



# THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT



In Association  
with the CWGC



## News from the Front line

July 2015

As expected the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gallipoli back in April was a pretty big occasion bringing together all nations who in the past may have been fighting against each other. It was good to see the sense of reconciliation during this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration at Cape Helles. Observing the scenes on the peninsula made me consider going back at some point, perhaps in the Autumn months when visitors are few and far between. During our last visit to Lala Baba cemetery we were able to lay a card at the grave of Stanley Cecil Parish on behalf of John Parish.

Now in his 92<sup>nd</sup> year, John made the trip to the cemetery in June this year so that he could visit the grave of his uncle who saved the life of his father. You can read about John's trip later in the newsletter.

There had been considerable interest in our Project during the early part of this year which was obviously due to the increased coverage of the commemorations 'down under' with the anniversary of ANZAC Day. So much interest that for the first time ever our site crashed on the 25<sup>th</sup> April causing me no end of increased blood pressure. It was sorted within 24 hours but I did feel out on a limb knowing that our 'Colonial' friends would be searching for family members.

### John Parish at the grave of his uncle



With the numbers of Australians being requested it highlighted the lack of requests from other Commonwealth countries for those held in the archive in the same period. I was reading a newspaper report by Paul Reed, the Military Historian, about the lack of knowledge of the general public that WWI even took place let alone when and where. For those of us who 'live' the subject every day it came as a surprise but should it be? We have now moved past the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of WWI but will there be the same (limited) interest at the Centenary of the Armistice in 2018 – somehow I doubt it.

If we take the Crimean war, 1853-1856, I imagine that 100 years after the end (just before I was born) very few even knew where the Crimea was. Saying that, in those days everyone was brought up with general



knowledge of where most countries were situated around the globe – No Apps then! The area has raised its head again recently due to ongoing political challenges in the Ukraine but the majority watching recent news articles will not realise that the original **Crimean War** was fought out there.

In May we saw the 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day. With the majority of those that actually served in that war no longer with us and the children of that era now potentially in their 80's, memories of that time in history will be fading. In another 30 years for that Centenary will it be commemorated as publicly as the recent WWI event?

With this on my mind, my thoughts have turned towards the project. It was initially set up to enable family members who could not travel to far flung battlefields to visit their immediate families graves or memorials. We do still get the odd request from those in their 80's or 90's, wanting to obtain a photograph, but this sort of personal request has been dwindling since we set up the site at the end of 2007. The majority of requests are from a different generation researching their family histories and these numbers are declining until some sort of National or International commemoration takes place which increases the interest for a short period in time.

Although we are in a four year period of remembrance it is only the big events like the recent ANZAC Day that appear to be acknowledged by the media. We seemed to have skipped Neuve Chapelle (March 10<sup>th</sup>), the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres and the first use of gas (April 22<sup>nd</sup>) and it will be intriguing to see if there is publicity later on this year of the Battle of Loos (25<sup>th</sup> September). The 99<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of The Somme passed recently with no mention at all in the daily editorials.

## **Publicity**

I did attempt to raise some publicity about the project prior to August 14<sup>th</sup> last year, as did some of you, as I felt that we had an archive of International (at least Commonwealth) importance. A letter to my local MP, which was passed to the then Cultural Secretary, the Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid MP did, I am pleased to say, warrant an answer.

*....The War Graves Photographic Project is an excellent example of the kind of initiative which we are keen to encourage... all the volunteers that have contributed to the project should feel very proud of what they have achieved so far.... I would like to wish the project every success in what is clearly a special and powerful project.*

However, it was recommended that we put the TWGPP site on the IWM's First World War Centenary Partnerships website which was done when first advertised. Probably about as much as I expected.

Until recently, I had always had in mind that the project would be never ending. There are always new conflicts, though hopefully diminishing, and the hours that all of our volunteers have put in since our start in 2008 have been outstanding. On a personal note the combined six hours that Sandra and I put in every night, after a day's work, is beginning to feel nugatory when so few people are requesting images.

The costs to maintain the site, store images, postage (hopefully no additional VAT now?) are always on the rise and with no support from other sources I'm considering that November 11<sup>th</sup> 2018 (100 years since Armistice) might be an appropriate time to 'call it a day' as I am sure interest in WWI will be minimal after that final commemoration. With requests at this time predicted to decrease (they already are) and outlay never diminishing it is inevitable that costs will outweigh any funding received from requests.

I will be 60 by then and I cannot envisage working all hours on the project as I seem to do at present. Answering enquiries on all aspects of war graves, adjusting images so that they are suitable for requests, resizing images and uploading to site all takes up an inordinate length of time. I'm beginning to feel I need to get my life back after at least eight years of non-stop TWGPP. I may even go on a holiday which is not planned around the nearest cemetery that has not been completed or revisited lately.

Ok, when it comes to retiring and keeping oneself amused I may find I need the project to keep 'gainfully employed' so to speak so this scenario will be reviewed !

I am investigating if there is a way of perhaps reducing costs with an IT 'Guru' so watch this space. It is the 1.8 million images we have on site already and the SQL database on which the details are stored and searched that makes us stand out from other sites but also costs significantly more to run.

### Of National Importance?

The New Zealanders are fortunate that their National war graves website was funded to the tune of NZ\$1.2 million (2006) and they can afford to pay 'experienced' photographers to travel the world and take the photographs of approximately 33,000 graves required. They still have work to do in many areas but, as stated by an old boss of mine, now Director of the Auckland War Memorial Museum, *"We consider the work the Trust is doing to create high-resolution images of an archival standard to be of national value and importance."*



My thoughts exactly so I approached the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in May to investigate potential funding to maintain the site and was honest in my application stating that the site needs to be maintained until at least 2018.

As expected the response was not positive in that they a) only fund new websites b) do not fund maintenance of an existing sites, and c) TWGPP it is not educational!

I have learned a hell of a lot since photographing war graves around the world from various campaigns as I am sure many of our volunteers have. It is odd that many villages who are producing websites to remember their war dead and obtaining images from us are funded by HLF as an 'educational' resource. It sometimes feels that those conducting the 'legwork' are not worthy!

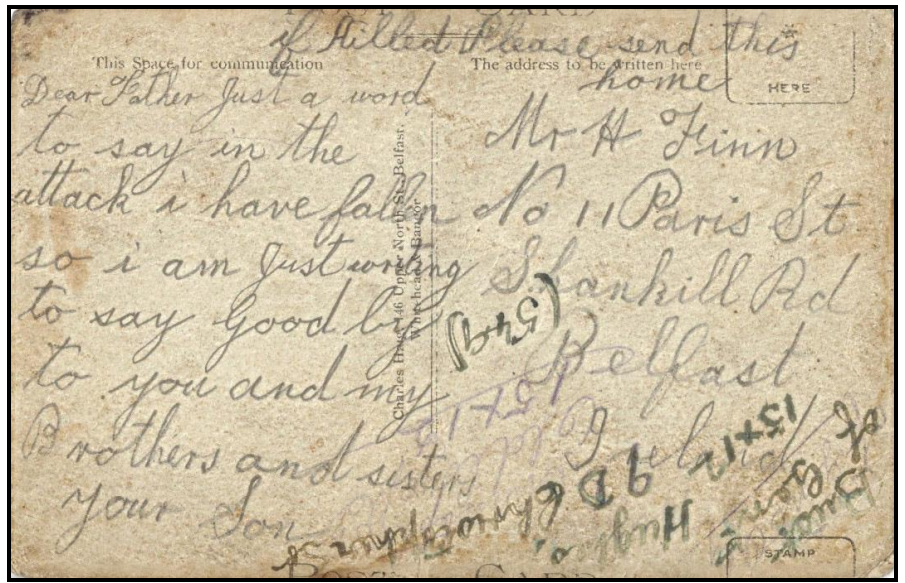
Perhaps if I had 'embellished' the submission somewhat and told a few 'porkies' I may have got somewhere!

I think what we have achieved using non-professional, but exceptionally good, amateur photographers is something to be proud of. Consider that apart from a few sites, in areas difficult to access, we have just about completed the world for all Commonwealth forces.

### A Message from the Grave

After a recent request for a name engraved on the panels at the Menin gate we were sent a picture of the casualty along with a scan of the postcard that the family received after his death.

Rifleman William John Finn of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Irish Rifles died on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1917 aged 24. He was the son of Henry and Margaret Finn of 11 Paris Street, Shankhill Road, Belfast. As his body was never recovered he is commemorated on the Menin Gate memorial to the missing.



Like many others, serving in the front line at the time, he had taken the opportunity to write one last letter (or in this case postcard) to his family so that in the event of his death they would be aware of his fate. In this instance his words are very poignant if not to the point:

*"If killed, please send this home - Dear father. Just a word to say in the attack I have fallen so I am just writing to say goodbye to you and my brothers and sisters. Your Son".*

One can only wonder what was written 'between the lines'.

### Battle of Waterloo Anniversary

It was good to see that the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Battle of Waterloo was adequately commemorated both on TV and in the press in June. As I live near the town of Waterlooville, here in Hampshire, which was named after the battle they had really made an effort with lectures in the local library and re-enactment teams, complete with canons, setting up camp in the shopping precinct. I wish I had my camera to hand when I spotted Prussian and British forces having a 'Latte' in Costa Coffee.

Although the casualties of Waterloo were buried in mass graves, therefore no headstones to photograph, many of the Officers were commemorated on plaques in the Church of St. Joseph, Waterloo and some of the ranks were also commemorated on tablets within the church. On site we have 165 of these memorials.

I was sent a set of commemorative postage stamps as a keepsake of the occasion so will look out for any next year commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Somme.



### Cecil Stanley Parish – by John Parish

I cannot recall when the word "Gallipoli" first entered my psyche, since I heard of it very many times over the years. It usually brought to mind the terrible wound in my father Monty's back which was caused by an impact from a Turkish sniper's bullet fired on 21 August 1915 at Scimitar Hill, Suvla Bay. I have travelled the world tracing relatives and it has been my final wish to pay a visit to my Uncle Stanley's grave at Lala Baba. It was his courage that unexpectedly led him to save my father's life. Indeed without Stanley's intervention, there currently exist a further 30 family souls who would never have been born.

As I approached my 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, time was running out and had it not been for efforts made by a former colleague, who made all the necessary arrangements, our joint visit to Gallipoli would not have been possible. Thus I am most appreciative to Tudor Jones who, upon his retirement, made this feasible.

As I traversed the now peaceful turf of Scimitar Hill I was reminded of my grandmother in the comparable location of her birth county of Devonshire, with its scenic landscape and beaches.

However, I could not envisage the pain and despair when she received the tragic news of her only two surviving sons and the Hell they had encountered only a few weeks after leaving England.

Proudly wearing my beloved father's medals, I could sense the chaotic scene in 1915 where he lay here severely wounded under the unrelenting, scorching sun among so many countless dead and dying colleagues. Some were seeking shelter under bushes which caught fire from artillery explosion's and subsequently incinerated them. His thoughts were whether he would ever see his widowed mother or Croydon again. From within this chaos, Stanley was ordered to take the last stretcher and bring back a wounded officer. Fortunately he encountered his brother – a lance corporal – and returned him to safety.



Lala Baba is the most remote and emotionally saddest cemetery on the Gallipoli peninsular. Its only approach is via an unmade 4.7 km. farm track. Our courier told us that although he had conducted 2,000 tours to the battlefields he had only come to this spot 5 times. By the time we identified Stanley's grave at Lala Baba we had spent 3 days touring the other cemeteries and monuments, marking the deceased of many different nationalities. The enormity of it was overwhelming – such an incredible sacrifice of young men. With no winners.

At the grave I laid a wreath of poppies and a wooden cross together with a citation expressing the combined thanks of the 30 family descendants who had been born after Stanley's brave action in rescuing his brother. I recited their names aloud.

Without thinking, I picked up a handful of stones and put them in my pocket. At the same time Tudor gave me a sprig from an Olive tree as another peaceful remembrance of Suvla Bay. Eventually I will take these to the cemetery in Croydon where my grandparents are buried and place them on their graves.

In August 1915 Stanley wrote to his mother:

*“Monty was wounded in an advance on August 21<sup>st</sup>. He behaved very bravely and all the time we laid out in the open together, under heavy fire, neither was hit after the first round. As for myself, after three weeks of constant fighting I am still untouched.”*

Stanley lasted a few months and was unlucky to be killed in early December 1915.

## Roland Baish – “A Man with two graves.” – By Peter Baish

Ro(w)land John Baish was born on 7th July 1881, the first son of Herbert and Ellen Baish (nee Webb). The family lived in Chippenham with Herbert working in the flour milling industry.

Roland worked as an Iron Moulder prior to his enlistment. From his Army records we see that he signed up for the Wiltshire Regiment at Devizes on May 28th 1898. He enlisted as John Baish, using his middle name. Perhaps he preferred to be known as John rather than Roland.

Between 28/5/1898 and 27/6/1900 he was stationed at home. He was then posted to South Africa 28/6/1900 until 21/5/1903. On 2nd January 1903, he was awarded the rank of Lance Corporal, from which, almost exactly a year later, he resigned. On 21st May 1903, he returned home. At the end of this period, May 27th 1905, he was transferred to the Reserves. Whilst in the Reserves, he was supposed to “render his life certificate” (a document used to calculate pay during that time). He failed to do so. He was then dismissed from the Army on April 14th 1909. However, John had re-joined the Army on 30th October 1908, under the name of Harry Morgan. He had signed up as a gunner in the Royal Garrison Artillery. This enlistment took place in Bristol, probably to avoid anyone identifying him if he was in the Wiltshire area especially around the Chippenham, Calne and Devizes areas. During that enlistment, he did not state that he was on the Reserve.



He was found out, but received a King’s Pardon in August 1910. Continuing with his service in the RGA Harry Morgan served most of his time abroad. At the time of the “death” of Roland Baish in Belgium on August 19th 1915, Harry was in Egypt. So who was in the grave at Lijssenthoek ?

I believe that it was his younger brother Frank. There is only basic circumstantial evidence though. Frank was born in 1887 and enlisted into the Royal Marines Light Infantry in 1903. He was discharged in 1904 and transferred to the Wiltshire Regt where he was discharged again, as medically unfit four months later. His other brothers were all in the army and he wasn’t, so I believe that he enlisted in the RGA as “Roland Baish” (taking his older brother’s unused name.) This was possibly to show that he could make it as a soldier. However, on the 1911 Census, we have “Roland Baish” in Woolwich Barracks with the RGA and Harry Morgan (the real Roland!) in Egypt. So the only evidence we have as to who the “Roland” was, who was killed, is that he knew the family well, (through personal information on his enlistment papers and his Army will). Unfortunately his RGA records were destroyed. Also, there are no records of Frank Baish after the war (no marriage records or embarkation records etc.) so it appears he no longer existed.

The real Roland however, continued to live on. After leaving the Army after the war, he worked as a Commissionaire in a Bath café, then moved to Exeter to be with his daughter Joan. Roland died in Bath Royal United Hospital in 1944 and was buried near his father Herbert in Holy Trinity Churchyard Calne. He has left behind his name on a few war memorials in the Bath Area and on Commemorative Rolls. Frank left nothing.

On the assumption that Frank is the person in the CWG in Belgium, I hope that this article, will give him some acknowledgement of his sacrifice. It may not result in his name replacing that of Roland’s in Belgium, and on the many memorials, but it will at least bring Frank to the public’s attention. On the Commemoration Scroll are these words:

*“Let those who come after, see to it, That his name be not forgotten.”*

I trust that I have done this, and set the record straight on his behalf.

## Ensignbus memorial – Peter Butt

On Monday 4 May at 1200 at the Purfleet Heritage Centre, the first one of five new buses for Ensignbus was named John Northmore, after a local soldier, killed exactly one hundred years ago during the bloody Gallipoli campaign. This will be one of 26 of our buses that will take the names of local soldiers from Purfleet killed in the Great War to commemorate the centenary of the Great War.

Not only will the buses carry the names and dates the soldier was killed on the outside they will also tell a little of the soldier's story and loss inside the bus. A booklet telling their stories in more detail has been produced by Ensign Bus and is for sale at the Purfleet Heritage Centre with all monies raised from it going to the museum to help keep our local heritage preserved.

That the buses are all used on routes in the local area, passing many of the soldiers homes, schools and work places, as well as the war memorial will ensure a very unique and local way of remembering these men.



Ensignbus have been based in and around Purfleet for 35 years and as a supporter of military charities and our armed services so wanted to do 'their bit' to ensure the sacrifices of local men was not forgotten. So if you see one of the named buses on the road, or you are inside and able to read about the man, take a few moments to reflect on them with pride.

## Coins on a headstone – Norman Brice



Whilst visiting cemeteries in America Norman Brice came across a sign at Fort Stanton, in New Mexico, which explained why he sometimes found coins lying on the top edge of headstones. Throughout Europe we often find pebbles on headstones they commemorate those of the Jewish faith but not so common are coins. One explanation goes like this:

Leaving a '*Penny*' (1 Cent) on the grave means simply that you have visited. A '*Nickel*' (5 Cents) indicates that you and the deceased trained at boot camp together while a '*Dime*' (10 Cents) meant that you served with him in some capacity.

'*Quarter*' (25 Cents) indicates that you were with the soldier when he was killed. According to tradition, money left at veteran's cemeteries is collected and funds put forward to maintaining the cemetery or helping with veterans charities. In the U.S the practice became common during the Vietnam War as a more practical way of communicating with the soldier's family, which could evolve into uncomfortable arguments over politics relating to the war. Some Vietnam Veterans would leave coins as a 'down payment' to buy their fallen comrades a beer or play a hand of cards when they would finally be reunited.

## FM, PM,s and CH's

Back in 2007 when I had my first meeting with the CWGC staff, including the then Director Richard Kellaway, about TWGPP working in association them I was asked a question about updating the archive. Over a period of time headstones succumb to the elements and we were aware that there is an ongoing programme of re-engraving and replacement. At the time I said that this would, in all probability, be conducted by new volunteers who would not mind revisiting the cemeteries albeit a copy was already in the archive.

This has been ongoing with most of France, Belgium, Greece and Germany having been completed a couple of times so images have been updated to higher resolution and where re-engraved or replaced are more legible.

Until 2014 I was able to access the Commissions Inspection Report Database where I could provide the cemetery report. These reports included plot locations and a descriptive element of the PM so making them easier to find. I know that many of you also contacted the Commission direct to obtain these which were forthcoming up until recently.

I lost the access to the online around the time of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations but had been able to get them from the enquiries section. As of April 2015 the facility to obtain a complete cemetery listing including the descriptive PM is no longer available to us due to a 'change in policy'.



**Finding a PM is not always easy!**

It is possible to obtain individual PM descriptions but these do not come with plot details as found by a volunteer in Warwickshire. A bit 'chicken and egg' really as we do not know which ones are covered by a PM without the list and they are not marked as such on the downloadable list from the CWGC site.

Without these lists a considerable time can be spent just walking the rows in search of them so I have decided that, unless individual volunteers want to pursue these, we will no longer search these out and abandon that aspect of the project as I do not want volunteers wasting their time.

I have seen on the newly announced 'UK War Memorial' website which is funded by the Department of Culture that they are duplicating what we at TWGPP have done in recording 'Family Memorials' (FM's) across UK cemeteries and churchyards. These are headstones that commemorate service personnel who have been lost in battle or are buried elsewhere. As such they are not recorded on any list so are only found when searched for.

Under the FAQ's on this site it describes that the new website does **not** record:

*2. Headstones, grave-markers or memorials marking the place of burial or official commemoration of an individual or group of people killed as a result of war or conflict (including any grave, **Memorial to the Missing, Cross of Sacrifice and Stone of Remembrance that is the responsibility of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**)*





## Disrespect for war dead



**Lilian and George Ross with their son  
George Terence**

During a bombing raid on Plymouth in Devon on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1943 Pilot Leutenant Josef Gaube flying a Junkers Ju 88A found that the heavy Anti-Aircraft fire from the Naval Base was very much on target. That along with a Beaufighter of the RAF (Newfoundland Squadron) also laying claim to a 'kill' ensured that Josef and his crews fate was sealed. With the starboard engine and fuselage badly damaged, the bomb load was jettisoned and the crew bailed out leaving Josef at the controls of a badly burning aircraft diving to the ground at speed. On hitting the ground at Beaumont house in Penlee road it was destroyed.

Mrs Lilian Ross who was a resident at the time remembers seeing the Swastika on the tail burning in the wreckage as she emerged from an Anderson shelter nearby.

Although an ambulance had arrived at the scene there appeared to be nothing they could do with no casualties evident. Lilian's husband, George Ross, home on leave from the RAF, had found the body of Josef which it seems had hit a tree and landed in the lane opposite the crash site. Josef may have jumped or was flung from the aircraft during its decent. George, had complained to the Commander of a nearby barrage balloon unit as the corpse was still where it had fallen late into the following day.

Josef and his Air Gunner, Werner Bruhn, who later died of injuries after parachuting, are now both buried in Cannock Chase German Cemetery. The remainder of the crew survived as Prisoners of War.



## Love lost - Kjersti Meyer

Kjersti has been helping TWGPP in Norway for a number of years now having first made contact as her father remembered RAF casualties being buried in his home town during WW2 and continues to visit their graves even to this day.

She recently recived an e mail from a Norwegian lady by the name of Tonje Bakke who found that by googling her grandfathers name 'Finn Bakke', one of the 'hits' was to the TWGPP 'Thanks' page from back in June 2012 <http://www.twgpp.org/thanks.php?start=140>

*" 5th June 2012- Good morning, Very many thanks for your prompt reply and for the attached photographs of the grave of Finn Bakke. My request for the photograph is on behalf of our 89 year old neighbour Kate, who worked in the control room of Fighter Command and who features on many clips of film from that time depicting the plotting table. She got to know Finn on his move to England and they were engaged to be married. It is only recently that we were able to discover that Finn was not shot down over the English Channel as Kate believed, but in fact was brought down in a mission over northern Germany. Your help and support is very much appreciated in allowing Kate some form of closure after all these years. With grateful thanks, Eddie Woodnutt "*

Tonji found Kjersti's contact address and asked if we at TWGPP still had Eddie Woodnutts contact address, which of course we did. Although we do not normally give out e mail addresses Steve felt this was one occassion where time was at a premium so Eddies address was promptly sent to Norway. Tonje resonded:-

*Hello - My name is Tonje Agate Bakke and I got your email address from Steve Rogers.*

*I read about you being neighbour to Kate, who was engaged to Finn Bakke. Finn is my grand uncle, as his brother Bjørn was my grandfather. Bjørn and Finn also had a sister named Brit. My grandfather and Finn were like twins, as there was less than 1 year between them. He had serious issues throughout his life, because losing his brother was such a hard thing for him. I have tried to find out as much as possible about Finns life before his death.*



**Finn Bakke**

*Is Kate still alive? If she is I have a lot of questions for her. None of us in our family knew Finn had a girlfriend in England, and as I promised my grandfather to look into this, I'd like to know everything I can.*

*When my grandfather was presented a medal of honour (as he was part of the resistance in Norway during the war), he refused to accept it. He said the only thing that wanted was his brother back, and since nobody could give him that, he wanted no part of the idolisation of the war. As i grew up in the same house as my grandfather we were really close. So finding some sort of closure on his behalf is important to me.*

*I really hope you can help me. (And I hope you understand my English)*

*Best regards, Tonje Agate Bakke*

Eddie Replied:- *Hello Tonje,*

*Thank you very much for your email regarding your grandfather Bjorn Bakke and his brother Finn. (What a wonderful man your grandfather sounds!) Your English is perfect and very easy to read and understand!*

*It is my great pleasure to be able to provide some information regarding Kate who was romantically attached to Finn during the war years.*

*Kate (short for Kathleen) Lawrence is indeed still alive and living in Winchester in England. As you know, my wife Judi and myself were neighbours of Kate for nearly 20 years and got to know her very well. Just under three years ago we moved house but still live in Winchester and see Kate twice a week, maintaining our friendship and doing shopping for her. Kate is now 92 years old and is a very intelligent, very knowledgeable, very independent and lively person with a great sense of humour. She does not venture very far from her house any more but retains a keen interest in all world affairs.*

*During the second world war she was the Women's Royal Air Force and worked at the RAF (Royal Air Force) Fighter Command Headquarters plotting the movements of fighter squadrons as they intercepted the German bombers and fighters. There are one or two pieces of newsreel film from that time where Kate can be seen moving markers around on the huge map table they used. She tells us that she did meet Winston Churchill (the British Prime Minister) on his visits to the headquarters! Kate has told us many, many times how important Finn was to her and how much she loved him. It was a great tragedy when he lost his life whilst flying a sortie. At the time Kate was informed that he had been shot down over the sea of the English Channel and believed that both he and his plane were lost beneath the waves.*

Several years after the war ended Kate married and had two children, but this marriage ended in divorce many years ago. We believe that Kate's surname was Winter when she knew Finn but will check that information for you. You should know however that Kate has always told us that Finn was the love of her life and indeed she has a photograph of him by her bedside and she tells us that she regularly talks things through with him.

About four years ago, Kate asked me if, that after her death and cremation, I could arrange for her ashes to be scattered at sea in the English Channel in order that she would be close to Finn. At the same time she asked if I could use the internet to find any information on Finn or his squadron. It was during my research that I discovered that Finn had not been shot down at sea and in fact his grave is in a German war cemetery.



In addition to information on his squadron, including one of the photographs you kindly sent with your email, we were able to provide details to Kate of where his grave is and a photograph of it provided by Steve Rogers of the War Graves Photographic Project. Judi and I sat down with Kate and carefully and sensitively talked her through this information which obviously came as a shock to her, given what she had been told all those years ago. We were worried at first whether this had been the right thing to do, but after a couple of days it seemed to have given her a new lease of life. We could hear through our adjoining wall her playing music that she told us that Finn had introduced her to.

It is very sad that Kate had travelled in Germany several times within just a couple of miles from where Finn is laid to rest. She has also visited Norway to see Finn's name on a memorial.

**Kate in 1940**

As I indicated earlier, we do visit Kate twice a week and will obviously share your email and photographs with her. No doubt, you will have many questions you would like to ask her, for example about how they met and fell in love and Finn's marriage proposal to her. If you are able to provide us with any we will obviously pass them on to Kate and seek answers for you.

Sadly she does not have an internet connection that would enable her to make direct contact. I hope all I have set out here is useful to you and that you can understand my English as well as I can understand yours!

With kind regards, Eddie Woodnutt

Since these initial emails we have now arranged for flowers to be laid on Finn's grave in by Brian Lewis, one of our volunteers who lives near Arnhem, in the Netherlands. He also laid a card sent from Kate at the gravesite.

Postscript from Eddie – It has been wonderful for us and especially for Kate, to have had communication from Tonje Bakke regarding her great uncle Finn. We have had several lengthy email exchanges allowing both Tonje and Kate to fill in many pieces of the jigsaw of Kate and Finn's time together from 1942 when they first met until his tragic death on his mission over Europe.

*Kate is now in her 93rd year and still mentally and reasonably physically agile. It is quite an emotional journey for her to be reliving times spent with the man that she fell so deeply in love with all those years ago. With my wife Judi and myself acting as intermediaries, she has been able to reminisce and recollect many pieces of information from the time she was with Finn. We see Kate twice a week and on each occasion we meet we come away with more memories and photographs to feed back to Tonje. It is a two way process and Kate happily receives aspects of Finn's family life in Norway before he left to join the RAF.*

*Thank you all so very much for the kindness and consideration you have shown to both Kate and to Tonje. It is so heart-warming that two people whose lives Finn Bakke touched so deeply have been given this opportunity to extend their knowledge of him.*

## David John Jones, otherwise forgotten – By Peter Jones

The Merchant Vessel SS North Cambria (of London) 3,577 gross tons and 11 years old was sailing from New York to La Pallice, near La Rochelle on the western seaboard of France. Her cargo was railway materials, and she had a crew of 35.

On 1 August 1918 she collided with the SS Port Stephens (of London) in the North Atlantic some 70-80 miles west of Ushant (off the westernmost tip of Brittany), with some 26 lives being lost.

David John Jones who served on this ship at this time isn't listed on the Tower Hill Memorial to the War missing of the Merchant Navy, which in any case is only for casualties arising from enemy action; but nor is he listed by CWGC under graves or memorials to the Royal Navy and its branches. So he wasn't in the RNVR, RN, RNR etc.

There are many such Merchant Seamen who died during the war period when their ships sank through storms, collisions or wrecked; or who were individual victims of accidental drowning or sickness. Officially they have no commemoration, though they can sometimes appear on local war memorials and / or (as in this case) family headstones.

With the accident having occurred so far away and out to sea, it is most unlikely that his body - even if recovered - was brought home for burial, so that naming him on his family grave's headstone was all they could do by way of commemoration.

I feel it is important to 'capture' these memorials to those that are otherwise forgotten casualties of the war but played a very important role in keeping Britain supplied with food and materials to maintain the war footing.

## A fitting memorial – Brian Lewis

Apart from helping us photograph the graves of German casualties on the Netherlands / German Border Brian Lewis sent in some photographs of a very nice memorial to three Canadians who died back in 1943 when their Wellington Bomber crashed in a peat bog whilst flying over Wilnis near Amsterdam. The Bomber had been hit by a German fighter plane and although two of the crew managed to parachute to safety (later captured), Warrant Officer Robert Moulton (pilot), Flight Sergeant Joseph White and Flight Sergeant Joseph Thibaudeau were all killed when the bomber hit the bog and promptly sunk. Some of the remains of the pilot were found and these were buried the next day in the local cemetery.



The remains of White and Thibaudeau were lost along with the wreckage in the bog until recovered some 60 years later in 2002 by two local men who has set up a salvage operation to ensure the casualties had a proper burial. These two casualties now lie alongside Moulton in Wilnis cemetery.

A memorial commemorating the loss of these men was erected near the crash site and is always well maintained by the local community.



## Epitaphs

On our search facility we have a photograph of an inscription which is at the base of a headstone situated in Ramleh Cemetery in Israel. The words inscribed are those that may have come from any Mother who had lost a son in battle. We can imagine that she had been informed that her son is now buried in that 'Corner of a foreign Field' as described in Rupert Brooke's poem 'The Soldier' ....*That there's some corner of a foreign field, That is for ever England..'*

In this case the epitaph reads '*Oh, for a glimpse of where you are laid, only to lay a flower at your head, Mother'*. We use this as we believe we are offering that '*glimpse'* to families around the world even in these times of easier worldwide travel.



During a recent re-visit to photograph the headstones in Chittagong Cemetery, Bangladesh, Catherine Chatham found an epitaph on a similar vein. It read '*Your grave I may never see but some kind hand may place a flower for me'*. The headstone was for Gunner J Clark of the Royal Artillery who died on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1943 aged 32. Catherine duly obliged and returned the following day to place that flower. The family, in all probability, will never know about this gesture but it is nice to know that words chosen over 60 years ago can still move people.

Articles for the next newsletter, due in November 2015, should be sent via e mail to [steve@twgpp.org](mailto:steve@twgpp.org)



**THE WAR GRAVES**  
PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT