



# THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT



In Association  
with the CWGC



## News from the Front line

July 2011

This quarter started in April which was good timing for the publicity we received from Chris Reason of Channel 7 in Australia who was covering the ANZAC Day Commemorations in France for the TV Network. Chris had bumped into Dave Lovell quite by chance in Paris last year and Dave mentioned the project which culminated in a flurry of Emails to get volunteers in Australia and France to be interviewed for a news article about the work TWGPP is conducting around the world. See Daves article later in the newsletter.



**Dave Lovell gives Chris Reason hints on how to take photos for TWGPP**

The article went out over a number of networks, including Sky TV in Australia and offers of help poured in from the various States "Down Under". To that end, much of Australia has now been allocated which is good to know. There are, of course, many isolated graves in the country which would take hours, if not days, of driving to so it may be some time before we could ever consider Australia compete as far as the project goes but reassuring to know that the majority will be done.

It is good to see so many family memorials being recorded, as we do here in UK, as many of these are falling into disrepair and may be lost for good in a few years time.

There are, of course, many Australian Service personnel buried in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea where we have yet to access so if anyone has contacts near Ambon or Lae then please contact Steve.

The revisits programme is going well. The idea is to update the archive to keep it current and compliment the original images currently held, but these will be retained as time of day, light, shadow and camera settings can alter images considerably. We also need to get cemetery views where not held as many of these are going to be utilised on the new CWGC site when live.

In those cemeteries re-visited so far we are finding large numbers of family memorials not originally found on the first visits so these are an added bonus.

If you would like to get involved in revisiting cemeteries please contact Steve who will point you to the appropriate Co-ordinator.

Enjoy the Summer – **Steve Rogers Project Co-ordinator**

## A Kestrels eye view

Paul Shenton recently made contact as he wanted to try out his new elevated camera equipment by taking 'Birds eye' views of cemeteries in Belgium. TWGPP put him in contact with Christine Connerty in the Belgian office of CWGC and on completion of this trial run Paul provided us with some overviews which gain a perspective not usually seen within cemeteries.



## Bedford House

As can be seen in these views of Bedford House cemetery and Lijssenthoek the results are quite stunning.

A few months back Steve, Vernon and Terry tried a more 'Heath Robinson' affair when photographing Arras memorial but Paul's kit reached different heights. Literally!

[www.kestrelcam.com](http://www.kestrelcam.com)

## Lijssenthoek



## An Epitaph to Sapper Onions R.E.

Whilst completing the photography of those graves TWGPP need recording on the island of Alderney in the Channel Islands, Nic Wakefield came across the grave to a young Royal Engineer by the name of George Onions buried in the grounds of St. Annes Church. On the grave was a framed 'Epitaph' written by a fellow serviceman based there at the time of Georges death.

Whilst looking up information about this event, an article about the short life of George was found on the Alderney Community website and permission has been granted by Rev. Arthur Mignot to reproduce it within our Newsletter.

'Until V.E. Day (8th May 1945) the Channel Islands were occupied by the Germans, even though the coast of France nearby had been liberated in June 1944. Alderney was only 8 miles from France (almost all the population of Alderney had been evacuated in 1940). The Germans had had carte blanche to have four slave labour camps (one of which was a concentration camp) using slaves, mainly Russian and Polish, to fortify the island against invasion from the Allies. In fact British troops landed in Alderney on 16th May 1945, when the Germans surrendered. So much was required to make the island safe for the inhabitants to return that the Home Office in London tried to persuade the islanders never to return, and leave the derelict island as uninhabitable.

Ruined homes would have to be repaired or rebuilt; kick-starting the economy from scratch, based on agriculture, would be required; strip-farming land was covered in undergrowth, brambles; boundary stones had been removed; cows (hopefully Alderney cows) would have to be imported; bunkers, underground tunnels would be a hazard; worst of all, over 35,000 mines had been planted in sand and soil by the slave labourers, supervised by the German troops. But the islanders in exile were determined to return. The British military personnel were there to prepare for the home-comers, and supervise the rebirth. Sappers were required to seek out those many mines and render them harmless. The tidy German mind had full records of where the mines had been planted, so the Sappers used the German soldiers, (no longer captors but captives) to find and remove them.



Sapper George Onions, aged 22, was one of those in charge of German prisoners in this hazardous work. One of the mines exploded and Sapper Onions was killed, on 21st June 1945. He was the only British casualty in Alderney - over a month after V.E. Day! For some reason or other his mum and dad were not allowed to bring home his body, and he was buried along with Alderney graves in St. Anne's Churchyard. For years the WRVS tended the grave, but for over 60 years we knew nothing about this brave soldier - only his name.

Quite by chance, I met his cousin in Guernsey in 2006. Hearing that I was from Alderney he told me that he had visited Alderney that very day to pay respects to his cousin George. I learned much about Sapper Onions from this man - no longer was he just a name, but a real flesh and blood person, and I was able to share that in our remembrances in Alderney. His number was 5059448, of 2 Platoon, 259 Field Company, Royal Engineers.

He had two older sisters. They were a very happy family and all used to attend Christ Church in Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent. George, having a very good singing voice, sang in the choir. In the whole of his youth he went through life singing. All of his comrades in the Army, and even the German prisoners in Alderney, referred to him as the singing soldier. He had been recruited into the Army on attaining his 18th birthday. During his service he went on raids into occupied France, prior to D-Day, and luckily came through unscathed. The war in Europe ended, and naturally his parents then started to plan everything for his return home, assuming that he was no longer in danger. Therefore news of his death came with a greater than usual devastation. A memorial service was held for George in Christ Church.

Although his body was not allowed to be brought home, the Government arranged for his parents to visit Alderney as soon as the re-occupation was allowed. Initially they were taken over to the island by a small Government launch, and an island family gave them accommodation, and were extremely kind to them. They made many visits to the island, and they received much comfort from their visit to the Church and to his grave. They said that the residents of the island always showed them love and compassion.

Now that we are in touch with his cousin Sapper Onions has become a real person from our recent history. On 21st June each year a small group of us gather around his grave for a short service of thanksgiving. I had returned to the island of my birth to "retire"! and as Honorary Chaplain to the local branch of the British Legion I have the privilege to lead that commemoration and thanksgiving. He helped make Alderney the lovely island it is today.'

Rev Arthur Mignot



## Foreward

This is an Epitaph written in honour of a great man. No, not a political leader or statesman, just an ordinary Sapper. He died a hero's death not fighting, but clearing mines from the fields and beaches in the Channel Islands.

To those who chance to read this please say a silent prayer for the equally silent men of the Royal Engineers. Their work in war is not yet finished.

We sincerely thank a Gunner of the Royal Artillery for the following epitaph:-

## Epitaph

***When you return to claim your island home,  
Let our rejoicing hearts restrain their joy,  
And meditate; you who have English blood,  
Or, owe allegiance to the English throne  
Seek English Justice and claim your English rights***

***Look upon this little mound of fresh cut turf,  
And read this epitaph: here buried lies  
The shattered corpse of but a boy,  
Who gave his life to make your land safe.  
Returned his English dust to cleanse our soil  
That this grim corner of the Commonwealth  
Might once again be England's – her field,  
Her air, and all the azure sea around.  
All her flowers, birds and every tree,  
Because this Tommy died – for Alderney***

## A Chaplaincy in Anzio – Elvin Smith

My father, Rev Robert James Smith was a curate at St Anne's church, Aigburth, Liverpool before joining the Army in January 1941 as a Captain of the Royal Chaplains Department who was then attached to 24<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, Royal Artillery.

He went overseas in July 1942 sailing to Egypt via the Cape arriving about October. After training in the desert they sailed in the invasion of Sicily as part of 24th Field Regiment RA. He was at Sicily, Salerno, Anzio and the advance north through Italy, ending the war near Venice. He survived but had a near miss at Anzio when an enemy shell burst immediately above his dugout. 24th Field Regiment was part of an Army Group RA. As such they supported every allied division in Italy.

Amongst his many duties was of, course, the burial of the fallen and he took photographs where possible, the intention being, I believe, to send them onto the families. Dad was Mentioned in Dispatches but I'm not sure why. I know that at one time he was conducting burials under sniper fire while wearing his black and white priest's vestments. He said it helped his soldiers' morale to see a funeral conducted in the traditional way.

Dad returned home in August 1945 and then was vicar at several churches in SW Lancashire. He died in 1983 and his ashes are buried at St .Matthews.



I remember as a child on holiday in Europe visiting war cemeteries in Italy, particularly at Anzio, and I recall my father telling me that he conducted some of the first burial services there.

Having looked up some of the names on the photographs on your website I see the modern headstones which now replace the original wooden crosses and it is interesting for me to now see from your records where these graves are.

Sunday mornings used to be a time to enjoy a weekend not yet fully over, but that was before tackling the 'St. Nazaire Pocket', the Germany Military Cemetery in Pornichet, close to where I live. I must admit I did say yes without looking at it and since then have discovered many things ranging from: boots in picture, finger or foot shadows in the photograph, merits of rotating single shots as opposed to taking multiple shots, but perhaps the most significant was the importance of light and shade when taking pictures of copper embossed tablets set in concrete and placed in a grassy field. Hence early mornings since February and late evenings, since the clocks went back, have found me there.

It is a quiet place, in fact the few folk I have met have come in not realising it was there, indeed our French secretary, Breton local and aide de camp for all things expatriate, did not know of it sandwiched between the Communal Cemetery and the Hippodrome ( race track). A few have come in as they saw my old Porsche outside. French I have come to realise, French with money, appreciate and tend to buy German auto-engineering



Engineering was at the centre of my conversation in the cemetery on Palm Sunday morning. Having slept in, I was furiously working to beat the sun and shadows and finish the final section of photography when a chap wandered by after a few minutes he returned. On such occasions I have given a salutation in my best CSE French and followed it with conversational German learnt from my time working in the Marine industry in Germany.

He was French and asking for the location of a Dr. Karl Hotz. I had put him into my spreadsheet the previous night, the name was unusual, Hotz, not Holtz (meaning wood) had stuck in my mind so I could direct him to the back end of Section 2 and he found it quickly.

Subsequently he showed me a French Wikipedia article about Dr Hotz, Dr Engineer Karl Hotz. I understood a bit and he showed great interest in the TWGPP and with the sun too high for pictures I went home and looked up Dr Hotz

Dr Hotz was a socially well connected Engineer and post WW1 was part of the German reparations to France. He was sent to Nantes (then the capital of Brittany) to organise engineering and public works from the 1920's till the early 30's. With hindsight, WW2 only a decade or so away, the French must have thought it a really dumb idea to have German Engineers working around France. Since discovering this I have begun to wonder if the famous, but not a French national monument, The Maginot Line was designed by German Engineers!

Dr. Engineer Karl Hotz having become well known with the 'good and great' of Nantes in the inter-war years was to return in 1940 as effectively the Governor of the region, the top man. Logical choice, he knew Nantes and was probably responsible for building a fair chunk of it!

According to what I found out things seem to have gone very smoothly, perhaps too smoothly for the communist resistance based in Paris. They sent a threesome of assassins to Nantes with the idea to kill 'an officer', not anyone in particular, but obviously with the intent to stir things up a wee bit. Unfortunately coming out of an office at 08:00 Dr Hotz was shot at close range in the back. His assistant survived as one of the assassin's guns jammed and they fled. As they say things were never the same afterwards.

Hilter immediately ordered 100 executions, which was reduced to 50, including a couple of notables and Nantes today has a square named after the 50 hostages.

Dr. Engineer Karl Hotz was re-interred in Pornichet and similar to other cemeteries in 'The Pockets' lies together with common soldiers.

A similar and very touching tale can be seen by reading The Atlantic Times article (2005) about the pocket of La Rochelle and the interaction between the German Commander Schirlitz and his French opposite number Meyer. Both secretly arranging not to blow up the town and Meyer, a Frenchman, standing as witness and gaining the acquittal of Schirlitz when he was accused of 'war crimes'.



Such tales abound, as the Pegasus Bridge museum shows, the leader of the British airborne and his German opposite number did lecture tours together for some years after the war.

Should you ever pass by southern Brittany, take a look at the Grand Block House in Batz sur le Mer. A former ranging position at the mouth of the Loire it is now a museum to the St. Nazaire pocket. Containing a fascinating collection of artifacts given by both sides and showing relations seem to have been predominantly reasonable in unreasonable times. The St Nazaire pocket was larger than London and probably the size of a reasonable English county and the museum shows that the Germans and French arranged exits for locals from the pocket by special train, once a day, again reasonable in unreasonable times

Hilter at the beginning of 1944 had instructed the occupied ports to fight to the last man and so 'the pockets', 'les poches' to the French, came into existence. These were, Bordeaux, La Rochelle, St Nazaire, Lorient, all remaining occupied till the general armistice in May 1945. Brest was taken by the Americans with heavy loss of life and Royan was taken by the Free French, again with a heavy loss of life, after which as the Batz museum states the decision for containment rather than conquest was taken.

As my work has shown, The St. Nazaire Pocket was a community and not just regiments. The oldest birth date being a female in 1869, the last death recorded 1949. I am aware from brief reading that many Germans' were kept after the war. I believe the French national memorial was built with some German labour. Likewise the Schirlitz/Meyer article shows Meyer complaining about camp conditions, a typhus epidemic killed many who had survived the war. Finally I know of an article about a Latvian artist, a non-combatant due to disability, captured by the Americans and handed to the French who, with others put him to work de-mining areas around Dieppe. It was not as per the Geneva convention and probably killed a few more who had survived the war, probably explaining death dates in the late 1940's

In case my question has upset a few I will support it briefly with the following:

I have worked in Germany and have many happy memoires over many years. Germans tend to hold dearly where their families came from and once I remember a contractor telling me his family came from Danzig (Gdansk). His grandmother never accepted her husband had died, requesting his file remain open. It was only after German reunification many decades later, when he did not return, that she asked the authorities to note him as dead. I have heard many such tales whilst working there

In Pornichet I have found some wreaths and flowers, but one touched me, it was the ashes of a loved one who had obviously waited many decades to be reunited

When in Germany, I attended the Armistice Day service in Hannover Cemetery, which is jointly conducted by the British Legion Minden and their German veteran opposite numbers.

Finally, I will say this, many Brits other than the Royal family have German ancestry. I once lived in Hounslow, opposite me was a retired professional window cleaner, I had never known one before! Albert Scripps was one of those people who make a street a community. Landed after D-Day he was with Monty in Operation Market Garden, finishing the War in Lubeck. Albert was from Essex, his German mother during WW1 had to sign in at the police station every day. As Albert said of his WW2 experiences, the average German was a descent enough bloke and it was only the fanatics that were a problem and, funnily enough, that brings us back to Dr. Karl Hotz, who seems to have been in the wrong place when some fanatics arrived and appears to be a decent enough bloke

*Nick is quite happy to photograph the other 'Pockets' of German graves which are situated outside Brest (Ploudaniel-Lesneven) and another outside Saintes ( about 100 km north of Bordeaux) at Berneuil and another large German cemetery close to Mont St. Michel. If anyone living nearby would like to help let Steve know as many hands would make lighter work!*

## Repatriation - Not often seen! – Rhys Williams



A recent request for a photograph of a grave by Rhys Williams of his Great Uncle proved to be unusual in that it was one of only a few that had been repatriated to England after his death in France.

Private Ernest Horsfall A Coy. 1st/5th Bn. Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regt) is recorded as having 'Died of wounds' on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1916 and is buried in Huddersfield (Edgerton) cemetery.

However the family has another version of his story and is reproduced with permission from Rhys and written by Ernest Horsfalls great niece Sandra Chadwick.

*"Ernest's mother, Lily Horsfall, received the fateful telegram that her beloved elder son had been severely wounded in Flanders and was now in the local field hospital. She screamed so loudly that the lady next door ran into her house and then ran towards the stables on Zetland Street where Arthur Horsfall, Lily's husband, worked. He returned home from work to comfort her, but Lily could only scream continuously "I want my boy home".*

*In an effort to appease her, and against all reason, my Great Grandfather, an ostler who had never before travelled further than Leeds, agreed to find their son, Ernest, and return him home so that Lily could tend to him. Travel was difficult during the war years and in 1917, Arthur had to get a warrant from Huddersfield Town Hall to travel to Leeds, where he could catch the train to London. He argued vociferously with an army captain in Leeds, who initially refused to let him on the London train, but finally won his case and the necessary legal documents were issued to him to travel overseas. Arthur eventually managed to catch a troop ship at Newhaven, and the captain, who must have felt genuinely sorry for this poor man's situation, said he would help Arthur by making a few phone calls to discover Ernest's whereabouts.*

*On arrival at Dieppe, Arthur was given the name of the hospital in France that his son had been transferred to and the captain had very kindly arranged for his own chauffeur to drive Arthur there. This journey from Huddersfield to the hospital took four days. On arrival at the hospital, Arthur saw the Matron, who had been informed earlier that he was on his way. "I've come to see my son, Ernest Horsfall" said Great Grandfather.*

The Matron kindly took this distraught gentleman into her study, plied him with a cup of tea, looked him in the eye and said she was extremely sorry to say that Ernest had passed away just ten minutes previously. His injuries had been severe and he had lain on the battle fields of Flanders for three days before he was discovered, which had made his wounds critical. "I promised my wife I would return my son home, and so I will" said Arthur. Matron could see that this determined man was in no state to be argued with. Although it was strictly against regulations, Ernest was put in a coffin and Arthur, as promised, returned his beloved son back home to Huddersfield to his mother. Ernest is today buried in Edgerton cemetery with his parents, and his name is mentioned on the cenotaph in Norman Park.

## Trying to name an unidentified Indian in Italy – Paolo Terzi

Paolo Terzi is a professional Photographer living near Modena in Italy and has helped the project in the past taking pictures (rather good ones) in the smaller cemeteries in the northern mountainous area of the country.

Closer to home is Modena Communal Cemetery which has just the one 'Unknown' grave. Paolo decided to visit this one to take a picture of the unknown grave as it is in the Italian military section of the cemetery. The stone is quite unusual and more like an obelisk and it stands on plot 358.

Further investigation into the archives at the cemetery revealed that buried in this plot was Chundau Tonley aged 32 years at death. It seems that he died on 20 June 1918 at 22.00 hours in San Paolo Hospital in Modena and was buried in 26 June. According to the record he was in the 71<sup>st</sup> Company Indian Labour Corps.



Modena Italian military section

Atti di morte - Parte II. Serie B	
<p>Stivesso <u>588</u></p> <p><i>Chundau Tonley</i></p> <p>COMUNE DI MODENA Archivio di Stato Civile</p> <p>Scopie autentiche dall'atto originale che si rilascia DA RICHIESTA, DEL SERVIZIO SCORRETO PER UN ANNO - ALL' UFFICIO DI MODENA</p> <p>17 MAG. 2011 Integrale Valeri</p>	<p>L'anno millevocentotrentotto, addì <u>vecento</u> di <u>giugno</u> a ore <u>vecento</u> minuti nella Cias Comunale io <u>Giuseppe</u> Segretario delegato del Sindaco con allo primo dicembre millevocentodieciassie approvato</p> <p>Ufficiale dello Stato Civile del Comune di Modena avendo ricercato da <u>del Direttore</u> <u>dell'ospedale di S. Revere</u> un avviso in data <u>di oggi</u> relativo alla morte di cui in appresso e che, morto del mio visto, inserisco nel volume degli allegati a questo registro, do atto che a ore <u>archivio</u> e minuti del giorno <u>di ieri</u> in detto ospedale <u>di S. Revere</u> è morto <u>Chundau Tonley</u> di anni <u>trantotto</u>, <u>lavorante nelle</u> <u>U. Impiegato</u> <u>Indiano</u> <u>Impiegato</u> <u>Indiano</u> <u>Impiegato</u> <u>Indiano</u> <u>Indiano</u> <u>Impiegato</u> <u>Indiano</u> <u>Impiegato</u> <u>Indiano</u></p> <p><i>J. Quaglini</i></p>

Death Certificate for Chundau Tonley

Therefore you would have thought that given this information the 'unknown' can now be identified? This information was forwarded to CWGC but because there is no record of such a man in the death indexes by this name he remains unknown!

## Am I one of these?

**Taphophilia** is a passion for and enjoyment of cemeteries .

The singular term is a **Taphophile**. Taphophilia involves epitaphs, photography, brass rubbing, art, and history of (famous) deaths. Not to be confused with Necrophilia!

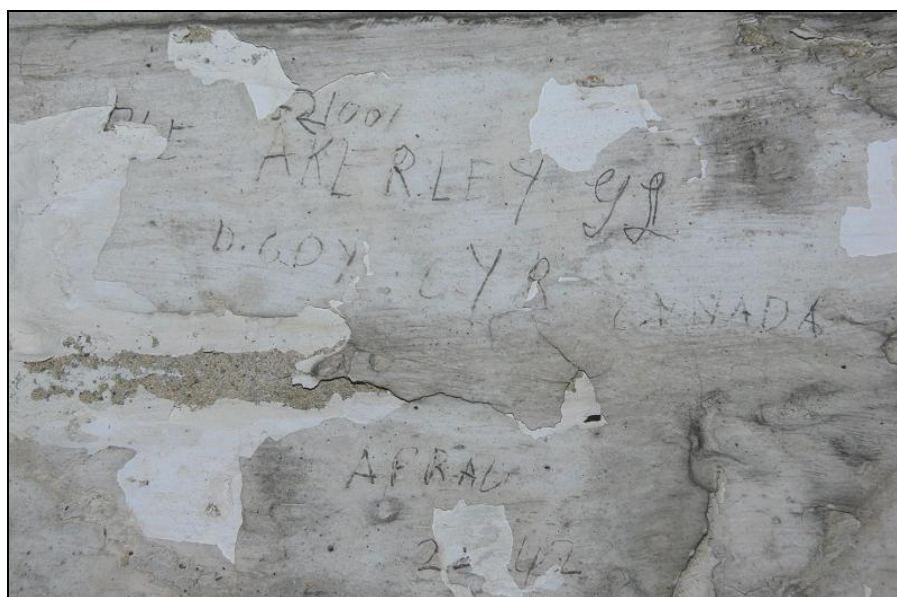


## Graffiti link to War Grave

There are a number of places around the world where graffiti, now classed as a nuisance in public areas, is considered of historical significance. A trip to a Coliseum in Tunisia revealed Roman names and even at the top of Thiepval memorial are inscribed the names of bored German sentries in WW2.

Closer to home the Dover Western Heights Preservation Society <http://www.doverwesternheights.org> – is a very small group of unpaid volunteers whose aim is to care for, educate and open to the public a series of Napoleonic defences overlooking the town and harbour. Much of the work is centered on the Drop Redoubt fort and the Grand Shaft staircase. Phil Hyden of the group recently made contact about his discovery.

“About two months ago I was looking at graffiti inside the 1860s side arms store on the terreplein and started recording some graffiti. I recognised one regiment immediately - it was of a Canadian Commando who was attached to D. Company of the Carleton and York Regiment (CYR) and dated 22nd April 1942.



We know from a Canadian report that CYR commandos were stationed at the old abandoned fort from the 18th to the 22nd April as a staging post prior to a raid on the French coastal town of Hardelot, near Boulogne. The plan, known as Operation Abercrombie, was a joint raid with 100 men of No.4 Commando and led by Simon Fraser, the Lord Lovat. The raid itself was a complete disaster as the 50 Canadians became stuck on a sandbank all night and never made it ashore. The British soldiers landed a mile off target and failed to reach their objective, that of a searchlight, in time and had to abandon the raid.

"G21001 Pvt Akerley D. Coy CYR Canada Apral 22 42."

The Royal Navy MTBs got caught in a firefight with waiting German E-boats resulting in casualties on both sides. All troops then returned to the Drop Redoubt.

I was somewhat shocked to find a photo of him and his grave on your website today, as I had no idea who the graffiti artist was, let alone that he had been killed at Sicily a year later. As I sometimes lead tour groups around the fort, I will be making a permanent mention of George when I describe Op. Abercrombie from now on.

The Canadian soldier who graffiti'd the wall is this man: **Pvt George Leonard Akerley**. <http://twgpp.org/information.php?id=2608565>



## A Brief Encounter – Dave Lovell

Travelling from Paris or, more recently, Brussels has become a routine matter for us. Our journey on July 2010 was much like any other, well-honed timing got us from our UK home in Romsey Hampshire to St Pancras Station in under 2 hours.

As we waited to pass through security screening it became clear that passengers behind us were agitated by the prospect that they were rather late for their train, the one before ours. They looked like a couple of nice guys, well laden with large transportation boxes and we let them pass with the chance remark, 'you're not exactly travelling light!'

Being well practised in Eurostar ticketing, screening and passport controls we were soon ahead of them and as often happens these travellers soon found that they were in good time. So a conversation developed.

"What is all that gear"

"Oh, that's just our TV cameras, we're off to France."

"Well it had to be there or Belgium, what are you going to France for?"

"We're covering the burial of some Aussies"

"Ah Fromelles, I'd like to be there for that. Coincidentally we take photographs of war graves for The War Graves Photographic Project"

"Wow that sounds interesting .....

Passengers for train number 3138 are requested to board via the entry points for platform 5"

"Ok, interesting .... Gotta go, .... You got a card?"

Business cards were swopped and off they went ...



What a coincidence I thought, it was less than a year since we did some filming at Villers Bretonneux cemetery for the Australian "Today" programme, to our knowledge never broadcast. Ah well, that's the end of that I thought. I couldn't have been more wrong. Not many minutes later my phone 'burbbled' and there was a text message "Hi, Dave, we just spoke, my names Chris Reason, tell me more about this project you're involved in". That was it I was hooked, but then anyone of us, volunteers for TWGPP, would stop at almost nothing to get the project some exposure and TV minutes cost thousands, dollars, pounds, euros it makes no difference.

Practically a year later and an Email out of the blue from Chris to say that Channel 7 will be covering the ANZAC commemorations in France during April 2011 and that they would consider adding an article on the work of TWGPP if interviews could be arranged both in Australia and France.

### Just pretend I am not there

The beauty of Email is that a number of people can be contacted within a few hours and get responses at short notice. A contact to Steve in the UK produced volunteers like Peter Waters based in Sydney and a recipient of one of our images, Stacey Fuller, agreeing to be interviewed. And so set the wheels in motion to get some 'air time ' and take the opportunity to advertise for more volunteers in Australia.

I met up with Chris again at Dauors cemetery along with his cameraman whilst Peter did similar in Sydney. Just as well film is no longer used as it take a surprising amount of 'footage' to compile a couple of minutes of film but the result is certainly professional.

To see the clip please go to this link [http://twgpp.org/news\\_information.php](http://twgpp.org/news_information.php)

## Gallipoli, Uncle Fred and The East Lancashire regiment – James W Foulds

My recent visit to the Gallipoli Peninsula was in the form of payment for a debt of nigh on 60 years.

In 1943, as the archaic expression then had it, I began “courting” a young girl from a nearby Pennine hill village. We were both seventeen. Amongst her talents she was a dancer. Tap, ballroom, modern, but, most significantly, she was a wonderful ballet dancer. She had, in fact, danced with Sadlers Wells. Following the 1940 Blitz this group was evacuated to nearby Burnley. Only the principal dancers and management; corps de ballet were recruited as necessary from the local “stars”- which included Mona, my lady.

Practice was constant, it certainly came between me and my intended! In those times there were no such things as iPods, nor any form of “on demand” music. Gramophones, rare, and the cost of records, prohibitive. Enter Uncle Fred. What a catalyst in my life he became. He created in me a life long interest of our Military past. He was usually a quiet, modest, engaging working man but he possessed an extraordinary musical talent, as a self-taught pianist.



For dance practice Uncle Fred would cross the avenue from his own home 20 yards away and play the piano for Mona’s practice. He couldn’t read music, had no background of Classical music, but whatever Mona needed he’d play. She would sing, or hum a few bars of her music - Stravinsky’s “Firebird”, Delibes’ “Coppelia”, Tchaikowsky’s “Nutcracker” - and away he’d go, immediately picking up the melody, adding trills and his own arpeggios when his memory briefly failed him. Quite unbelievably brilliant.

In 1914, he’d been a member of a Territorial Battalion of the local East Lancashire Regiment and by August 1914 his Battalion was called up to depart for Flanders.

**His only sister, Ruby**, mother of Mona became fearful for her beloved brother in the trenches and after putting him on a train back to France following a brief leave she decided that she would join the Women’s Royal Army Corps, go out to France, and take care of Fred.

### Ruby

She was, of course, totally unaware of Army Regulations and found herself in France at the Abbeville base far from caring for Fred. She found herself as part-time bat-woman to a Grenadier Guardsman, Edward, Prince of Wales, heir to the Crown! To his credit he also was keen to “do his bit”, but the Army Council kept him at base, out of harm’s way.

Following service in France and Belgium, Private Fred Stainsby’s Battalion was transferred to Gallipoli and the campaign against Turkey. There the East Lancashire’s, together with the Lancashire Fusiliers (6 VC’s before breakfast), took grievous losses on the beaches near the infamous village of Seddul Bahir.

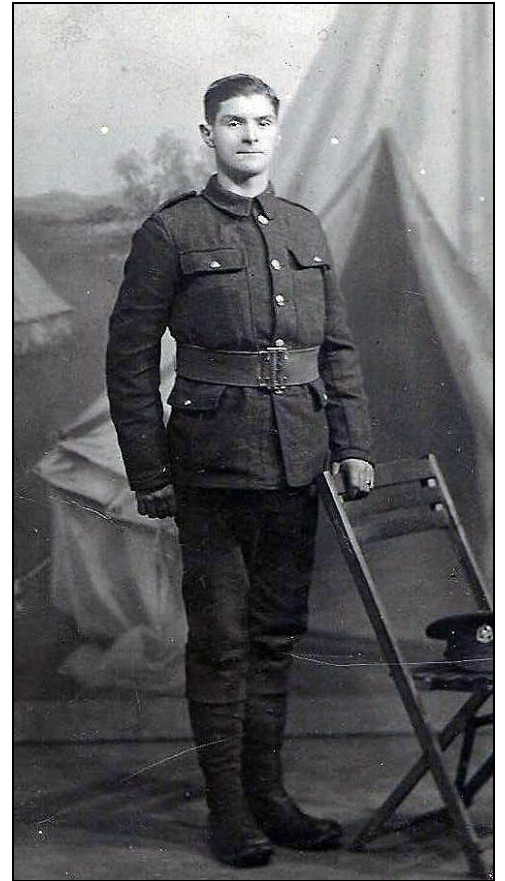
Uncle Fred was severely wounded; he carried to his 1950 grave a stripe of Turkish machine-gun bullet scars. He was repatriated to UK to recover but it wasn’t long before he returned to the front in France and was soon promoted to Sergeant. Soon he was wounded again and transferred to hospital at Fecamp where he was nursed back to health by the nuns of the adjacent Benedictine Monastery. As part of their “recovery package” these caring women gave all their charges a nightly tot of Benedictine liqueur in hot water.

They established a routine, still vigorous today in East Lancashire, particularly in Burnley at the Territorial Barracks base. Returning members of the East Lancs. demanded that their locals should offer their “*Benny and ‘ot*” which they were convinced had helped to save their lives. Today, the Miner’s Arms in Burnley sells more Benedictine than any other single outlet, World-wide. Perhaps an appropriate epitaph to the disappeared East Lancashire Regiment.

Once restored to health Fred was soon back in France, where he was awarded the Military Medal. When asked about the award all he would say was "I got it for shooting a pig." In Flanders his Regiment were forced into retreat by superior German forces. Whilst passing through a Flanders farmhouse, hot and thirsty, Fred approached the farmer with a request for water. The farmer made clear his German sympathies so, said Fred, "I stuffed a round up the spout and shot his bloody pig". Sadly, the reality of his award cannot be traced. A WW2 Blitz fire destroyed Uncle Fred's war service records in the East Lancashire Regiment. One thing we do know is that he for a time served in the 11<sup>TH</sup> Battalion ( the doomed Accrington Pals).

His Army career ended, fittingly in 1919, when he was selected to be the Standard Bearer when the Battalion flag was laid up in Blackburn Cathedral. His back ramrod straight and stiffened off he'd march to meet his surviving pals at the British Legion Club. After the Parade he routinely disappeared for up to four days. When he eventually returned, dirty, disheveled, and lacking items of his clothing – gloves, hat, spats, his defiant explanation was simply- "Been on the Benny and 'ot". He'd earned the right to refuse questions.

### Uncle Fred



In 1947 Fred, and his sister Ruby, Mona's Mother, danced at our Wedding. In 1950 he was laid to rest in the village where he'd lived all his life apart from his Army service. Amongst those sharing his resting place, Sir William Pickles Hartley, maker of jams and preserves, Roger Bannister's Grandfather, Wilson Hey, world renowned Cancer Specialist at the Christie Hospital in Manchester. All notable local men, including Uncle Fred.

He instilled in me a respect and admiration for our Military past which burns in me to this day and to my pleasure, a passion now shared with my son. 60 years ago I promised myself that, one day, I'd visit the Gallipoli Peninsula to plant British Legion mementoes in the Lancashire Landing Cemetery, for Uncle Fred, and his East Lancashire comrades and this I managed to do last year.

Before I left for the trip I discovered TWGPP and offered to take some pictures of the cemeteries there and felt privileged to photograph graves of my Uncle Fred's friends. It has been an immense pleasure to contribute to the magnificent work of The War Graves Photographic Project. Thank you all



## Pilot Officer Harvey DSO – Peter Harvey

One of the most amazing stories of endurance to come out of RAF Portreath/Predannack was begun at last light on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1942 when Beaufighter BQ-O from 600 Squadron was engaged on convoy patrol. The pilot was P/O Harvey with F/O Wicksteed as his observer. They sighted a Heinkel (which later was proved to be a JU88) flying at sea level lining up to attack the convoy. Harvey engaged the Heinkel and, in spite of the fact that his starboard engine was set on fire, he pressed home his attack and set fire to the port engine of the enemy, which was later confirmed as destroyed. The Beaufighter also crashed into the sea and, after struggling free from the wreckage, Harvey managed to lift Wicksteed up into the one man dinghy and, by swimming, he proceeded to push the dinghy towards the coast, which was 7 miles away. Finally, exhaustion overcame him and he also climbed into the dinghy. After being afloat for 5 hours and, judging himself to be approximately 200 yards from the shore, he slid back into the sea, swam to the shore and scaled the cliff in front of him in pitch darkness at Basset Cove Portreath. He then walked to the Ops room of RAF Portreath and organised a search party which found his observer. This action earned P/O A B Harvey an immediate DSO and his observer F/O B. Wicksteed the D.F.C.



### Bristol Beaufighter – 600 Sqdn

Although claimed as a Heinkel, the aircraft shot down on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1942 at 11.14pm was in fact a Junkers JU 88 D5 Serial No 1748 3<sup>rd</sup> Flight, long range Reconnaissance Group 123. The crew (Pilot) Oberleutenant Wolfgang Baumung. (Nav) Camillo Kleemann, (W/Op) Feldwebel Friedrich Fug, (AG) Otto Maier.

Only the bodies of Baumung and Fug were ever found, Fug was found on the 15<sup>th</sup> June in the sea off Lands End as reported by Military Historian Phil Irwin of Torquay.

Ironically 69 years later to the day I visited the web site of The War Graves Photographic Project looking for German War Graves to find that Oberleutenant Wolfgang Baumung and Feldwebel Friedrich Fug are both buried in Cannock Chase German Military Cemetery in Staffordshire.



## Visit to Kulpotak – Lt. Colonel Bertie Morris & Mohamed Abu Sayed

Kulpotak Baptist Mission ground in Mymensingh-Netrokona district of Bangladesh contains just the one war grave, that of the Rev. Ronald Chesterton . This grave was originally located at the Birisi Australian Baptist Mission Burial ground at Gobindasri but in 1974 was moved to it's present location by the Australian Baptist missionary Society, who feared the old site was in danger of being lost due to river erosion.

As part of the ongoing inspection process by the CWGC quite often the Defence attaché based in the country will conduct the visit and in this case was accompanied by Mohamed Abu Sayed the CWGC representative.

After a six hour drive from Dhaka, Lt Colonel Bertie Morris and Mohamed arrived at the village of Kulpotak.

They met the pastor of the church Mr. Bidhu Bhushon Mojumdar and assistant pastor Mr. Jhiskel Das and with other ladies and gents from Christian community of the village.

The villagers were quite happy to see the visitors and cleaned the grave to allow Bertie to place a poppy floral wreath on the grave of Rev. Ronald Chesterton Potter . Also in the cemetery are the graves of Mr. Cyril James Moore (Physician) and his wife Mrs. Edna in the same style of headstone

Bertie has forwarded pictures to TWGPP as it is very unlikely we would find someone in the area to get them.



## Urban Guerillas?



Some of the Urban wildlife encountered by David Milborrow whilst in cemeteries

## An ANZAC occasion in the Antipodes - Tony and Sue Wege

ANZAC means a lot in Australia and New Zealand these days. Probably of passing interest in some places elsewhere. But here in Australia, Anzac and what it means is going through a massive revival.

I was a young teacher in the late 1960s and into the 1970s. Australia was heavily involved in the Vietnam War at that time. Young men were selectively drafted into the army for national service with a distinct chance of going to Vietnam. I was not one of them. But 50,000 Australians served in Vietnam and over 500 of them died during that war. Most of them were buried here in Australia in local cemeteries. Anzac Day was not very popular then. It threatened to disappear completely or at least become an irrelevancy.

But for reasons unfathomable to us, the Anzac spirit began a revival in the early 1990s and this has burgeoned into massive proportions today. Even the Barossa branch of the ladies Probus service club has become swept up in the euphoria. As Anzac Day 2011 approached they asked Susan and myself to speak to them about our work for The War Graves Photographic Project. We were only too happy to oblige. We prepared a 45 minute Powerpoint presentation which we gave to an audience of about 60 people at the Vine Inn hotel, Nuriootpa, South Australia just two days after Anzac Day 2011.

Our theme was the disastrous but forgotten Battle of Fromelles on 19/20 July 1916 that occurred on the Western Front in France and how our work for TWGPP here in South Australia is helping to open a page of the state's history that has been neglected for over 90 years. We showed our audience the family memorials to two of the men lost at Fromelles, both 32<sup>nd</sup> Battalion AIF, which we have found in our searches of cemeteries here in South Australia. We explained that these men have been actually found in a mass grave, identified and properly buried at Pheasant Wood, France in 2010. Thanks to Steve who sent us the photos of these two brand new headstones at Pheasant Wood, we showed our audience both those and the family memorials to the same two men we located here.

During our presentation, we were able to give to Mrs Aileen Inches, a Probus member, a photo of her uncle's headstone.



He was Private C B Atkinson MM who died in 1950. We had recently found his grave at the AIF cemetery, West Terrace, Adelaide. He was sent to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Battalion in August 1916 as a reinforcement following the disaster at Fromelles. Mrs Inches never knew where he was buried after his return to Australia from the Great War having lost contact with his family for over 65 years. Needless to say she was very grateful to TWGPP for the re-discovery of her uncle and his military history which we gathered for her from the National Archives of Australia.

We think we hit the spot with our audience. Almost none of them had ever heard about the disaster at Fromelles or any of the soldiers involved, the day when more Australian life was lost in a 24 hour period than any other in the nation's history. They certainly appreciated our work in endeavouring to capture lost history and with TWGPP itself. By extension, they marvelled at what the Project is doing world wide and I am sure that The War Graves Photographic Project has been talked about in many homes in this district for the first time. Anzac will have just that little bit more meaning to many people here in the Barossa Valley, South Australia in the future.

**The next newsletter will be out in October 2011.**

**Anyone wishing to contribute should contact Steve on [steve@twgpp.org](mailto:steve@twgpp.org)**



**THE WAR GRAVES**  
**PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT**