



WESSEX BRANCH

Western Front Association

THE DUGOUT

Registered Charity: 1142787

Branch Patron: The Lord Lieutenant of Dorset - Angus Campbell

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 21

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2021

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT:

Welcome to **THE DUGOUT ISSUE 21!** You may notice a different layout this time! I hope to revert to the usual layout for future issues, but resource and software issues result in this temporary layout! I am sure you will find something of interest within where topics range from the Rolls Royce Silver Ghost Armoured Car in Africa, Letters from the Front, Medals etc. As for the current situation – Well, on a positive note there is some light at the end of the tunnel but having studied the government document detailing the ‘roadmap’ out of the pandemic I find that the light is still very dim and the tunnel very long. Despite the documents 68 pages of great detail I have not found any opportunity to have branch meetings until 3rd July 2021 at the earliest! This is in my view a retrograde step as Wessex WFA is concerned. Be assured that I will initiate meetings again at the earliest opportunity and I am glad that we were able to at least, have meetings in September and October 2020 when many branches were not able to, although they seem such a long time ago now! Thinking of the future I believe it is necessary to keep our options open for future branch meetings and not cancel until ‘last safe moment’ so that we can re-convene at the earliest opportunity with minimum effort - when we are permitted to do so! Our Branch Secretary is very diligently managing our meeting programme for 2021 and whilst we must accept that not all will be able to go ahead it is better to be prepared for the time we can return to the ‘sunlit uplands’! The meeting programme for 2021 is on the branch website **but do keep an eye out for updates.** I know PVH is (as we are) keenly anticipating the day when

we return! Meanwhile there are many articles of interest on the branch website including past issues of *The Dugout* and new articles have been uploaded and there are many other online items to keep your interest in the Great War going for the foreseeable future. WFA members should keep a look out for the excellent series of WFA webinars. There is a great choice of topics and it is a pleasant way to while away an hour so of an evening and learn something new. Check the WFA website for details and do register online for your chosen webinar. They are all very well subscribed so do de-register if you cannot take part. All the webinars can watched on the WFA YouTube channel after the live webinar. Based on the ones Judy and I have seen they are well worth watching. Please keep checking the branch website as this is where updates regarding future branch meetings and other information will be posted. All that remains is for me to wish you all well, stay safe and ***Illegitimi non carborundum!***

BRITISH ARMY CAP BADGES

The Royal Warwickshire Regiment

The Royal Warwickshire Regiment, previously titled the 6th Regiment of Foot, was a line infantry regiment of the British Army in continuous existence for 283 years. The regiment saw service in many conflicts and wars, including the Second Boer War and both the First and Second World Wars. The badge was a white metal antelope with a coronet around its neck and chain attached, standing on a heraldic wreath over a brass scroll inscribed 'Royal Warwickshire'.



The antelope of the bi-metal badge is associated with the regiments service overseas during the War of the Spanish Succession and possibly derives from the standard of a Spanish Regiment defeated at the Battle of Saragossa in 1710.

Although many regiments with bi-metal badges were issued with all brass war economy badges from 1916, this does not appear to have happened to the Warwicks. Even the three “Birmingham Pals” battalions (14th, 15th and 16th Bns) wore bi-metal badges, albeit with an additional brass scroll indicating the Birmingham link. Some 30 battalions of the regiment were raised during the war and five soldiers were awarded the Victoria Cross.



A total of 70 battle honours were granted to the regiment including Le Cateau, Marne 1914, Aisne 1914, Ypres 1914 '15 '17, Somme 1916 '18, Arras 1917-1918, Hindenburg Line, Lys, Piave, Sari Bair, Baghdad. Estimated casualties (died): 11,610.

Acknowledgements:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Warwickshire_Regiment

British Army Cap Badges of the First World War

ROD ARNOLD

THE FIRST BLACK OFFICER TO BE KILLED?



In many publications Walter Tull is often mentioned as the first black officer commissioned (on 30th May 1917) and the first to be killed in action (on 8th March 1918). However a recent newsletter from the Fusilier Museum in Warwick (formerly the Royal Warwickshire Regimental Museum) suggests that these accolades may belong to Euan Lucie-Smith who, like Walter Tull, came from a mixed heritage background.

Euan Lucie-Smith was born in Jamaica at Crossroads, St Andrew on 14th December 1889. On the paternal side he hailed from a line of distinguished white colonial civil servants. His grandfather was a Chief Justice of Jamaica and his father, John Barkley Lucie-Smith, a retired major, was the island's Postmaster. His uncle, Alfred Lucie-Smith was also a British colonial judge.

Euan's mother, Catherine (Katie) Lucie-Smith (née Peynado-Burke), was the granddaughter of Samuel Constantine Burke a distinguished "coloured" lawyer and campaigner for constitutional and political reform in Jamaica during the Nineteenth Century. His advocacy on behalf of both black and "coloured" Jamaicans was endorsed by the renowned black activist Marcus Garvey.

Ethnicity apart, Euan thus came from what might be considered to be traditional "officer class". He attended private schools in England (Berkhamstead School and Eastbourne College) and was commissioned in the Jamaican Artillery Militia on 10th November 1911.

In 1914 the Manual of Military Law excluded soldiers "*not born or naturalized subjects of pure European descent*" from becoming officers in the Special Reserve. Nevertheless six weeks into the First World War Euan Lucie-Smith enlisted as an officer in the British Army.

The London Gazette announced that Euan Lucie-Smith had been commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment on 30th November 1914. He travelled to England in December 1914, and after training on the Isle of Wight he went to France on 17th March 1915 to join the regiment's 1st Battalion (Bernard Montgomery's unit).

Second lieutenant Euan Lucie-Smith was killed in action near Kitchener's Wood, St. Julien, on 25th April 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres. According to a witness he was shot through the head. On that day 1st Bn Royal Warwickshire Regiment suffered more than 50% casualties; a figure comparable with those associated with the First Day of the Somme in 1916.

The memorial plaque for Euan Lucie-Smith appeared for sale on-line in August 2020 after some years in private ownership. During his research, the purchaser found a photograph of Lucie-Smith and noticed that he did not appear to be white. The plaque came up for auction later in 2020. The estimated price was £600-£800 but with the plaque's historical significance now recognized, it was expected the estimate would be exceeded.



The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum (Royal Warwickshire) was anxious to acquire the plaque and began raising funds. The generosity of a wide number of people and organizations, including a grant from the Arts Council England/Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund, enabled the museum to successfully bid at the auction. The hammer price was £8,500; with auctioneer's commission and VAT the total cost was £10,540 – thirteen times the pre-sale estimate.

Coming as it did at the end of Black History Month, this was a timely reminder to the general public that the contributions to Allied victory in the First World War came from across the Commonwealth.



Euan Lucie-Smith has no known grave and is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial to the Missing (Panels 2/3).

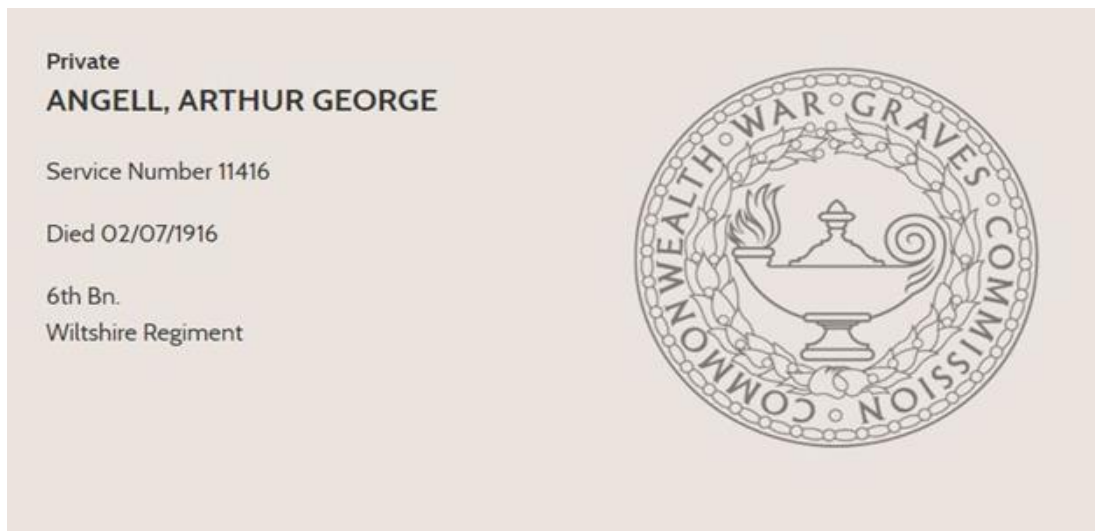
Acknowledgements

- *Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum (Royal Warwickshire)*
- *Wikipedia*
- *Dix Noonan & Webb (Auctioneers)*
- *BBC News*
- *Eastbourne Herald*

ROD ARNOLD

THE LETTERS OF ARTHUR GEORGE ANGELL

Born 1886 – Died 2 July 1916



BACKGROUND

Arthur George Angell, my great-uncle, was born in 1886 in Malmesbury, Wiltshire. His father was Jacob Angell, who appears in the 1891 census as a 'Borough Inspector'. His mother, Bessie Angell, was a 'School Mistress'. In the 1901 census and also in 1911, the last census currently available, Arthur George is listed as a 'Butcher's Assistant', unmarried and still living at home in Malmesbury.

 **Arthur George Angell**
England and Wales Census, 1911

Name	Arthur George Angell
Event Type	Census
Event Date	1911
Event Place	Westport St Mary Within, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, England
County	Wiltshire
Parish	Westport St Mary Within
Sub-District	Malmesbury Western
Registration District	Malmesbury
Gender	Male
Age	25
Marital Status	SINGLE
Occupation	BUTCHER'S ASSISTANT
Birth Year (Estimated)	1886
Birthplace	Malmesbury, Wiltshire

In the third quarter of 1913 he married Rosa Jane Adelaide Nelly Gale. He refers to her often in his letters, asking his brother, Charles, to look after her if anything happens to him. It seems that his family did not approve of Rosa.

In 1915 Arthur George Angell joined 6th Bn Wiltshire Regiment with the rank of private and, after training, was sent to the front. He wrote many letters to his family and friends. His letters are stored by Lisa Burdess-Kelly and were transcribed into manuscript form by Susan Ord, both of whom are my cousins, and great-nieces of Arthur George.

Many of the letters are to his younger brother, Charles Bernard Angell, my grandfather, then a teacher in Co. Durham. Evidently Charles Bernard also wants to join up, and Arthur George does his best to dissuade him. School teaching was a 'reserved' occupation and there was no need for Charles Bernard to join the forces.

There is also a letter from William Angell, whose family emigrated to New Zealand. He and his brothers returned to Europe and fought in the Dardanelles and elsewhere. I have told their story in my article 'The Angel Brothers in the First World War', available on the Wessex WFA website: <http://wessexwfa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Angel-Brothers-in-the-First-World-War.pdf>.

Although he was not usually able to provide details of his whereabouts, the regimental history of the Wiltshire's sometimes provides background information about the movements of Arthur George's battalion and I have added this in an appendix. I have not edited the letters at all. They provide a very vivid impression of life in the trenches and I felt it would be intrusive to add notes. Arthur George died on 2 July 1916 aged 30 near Lochnagar Crater on the second day of the Battle of the Somme. He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial Pier & Face 13A, where I have been several times to honour his memory. His body has never been found so he has no grave.

THE LETTERS

A selection of the letters appear below, and the complete set appear on the Wessex WFA website here: <http://wessexwfa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/The-Letters-of-Arthur-George-Angell.pdf>

Letter 1

On July 15th Arthur George was preparing to leave Andover after completing his training. He is writing to his brother, Charles Bernard Angell, a teacher in Co Durham.

11416 DCO 6th Wilts,

Rechaw Down,

Andover.

Thursday July 15, 1915

My Dear B,

Just a few lines to let you know we expect to go any minute now. I have been home since Sunday till last night and can tell you I feel pretty upset. I made my will and the Gov is going to take care of it, so if anything happens to me, may I ask you to do your best for my Darling wife. I should never have asked you lad if this hadn't happened but if you can afford it, will you send her a little of what I let you have when you went to Colledge? I have managed by hook or crook since I have been up to send and help her with the rent, but I know it will be impossible for me to do it now I am going abroad and 12/6 isn't much for her to do everything on. I hope old boy you won't be offended as I never meant asking you for it. I hope old boy you will be successful and get with Erin, it would be better than joining the army. I can't tell you my address because we don't know where we are going but I will drop you a line the first chance I get. Well brother I don't feel I can write any more. Don't let ma know I have made a will as she has never wanted me or Rosa like she ought since we have been married and I can't forget it. Cheer up old boy. Hope you are alright and that I shall see you again some day.

Your affec Brother,

George

Letter 2

3/11411 LGT (?),

14 Platoon DFO (?)

6 Wilts, BEF.

10 Aug 1915

My Dear Mother & All,

Just a few lines to let you know I am keeping alright. I received your letters & paper & cigarettes quite safe yesterday. We have had much better weather than ??? ??? and since we have been out here it is very ??? the farmers at home having such heavy storms. The crops out here look very well & they are busy harvesting. It is as well that you cannot picture our whereabouts at times. I can assure we have moved on again since I wrote last. Have been at our present destination since Friday I believe but I quite forget the days at times. We are at a farm & are sleeping in the farm & orchard. It is different to home, I can tell you but it's no good grumbling. We get plenty to eat. Everything is very dear. I have given 10d for some beans this morning that I could get for 3d at home. I also got some plums & I should say it was at the rate of 5" per lb. I see them advertised in the paper you sent me at 1' per lb. I have come across one or two Malmesbury lads. Dick Pike & E ??? came on Sunday & saw us. They are not many miles away from us at present but of course we don't know how long we shall be so near each other. Rosa told me Mary was down from London. It must seem very different to them to what the old times were. I suppose Charley will be off back to school end of week but no doubt I shall hear from one or the other when he goes. I heard from Erin. He told me he was getting no holiday for awhile. I am

expecting to hear from him or Jesse today. C Bennett must have had quite an exciting time in the North Lea. I know the lad and he knows me. When you write again send U Tom's address & I will drop him a few lines the first chance I get. Now I must dry up and get to work. Remember me to everybody. Hope you are well.

Your loving son & Bro, George

I wonder if I shall come across Jack. You say he is still in hospital at Havre. We are some way from there.

Letter 3

During September Arthur George was on the front line near Bray in France.

3/11416 AGA

14 Platoon D Co

Officers Mess

6th Wilts

8 Sept 1915

My Dear Bro,

As I have an hour to spare I will try to scribble you a few lines. I received your letter & cigarettes yesterday. The lot before I received when I sent you the card but I didn't get the letter till 4 days afterwards. Well old boy I am glad to say I am keeping well. I am writing this in the trenches. We were in 2 days a fortnight ago then we came out & rested & moved on here. We have been in these since a week last Monday & I can tell you I shall be very glad to get out & have a look around again. One of my mates I was billeted with at Weston got wounded. He is in hospital at Boulogne & is going on alright. We lost about 20 killed & wounded when we were in for those 2 days but this time we have been lucky up to now, have had about 6 wounded. This is a hot corner we get plenty of shells & founts (?) & rifle grenades. We don't like the grenades. They are on you before you know where you are.

We had it wet for a couple of days last week & you should have seen us. It was too bad for words, up to our ankles in mud & water. Goodness knows what it will be like in the winter. We are badly off for water. It all has to be fetched about 4 miles in cans & jars so you can guess we get plenty to wash with. We have a swill & shave when we can spare the water. I do think differently to what you said in your letter & you would too if you only knew. The sights we see are cruck. We came through a place on our way here & every house was smashed. The church blown down & the graveyard upside down but the Crucifix was standing and looked as though it hadn't been touched. It was just the same as you have read in the paper. I had a letter from Rosa. She is alright & told me what you had sent. Thanks so much old boy. I don't mind a bit about myself but it's her I worry about. If it was only a bit different down Westport she wouldn't feel it as much but I try not to worry. I hope it won't be long before I am back & can come to see you all. If it is my luck I intend to have a scan round you all. I hear from Jesse or Rosa (?) every week also from Annie. It is getting cold now. Mornings we have to turn out at 3.30. Wouldn't

hardly suit you would it. We have just been served out with a blanket & we can do with it. We have had nothing but our overcoats & sheets till now. It was a treat turning in these wet nights, wet through & up to our eyes in mud. Now I will dry up. Hoping you & the young lady are alright. Send some tobacco next time for change. Good luck old boy.

Millie has been with Rosa for a week again.

Your affect B

George

Letter 6

12 Nov 1915

My Darling Mother & ???,

It is Friday night but as I have a green envelope & am sending this to Rosa I thought I would scribble you a few lines too. Well Mum we came out of trenches on Sunday but we have had to come back in again today. I don't think we shall be in very long this time. That's if all's well. I think we go back for a rest & we deserve it. The trenches are worse I think than when we came out, but one blessing our Co. is in the Reserve trenches (that is the first lot) & not right up in the firing line. It was a sight to see the poor chaps come out today that we relieved. A good many had got stuck in the mud & they had to leave their boots in & come out barefooted. It is hard for you to realize it but the mud is up to our wrists & about as thick as pigs food. I had my usual from Barrow last night. Erin is better, Jesse said & gone back to work. I haven't heard from Charles. I keep thinking about him. I do hope he will be guided by what I have said. Jess said no Angell was at Kirton. I have never heard from ??? I see in paper W Rich is married again. I am writing this in my cookhouse but it's not like home. I am in water over my ankles but have a good fire. My health is keeping alright but don't know how much longer it will last. Now Goodnight Mum. Take care of yourselves. Kind regards to all friends.

Your loving Son & Bro

George

Letter 14

27/4 1916

Dear Charlie,

Just a few lines to let you know I am still knocking about. My luck was out with the passes. They stopped the day I was to have gone out. I suppose they will start again later on. I hope R let you know in time as it was no use your travelling all the way for nothing. We are having some lovely weather. At present it is real hot in the day. I hope you are getting the same as I guess you can do with it. I see by the papers the Germans have been quite busy all the way round. The blessed lot isn't over yet. Mother told me what you thought about doing. Don't get doing it lad. You would be in hospital in no time with what they infected you with & you would regret it. We are out of trenches and a good way back. It's more like home where we are now. A few hills etc so different to what it is up near the firing

line. There it reminds me of the Fens. I don't think R will be going to the shop for a while yet. They can't get ??? ready for the Gov labour is so ??? I shouldn't wonder if it isn't towards July before she gets there. Now I must dry up. I hope you are alright & had a good time this Easter. Kind regards to Edie. Hope she is alright.

Your loving Bro

George

Letter 16

Card

13-6-16

Dear Kid,

I have arrived home at last ??? Malmesbury. Then off I go back next Tuesday. Do come down if you can but I must leave it to you. Pete asks to be remembered to you. He is the same. Take care of yourself.

Your loving Bro,

George

Three weeks later Arthur George Angell was dead. He was killed on 2nd July 1916, the second day of the Battle of the Somme.



Lochnagar Crater Near La Boisselle, Somme, France.

Arthur George Angell was killed at the top of the hill overlooking the crater.

POSTSCRIPT:

The letters raise many more questions than can be answered here. We know almost nothing about Arthur George's brothers and sisters with the exception of our grandfather, Charles Bernard. Why did Charlotte

(known as Lottie) end up in a convent in Saltash? Who are the other people referred to in the letters? Did Arthur George and Rosa have children?

I was however able to find out that Rosa married again, in 1920. Her second husband was Charles J Bailey, a neighbour in Malmesbury, who had survived the First World War. They had two children, Francis and Margaret. Rosa died in 1967. I wish I could have met her.

My grandfather, George Bernard Angell, despite his brother's entreaties not to sign up, did so and fought with the East Yorkshire Regiment. He was captured by the Germans near Termonde (Dendermonde), Belgium on 25 April 1918 and was imprisoned at Wynschote, Belgium. He survived and returned home to Co. Durham after the war.

In the autumn of 2008, close to Armistice Day, I visited the Lochnagar Crater together with several friends and the Director of the Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres, Piet Chielens. With the details I had given him about Arthur George's regiment and battalion, Piet was able to trace his probable position during the battle, at the top of a hill. We made our way there and I laid a wreath of dark red roses, with a card reading 'In memory of Arthur George Angell from his loving family in England'. Just where I laid the wreath, we could see the remnants of more flowers, laid in the not too distant past, evidence that these soldiers who died for their country are not forgotten. The friends who were with me that day still remember our trip to Lochnagar Crater.

"WE WILL REMEMBER THEM"

SUE FORTESCUE

THE ROLLS ROYCE SILVER GHOST ARMoured CAR IN KENYA 1915 – 1916:

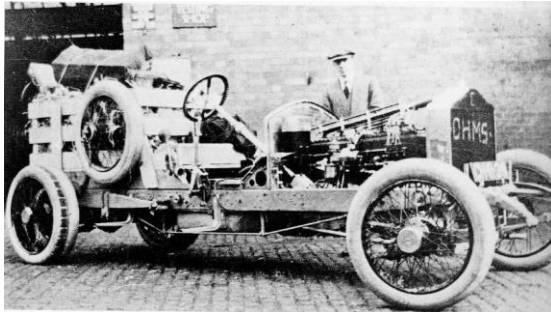
On the 25 November 2018 I was part of a group commemorating the end of the First World War in East Africa standing at the foot of Salaita Hill in Kenya. This was the site of a pitched battle between the allies under General Jan Smuts and the Germans under Colonel Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck on 12 February 1916. Our group leader, James Willson had given us the background to this one-day battle in the bush. Then it was my turn to mention briefly the part played here by two 4-inch naval guns salvaged from the British cruiser HMS Pegasus. I also mentioned that two Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost armoured cars had been used in the attack and both had run into trouble and afterwards a lady presented me with this photograph of an RR armoured car at Salaita Hill. It was taken after the battle and was probably used by Smuts to see the battle site for himself. The commemoration of the end of the war in East Africa on the 25 November was the date that von Lettow-Vorbeck surrendered to the Allies fourteen days after the Armistice due to a lack of communication in the bush.



Rolls Royce Armoured Car - Salaita Hill 1916

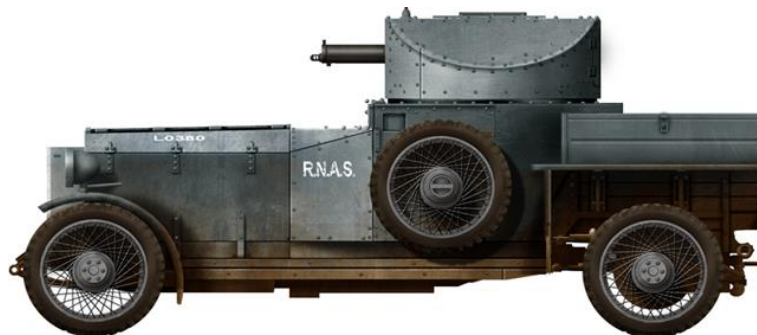
So how did two Rolls armoured cars come to be in East Africa in 1916. The story of the armoured cars starts back in England when the design was approved after successful trials with a Ghost in August 1914 by Commander Samson at Dunkirk. Such was their reliability that all Ghost chassis were requisitioned from Rolls-Royce to become ambulances, armoured cars or staff cars.

In October 1914 a small committee fabricated a plywood mock-up and by December three cars were ready having been fitted with heavier springs and a rear axle with double wheels to cope with an all up weight of 4.2 tons. There had been a compromise between the weight, overall speed and thickness of armour plate, settled at $\frac{3}{8}$ inch considered satisfactory for small arms fire at five hundred yards.



The secret behind the Ghost's reliability was a rugged steel chassis, a 7.4 litre, 6 cylinder side valve engine developing 60 horsepower and a four speed gear box. The cylinders were cast in two blocks of three with a $4\frac{1}{2}$ inch bore and a $4\frac{3}{4}$ inch stroke and a compression ratio of 3.2 - 1. The engine had tremendous torque enabling the car to accelerate from 3 to 60 mph in top gear. Petrol was fed from a

twenty-two gallon tank pressurised by an air pump. Two steel shutters closing to a 'V' protected the radiator, with the engine covered by hinged side and top plates. Attached to the interior engine bulkhead was the steering wheel and a speedometer where the driver sat on a leather cushion with a supporting back strap. Visibility was restricted to a small slit for driving forward and another on the side for battle formation. The body sides were curved to match the turret. To reduce the weight, the rear of the car was made of wood with boxes over the rear wheels that contained spare parts and tools. Access to the interior was by two doors in the rear, split horizontally like stable doors closing to a 'V'. The two gunners stood and operated the Vickers gun in the rotating turret and the heat from the engine and tropics made it necessary to run with the turret hatch open for much of the time.





The First World War campaign in the colonies of British and German East Africa now Kenya and Tanzania was considered to be a backwater action compared to the Western

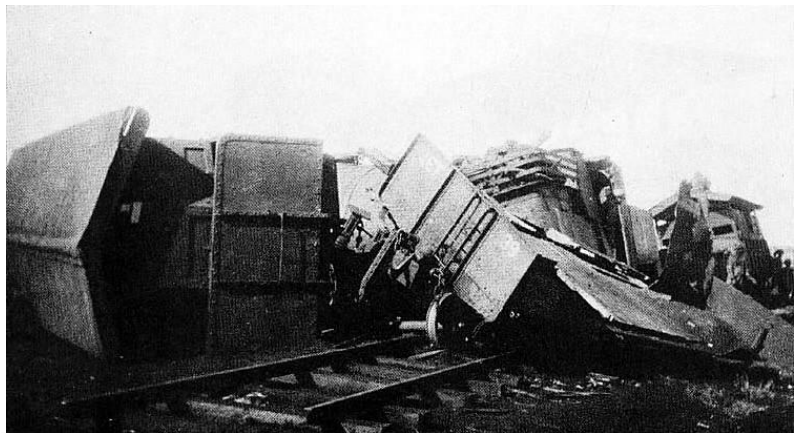
Front, Gallipoli or Mesopotamia. But the casualty figures show this to be otherwise. The East African campaign dragged on from 1914 through to the armistice with Allied troops covering thousands of miles chasing the enemy in the waterless tropical bush while suffering from the effects of disease, malnutrition, wild animals and monsoon rains.

The formation of these two colonies dated back to the 1880s when Germany and Great Britain were key players in the region's politics. Each was determined to take the upper hand in an area then

ruled by the Sultan of Zanzibar. The political wrangling was eventually settled with the Treaty of Berlin signed between the two powers in July 1890, with the two colonies sharing a common border running from Lake Victoria around the base of Mount Kilimanjaro to the Indian Ocean.

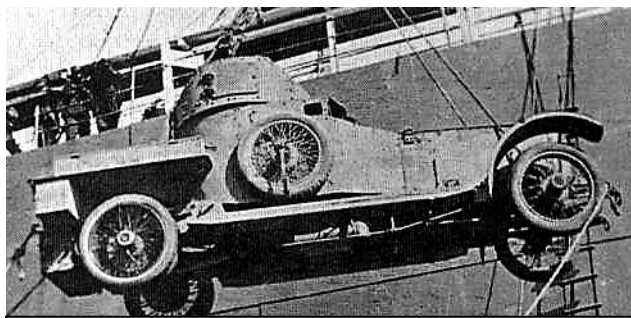
The outbreak of the Great War on 4 August 1914, saw many British settler farmers ride into Nairobi anxious to take on the 'Hun' next door, but a lack of military control forced many to form their own bands of mounted troops with names such as 'Bowkers Horse' and 'Wessels Scouts', and patrol the Mombasa-Nairobi railway. The metre gauge line completed in 1901 was the lifeline of the country and the Germans quickly realised that destroying it would cripple the colony. The Germans meanwhile under Lettow-Vorbeck had established a fighting force of Africans led by a few European officers and N.C.O.s, known as the 'Schutztruppe' and on 14 August captured the border town of Taveta, near Mount Kilimanjaro.

The Uganda Railway was less than sixty miles away, and guerrilla attacks by mounted patrols soon damaged the line. Despite counter patrols and armoured trains the enemy attacked the railway at least fifty times. To deal with this dangerous situation, large numbers of Allied and Indian troops were brought in to secure the line with many based



Derailed Armoured Train-Uganda Railway 1915

at Voi, a township one hundred miles inland from Mombasa. After the disastrous seaborne invasion of the German colony at Tanga in November 1914, it was decided a land invasion would be a better option and Lord Kitchener approved construction of a railway from Voi towards Taveta on the German border in February 1915 to link up with the German line since both gauges were identical. The railway was ideal when it was found that the dry bushland rapidly became a muddy morass during the monsoon rains. Construction commenced in February 1915 using Indian labour with all water railed in from wells. Despite stringent precautions, casualties from water and food poisoning were high. It was said that for every man who died in action at least three died of disease. Food was a major problem during the campaign and the canned stew and biscuits were interspersed with corned beef and game meat shot in some cases with the Vickers machine gun.



Off Loading Mombasa 1915

To help with patrolling the new line, a detachment of four Royal Naval Air Service Rolls-Royce armoured cars arrived at Mombasa from South Africa on 15 August 1915. These four cars had been part of the twelve car Royal Navy Armoured Car Division sent to German South West Africa in March 1915 commanded by Lieutenant Commander Whittall. The cars had seen service under

General Botha in the capture of the German colony and were later overhauled in Cape Town. After their success they were accepted by the military in East Africa, and four shipped to Mombasa with Lieutenant Nalder in command while the remainder returned to England. These cars were standard Silver Ghost chassis fitted with a steel body made from Beardmore armour plate with stronger springs and Rudge Whitworth wire wheels, armed with a water-cooled Vickers .303 machine gun, with back up trucks carrying ammunition, food and water. The four cars command-ed by Lt. Nalder became known as 10 (R.N.) Armoured Motor Battery, two of which had been named Ark Royal and Anne Gallant.

According to one report the tyres of the cars were filled with a self-sealing compound called Rubberine which made them less susceptible to deflating from punctures and bullet strikes. On arrival the cars were railed to Voi and patrolled the new line. The Germans meanwhile advanced further into British territory and established a second outpost at Mbuyuni, twenty miles from Taveta. They were now less than a day's ride from Maktau, the main British military camp. Not long after the arrival of the cars, the Germans ran into a Ghost and were driven off with losses. A report by Nalder detailing the



En Route Voi to Maktau

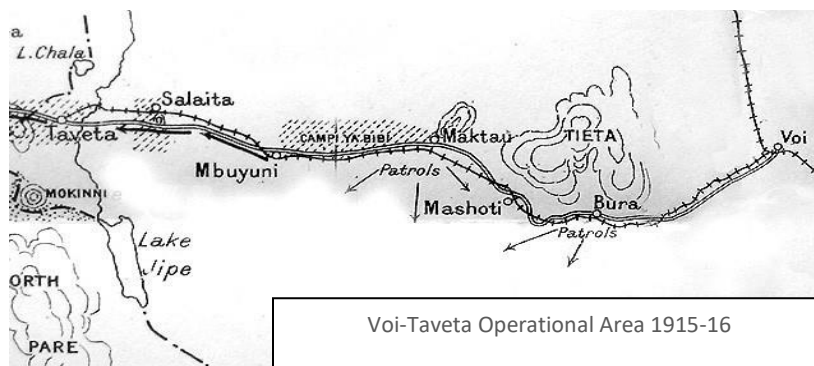
car's activities mentions how the German African askari soldiers began to fear the cars calling them *Kifaru ya risasi* (rhinoceros that spits bullets) and called them *Pepo* (evil spirits). Determined to counter them, the enemy laid mines and dug pits covered with branches in the hope they would fall in, and on the dirt road to Taveta trenches were dug in echelon.



Albion Truck meets German Obstacle

However the cars could take to the bush and make their way around some of the obstacles. One particular attempt to attack a car ended with the German askaris being forced to surrender and when loaded into the back as prisoners, thoroughly enjoyed the ride into captivity never having ridden in a vehicle before. A ride on a steel rhinoceros was going to be a great talking point.

By the 23 June 1915 when the railway reached Maktau, attacks had eased and the cars were employed scouting in front of the railhead towards Mbuyuni. Although at night the enemy occasionally crept close to the thorn fencing at Maktau and fired through it to disrupt the camp. Patrols continued using Triumph motorcycles to scout ahead of the cars, and Nalder's report for January 1916 shows the cars had seen considerable action on a daily basis. Occasional accidents including a car overturning after hitting an ant bear hole did little to affect their overall performance and they played an important part in over running the German trenches at Mbuyuni. Nalder went on to receive a commendation from General Malleson for his leadership in this action.



Voi-Taveta Operational Area 1915-16

In February the allies pre-pared for a frontal attack on Salaita Hill, a German observation post near Taveta. Lettow-Vorbeck had cleverly built a dummy trench around the middle of the hill, the remains of which can be seen today. This fooled the allied commanders into

thinking the Ger-mans were on the hill itself. When the attack began after a heavy bombardment of the slopes on 12 February 1916, by two guns from HMS Pegasus, it was discovered the enemy were dug in with Maxim machine guns around the base. Two cars had been deployed near the German trenches at the base of the hill and while manoeuvring became aware of a disorganised retreat by the South African troops through the bush. Taking the initiative the cars drove forward and succeeded in getting behind the trenches and inflicting heavy casualties. Suddenly one gun jammed as its water jacket had been holed and the other car was low on ammunition. It was sheer luck that while back-tracking that they were seen by two motor cyclist scouts who guided them to safety.

When stationary the cars machine gun fire was accurate and devastating, but the Loyal North Lancs Regiment war diary noted that the accuracy vanished when fired on the move over rough ground. The vehicles were best used in conjunction with the mounted infantry (M.I.) providing mobile fire power while the M.I. provided local security in the surrounding bush. When the ground allowed a tactical deployment, the armoured cars were potent



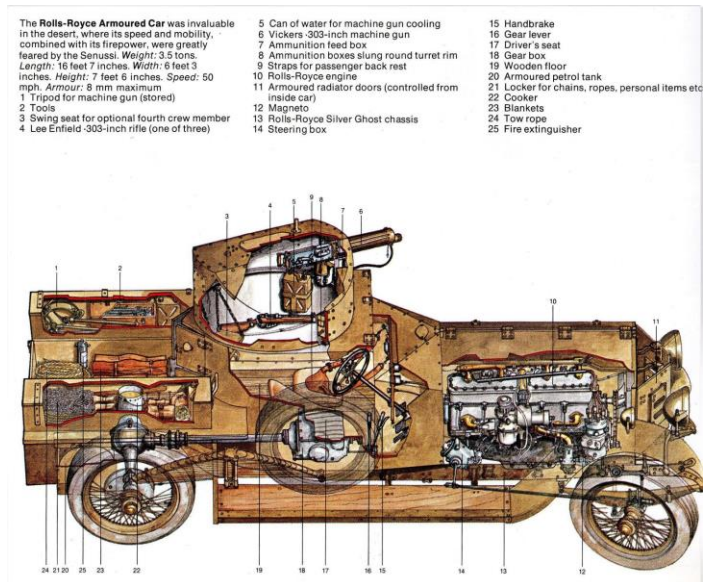
Salaita Hill 1916 – Dummy trench in foreground

weapons and useful for casualty evacuation under enemy fire. The shambles at Salaita Hill was later summed up by General Smuts who had taken over command of the East African forces in February when he said, 'The South African infantry had learned some valuable lessons in bush fighting, and also had opportunities to estimate the fighting qualities of their enemy'. Following the Salaita battle, Lettow-Vorbeck began a rear-guard action retreating across the border back into German East Africa with allied troops under the South African General Van Deventer in hot pursuit. From the reports it appears Nalder's four cars remained at Maktau until May when in dire need of an overhaul they were sent to Nairobi workshops. By August two were serviceable and were railed to Korogwe near Tanga in German East Africa to support General Hoskins advance. The other two followed later. Eight more Rolls cars arrived in March 1916 and were hurriedly sent across the border into German East Africa chasing Lettow-Vorbeck. With the advance into GEA the countryside changed and sometime later it was decided that the cars would be better employed in the Middle East and all were shipped out from Dar es Salaam in 1917.



Gen Jan Smuts – Salaita Hill
1916

Around 130 Silver Ghost chassis were modified to become armoured cars and military transport, and at the end of the First World War many were returned to civilian use, while later post war models of the 1920s ordered by the War Office were modified and went on to see service in the inter war period in India, Iraq and Ireland with a number seeing service during the Second World War. A fitting tribute to a car designed in 1905 and still running nearly forty years later. During WWII some of the Ghost steel bodies were removed and fitted to Fordson trucks when spare parts for the cars were no longer available.



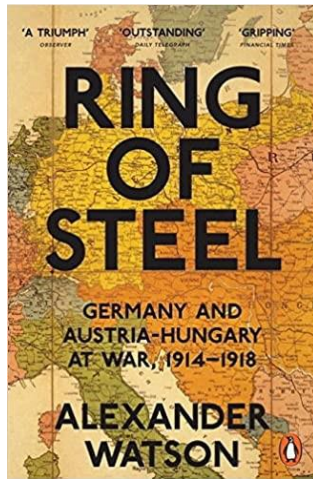
Today there no wartime examples left, but there are five original post war Ghost armoured cars in existence dating from the 1920s. Three are serviceable, one owned by the Tank Museum at Bovington, Dorset and another recently restored example owned by the Irish Army on display at the Curragh Military Museum in Eire. Another ex-Irish Army car has been rebuilt with a steel replica armoured body and named 'Tom Keogh' . While a third ex-Irish chassis is on display at the Schlumpf Museum in Mulhouse, France, and a derelict example is displayed in the Cavalry Tank Museum in Ahmednagar, India.



KEVIN PATIENCE

Cutaway – John Batchelor

BOOK REVIEW



RING OF STEEL-
GERMANY AND AUSTRIA-HUNGARY AT WAR
1914-1918 - ISBN-13: 978-0141042039
BY ALEXANDER WATSON

This is a long book, but worth the effort. The strategic situation of Germany and Austria-Hungary determined how they waged war. The leaders of the Central Powers were not fools. They knew that, surrounded on all sides by superior forces and more powerful economies, their best hope of overall victory lay in achieving quick success in the west, against France, before the Russian colossus could get moving. When those hopes disappeared on the Marne in 1914, they were stuck with a long war and, as first Italy, then Romania and finally the United States joined the Entente, found the odds increasingly stacked against them. When the British blockade began to bite, their populations began to starve.

How then did the Central Powers keep going? In part they had no choice, but they also succeeded in motivating their troops to fight and in mobilising their societies behind the war. A genuine popular war culture arose, composed both of comradeship and love and of passion-ate hatred of the enemy. This was more easily done in Germany than in the Habsburg Empire indeed it appears to this reader that leaving the Ottoman empire aside, the allies were fighting three countries, Germany, Austria, and Hungary as In war and their individual economies, they seem to do their own thing. The Austro-Hungarian Empire had several ethnic groups (Poles, Czechs and Ukrainians for example) indeed the Army had to issue orders in at last 15 languages!

The German decision to launch unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917 – which seems mad today, because it forced President Woodrow Wilson to enter a war he wanted to keep out of was based on the flawed calculation that if Britain could be denied wheat imports for five months she would be forced out of the war. But it derived also from emotional outrage at the effects of the blockade on German civilians and contempt for the hypocrisy of the Americans. When the U-boat campaign failed, the German government's authority was further undermined, while in the Habsburg empire nationalist separatism was inflamed by the rhetoric of Wilson's Fourteen Points. Though the Bolshevik Revolution brought a temporary respite, by early 1918 both monarchies were suffering a crisis of legitimacy.

Was the German army defeated in the field in 1918 or was it (as the German right wing asserted) "stabbed in the back" by agitation and unrest at home? Soldiers' morale was undoubtedly affected by the deprivations faced by their families at home, yet at the end there was arguably more support for the war back in Germany than at the front. Soldiers deserted on their way to the trenches in the summer of 1918 but only began to surrender en masse to the British once it was clear the fighting was nearly over. Essentially, Germany's defeat was psychological: by the end of the war, even Ludendorff, the great fire-eater, was relying on a shrink to keep him going.

TREVOR LINDLEY



Central Powers Boundaries

IMAGES OF WAR



French Soldiers in a Front Line Trench – 50 metres from the German Front Line - 1915



Front Line hairdresser - a Poilu gets a rough and ready haircut in the trenches 1916.

Wounded British soldiers being evacuated on a trench railway during the fighting on the Somme in 1916.



Photographs Courtesy of Paul Reed

MEDALS OF THE GREAT WAR

IMPERIAL GERMANY ~ SCHAUMBURG-LIPPE

CROSS FOR LOYAL SERVICE ~ ON COMBATANT'S RIBBON 1914-1918

The gilded bronze Greek cross has a loop for ribbon suspension. The obverse has the crowned monogram of Prince Adolf II in the centre with the upper, left, right and lower arms inscribed 'FÜR', 'TREUE', 'DIENSTE' and '1914' (For Faithful Service 1914) respectively. The cross measures 36·65mm in width x 40·84mm in height

Schaumburg-Lippe ~ Cross for Loyal Service (Obverse)



and weighs 9·2 grams. The reverse is plain. For combatants, the ribbon is blue with a central and two white stripes towards the outer edges. The cross was awarded to Officers, NCOs and Soldiers of the Hussars Regiment Nr.14 and Nr.7 and the Jäger Regiment Nr.7 and is relatively a rare medal. The ribbon for the non-combatants is white with red and blue stripes towards the edges.

The cross was instituted by Prince Adolf II of Schaumburg-Lippe on the 18th November 1914 and is based on the cross founded by his grandfather Prince Adolf I (1817-1893) for the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. It was the main military award of the small Principality of Schaumburg-Lippe during the First World War. It was the smallest state in the German Empire in 1913, in terms of its population of less than 50,000.

Schaumburg-Lippe was created in 1647 and became a Principality in 1807, a Free State in 1918 and until 1946 a small state in Germany in the present-day state of Lower Saxony with its capital at Bückeburg and Stadthagen the only other town. The House of Lippe can be traced back to Jodocus Herman, Lord of Lippe who died c.1056. His descendant Bernhard I founded the state of Lippe in 1123.

Prince Adolf II was born on the 23rd February 1883 in Stadthagen the son of Prince Georg (1846-1911) and Princess Marie Anne of Saxe-Altenburg (1864-1918). He became heir apparent on the 8th May 1893 on the death of his grandfather and the accession of his father. He succeeded his father on the 29th April 1911 and reigned until he was forced to abdicate on the 15th November 1918. The Principality became the Free State of Schaumburg-Lippe and Prince Adolf II was exiled to Brioni in Istria. The latter is the largest peninsula in the Adriatic Sea between the Gulf of Trieste and the Kvarner Gulf. Brioni is a group of small islands 2-kilometres off the coast of Istria.

Schaumburg-Lippe ~ Cross for Loyal Service (Obverse)



Prince Adolf II married in Berlin on the 10th January 1920, Ellen Biscoff-Korthaus (1894-1936). They were killed in a plane crash in Mexico on the 26th March 1936. All fourteen people on the Ford Trimotor aeroplane were killed and it was at that time the worst air disaster in Mexico. Prince Adolf II and his wife were buried in the mausoleum at Bückeburg Palace Park, the burial place of the Schaumburg-Lippe Princely House, situated 50-kilometres from Hanover.



The Mausoleum was built between 1911-1915 during Prince Adolf's reign replacing the Renaissance mausoleum in Stadthagen as the family place of burial. The architect was Paul Baumgarten (1873-1946) and was built in the neo-Romanesque style. At 43-metres in height and 27-metres wide it is the largest mausoleum of its kind in Europe and cost over one million gold marks to build. The 25-metre domed hall was designed by Gottfried Hofer (1858-1946) and has the largest mosaic work in central Europe with 500 square metres of gold mosaics. The present senior member of the House of Lippe, Prince Stephan still owns a castle and an estate at Detmold, which was the former main residence of the Principality. Prince Alexander of Schaumburg-Lippe lives in the Bückeburg Palace.

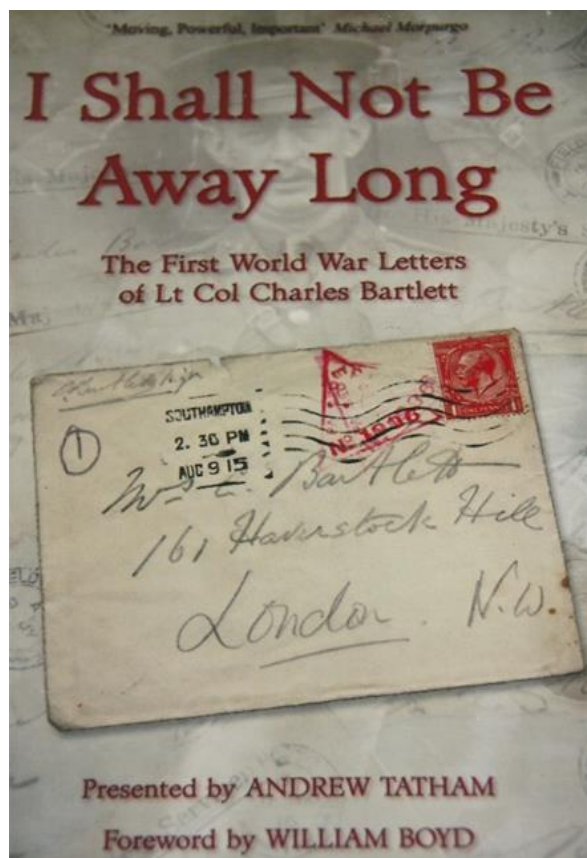
BOOK REVIEW

I SHALL NOT BE AWAY LONG

The First World War Letters of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Bartlett

Presented by Andrew Tatham

–Published by ARVO VERITAS 2020



This excellent and well produced book compiled and researched by Andrew Tatham of letters written by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Bartlett (1888-1940) give a fascinating account of the day-to-day life for an officer on the Western Front during the First World War.

Charles Bartlett was commissioned into the Royal Berkshire Regiment in 1900. Although he left the Army six years later, he re-joined on the outbreak of the First World War from a Territorial unit into the 8th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment as a 36-year-old Captain. He had married in 1908 Margaret Robinson an actress whose stage name was Peggy Bethel.

Andrew Tatham began researching his own family's participation in the First World War during the 1990s. At the Imperial War Museum, he discovered a group photograph of officers of the 8th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment. In the centre of the photograph was his great-grandfather Colonel W.C. Walton and sitting

beside him was the battalion's second-in-command Major Charles Bartlett. He then undertook the task of researching and communicating with the descendants of all the officers in the photograph. When he visited a female descendant of Charles Bartlett, she produced the proverbial 'biscuit tin' which contained over 341 letters written by Charles to Margaret during the First World War. These letters were written between August 1915 and March 1917. This precious archive revealed many aspects of Charles' life and that of the battalion in the front line. They are personal and heartfelt. Charles gives explicit descriptions – under wartime censorship – of the day-to-day life at the front.

He relates to Margaret in the letters for example, about the weather in summer and winter, rain, mud lined and clogged trenches, the monotony, loss of officers, men, friends, shortages of

manpower, replacement of casualties by inexperienced troops plunged into the front line, writing letters of condolence and the uncertainties of being under fire. As a Major he presided over numerous court-martials. Essentially, he had a positive outlook always assuring his wife he was alright and not to worry about him. At times it is apparent that tiredness and fatigue affected him. Weariness brought about by the day-to-day requirements and essential duties required to keep a battalion efficient at the battlefield with little sleep gradually took its toll upon him. The continuous strain of spending hours walking around the trenches visiting, encouraging the troops, planning and organising raids, and when given rest they were either digging new trenches, training and route marching to keep them fit for morale purposes, is evident in some of the letters. Charles often requested his wife to send food and small luxuries to supplement the officers diet, clothing for everyday wear and the wet weather, writing paper and other basic essentials to help cope with life in damp dreary dugouts and shelled out buildings.

Although a substantive Major, he was given temporary promotion to lieutenant colonel, commanded the battalion, and reduced again to Major. He also was at times seconded to work at Brigade headquarters. The battalion participated in the Battle of Loos and in the Somme battles sustaining many casualties. When the opportunity arose Charles and other officers sought happier moments and brief relaxation away from the front enjoying an evening meal at a hotel or restaurant in nearby towns.

The book is comprehensively illustrated and organised chronologically. At the beginning of the book Andrew Tatham gives a detailed explanation about his research project and the early life of Charles Bartlett before he went to France. Each letter is numbered and at the bottom of the page on which it is shown or overleaf are footnotes. These give where necessary brief explanations and biographical details of persons mentioned in the letters. Following on from the last letter in the book is a section on Charles' life after the war, then fuller biographical information of personalities, some famous others not so mentioned in the letters, Charles and Margaret's Ancestors, Late Editions, Following in Charles' Footsteps and finally some Closing Thoughts.

In March 1917 Charles was hospitalised due to ill health and exhaustion. After convalescence he returned to the United Kingdom and briefly was attached to a battalion of the Green Howards and spent the remainder of the war working in a government ministry. He left the Army in 1921 and spent time working to help the Blind Associations and well as leading a colourful life, divorced Margaret and re-married.

This splendid book and first class presentation of the material on quality paper is a very good read. The humanity and realities of life in the front line is compelling, humorous and compassionate. It is a worthy addition to the bookshelf of the First World War enthusiast and those who have a passing interest in family history and war.

ROGER COLEMAN

Photograph ~ ©Roger Coleman

GREAT WAR QUIZ No.8 (Thanks Rod!)

1. Official searches for missing BEF casualties ended in 1921. How many additional bodies were discovered in the next three years?
2. What “first” did Capt. Tom Rees (observer) and 2/Lt. Leonard Morris (pilot) of 11 Sqdn. RFC share on 17th September 1916?
3. Of whom did Walter Hines Page, the US Ambassador to the UK, write in 1917, *“I have made up my mind to live 20 years more in order to be present at the opening of his papers. The man is a genius – a clear case of genius”*?
4. What linked Southampton, Folkestone, Kinmel Park and Epsom in 1919?
5. What percentage of Britons contracted “Spanish Flu”?
6. What cost £10,000 in 1919?
7. In the week before 1st July 1916 British artillery fired 1.73 million shells on the Somme. How many shells did German artillery fire in five hours at the beginning of their attack on 21st March 1918?
8. Who is alleged to have said of US President Wilson’s ‘Fourteen Points’ – *“The good Lord had only ten”*?
9. Name the British admiral court-martialled in 1914 for *“negligence or ...other default”* in failing *“to pursue the chase of his Imperial German Majesty’s ship Goeben, being an enemy then flying.”*

And the last question?

10. What song from the Spanish-American War of 1898 was also popular in the Boer War and First World War?



ANSWERS

[1] 38,000; [2] Crew of first RFC aircraft shot down by the Red Baron; [3] Admiral William Reginald Hall-Head of Admiralty Room 40; [4] Scenes of mutilies by troops awaiting demobilization; [5] About 20% (228,000 died); [6] A knighthood in Lloyd George's "sale" of honours – a baronetcy was £30K, a peerage £50K+; [7] 1.16 million; [8] French premier Georges Clemenceau; [9] Rear Admiral Sir Ernest Troubridge; [10] Goodbye Dolly Gray.

AND FINALLY



Poster courtesy of Rod Arnold

AT LOOSE END THIS LOCKDOWN?

Time to write up that article?? All contributions gratefully received!

Newsletter Editor: SANDRA TWYFORD

Email: sandra.twyford@btinternet.com

Important Information

Meetings are held at:

Pimperne Village Hall,

Newfield Road, Pimperne,

Blandford Forum Dorset DT11 8UZ



NEXT MEETING: to be announced!

Branch Executive Committee and Trustees

Martin Willoughby Chairman /Trustee

Rod Arnold Vice-Chairman /Trustee

Judy Willoughby Secretary /Trustee

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