRONG AS A ROCK,
THROUGH STRIFE AND
FEAR, HE SERVED HIS
LORD, TILL DEATH"**

Personal inscription on a headstone

With ANZAC Day fast approaching when Australia and New Zealand remember their war dead it is appropriate to remember all of those that died during conflict but we are able to give some personal stories here submitted by those 'Down under'.

Finding Corporal Henry Hatfield – Keith Harrison



The photographing of graves in the Toowoomba cemetery in south-eastern Queensland for TWGPP was almost complete. Several return trips had found all of the remaining graves in the general section of the cemetery but one – Corporal Henry James Hatfield who died on June 6, 1944, aged 35 years. His location on the cemetery database location matched with that from CWGC but there was no grave at that location. In the interim the cemetery updated the on-line database to include a photograph of the headstone, in this case a privately arranged one. Even equipped with this I could not find it anywhere near the stated location. It was some months before I was in the city at a time when the cemetery office was open. One of the staff accompanied me to the stated location and agreed that the grave was indeed not there. Back in their office they consulted another database and found that Corporal Hatfield had been disinterred in 2010 and taken a thousand kilometres north to the North Queensland city of Townsville.

At this point I felt a little for Corporal Hatfield – disturbed after lying in peace for 65 years. He had served with the Australian Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers at Milne Bay in Papua New Guinea and passed away due to “illness” after being brought back to Australia.

At this point I sought assistance from the ever-helpful Office of Australian War Graves North Queensland manager Jason Daniels.

He was able to confirm that Corporal Hatfield’s wife Pearl Winifred Hatfield had died in 2010 at the age of 105 years in Townsville and the family, including their son Paul, had resolved to reunite them in death. Corporal Hatfield had been born in that city and Pearl had moved there from the nearby gold mining town of Charters Towers at age 10 years. Pearl subsequently became a book-keeper and was a founding member of the local War Widows group. Their combined grave still does not have a formal headstone, just a simple grave marker (pictured), so there is nothing to put on TWGPP. The saga did however have a pleasing outcome – Henry reunited with Pearl, the young bride who lost him 65 years earlier.

GEORGE PARKER, M.M., D.C.M. – Brian Walker

After visiting the Strathalbyn Cemetery, South Australia, to photograph war graves and family memorials, the following story was compiled after a lot of research.

The following notice appeared in *The Register* newspaper, Adelaide, South Australia, on Friday, 12th August 1921: “PARKER – On the 10th August at Strathalbyn, George Edward, the beloved son of George W.H. and Elizabeth A. Parker, aged 31 years, result of accident.”

This short death notice to anyone who read it could in no way convey the full story of this remarkable man.

George Parker was born on 24th April, 1890, at Long Plain, near Strathalbyn. His father, born at Stourbridge, England, had come to Australia in 1877.

Strathalbyn is a prosperous, thriving rural town about one and a half hours driving time south of Adelaide, the capital of South Australia. The town has early Scottish connections dating from 16th November 1841 when William Rankine and James Dawson received the first land grant for what was to be the village of Strathalbyn.

George Parker, regimental number 2674, enlisted on the 10th July, 1915. His occupation was given as Labourer, religion Church of England. He was single and aged 25 years. He was six feet tall, with grey eyes, brown hair and of dark complexion. He embarked for the war on *HMAT A55 Kyarra* on the 16th August 1915 with the rank of Private attached to the 15th Battalion, 8th Reinforcement.

His ability as a soldier on the Western Front was soon recognised. He was promoted to Lance Corporal on the 1st July 1916, then to Temporary Corporal on the 19th August 1916, and Sergeant on the 5th September, 1916.

It was during the battle of Pozieres that George Parker was awarded the Military Medal. His citation from the G.O.C. 4th Australian Infantry Brigade reads as follows: *“Recommended for his splendid conduct from 5th to 10th August during operations north-west of Pozieres. He was especially noticed on the 9th August carrying water throughout the day to wounded men in exposed positions. He showed great skill and enterprise in handling his party of scouts, and his information was always most valuable.”*

Also during this action he received gunshot wounds to both arms and was transported to England on the 12th October 1916 in the Hospital Ship *St Denis* from Boulogne. He returned to France on the 12th December, two months later.

On the 1st February 1917, for the second time, he was wounded in action with gunshot wounds to the hand and right knee and returned to England for hospital treatment, this time from Le Havre. He returned to France via Folkestone on the 20th April 1917. He was promoted to Company Sergeant Major on the 4th June 1917.

On the 1st October, 1917, he was recommended for a Bar to his Military Medal. His citation reads as follows: *“For his magnificent bravery and devotion to duty during operations near Zonnebeke on 26th September 1917.*

He was a tower of assistance to his Company Commander throughout these operations. He did wonderful work in getting his company formed up in rear of the Jumping Off Line, on difficult ground, strewn with barbed wire and under enemy shell fire, the cool able way he performed this job had a great effect on the men. When the attack was launched he was continually noticed for his quiet and able handling of his men.

He showed great decision and dash in smothering any enemy opposition and was responsible for the capture of an enemy machine gun and putting a crew of two of the enemy out of action.

His courage and coolness infected his men and greatly influenced the excellent work done by his Company in the consolidation of the objective and in repulsing several enemy counter attacks.”

However, despite this recommendation, he was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal in lieu of a Bar to his Military Medal. On the 25th January 1918 his service records show that he was delisted from his Battalion strength for special duties with the Imperial Army and sent to Cairo. The reason for this move was to join ‘Dunsterforce’ which was set up in 1917.

‘Dunsterforce’ was an Allied military mission of under 1,000 Australian, New Zealand, British, and Canadian troops (drawn from the Mesopotamian and Western Fronts), accompanied by armoured cars, deployed from Hamadan some 350km across Qajar Persia. It was named after its commander General Lionel Dunsterville.



Its mission was to gather information, train and command local forces, and prevent the spread of German propaganda. Later on, Dunsterville was told to take and protect the Baku oil fields. The force was initially delayed by 3,000 Russian Bolshevik troops at Enzeli but then proceeded by ship to the port of Baku on the Caspian Sea. This was the primary target for the advancing Turkish forces and Dunsterforce endured a short, brutal siege in September 1918 before being forced to withdraw.

George disembarked at Basrah, March 1918, to join up with the 'Dunsterforce' in Baghdad. However, he contracted typhus on the 12th July 1918 and was dangerously ill; he recovered and was removed from the danger list on 25th July 1918. He left 'Dunsterforce' in October 1918 and departed Egypt, November 1918 for France, having served three years and 272 days overseas. He returned to Australia in July 1919.

Having read the inscription on George Parker's headstone when photographing for the TWGPP I was drawn to the fact that he was a highly decorated soldier who had survived that terrible conflict WW1. I also noticed that he had died in 1921 from an accident, three years after the war ended. Curiosity led me to try to find out more about his death. I visited the State Public Library where copies of the 'Southern Argus' are kept. This was the Strathalbyn newspaper in the 1920s (in fact, still published today). The following report appeared in the newspaper of the 18th August 1921:

"A very sad fatality took place near Strathalbyn on Wednesday last, by which the district lost one of its most popular and promising young men, Mr George E Parker, eldest son of our old and esteemed townfolk, Mr and Mrs George Parker, the mournful incident causing a pall of gloom over the district when the news of it spread. Mr Parker left his home in the morning with the intention of felling some trees, and took his double-barrelled gun with him on the chance of getting a rabbit or two. He did not return to his parents' home at the usual time, and when some hours later he was still absent, they grew anxious, and as at a late hour he was still missing, sent word to the police, M.C. Lyons organising a search party which was swollen after the entertainment in the Institute concluded, Sir Lancelot Stirling announcing that the young man was missing and asking for assistance in finding him. A big contingent was soon scouring the neighbourhood of his intended operations and soon after midnight his dead body was found at a fence near Sweet Home Estate (Mr Frank Thring's), Mr Geoffrey Gardiner discovering him, the position of the body and the gun indicating that the hammer had caught in the fence and exploded the charge as he was getting through, the full contents of the cartridge entering his head causing instantaneous death, which must have occurred early in the morning while Mr Parker was on his way to his work. Young Parker was a returned soldier with a very enviable reputation, having won the D.C.M. and Military Medal, rising to the rank of company sergeant, and winning also the highest respect from his comrades and officers alike. He served on several fields and came back to his home at the sacrifice of an offered commission in the Imperial Army. He was a studious and thoughtful young man and while abroad mastered the language of each country he spent any time in. His future seemed very bright, and additional sorrow attaches to his death from the fact that his parents are both in poor health, and the young lady to whom he was shortly to have been married was also ill at the time of his untimely decease. The funeral took place on Friday with military honours, a contingent of the R.S.A. following his remains to their resting place at the Strathalbyn Cemetery, as did a number of members of the Rechabite Lodge. Capt.-Chaplain the Rev. T.P. Wood conducted the service at the grave, Mr G.D. Jones reading the Rechabite ritual. Very great sympathy is felt for the bereaved relatives."

A friend of George Parker, Mr Archibald Beviss, wrote: *"The tragic death of Mr. Geo. Parker, soldier, D.C.M* and bar*, M.C*, has removed one of God's chosen men, a loving son, a true brother, and a loyal friend. Unostentatious, fearless, and kind, though unallied to me by blood or birth, like a brother I loved him well, and those who knew his sterling worth will mingle their tears with mine in this farewell. Ah ! George, can it be that we will never again see thy honest face beam forth with its kindly depth of true, hidden forever from our view, oh is it true ? We will never again hold that strong right hand of thine, so genuine in its grip, and watch thy smiling eye and lip, a man that knew no guile and never bowed at fear; was stricken down by a soldier's unerring fire, that fire which ends many a bright soldier's career. Farewell, a long last farewell."*

Having been wounded in battle twice on the Western Front, near death from typhus in Persia, his cause of death was a sad and tragic irony.

* Footnote: Mr Beviss was incorrect in quoting these decorations. From the official service records the gazetted awards are M.M. and D.C.M.

New Zealand Airman died in Canada – Ken Roberts

Raymond Swingler's Father was one of the many New Zealand aircrew, amongst other Commonwealth airmen that were drafted to Canada to learn their flying skills in a relatively safe environment away from the war zone of mainland Europe. Inevitably some accidents occurred during training and this was the case with Sergeant Raymond Joseph Swinger who was serving at Royal New Zealand Air force 1(y) Depot in Nova Scotia.

A letter was received by his wife giving her details of his funeral as no family member was able to attend at that time.

Air Department,
Wellington. C.1.
7th July, 1943.

Mrs W.E. Swingler,
102 Chalmers Avenue,
ASHBURTON.



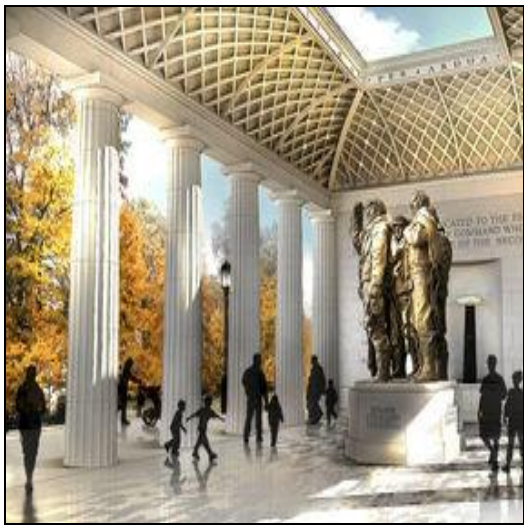
Dear Madam,

I have to advise you that this Department has now received a detailed report of the funeral of your late husband, **Sergeant** Raymond Joseph Swingler. The report states that the funeral of your husband was held with full service honours on Saturday, January 2nd, 1943 at ten o'clock in the morning. It was attended by the Commanding Officer of No. 1 "Y" Depot, Halifax N.S. Wing Commander A. Woods, the Senior Administration Officer, Squadron Leader J.S. Williamson, the New Zealand Liaison Officer, Flight Lieutenant F.O. Spackman, Flying Officer J.W. Such, Flight Lieutenant C.A. Hird, and several other officers and Sergeants of the New Zealand, Australian and Canadian Air Forces. The Bearer party consisted of six New Zealand Sergeants. The church service was held at Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral, the party having proceeded there from the Undertaking parlours of Snow & Co. Ltd. The Roman Catholic padre of No. 1 "Y" Depot, Flight Lieutenant J.P.A. Brazeau, officiated at the funeral Mass at the Cathedral and at the graveside. Sergeant Swingler was buried at 1145 hours, January 2nd, 1943, at the "Gates of Heaven" Cemetery located at Saskville, N.Z. approximately thirteen miles from Halifax, N.S.

The grave has been marked with a temporary wooden cross pending the erection of a permanent memorial by the Canadian Agency of the Imperial War Graves Commission which will also provide perpetual care and maintenance of the grave.

Once again please accept my deepest sympathy in your great loss.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) T.A. Barrow,
AIR SECRETARY.



Bomber Command Memorial Unveiling June 2012

This year sees the unveiling of the new Bomber Command Memorial situated on the edge of Green Park in London. The dedication and unveiling is planned for June 28th and will be unveiled by the Queen and will honour the 55,573 men of Bomber Command who lost their lives in WWII

During WWII of the 125,000 volunteer airmen of RAF Bomber Command 55,573 made the ultimate sacrifice. For much of the war RAF Bomber Command provided the only option available for carrying the fight to the heart of the enemy's capacity to wage war. The RAF Bomber Command Memorial in London will recognise the role of these men and the price they paid.

The Memorial has been designed by the distinguished architect Liam O'Connor. Best known for the design and construction of the Commonwealth Memorial Gates on Constitution Hill, near Buckingham Palace, Liam O'Connor has worked with the recognised and renowned sculptor Philip Jackson, (whose noted work includes the HM Queen Elizabeth Memorial on The Mall in London).

The memorial is built in Portland stone and at its heart will be a bronze sculpture depicting seven Bomber Command aircrew. The space around it will be open to the sky with an aperture designed to allow light to fall directly onto the aircrew.

The sculpture will be set on a 1.5 metre plinth. The height of the plinth and the scale of the sculpture as a whole means that visitors will always see the profile of the figures against the sky above them, day and night - thus rendering that section of the sky powerfully symbolic for the memorial. The Memorial will be an area of quiet contemplation and serenity and will ensure that these men are remembered forever.



Bomber Command crew in Reichswald War Cemetery, Germany

A Minor Skirmish - Craig Walker

I have only recently volunteered to take photos for TWGPP and like most volunteers have soon found the experience both fascinating, moving and, of course informative as I worked my way through a revisit of Phaleron War Cemetery in Athens.

I thought that I had a fairly extensive knowledge of all things Royal Naval and especially of the Navy's activities around Greece in the Second World War. However, I came across a small group of headstones which proved how little I knew. The graves were of four Royal Marines, one a Captain, all killed on 14th November 1944. What intrigued me at first was their unit affiliations – two with HMS Nile and two with HMS Sphinx. The only HMS Nile I had heard of was a Victorian pre-Dreadnought battleship and as for Sphinx, I had no idea. I was also intrigued by the date: after the German withdrawal from Greece, but before the unfortunate clashes between British troops and Greek Communist fighters from December 1944.

A quick look in my reference books confirmed that the last HMS Nile had in fact been broken up in 1912. The last HMS Sphinx, it seemed, was a small minesweeper which foundered in the Moray Firth in 1940 after being damaged in an air attack. More research on the internet revealed what I should have guessed – both names were given to shore bases in Alexandria and HMS Nile was Admiral Cunningham's HQ whereas HMS Sphinx was an accommodation base. Both affiliations were given to SAS, SBS and other special forces along with harbour clearance and other shore parties etc., and this continued as the Axis troops were progressively driven from Libya, Tunisia and Italy.

Further research led me to the history behind these particular deaths. As the Germans withdrew from Greece, advance parties moved in and began to prepare Piraeus harbour, in particular, to receive British forces in strength. However, the German evacuation from the Greek islands couldn't be completed as easily as that from the mainland and there were many small garrisons left behind. One of these was on Milos, a sizeable island between Athens and Crete, home to a Kriegsmarine "Freya" radar site on Mt Topakas. A party of 50 or so Royal Marines (with the delightful codename "Haddock") under Captain Arnold Bell were transported from Piraeus aboard HMS Easton to take over the island.



In the fighting that followed, Captain Bell and the three other Marines were killed. HMS Easton sailed back with several prisoners and some Greeks who wished to fight for the Allies. Most of this I learnt from an online discussion in the forum of www.british-genealogy.com - most interestingly from Mr Edwin Bell, son of Captain Bell, who has visited the site several times and in 1998 erected a small memorial plaque at the ruined radar site.

For those on facebook, there is a page devoted to Milos under German occupation at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/12945903861/>. This is maintained by a local historian, and includes pictures of Mr Bell's memorial and the ruined radar site and blockhouse which formed the focus of the Topakas fighting.

I've been all over Greece, but only seen Milos from the sea. I hope I'll be able to make my own pilgrimage to the radar site that saw this sacrifice in 1944.

Exhibition and Bike run in the Netherlands – Paul Ten Broeke

Paul Ten Broek, who we mentioned on page 1, is presenting an exhibition and talk in his home town of Gennepe about his experiences whilst volunteering for TWGPP. He explains:

'Remembrance', is an exhibition of pictures inspired by my work for the TWGPP. Visiting many small and larger cemeteries a transition took place; from stones to stories. Stories given to me by people I met at cemeteries and taking the opportunity to talk to them.

For example the story of Major Beales and his orderly Private Smith, who fought at the liberation of Gennepe during Operation Veritable. Private Smith was ordered to courier a message to the troops. He saluted and said "see you in 20 minutes, Sir". Shortly after Major Beales was killed by a grenade and just 20 minutes later Private Smith was also killed: "See you in 20 minutes, Sir.....". They now lie side by side in Milsbeek Cemetery.

Also Mrs Thijssen taking care of the grave of Lance Corporal Ewen since her marriage in 1948 and still visiting his grave 3 times per year, just because a grave is supposed to be visited.

This Remembrance project will have 3 parts: an exhibition in the library of Gennepe, two readings and a Remembrance Run for British Motorbike enthusiasts. One of the readings is meant for children to show them that freedom was given by people who paid the ultimate price for it.



'Remembrance' is an abstract representation of the images I have seen at the cemeteries in Milsbeek and the Reichswald, but also in smaller cemeteries. They have become cue-cards of my feelings I had whilst taking pictures at the cemeteries and at home, and of the stories given to me.

You are invited to visit this exhibition for free. The opening is on the 27th April at 18:30. The Remembrance run will be on the 5th of May, starting at 10:15. The address is Ellen Hofmanplein Gennepe. If you want to know more about this project, have a look at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/paultbfotografie/project-remembrance/achtergrond>

Exhibition

http://www.paultenbroeke.nl/mediapool/83/832266/data/Flyer_expositie_Remembrance.pdf

Bike Run

http://www.paultenbroeke.nl/mediapool/83/832266/data/Uitnodiging_Remembrance_run_2012.pdf

An original grave marker?

Hugh Trainer has found this original grave marker in Margam St. Mary Churchyard on the grave of Guardsman David Stanford of the Welsh Guards. He died in 1946 and it appears that the family have foregone the option of a Commission headstone in preference for a family memorial and yet this cross is in remarkable good condition and still bears the original Imperial War Graves Commission logo.



Two First World War photographs – Peter Butt

In 2003 the London Borough of Redbridge Libraries Service published, in booklet form, the 7 editions of 'The Ilford War Memorial Gazette', these were 'the official organ of the Ilford War Memorial Committee' and were dated: Feb 1920, June 1920, Dec 1920, May 1921, 11 Nov 1921, Nov 1922 and Nov 1926. Each issue contained the list, as then known, of Ilford's Roll of Honour, the first had 657 names whilst the final Gazette contained 1159 names. Each issue also had a selection [69 in total] of photographs and details of the actions in which some [32 in total] of the casualties were involved. There are also photographs of 2 War Graves. On the front page of the 3rd issue that of H[enry] H Wakefield of the 92nd Battery of the RFA (Fig 1). On page 17 of the 4th Gazette, H W Taylor who was killed in January 1919 in India (Fig 2) with the description: 'An Ilford man's grave in India, erected by his comrades'. His photograph was also published in this edition (Fig 3).



Fig 1



Fig 2

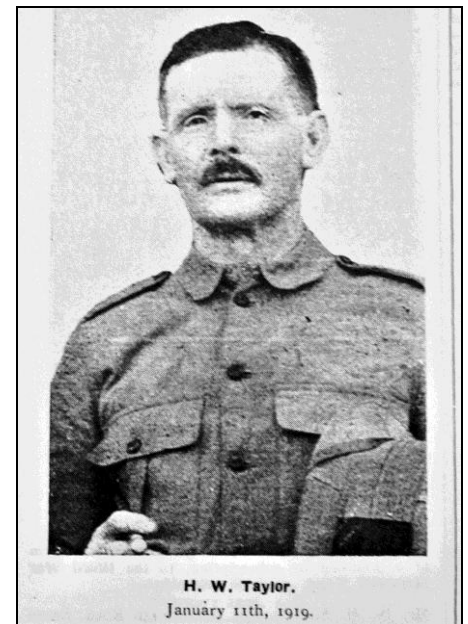


Fig 3

In the June 1920 Gazette it was announced that: 'Fourteen Thousand Votes were recorded in favour of a Children's Hospital. As stated on the plebiscite card, the Committee have agreed to erect a suitable monument in addition to the Hospital. The sum of £20,000, at least will be required. A site for the erection of the Hospital has been secured in Hatch Lane'. Hatch Lane became the A12, Eastern Avenue, and the Memorial Gardens, just west of London Underground's Central Line station at Newbury Park, contain a bronze monument by NA Trent of an infantryman standing at attention, and the Memorial Hall. The latter, a small octagonal building now looking like a mausoleum was originally one of the entrances to the childrens' ward. Its glass domed roof lighting the memorial panels on the walls. The monument was unveiled on 11th Nov 1922 and the foundation stones for the War Memorial Children's Wing laid on 6th Nov 1926.

A setting for the photograph of the wooden cross of Fig 1 can be seen in a special exhibition at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, in the work of the war artist Sir John Lavery. His picture, The Cemetery at Etapes, on loan from the Imperial War Museum, was painted in May 1919 before the crosses were replaced by white headstones. It is very evocative, with members of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corp tending the graves which were then still being laid out.

The first 6 Gazettes contained an appeal to the effect that: 'Many names of Ilford men, who gave their lives for King and Country in the Great War, have not yet been received. Will relatives please send on full particulars as soon as possible, giving Name, Rank, Regiment with date and place of death'. As the Committee had to appeal to the general public for this information, how accurate is the Roll of Honour of Ilford's war dead in the sense of obtaining all, and only the names of those who came from Ilford and how were 'Ilford men' defined: those born in, or their parents or they came to live in Ilford? In 1918 Ilford was effectively a new 'London in Essex' suburb.

As the Roll does not appear to have been obtained from 'official' War Office sources, this could explain why recently I have come across 2 local history societies who have not been able to 'positively identify in other wartime records' all of those named on their War Memorials. Does this also apply to other towns across the country and how were the names of those killed in subsequent wars collated?

Service Dependents

Whilst photographing the service graves in Malta few years ago I was struck by the number of 'Service Dependents' graves in Cappucini cemetery. This is the term used for the wives and children of serving members of the armed forces who died whilst serving in an 'accompanied billet' abroad. How sad it must have been to have lost your child and then even worse to have to leave them behind when the draft or appointment was completed knowing that it would no longer be possible to tend to the grave. I photographed these as did David Milborrow on his trip to Libya a couple of years ago on the off chance that someone may need them one day. Someone did!

'I was wondering if you would be able to help me. My dad served in the RAF stationed in Cyprus unfortunately while he was there my brother Paul died of meningitis at the age of 8 months, he was buried in the RAF cemetery in Tripoli. My parents then came back to England leaving my brother there. This year (April 2012) he would of been 50 and i am trying to commemorate it in some way and was wondering if you or you know someone who could help me in trying to find his grave either with a picture or something as it would be such a comfort to my parents to know his grave was still intact as they left him. His name is Paul Edwin Russell died at the age of 8 months 1962. Thank you so much my name is Debra Fairhead.

As luck would have it, Paul's grave was one of those being restored at the time of the visit so only had a temporary marker which we were able to supply with the help of the Honorary Supervisor in Libya, Mr Dragan Bozic, along with a picture of the cemetery. The subsequent Libyan uprising has meant a delay in erecting the new headstone marker so it was unfortunate that we were not able to provide a picture of the headstone in time for his 50th Birthday which was this week. Today, April 8th I have just received the following e mails.



Hi Steve- This is Mr Roger Russell. Father to Debra Fairhead who you have been working with to locate my son's grave in Tripoli. I was stationed at RAF Idris just outside Tripoli. We did not know my daughter was working on this till she told us on, what would have been Paul's 50th birthday. When she told us what she had been up to we were both overjoyed to see our Paul's grave after all those years. I along with my wife Shirley was surprised to see it in such good condition after the trouble out there, although you have said the headstone along with others, are being replaced by the CWGC. When it arrives would it be possible to get a photo sent to either Debra or myself. Could you also give Dragon Bozic my deepest thanks. Once again Shirley and myself cannot thank you enough for what you have done for us. We can now rest assured that our Paul is safely resting at peace.

Hi Steve, just thought id drop u an email to let u know that we have had our memorial for my brother, it was a very emotional day. On what would of been his 50th birthday my brother and I had a memorial vase engraved and placed at our grandparents grave, our parents met us there and was very overcome with it, we said meet us at home as there's more. They came in saying it's something they have wanted for years, told them to sit down and explained what you and your fantastic team had done and my mum just collapsed in tears, my dad was gobsmacked, when my mum calmed down she couldn't believe it, our son had made both pictures into a lovely framed piece with an engraving of his name. My mum couldn't stop touching the picture, their worst fear was that the cemetery had been destroyed in the war and there was nothing left, to see it and how well kept it still is in amazing. I have given a copy of all our emails to my dad so he may be in touch as well. I can never repay or thank you enough for what you have done, my brothers' death at the time must have been devastating for the whole family and under the circumstances so awful, but the stories that have come out recently of what a wonderful beautiful baby he was and family members have all been overcome with the pictures and the work you all do. Thank you once again and please pass on our thanks to all concerned, I would like to put a public thank you or you may use this or our information on your site, please do so or tell me how I can. Thank you, forever in your debt. Debra