



THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT



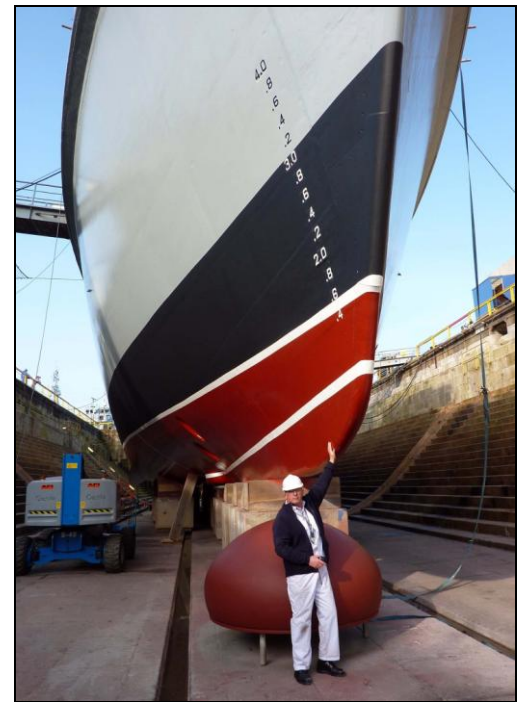
In Association
with the CWGC



News from the Front line

April 2014

“She’s got a very nice smooth bottom”. A term of endearment that is often heard as ship prepares to undock having had her bottom scraped and a new anti-fouling applied. Nowadays, a new rubberised formula is used to which nothing can stick to, even ‘Post it’s’, as I found to my cost when trying to label and photograph the underwater grills. Yes, I am in my new job in Ship repair having moved from Ship build as detailed in the last Newsletter. Now classed as a ‘Docky’ it reminded me of Sandra’s grandfather who was shipbuilding on the Tyne during WW1. This was a reserved occupation as we were in need of warships. However, to prevent the young skilled dock workers being presented with a white feather the men were given lapel badges which stated ‘On War Service’. It seems that some companies issued similar badges to prevent their work force being called up. In 1915 all such unofficial ‘war service’ badges were banned. Men issued with the badge had them stamped with a number to prevent them being transferred to others who did not want to go into the services. The stamped number indicated who the badge was issued to and could be checked if someone tried to use it as a means of not getting conscripted!



I have tried to find out how many Dockyard workers were killed during the wars but no definitive figures are available. Portsmouth took a considerable amount of bombing in WW2 and I expect many of those that worked in the dockyard were killed albeit at home during this time.

Back to the paint! Given the cost of the stuff I think it must be made by L’Oreal , It has to be applied in the right temperature and humidity and must be similar to the someone applying makeup. Buff the surface, apply a pink base coat (foundation) then a bronze ‘filler’ coat (concealer), all within a certain timescale, before the final ‘Rouge’. However, if it gives ‘The old girl’ another 20 years service then ‘she’s worth it!’ (Sorry, I am not PC but I have yet to hear Royalty launch a ship and call it ‘him’ – You never know with HMS Prince of Wales coming up though).

Sandra and I have been taking advantage of the better Spring weather here in Hampshire by revisiting small parish churches that have not been called on for a few years. I must admit that some of the villages, which are really quite close by, (less than 30 miles) we have never ventured to and realise there are some very nice places literally on the doorstep.

In one very small hamlet of Binsted near Alton we came across one grave that does not officially qualify to be on site, but nevertheless we have him on now. Until we came across the grave I was never aware that Field Marshall Montgomery was buried there in 1976.

In another tiny hamlet of Hursley we found 15 war graves which was a surprise as it is in the middle of nowhere. Further investigations, when we returned home, indicated that the large Hursley Park House had rooms converted to a Hospital for officers. In the grounds there had been a temporary hospital set up for the wounded. These men, buried in the church cemetery, had obviously succumbed to their injuries.

Looking for the private memorials (PM's) on war graves is becoming so much easier now since the CWGC have been cleaning them (here in Hampshire at least). These now stand out quite light in colour compared to the grey forms surrounding them.



Church cemetery at Hursley

Just three days too late

A number of families requesting images from us mention the fact that the wife, mother or sisters of the casualties had died a few weeks or months prior to them finding us. They would have loved to have seen the photo of the grave but sadly, they were not aware of TWGPP's service. Particularly sad was a request received on the 23rd March stating that the sister of Private C. Ward, buried in Rheinburg War Cemetery, had died just three days earlier on the 21st March and had never been able to fulfill her wish to see the grave of her brother. The family contacted us so that we could provide a photo to be buried with the sister which we have fulfilled. However, it is still very sad that she was never able to see his grave beforehand. This does cause us some angst knowing that we could quite easily have provided a photograph of his grave whilst she was alive.

I have been conducting a number of presentations locally to try and publicise the work we do and I know a few of you have been doing likewise around the country. These highlight the facility available so thank you for that. One of my first questions to the 'audience' is to ask who has heard of us before to which the response is always minimal. Come the end of the presentation feedback is always very positive and the promise to promote what we do via other organisations. However, apart from paying the fees to advertise in magazines, I am not sure how we can highlight or promote TWGPP to a wider audience thus preventing similar occurrences to that mentioned above.

Retiring after 29 years service with the CWGC



We were sorry to hear that at the end of March Nigel Haines retired from the CWGC HQ at Maidenhead after 29 years service.

A records man at heart, Nigel was part of the small but integral branch of the CWGC who promoted the work they do by conducting presentations to schools and various organisations. He also organised exhibitions at a number of events such as Armed Forces Days and Genealogical shows supported by Roy and Ian.

Nigel has been an ardent supporter of TWGPP since we started and has always promoted our work when and where he could. He instigated our attendance at many of the genealogical shows where we joined forces with CWGC and gave us encouragement in all matters. We will be sorry to lose him as part of our 'Team' but wish him all the best in his retirement.

Earliest War Memorials? – Peter Butt

When we booked for The Cultural Experience's 500th anniversary battlefield tour 'Flodden 1513', the biggest battle between Scotland and England, we did not think that it would have any TWGPP relevance. Being inspired by the tour guide, the Northumbrian historian John Sadler, we also bought the book (1) and in the final paragraph of 'A Note on Sources' were surprised to read: *There are other timely references to the battle [of Flodden]. Sir Richard Assheton's memorial in his parish church of St Leonard's in Middleton. Sir Marmaduke Constable has his own memorial brass and other dalesmen from Littondale, Arncliffe and Hawswick are remembered in St Oswald's Church at Arncliffe in their native Yorkshire. As Niall Barr rightly points out, these are amongst the very earliest war memorials in Britain* (2). So there was a TWGPP interest. However, from what I subsequently found, the second sentence should surely have been: *Sir Marmaduke Constable has his own memorial brass in St Oswald's Church, Flamborough and other dalesmen from Littondale* Intuitively, to help in such investigations I first consult the relevant 'Buildings of England' ie. 'Pevsner' and the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

Between Manchester and Rochdale, Middleton's St Leonard's church is described as *one of the most rewarding medieval churches in SE Lancashire*, the chancel's south windows depicts *the famous Middleton archers*. *The glass is not now in good shape. The date no longer visible, has been recorded as 1505, but it has always been called The Flodden window, and as such we can suggest 1515 or 1525 (to go with the [Richard] Assheton rebuilding [of the church] as more likely)*. Hence, Sir Richard survived Flodden so his 'war memorial' is not one by our definition of them, ie. he did not die in service. Sir Richard may not have a traditional memorial as such but *in 1524, as was recorded on the now-decayed south parapet, came a rebuilding by Richard Assheton. What is so special [about the Flodden window] is that the 16 kneeling archers are individually named, and so is their chaplain Henricus Taylor at the head of the procession* (3).



Each archer is shown kneeling in prayer before leaving for the battle, wearing a blue court mantle and carrying a bow stave with each archer's name above it, the chaplain kneels in the front of them. But is that a representation of Sir Richard, his wife and son in the right hand panel immediately above the archers? Disappointingly, I could not find a listing of the archer's names on the web and Sir Richard Assheton does not have an entry in the ODNB.

Sir Marmaduke Constable's ODNB entry states: *Constable, Sir Marmaduke (1456/7?–1518), soldier and administrator, was the son of Sir Robert Constable (1423–1488) of Flamborough, Yorkshire. In 1513 Constable served under Howard at Flodden, where he commanded the left wing; he received a letter of thanks from the king.* So Sir Marmaduke did not die on Flodden field / Branxton moor, so again his 'war memorial' is not one by our definition. In the description of St Oswald's Church, Flamborough (4) it states that there is a brass inscription in black letters with 26 lines of English verse:

*Here lieth Marmaduke Cunstable, of ffaynborght, knight
... [who fought under Edward IV and Henry VII]
Bot for all that, as ye se, he lieth under thys stone
At Brankisto(n) feld, wher the kyng of Scottys was slayne,
He then being of the age of thre score and tene
With the gode duke of Northfolke yt journey he haye tayn*

The description of St Oswald's Church at Arncliffe in Littondale (5) does not include any memorials! But on googling: Flodden Littondale, there are sites that have a photograph and details (6) of what appears to be an illustrated manuscript naming 34 men from Arncliffe, Hawswick, and Littondale who fought at Flodden. There are 4 listed as having *able horse and harnished* ie. armoured, 15 having a *bowe*, and 15 as having a *bille*. The superiority of the English billhook over the Scottish pike was one reason for the outcome of the battle. From the photograph the manuscript would appear to be 'modern'. Surely an 'original' document of this kind would not be hung on a church wall?

Presumably the details were obtained from a survey such as the one of the area in 1520 where tenants who fought against the Scots at Flodden were identifiable in the muster roll (7). The tenants' role in the army would appear to have been determined by the amount of land they held, the holders of an oxgang, at least 5 acres, being archers, the lesser tenants would have been billmen.

Whilst investigating the above I was given a flyer for the 'War Memorials Archive' which contains the statement: *We record memorials to all wars and conflicts with the earliest so far recorded dating to the seventh century. Searching their website (8) produced: 7th Century Wars, Memorial Title, Battle of Dunnichen, Tayside, Scotland, Village Aberlemno, Aberlemno Church, [between Forfar and Brechin] Type: Stone of Remembrance in the churchyard. With the description: On front of stone is carved a celtic cross. Reverse side depicts a battle scene. At the top is a mounted Pictish warrior giving chase to a Northumbrian horseman with a helmet and nose-guard who has thrown away his sword and shield. At the centre are three Pictish foot-soldiers in battle order about to attack a Northumbrian warrior with nose-guard and raised spear. At the bottom are a pair of warriors charging towards each other, the Pict on the left and Northumbrian (with helmet and nose-guard) on the right. A third man, believed to be the Northumbrian king, Ecgfrith, lies dead while a raven knaws at his head.*



The battle on Saturday 20th May 685 is claimed to be the best documented event in the history of the Picts being mentioned in Bede's 'The Ecclesiastical History of the English People' that he wrote within 50 years of the battle. The Pictish victory over the Northumbrian Angles' who had previously dominated the area, was complete with the result that the Pictish kingdom of Fortriu became the dominant kingdom in Northern Britain, during which time its kings laid the foundations of the medieval kingdom of Scotland. Therefore, surely the battle should be equated with those of Stirling Bridge in 1297 and Bannockburn in 1314. To confuse the issue, on other web sites, the battle of Dunnichen seems also to be called 'Nechtansmere' and / or 'Dun Nechtain', and recent research has suggested a more northerly location near Dunachton, on the shores of Loch Insh! Under the heading: *Bloodshed, Weapons and Heroes*, there is a full size replica of the stone in the Early People gallery at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh with the explanation: *Political warfare: organised forces fighting for control over land and people – is now a familiar idea of conflict ...*

Having come across the above two claims for Flodden and Dunnichen as being possibly the 'earliest war memorials', the Flodden ones are really in gratitude for victory and a safe return and the other as the War Memorials Archive describe it, a Stone of Remembrance. This still raises the question as to which is or are the earliest war memorials by TWGPP's definition?

The earliest one that I personally know is the grave of the commanding officer of the 1/29th, Lt. Colonel George Lake, killed at the 1808 battle of Roliça, Portugal, seen when following in the footsteps of a 3 x grandfather who fought throughout the Peninsular War (1808-1814) being one of Wellington's 'scum of the earth'.

Peter J Butt

References:

1. The Battle of Flodden 1513, Sadler & Serdville, The History Press, 2013.
2. Flodden, Barr, Gloucestershire, 2001.
3. The Buildings of England: Lancashire and the South-East, Hartwell, Hyde & Pevsner, Yale University Press, 2004.
4. The Buildings of England: Yorkshire East Riding, Pevsner & Neave, Yale University Press, 1995.
5. The Buildings of England: Yorkshire West Riding, Pevsner & Radcliffe, Penguin Books, 1967.
6. www.genuki.org.uk
7. The Earl of Cumberland's survey of North Craven of 1579, Tony Stephens, Journal 2010, North Craven Heritage Trust.
8. www.iwm.org.uk/warmemorials

A Belgian grave at Brookwood, Surrey – Helen MacEwen

I am researching the British biographer Winifred Gérin née Bourne (1901-1981) and her Belgian husband Eugène Gérin (1896-1945). They both worked for the War Office during 1940-45 where Eugène Gérin recorded daily bulletins, in French, for the BBC. These were then broadcast to the resistance organisations in France and Belgium.

He died in London in 1945 and was buried in a service grave at Brookwood military cemetery. I don't know what work Winifred Gérin did for the War Office. Does anyone have any information about their war work?

I can be contacted on helen.macewan@ec.europa.eu



A lone grave in Bougie, Algeria

Some of us get a buzz out of photographing many thousands of graves whilst others like to find the more obscure! Susan Hunter took on the task of finding the lone grave of Lieutenant Albert George Errington who lies in Bougie (Bejaia) Communal Cemetery in Algeria. Lt. Errington, Son of Albert H. and Jane R. Errington, of 6, Ryehill Place, Leith, Edinburgh, was killed in action whilst serving on HMS Candytuft. One might wonder what a Royal Naval Lieutenant was doing to find himself buried in Algeria.

HMS Candytuft was designated as a 'Q' Ship. These were armed merchant vessels which were disguised to conceal the armaments and so had the opportunity to engage enemy submarines when they surfaced believing that that were able to do so safely as this was not an armed warship. In November 1917 Commander Cochrane left Devonport in command of the Q-ship Candytuft, together with a convoy of merchant ships bound for Gibraltar.



Candytuft was disguised to represent a tramp steamer. This Q-ship had the misfortune to be attacked by a submarine who used torpedoes to blow both the bow and stern off the Q-ship. The "Candytuft" was afterwards beached on the North African coast, and on the eighth, when in the vicinity of Cape St. Vincent, had an encounter with a submarine in which the usual tactics were employed. One of the enemy's shells struck the Q-ship's bridge, exploding under the bunk in Captain Cochrane's cabin, wrecking the wireless and steering-gear. Candytuft was able to fire three shots, but the enemy disappeared, made off, and was never seen by the Q-ship again.

After having been repaired at Gibraltar, Candytuft left in company with the merchant ship Tremayne for Malta. This was on November 16. Two days later they were off Cape Sigli when a torpedo crossed Tremayne's bows, but struck Candytuft on the star-board quarter, entirely blowing off the ship's stern and killing all the officers excepting Captain Cochrane and Lieutenant Phillips, R.N.R., who was on the bridge, but very badly wounding Lieutenant Errington, R.N.R.

With sound judgment and true unselfishness Captain Cochrane now ordered Tremayne to make for Bougie as fast as she could, and in the meantime, the Q-ship hoisted her foresail to assist the ship to drift inshore. Most of the ship's company were sent away in boats, only sufficient being kept aboard to man the two 4-inch guns, and everyone kept out of sight. Within half an hour a periscope was seen by Captain Cochrane concealed behind the bridge screens.

A periscope is a poor target but it was fired at though ineffectually. On came the torpedo striking Candytuft just forward of the bridge, completely wrecking the fore part of the ship. This explosion wounded several men in a boat, covered the bridge with coal barrows and other miscellaneous wreckage, blew a leading-seaman overboard — happily he was picked up unhurt— blew Captain Cochrane up also, but some of the falling wreckage struck him on the head, knocked him back inboard, and left him staggering off the bridge.

Presently the ship gave a sudden jerk and rid herself of her bow, which now floated away and sank. Candytuft drifted towards the African shore and after the captain and one of his crew had gallantly closed the watertight door at the forward end of the mess-deck, up to their middles in water and working in almost complete darkness, with tables and other articles washing about, it became time for these last two to leave the ship. They were taken off by a French armed trawler and landed at Bougie. Candytuft, minus bow and stern, drifted ashore on to a sandy beach and eventually the two 4-inch guns were salvaged.



Lieutenant Errington had died before reaching land and the wounded had to be left in hospital. But, afterwards, some of Candytuft's crew went to sea in another Q-ship and so the whole gallant story went on. Ships may be torpedoed but, like the soldiers, sailors never die. They keep on ' keeping on ' all the time, as a young seaman once was heard to remark.

Bougie cemetery is just about totally overgrown but with the help of the cemetery keeper and his dog Susan was able to eventually find the grave, albeit well hidden amongst the shrubbery. A job well done!

A Monumental Man

In the last newsletter we mentioned the film 'The Railway Man' which was based on a true story of survival by men being forced to build the Burma Railway. Following on its heels came another war film based on the exploits of a team of men, dubbed 'The Monuments Men', who were tasked to investigate and recover the many art treasures stolen by the Nazis during the occupation of Europe. As would be expected an element of artistic licence was used in the film but one of the casualties portrayed by the actor Hugh Bonneville was actually killed whilst serving with the unit, albeit not quite like shown on the film.



Major Ronald Balfour , from Oxford, was a historian at Cambridge University before joining the army in 1944. He was serving in King's Royal Rifle Corps but attached to the 'Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives' Section of S.H.A.E.F (*Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force*).

Balfour made the compelling case of the importance of the task confronting the Monuments Men Unit in a speech he planned to deliver to his men. He said: *"No age lives entirely alone; every civilisation is formed not merely by its own achievements but by what it has inherited from the past. If these things are destroyed, we have lost a part of our past, and we shall be the poorer for it."*

Balfour also explained for his men the word "monuments":

"When we invade Europe, we shall be going into countries which are full of churches and other buildings, of museums and pictures and other works of art, of libraries and archives. These things are all valuable and many of them irreplaceable. It will be the same wherever we go, whether it is France or Belgium or Holland or Norway..."

To avoid repeating the whole list — churches and other buildings, museums and pictures and other works of art, libraries and archives — every time we speak of them , we use the word monuments to cover them all. So don't be misled into thinking that when I speak of monuments I mean only statues and tombstones.”

He was one of the first 'Monuments Men' in the field, arriving in France in late August 1944. Balfour spent much of his time in Belgium and was the first to report on the theft of Michelangelo's Bruges Madonna, stolen by the Nazis, from the cathedral in Bruges just a week before his arrival.

Major Balfour was killed in Clèves (now Kleve) on March 10 by a shell while he and four other men were evacuating sculptures from the damaged church. Sir Leonard Woolley, the distinguished British archaeologist and fellow Monuments Officer, described Balfour's death as *"a great and unexpected blow. He had written only the day before, so cheerfully, delighted with being at the front; then he was killed in action, where actually engaged in saving some of those works of art which he loved so much.... The whole field of art history has suffered a tragic loss."*

Major Balfour now lies not too far from the town of Kleve , in Reichswald Forest War Cemetery.



Impossible to separate

I was giving a presentation recently on the work of TWGPP after which I always get asked a number of questions. One I was asked on this occasion concerns the men currently buried in ST. LOUIS (JEFFERSON BARRACKS) NATIONAL CEMETERY in Missouri, USA.

There are 40 men from commonwealth forces buried in a collective grave including British, Australian and Indian casualties. In addition to that there are about 60 American and about 10 Dutch men. Nothing untoward there except that one might wonder how so many foreign nationals ended up in one collective grave in a cemetery in America miles away from a combat zone.



Normally on the CWGC site there is a brief history of the cemetery and details of why men are buried there. This could be the result of concentration, military hospitals nearby or other reasons but for St Louis the details are quite sparse - nothing!

It appears that the men all commemorated here were originally in a Japanese prisoner of war camp known as Fukuoka on the island of Kyushu. Once Japan had surrendered American forces entered the camp and found a number of funeral urns containing the ashes of those that had died.

A hundred of these urns, which contained the ashes of men who died in the camp between December 1944 and March 1945, were gathered up by American forces. As the records of the camp indicated that a number of American servicemen had died there the urns were returned to America and buried in St Louis cemetery. Obviously it would be impossible to determine whose ashes they were, Americans or otherwise, so a number of other nationalities find themselves neither buried at home or in the land in which they died!

A chance finding

We have mentioned in previous newsletters the fact that Dave Donatelli, living in Canada, was given a photograph album by one of his friends that contained images of a number of Black Watch personnel who served during WW1. The album belonged to a 'Highlander' by the name of Tommy Byers and his notes indicated that a number of these men had died in combat. We included a picture of Captain James Donaldson, buried at Brandhoek War Cemetery, in our Autumn 2013 newsletter and have received the following response:

"Good evening

Purely by chance I landed on your October 2013 newsletter on the internet. The last item on the newsletter concerns a photo dated June 1917 of "C" Company, 9th Battalion, Black Watch, with reference to Captain James Donaldson who was killed in August 2017.

Captain Donaldson was my grandfather, whom I obviously never met. He injured an eye earlier in the war (I think he may even have lost the eye) and was sent home and didn't have to return to the war due to his injury. However, he volunteered to go back and was shot by a sniper in August 2017, leaving my grandmother with 4 children aged from around 6 months to 6 years old. I have a huge bag of letters which my grandfather and grandmother wrote to each other while he was away at war. In what I believe must have been my grandmother's last letter to him, she refers to him being in a dangerous sounding place and says "I hope they are keeping you safe". Very sad. I also have his (ornamental) Black Watch claymore.



**Captain Donaldson, centre front,
with Tommy Byers standing directly
behind him**

So I was very excited to happen upon the photo of him in your newsletter. I hope you find this additional information about him interesting and please make Mr Donatelli, who supplied the image, aware that his photo has unearthed a personal connection if you think he would be interested.

Kind Regards Fiona Watt (née Donaldson), Aberdeen, Scotland

We hope to include extracts of some of Captain Donaldson correspondence in future newsletters.

Somalia and Gaza - Updates

We have had some good news for those cemeteries that are difficult to get to with new volunteers Matt completing HARGEISA WAR CEMETERY in Somalia and Hasan, assisted by Sofian, now gaining access to GAZA WAR CEMETERY to complete this site which has been outstanding for a number of years. "Good things come to those who wait" springs to mind!

Still awaiting for access to Baghdad!!

For the Love of a Good Mother. – Mike Hall



Private Harold Hall

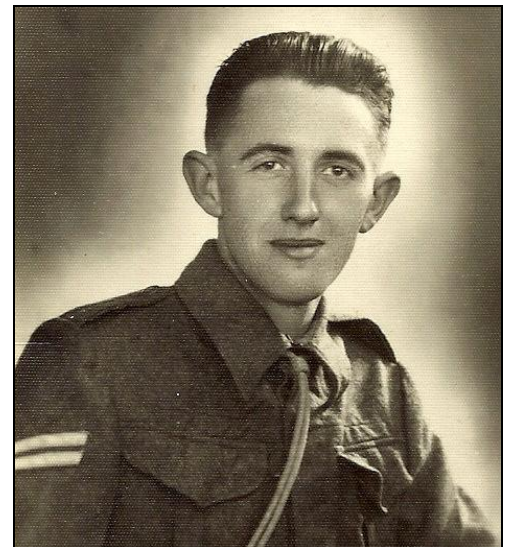
My uncle Harold Herbert Hall was born in 1898, the eldest son of Hannah and John Herbert Hall of Derby and in 1914 he joined the 1st Battalion, the King's Own (Yorkshire Light Infantry) Regiment, 'The KOYLIS', soldier number 203906. The records show he enlisted in Derby.

In 1914 the 1st Battalion of the K.O.Y.L.I. were stationed in Singapore but on 17th February the same year they moved to Hursley Park, near Winchester, Hampshire to join the 83rd Brigade of the 28th Division. The 28th division were mobilised for war on 16th January 1915 and landed at Le Havre, and engaged in various actions along The Western Front including the Second Battle of Ypres and The Battle of Loos. On the 26th October 1915 the 28th Division embarked from Marseilles for Salonika, Northern Greece, where they were engaged in various actions against the Bulgarian Army. As part of the 28th Division, the KOYLIS maintained the occupation of Mazirko and the capture of Barakli Jum'a. In 1917 they captured the Ferdie and Essex Trenches and later that year they also captured Barakli and Kumli. On 20th June 1918 they returned to France, leaving the 28th Division and joined the 151st Brigade of the 50th Division to once again see action on the Western Front.

On the home front, although worried about Harold Herbert and still devastated by the loss of their 6 month old daughter Vera in 1910, the Hall family got on with their lives in Derby and on 12th June 1918 at the age of 40 years Hannah gave birth to a boy whom they named John after his then 42 year old father. The joy and happiness they must have felt with the birth of my father was short lived for 3 months later a telegram arrived informing the family that Harold Herbert Hall, at the age 20 years, had died of pneumonia on 9th September 1918 in Salonika, and that he was buried in the Mikra British Cemetery, Kalamaria, Salonika. Understandably, Hannah did not take Harold's death at all well. As she explained to my father many years later, it was difficult enough to come to terms with being able to pay her respects, lay flowers, and say a prayer at Vera's grave but she would never be able to do the same for Harold as part of the mourning process and she felt that her grief could not come to an end without at least one visit to his grave. In the coming months the family received the bronze 'Next of Kin Memorial Plaque and associated paper Scroll'. The plaque was given the nickname of 'Dead Man's Penny', because of the similarity in appearance to the one penny coin which was in circulation at the time. Also, the family received Harold's personal affects and his two medals, The British Campaign and Victory Medals, which when worn together were affectionately known as 'Mutt and Jeff'.

My father John Hall grew up with two loving parents and his older brother Frank, obviously he never met his eldest brother Harold. My father enlisted in the Army in August 1939, nearly one month prior to the outbreak of war on 1st September 1939, joining the 150th W/T Section of the Royal Corps of Signals and began his training at Catterick Camp, Yorkshire. The invasion of Iceland (codenamed Fork) by the British Royal Navy and Royal Marines on 10th May 1940 took the island with little or no resistance. On 17th May 4000 troops of the British Army arrived to relieve the invasion force. My father, as a Private, formed part of this relief force. In July 1941 Britain passed responsibility of Iceland to the USA under a US/Icelandic defence agreement and the British troops left to be deployed elsewhere.

Corporal John Hall



After Iceland, the whereabouts of my father is unknown. However, he did find time to marry my mother, Ada Ethel Ratford, in Alvaston, Derby on 8th December 1942. During the war years she worked 6 nights a week at Rolls-Royce in Derby carrying out the inspection of several different type of machined components.

My father's next known appearance was near to Algiers, in 1943. From there the 150 W/T Section of the Royal Corps of Signals was sent to Drama, North East Greece, where they remained for the most part of 1944 and where photograph 2 was taken of my father, now a corporal, in service dress uniform. Early in 1945 the section moved to Faliron. near Athens. where they remained until the end of the war on 8th May. Demobilisation for all troops began in June 1945 and was based on age and length of service. Most servicemen involved agreed at the time that this was implemented quickly and efficiently and was basically concluded by the end of 1946. John, aged 28, wanted to get home as quickly as possible to see his wife again, who he had seen precious little of since 1942 and also to show his mother and father that he was no longer in any danger and really was safe from harm. Moreover, he had a very important surprise particularly for his mother, for photograph 3 was taken at some point during his service in Greece. It features the grave of his eldest brother, Harold Herbert Hall, who had died towards the very end of the Great War.

John's thinking was that if his mother could not visit Harold's grave to pay her respects, the next best thing would be to provide her with a photograph that she would be able look at and cherish for the rest of her life. Hannah died in 1948, before I was born in 1949. However, I did enjoy the company of my Grandfather for nearly 5 years. He came to live with Mum, Dad and I at our family home in Derby.



After my mother died in 1988 we managed to move my father to sheltered accommodation in Mickleover the following year, where he remained independent to the end. Most Tuesday evenings, throughout the year, my father would join us for a meal and later he and I would enjoy a drink at the Mickleover British Legion and it was here that he told me that at long last he was going to collate all the family photographs that for years had been stored in an old leather brown suitcase, and so create a family album that he could show his two grandchildren. This he did, and it brought to my attention the truly remarkable story behind the photo of the grave on the right.

At another one of our nights together at the Legion I asked him how he had managed to take this photograph because as long as I could remember I never saw him take a single photograph. He referred to the old proverb that *Necessity is the Mother of Invention* and said no more regarding the photograph. However, he did go on to say that in life it is impossible to do too much, *For the Love of a Good Mother*.

Mike Hall, Mickleover, Derby.

Postscript

The above is an edited version, with permission, of part of an article that appeared in the Journal of the Derbyshire Family History Society, Issue 148, March 2014. Through the TWGPP, Mike now has a picture of his Uncle Harold's present headstone for which he is most grateful.

From a TWGPP point of view I queried with Mike the original photo showing the grave of his Uncle Harold, as to when, where and by whom was it taken? For it is of a freshly dug grave as are the other ones around and it has a cross and not a CWGC headstone. His father John actually wrote in the family album under that photograph *Grave visited by John Hall late 1944 while on active service in the army*. On the back in pencil is written 21/1313. Mike is as certain as he can be that his father did not take the photograph, so was it taken by a professional photographer? It surely was not taken using a 'box' camera of the time for even after electronically scanning the photograph from the DFHS journal, Harold's name and number can be clearly seen.

Also, the aspect taken, accords to TWGPP recommendations as are the other crosses that I have seen in publications produced shortly after WWI.

A friend who has carried out substantial research on a local parish church's war memorial has told me that she had *seen adverts in local papers just after the end of WWI stating that photographs could be taken for relatives on request to the IWGC; so they must have had professionals based abroad to be able to offer the service. Unfortunately I haven't got a copy of an advert to share with you. Has anyone?*

As to where was the original grave taken? Steve Rogers pointed out that Harold's grave could have been a case where the original burial may have been elsewhere in Greece, and what is termed 'concentrated', into the Mikra Cemetery at a later date. The CWGC confirms this possibility: *The earliest Commonwealth burials took place in the local Protestant and Roman Catholic cemeteries. The British cemetery at Mikra was opened in April 1917, remaining in use until 1920. The cemetery was greatly enlarged after the Armistice when graves were brought in from a number of burial grounds in the area.*



However, Harold's original grave, which from the CWGC records is number 399, is in the row in front and one to the left of grave 370, this agrees with the CWGC grave plan of the Mikra cemetery. So when was the photograph taken?

The CWGC gave me an aerial view of the Mikra cemetery taken in the 1930's (above) which shows that the CWGC headstones were by then in place and the cemetery's shape agrees with the current map of the cemetery so confirming that the 'concentrations' had occurred by then. The map indicates that Harold's grave is in the 3rd row in front of the 'Great Cross' and the 9th nearest to the camera from the central pathway. The white crosses and memorials on the far side of the rectangular CWGC cemetery which is surrounded by a 'hedge', would be in the adjacent cemetery *made by the Greeks for burial of Greek Refugees from Russia*. However, the question as to how Mike Hall's father John obtained during WW2 a photograph of his eldest brother's WW1 war grave in the Mikra British Cemetery before its headstone was in place and the ground levelled and grassed, has still to be answered. Suggestions welcomed.

A Sergeant in the RAF with links to Russian aristocracy



Vera Narishkin wrote to us from Switzerland requesting a photograph of her brother's grave which is situated in Oxford (Headington) Cemetery.

Sergeant THEODORE NARISHKIN, 131903, was a pilot serving in 183 Squadron who flew Typhoon aircraft having been trained in the USA after participating in the Battle of Britain.

"My brother was a pilot in the 183 Sqdn., Royal Air Force Fighter Command and flew a single engine Hawker Typhoon. He participated in the Battle of Britain and died in a crash while test piloting a modified Typhoon on March 7, 1943. He had been trained in the USA with Tony Johnstone, a former RAF pilot". Vera added that during one engagement with the enemy, when his plane was hit, he had stepped out of the plane on to the wing to bail out. He then noticed that the falling plane would land in an inhabited area so he stepped back in and adjusted the gyro scopes to ensure the plane flew on a bit longer away from the town and then bailed out.

Theodore's parents were Captain. Vadim A. Narishkin, M.A. of the Intelligence Corps, and Elizabeth Narishkin, who lived at Headington, Oxford. In a local newspaper of the 1920's Vadim recalls his life in Imperial Russia.

EXPERIENCES IN RUSSIA - Oxford Man Who Lived Under Imperial Regime

Capt. Narishkin, of Oxford, who lived in Imperial Russia, fought in the Revolution, and finally escaped from the Soviet Union in 1921, described his experiences at a meeting of the Oxford branch of the International Friendship League at the Cadena Cafe, Cornmarket Street, last night. It was not until the War that he really had an opportunity of getting to know the Russian peasant, he said, but he found him shrewd and pleasant, with a strain of lofty idealism, and he learnt to like the type.



Capt. Narishkin said he thought if the War had never happened the Revolution would never have happened. It found the old regime completely unprepared. The old regime might not have been ideal, but it had been said every regime established by revolution was usually worse than the one it had overthrown.

He did not join up with the White Army, and after the Revolution he helped build up the new Russia's territorial army. In 1921 he left Russia because he had lost all faith in the success of the Revolution. Life had become nerve-racking and dirty

Veras aunty was Princess Ljuba Alexandrovna Obolensky, née Narishkina, and she was the mother of another young war hero, Prince Alexander Obolensky, who was a famous rugby player and a pilot with the RAF. The Prince was killed in a Hurricane Mark 1 at Martlesham Heath on 29th March 1940 aged 24.

TWGPP Meeting at NMA 5th July 2014 - Steve

I'm looking forward to seeing old friends and meeting new ones at our 'get together' at the National Arboretum on July 5th this year. The 'plan of action' for the day is to meet up in the main reception hall (Pauline has details), get refreshments and then have a chat / presentation about what we have all been up to since we started which will probably take a couple of hours . Then there will be the opportunity for everyone to visit the grounds which I understand have matured somewhat since we last visited! I, of course, will be happy to chat to anyone during the course of the day. Let's hope the sun shines.

Should anyone still like to come along I am sure Pauline can arrange it so please contact her on pauline@twgpp.org

Articles for the next newsletter, due in July 2014,
should be sent via e mail to steve@twgpp.org



THE WAR GRAVES
PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT