March 2021
Military History Group
U3A Dorking

Newsletter Number 8

Meetings via Zoom during Pandemic

Any contributions to the newsletter are very welcome and should be sent to Robert Bartlett at 938at938@gmail.com

Contents

From Group Leader Barrie Friend

Fellow enthusiasts welcome to our latest Newsletter.

Each Newsletter brings us closer to our being able to meet face to face and we shouldn't forget a most important aspect of our group, like all U3A groups, is meeting like-minded friends sharing a cup of coffee whilst exchanging thoughts and knowledge openly in a room together.

We are getting there.

One heartening aspect of lockdown and Zoom is the size of the audience attracted to our talks. We have regularly greeted over fifty attendees, more than twice the signed-up members of the group, and many new faces are becoming old friends. Thank you. These figures augur well for our future and we hope that our 'old friends' will remain just that and join our face-to-face meetings. You will at least be able to see that George, Jim, Mike and I have legs and we are not just talking heads!

What are our future meeting plans?

Until the all clear is given we will continue with our Zoom meetings. Then we will move to a 'blended' formula where we will have face to face meetings with a live speaker but recognising that some members and friends may still be a little wary of meeting inside a room with others the talk will still be available live on Zoom.

These plans will be updated and confirmed and we'll keep you fully informed.

In March Jim Barnes' talk *Women at War- that Superior Race* was well attended by over fifty members and friends and many emails from many of you said how stimulating it was, and much enjoyed.

If you would like to see it (again) then visit our YouTube site with this link:

https://youtu.be/5_Zq5dsDkqQ

Jim has also written up this talk for this edition of the Newsletter and Bob has published it below.

Here is the link for MH Meeting on 6th April:

Join Zoom Meeting
https://zoom.us/j/91541451006?pwd=U2E2L0pJaGtvSXVxVmM0YjlvWk4rUT09

Meeting ID: 915 4145 1006
Passcode: 762657

April 6 Barrie Friend "The defence of Britain in wartime." We were all weaned on the tales of the Norman invasion of 1066, but since then we have kept our shores successfully sealed from our enemies' threats. Yes, OK - 1667 was a hiccup for us and well done to the Dutch. When can we have our ships returned?

But how did we defend our country from enemy invasion in more recent times and how did we plan to deal with the invaders if they arrived on British soil by boat or parachute? Barrie Friend will identify the nature of the threats, the strategy behind the defence and the legacy around us today.

May 4th **The Battle of Waterloo: the French view**. Guest speaker Mike Fox, U3A Military History National Subject Advisor. In Britain we remain proud of that day of victory in June 1815 and can tell the story of how Wellington's troops (by no means all British) defeated Napoleon's Army and his own personal Imperial Guard - thank you Napoleon for the bearskins our Guards wear today. What we rarely hear, however, is the view of the battle as directed and seen by Napoleon. Mike will offer a fascinating, insightful story of this counter view of the battle.

June 8
July 6
August 3
September 7

The Women's Auxiliary Service (Burma)
'The Wasbies'
1942-1946

A talk given by author Elizabeth Lockhart-Mure
to
Dorking and District U3A Monthly Meeting

10th February 2012

During and following World War Two the Fourteenth Army was too often referred to as the "Forgotten Army" with its operations in the Burma Campaign (1943-1945) largely overlooked by the contemporary press.

Formed in 1943, for most of the Army's existence it was commanded by Lieutenant-General William Slim who had under his command some one million service personnel. Even though it was the largest Commonwealth army ever assembled he is reputed to have told his troops "When you go home don't worry about what to tell your loved ones and friends about service in Asia. No one will know where you were, or where it is if you do. You are and will remain 'The Forgotten Army.'

To keep the memory alive, following severe fighting in the Imphal and Kohima area, where one battle was fought across a tennis court, John Maxwell Edmunds composed The Kohima Epitaph which is inscribed on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery there. It demands that we don't forget the members of General Slim's Fourteenth Army who remain behind:

"When you go home, tell them of us, and say that for your tomorrow,
we gave our today"

These words are familiar to those of us who attend remembrance ceremonies today, never ceasing to make a strong emotional impact.

If an Army is forgotten, then what chance is there that an individual unit within that Army will be remembered?

The Wasbies was one such a unit within the Fourteenth Army destined to be lost to memory until Elizabeth Lockhart-Mure discovered the war time diary, notes, photographic album, campaign medals, including The Burma Star, a Mentioned in Despatches bronze oak leaf, and MBE and citation of her late maternal aunt, Captain Maria Pilbrow[1]. Elizabeth drew much information from these highly significant primary sources for a book and for the talks she gives.

The Wasbies - The Womens' Auxiliary Service (Burma) or WAS(B) - was formed in 1942 and very little published objective information about their activities was available.

Elizabeth was committed to tell the story of the Wasbies , her aunt, who served from 1944, and her Wasbie colleagues. Years of research in archives and the interviewing of some remaining Wasbies resulted in her publishing *Front Line and Fortitude, Memoirs of a Wasbie with 'The Forgotten Army'* which tells their story. Elizabeth talks to clubs, societies and other groups about her research to ensure that Maria and the Wasbies will not be forgotten.

[1] The London Gazette announcements give her name as Jeanne Elspeth Pillbrow. Maria was a name used within the family

Her talk to Dorking U3A on February 10th, 2012, demonstrated her command of the subject and was told in a well-paced and most engaging manner doing full justice to her aunt and her fellow Wasbies, some 250 in number, who as members of the British Army wore a khaki, later jungle green, uniform at all times.

Raising and maintaining the serving men's' morale was the core function of the Wasbies who formed static and mobile canteens, prepared meals, established entertainment events, dances and film shows whilst being exposed to monsoons, floods, tropical temperatures, humidity, wretched jungle conditions and at times operating within gunshot sound of the enemy. Tropical diseases, insects and flies were a constant source of frustration. Improvisation underpinned much of their efforts and their ingenuity resulted in the concoction of field ovens, the ability to cross swollen rivers and the repair of their transport vehicles.

Aged from their teens to middle age and largely from protected backgrounds, these wives and daughters of expats, military staff and missionaries, most with a 'get up and go' attitude, staffed the WAS(B) which was initially tasked to work on cypher duties in Burma but following the Japanese invasion they evacuated to India and disbanded. Undaunted they reformed and undertook canteen service within the British Army. Their morale boosting provision of 'char and wads' and the generation of a feeling of 'home' accompanied by a smile and time to chat were eagerly accepted and welcomed by the Fourteenth Army to whom they were assigned.

Their canteen shops and tea counters were increased to cover a large geographical area where they operated from bombed out houses and mess tents whilst serving bully beef, Heinz's K Rations and the universally disliked Soya Sausages when no other rations were available. Mobile canteens were also established enabling access close to the front line including the battle area near Kohima where they established a major rest camp named 'The Elephant Arms' to resemble a club with fireplace and easy chairs. On one occasion some eight hundred gallons of tea were dispensed to weary troops returning from battle.

It was not unusual for the Wasbies to work nineteen-hour days in 110F temperature with very high humidity or knee deep in mud in the monsoon rain. 'Work' also included arranging dances to suit English and American tastes, entertainment, supplying board games, books and gramophone records.

All their activities had to be undertaken in very trying conditions with little privacy and no mod cons although many did insist upon having their own portable loo seat with them for some semblance of comfort. Doing their own laundry, sleeping on the ground and washing in tin buckets were frequently necessary whilst at the same time fighting off snakes, spiders and mosquitoes. They made it clear that they did not want to be treated differently to the men.

Maria joined the Wasbies in 1944, aged just 24, and as defence led to attack in Burma, she and two Wasbie teams were assigned to the 36th Division landing there on 20th December 1944 from a supply Dakota. She was responsible for Number 16 Canteen in charge of four to five team members. They were immediately tasked to provide a Christmas dinner for the hundreds

of men who were about to head for the front line. An escaped turkey and pig had to be rounded up before becoming another meal on Christmas Day. Off duty time enabled the ladies to enjoy the large quantities of alcohol supplied to the Division demonstrating that not all the Wasbies' time was work but it was only on Christmas day that they got a little bit the worse for wear!

Being close to the front line the mobile canteens experienced sniper fire and at one point the ladies were issued with service revolvers for their own protection. The two canteens moved forward as the fighting men advanced which meant that the Wasbies' sterling efforts at maintaining morale could continue. This contrasted with the mood changing effect on them personally when experiencing graves of men whom they had been chatting to just a few days beforehand. Their strength of character showed through as they quickly pulled themselves together and continued with the task they were there for.

The actions of Maria, who was to be promoted captain, were officially recognised during her time with the 36th Division in her being presented with a Mention in Despatches gallantry award and also with an MBE.

War didn't end the Wasbies' role. Following Victory over Japan Day they became engaged in both the repatriation of the women in the Dutch East Indies who had been internees in camps, and of those men who survived the dreadful Japanese Prisoner of War camps. Later Maria was to meet a man who had survived such a camp and he became her husband but sadly due to the inhuman treatment by his captors was to die too soon.

The Wasbies provided a significant and continuing morale boost to the men of the Fourteenth Army in the Burma campaign whether they were in base camps or in the fighting zones. The researches of Elizabeth Lockhart- Mure so passionately described in her talk will ensure the Wasbies of the Fourteenth Army will never be a forgotten unit of World War Two.

Elizabeth's book *Front Line and Fortitude, Memoirs of a Wasbie with 'The Forgotten Army'* (ISBN-13 : 978-1789016437) is available directly from her (lockhartmure@btinternet.com). It is an invaluable reference and gives full recognition of the value of the Wasbies in Burma.

Women at War; that Superior Race
Those wonderful women in their flying machines

Jim Barnes

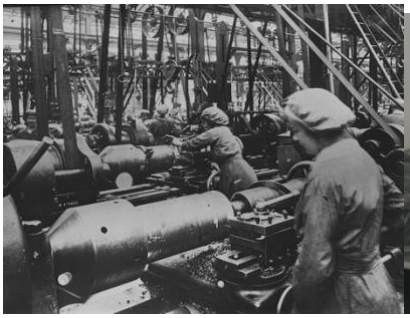
This presentation is about some remarkable women who gave great service with their talents in both world wars.

If we go back to Victorian times women may have been in domestic service, or in a factory, but some had to resort to prostitution.

However, in 1870 a Liberal MP called William Forster got his bill through parliament for all children between 5 and 8 years to be educated. Gladstone was pitching for parliament and proposed the married women's property act which, after 1882, meant that if a wife's father left his property to his daughter it no longer became the property of her husband. Then we had the railways and women could travel. So, women became more equal.

But it was World War One, when men had been called up, that saw women doing all manner of work including the Women's National Land Service Corps.

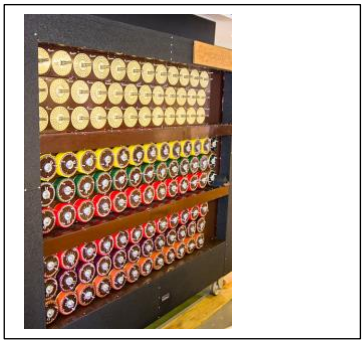
In 1915 there was a shell crisis for which General Haigh was blamed. It was said many shells did not fire and they were the wrong type supplied by the French. David Lloyd George, the war minister, then put the women to work in shell factories and output went up twentyfold. Suddenly women were working with big heavy machines.

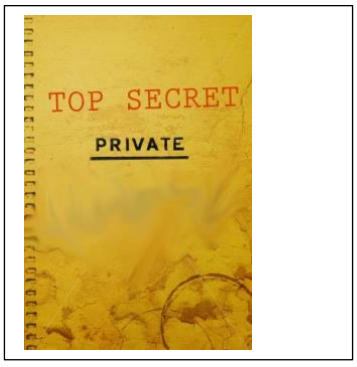


Shell Factory WW2 Women's Land Army

Similarly, in World War Two, there had to be a land army to feed the country. If you were a woman of 18 years of age, and not married, you would be conscripted into various services or the land Army. Perhaps most secret was the number of Wrens working at Bletchley Park – generally ex-public-school girls.

Here in Dorking, we have ex Wren Ruth Hughes who worked at Bletchley Park on Turin's bombe.





Dorking's Ruth Hughes Turin's Bombe

Such was the secrecy that many did not admit to working at Bletchley until many years after the war. But what about women flyers? Hélène Dutrieu was the first woman to gain a pilot's licence and made her name in the early 1900's as a stunt pilot. In 1930 Amy Johnson had gained fame and the admiration of the world with her epic flight from Croydon airport to Darwin Australia.

In 1938 there was concern Britain would not have enough pilots, so the Civil Air Guard was formed to train some 4000 pilots of which 400 were women. But it was Gerard d'Erlanger – a Director at British Airways - who spoke to Francis Shelmerdine, the Director of the Civil Aviation Authority, to point out that front line pilots could not be expected to deliver aircraft from factories. There were many pilots too old for the front line, or with missing fingers or even arms, who could deliver aircraft. d'Erlanger was told to form the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) on the lines of British Airways with the same ranks.

Gerrard d'Erlanger

ATA Pilots Wings

Pauline Gower

There were over 1000 male pilots but it was Pauline Gower who had flown 33,000 passengers on joy rides who approached Francis Shelmerdine to push for women pilots in the ATA. She wanted to start with 10 pilots but the RAF said only 8 would be permitted. These included Joan Hughes who had learnt to fly at 15 and who became an instructor on every military aircraft. There were to be 164 female pilots in the ATA. In all the ATA delivered 309,000 aircraft of 147 different types. The women of the ATA were respected and adored by their male counterparts and the public.

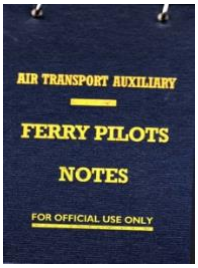
The First Eight

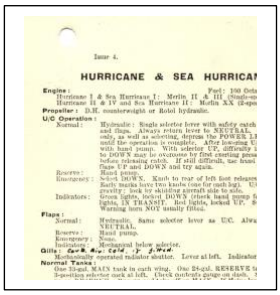
Mary Wilkins-Ellis

A famous ATA girl was Mary Wilkins-Ellis who died last year aged 100. She delivered a Wellington bomber to an RAF base and along came the Duty Officer. "Oh, how kind" she said "you have brought a car to pick me up" "No, it's for the pilot" replied the officer. "But I am the pilot" replied Mary!

The ATA women representing 16% of the ATA, had the lowest accident rate and in many cases were superior pilots to men. They started at Hatfield delivering Tiger Moths but moved on to the Proctor, Magister and Lysander. But it was Pauline Gower who pressed for women to fly fighters which was eventually granted. Winifred Crossley, Hon. Margaret Fairweather, Joan Hughes and Rosemary Rees were the first to fly the Hurricane.

All ATA pilots carried Ferry Pilots Notes which had details of all 147 types as often a pilot would have no idea what he was going to fly. The notes were the envy of the RAF.




HURRICANE & SEA HURRICA

Surrey girl Diana Barnato Walker was known as “the IT girl.” She was well connected and her father was Wolfgang Barnato the leader of the Bentley racing team and chairman of the Bentley company. Her grandfather had set up DeBeers diamond mine. She was a DEB who was presented to Edward V111 and often socialised in London returning the next day to fly.

Lettice Curtis

During the war she lost a fiancée, Squadron Leader Gilbert, and also her husband Wing Commander Derek Walker. One of her famed exploits was to find out what was wrong with a Grumman Avenger which male pilots had aborted. She flew carefully and discovered the supercharger switch was wired the wrong way round. How typical many said that it took a woman to find out what was the problem. She flew 80 different types and after the war extended this to 120 types. Diana always took her makeup into the cockpit to appear as a pretty woman

on landing. One day she decided to roll a spitfire. Out fell her Compaq and put face powder all over the instruments and her. The duty officer meeting her said "I was told I was going to meet a pretty girl not a clown"

A second Surrey girl was Lettice Curtis who was the first woman to fly a four-engine bomber – the Halifax. She went on to deliver Lancaster bombers. After the war she worked for Fairy Aviation and was the personal pilot to the Chairman. When she was 77 years old, she took her helicopter licence but stopped flying at 80 years of age!

Perhaps the most famous ATA female was Joan Hughes who qualified as an instructor on every military aircraft. She had begun flying aged fifteen and continued flying after the war. She was even an instructor to the RAF on Meteor bombers.

Joan Hughes

Lettice Curtis describes one flight where they both got airborne in Hurricanes intending to refuel at Finningley. Joan could not get the undercarriage up so gave the lever a push with her foot. Unfortunately, the lever could not be moved so she could not use flaps or get the undercarriage down. She thought 'men will say women should not fly fighters. Joan did a flapless belly flop with the aircraft but was exonerated by the Accident Committee.

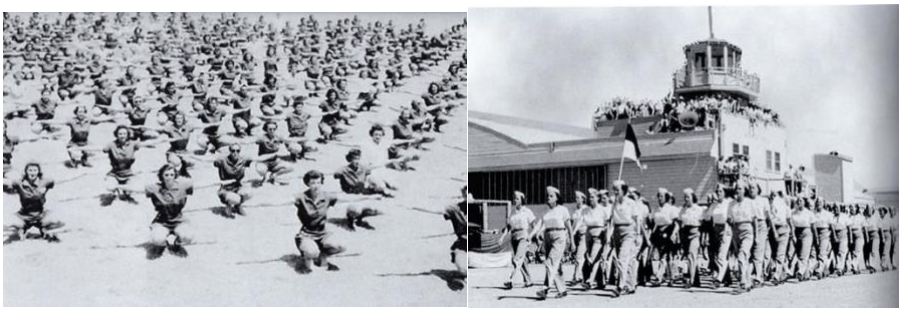
Enter the Americans! In 1942 Jackie Cochran brought 25 female pilots over from the USA to join the ATA. Jackie kept re-writing her birth certificate, could hardly read or write but was married to the fifth wealthiest man in the USA.

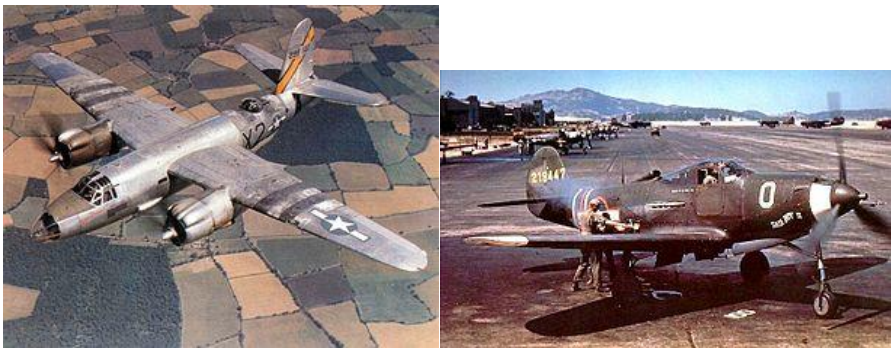
Jackie got the politics wrong having welcomed the girls from the USA at the Savoy Hotel for lunch! Imagine the reaction of the other women. Jackie was influential as she was a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt and invited her to see the ATA at White Waltham.

In America General Hap Arnold who commanded the Air Corps said women were not needed. However Major General Robert Olds, whose wife was a pilot, persuaded Hap Arnold that women were needed. 1,000 women were to serve in the Womens Air Force Service Pilots 'WASPS'. But such was the animosity from men that even sabotage took place when sugar was found in a petrol tank from a crashed Dauntless where Betty Taylor Wood had lost her life in 1943. So, we had the women of the ATA who were adored and respected by male pilots and the public, whilst WASPs were despised. Moreover, if a WASP was killed the family had to get her body back. Thirty-eight WASPS lost their lives.

The WASPS were made to do PT, live in barrack blocks and learn military law along with male pilots - though they were not military. They were made to march and salute.

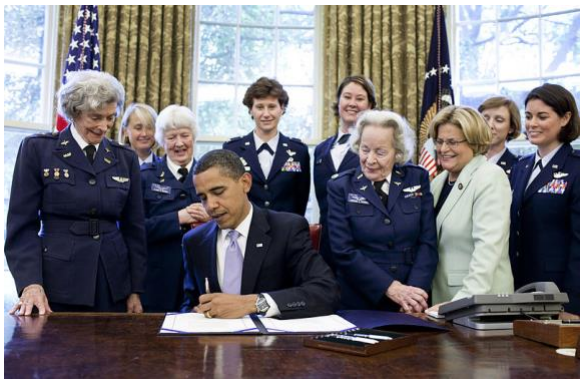
The B26 Marauder was said by male pilots to have an undercarriage with wheels not spaced enough. It created fear amongst them. So, it was the WASPS who delivered the aircraft to show the men. Similarly, the P39 Airacobra was a dangerous aircraft which had killed a number of male pilots until one of the WASPS flew it and said the take-off and landing speeds were too low.





B26 Marauder P39 Airacobra

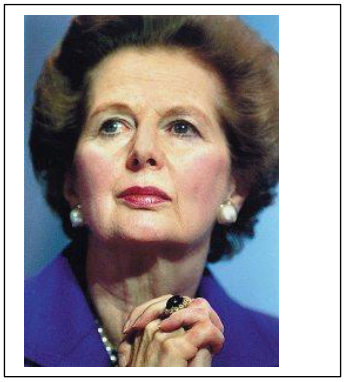
Only one Air Medal was awarded to Barbara Jane Erikson for flying 8,000 miles in ten days. It was not until 1979 that WASPs were granted veteran status and not until 2010 that they were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by Barrack Obama.



So, this has been a story of two women who led the UK and American aircraft deliveries. Pauline Gower whose legacy is the ATA as she died in childbirth just after the war. And Jackie Cochran who was the first woman to fly supersonic, then twice the speed of sound (Mach 2) and to take off from a Navy carrier.

Pauline Gower Jackie Cochran

There are many examples of superior women who have made their mark on society, and who were better than their male counterparts.



But my favourite superior women are the ATA pilots who flew bombers and fighters.

Major RC Knight DSO MC Bar
Dismissed as Town Clerk, Guildford

Reginald Knight had a distinguished record from the First World War winning three medals for bravery. On leaving the army after a number of roles he became the town clerk at Guildford a role he was undertaking when arrested and imprisoned for fraud. There is no argument that he showed a lack of judgement though details of the offence are not explicit, from the charge he forged and passed a number of cheques, to the value of £2,400.

Knight's Military Record

Royal Fusiliers joined as a private soldier
Motor Machine Gun Service
Machine Gun Corps (Motors)
Machine Gun Corps (Heavy Section) ("A" Company)
Machine Gun Corps (Heavy Branch) ("B" Battalion)

Tank Corps (1st, 2nd & 16th Battalion)

MC for Messines 7th June 1917
MC Bar for Cambrai 20th November 1917
DSO for Amiens 8th August 1918
Mentioned in Dispatches when captain in Tank Corps

Military Cross - London Gazette 16th August 1917 (Temp Lieutenant / A/Captain, "B" Battalion. Battle of Messines, 7th June 1917) "This officer has shown great gallantry and devotion to duty as battalion reconnaissance officer. He did, on numerous occasions, make reconnaissance in front of our lines in order to obtain information useful to tank officers before taking their tanks into action. During the action on June 7, 1917, he reconnoitred routes through the enemy system after its capture and led tanks in Army Reserve over them. He also proceeded on foot to Oosttaverne Line and collected valuable information with a view to future operations. This officer has shown utter disregard for his own safety in collecting information, and I consider the success which the tanks had is greatly due to his fine work and gallantry."

Military Cross 1st Bar - London Gazette 3rd June 1918 (Captain, 2nd Battalion. Attack on Containg, Battle of Cambrai, 20th November 1917) War history of "B" Battalion lists the award under "B" Battalion for Cambrai 20/11/1917, where he was wounded, but no citation/recommendation has yet been traced.

Distinguished Service Order - London Gazette 1st January 1919 (Temp Lieutenant / acting Captain, 5th Tank Brigade - Battle of Amiens, 8th August 1918)

He was transferred to the General Staff on 3rd March 1918 (Confirmed LG 10/12/1918) and was appointed Brigade Major (Confirmed LG 09/04/1918 (Supp 10/04/18)).

Reginald Coldham Knight. Born 13th November 1891. Died in Hay June 1971. The Motor Machine Gun Corps 1916. Commissioned into The Motor Machine Gun Corps 25/04/1916

Article in The Essex Chronicle on 1st October 1920 confirms his appointment in 1920 as Chelmsford Town Clerk.

The Second World War 1939 to 1945

Pioneer Corps 1939-45 He volunteered again on the outbreak of the Second World War but due to the criminal conviction was not granted an emergency commission. He served as 13012019 in the Pioneer Corps being appointed a Warrant Officer Class II on 22 November1941.

Educated at Horsham Grammar School, finished final law exam before joining up - post war assistant town clerk and solicitor.

The offence came about following a lifesaving event towards the end of the war. Whilst in the trenches his life was saved by a man called Chapman who came forward and rescued him, and who after the war sought money from Knight to avoid going to prison. To get the money to help this man who saved his life, he committed fraud.

1924 September 11: Charge against former town clerk: At Guildford police court yesterday Reginald Knight, late the Town Clerk appeared to answer two summonses charging him with fraudulent conversion. The first charge related to the sum of £249 entrusted to the defendant on behalf of the Mayor, aldermen and burgesses of Guildford and the second one of £22 2s 9d in cash received on account of the Guildford Fire Brigade. Knight was remanded for one week on bail.[2]

1924 September 11: Knight was committed for trial at the Surrey Assizes on bail.[3]

1924 September 30: 1924 December 4: Town Clerk Sentenced: Surrey Assizes yesterday three years penal servitude was passed on Reginald Knight 34, former Town Clerk of Guildford who was charged at the instance of the Guildford Corporation with forging, uttering and converting a number of cheques to the value of £2,400. The defendant pleaded guilty to nine counts and not guilty to the remaining six. The accused had a magnificent war record and his career since the war had been such that at the early age of 30, he was appointed town clerk of another place before coming to Guildford.

Sir Henry Curtis Bennett KC said the prisoner went to France in 1915 as a private and was mentioned in despatches at Loos. Within a month he was made second lieutenant. He joined the tanks and was with them on the Battle of the Somme, the first action of the tanks. He fought

[2] The Times Thursday 11 September 1924
[3] The Times 30 September 1924

in all the big battles and was awarded the MC and bar, and the DSO the latter for capturing single-handed 20 Germans and five machine guns. Since the war he got into debt and fell into the hands of moneylenders. He will lose his decorations, The Judge asked if that was certain." I think it right to express the view that he should not be deprived of the decorations he properly earned and you can communicate that view to the authorities." [4]

Clausewitz And His Theory of War
With Reference to the 1940 Campaign in France

By HHI Easterling – a talk given to the MHS of the Oxford and Cambridge Club

November 2016

Despite its rambling and repetitive and at times contradictory character, On War makes Clausewitiz the greatest theoretician of war ever. That there have been few major exponents on the conduct of war does not detract from his achievement. Clausewitz's influence has been immense, and not only in Germany. Wars have been analysed according to Clausewitzian principles, including the Second World War.

The Influences on Clausewitz's Thinking

Born in 1780, Karl von Clausewitz has been described as something of an introvert, solitary, bookish, shy, intellectually arrogant and temperamentally an outsider. His thinking was shaped by three main influences: the transformation in the nature of war he witnessed during his lifetime; his participation in the reform of the Prussian army after the Jena disaster; and his own intellectual and social outlook.

The development of Clausewitz's thought on war will be seen in the transformation that occurred in politics and in the character of armies and warfare following the French Revolution. The military background of his earlier years was the form of the army moulded by Frederick the Great, which Prussian military opinion saw no need to change till Jena. The Pussian army had been perfected to dominate the way 18th century warfare was conducted. Infantry won battles by disciplined fire power, helped by artillery. The deployment of cavalry was almost ancillary. The deployment of infantry in long, thin lines turned battles into murderous set pieces. Concentration in battle was necessary because of the restricted nature of communications. The wars Clausewitz experienced involved armies often three times larger than those of his youth, committed to a strategy of overthrow, and in which nationalism was the key to mobilisation.

Warfare after 1790 was transformed, first by the French Revolutionary armies that overran the Low Countries and threatened the Rhine between 1792 and 1795, and then by Napoleon's campaigns in Italy from 1796 to 1799, waged with enormous energy and far exceeding the purposes and means of wars in earlier times. Gerhard von Scharnhorst was first to see how much French success owed to the transformation of the French polity. The levee en masse

[4] The Times 4 December 1924

instituted by the Revolutionary Convention in 1793 was the ultimate expression of the nation in arms.

The loyalties of the French soldier were to shift more to the army itself, above all, to Napoleon himself. But apart from such moral factors, it is obvious that French military strength lay in the army's tactics, organisation and logistics, which to a large extent originated before the revolution: the creation of self-reliant divisions, the skilful use of light infantry and the flexible use of artillery. By these means the French army was able to move rapidly and converge on an enemy army and destroy it.
Clausewitz entered the Prussian military establishment as Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and other officers endeavoured to carve out a new military establishment out of the bulk of the Prussian army that had been ravaged at Jena and when there was massive resentment that Prussia's neutrality following the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807 seemed to be a covet form of French domination. Military reform was part of a general movement to reform the Prussian state and society. For a few years reforms made great strides, although conservatism never yielded wholly.

The military reforms were of a structural and technical nature and would have appealed to Clausewitz: the creation of a ministry, within which the rudiments of a general staff could develop; promotion on merit; and crucial improvements in training, tactics and weaponry. Prussia finally abolished serfdom in 1813. Frustration at what seemed gradualism in introducing reforms led Clausewitz to take service with Russia in 1812. Present at Borodino, he observed the retreat from Moscow. Such experience and the experience he had following re-admittance to the Prussian General Staff must have been invaluable. He served as an adviser to Gerhard Leberecht von Blucher in the 1813 Leipzig and Waterloo campaigns.

Intellectually, Clausewitz was very much a child of his age and of Prussia. He enjoyed reading philosophy. He believed that everything is susceptible to reason. As a Prussian, he had a strong belief in the state and nation as a living entity and sovereign body. The army was the nation. Most important for him was his belief in the regiment as a unit of military force and a device for securing the control of the army, promoting the ideals of total obedience, single-minded courage, self-sacrifice and honour.

The chasm between the army and the liberals in Prussia which opened up after 1815 turned Clausewitz into a conservative. Parties were an element of disunity. Clausewitz did not cite religious faith as a motivation for making war or for pursuing any policy during the course of a war.

Clausewitz was promoted to major-general in 1818 and was appointed director of the Military Academy which he served until 1830. He died in 1831.

Clausewitz's Principles for Waging War

As Clausewitz became increasingly determined to write an all-embracing study of war, he recognised a number of matters that would determine his theory of war. It was impossible to study war as a science and produce immutable rules as to how to wage war. He rejected the theory that war was just a matter of generalship. One could only conduct a war by studying reality from the experience of past wars. Only then could a comprehensive theory of wars be developed, remembering that the bulk of histories were so unreliable as to be useless. He

wanted his writings to be used by the Prussian military, as his contribution to the well-being of Prussia.

Clausewitz's work is impressive in its comprehensiveness and depth of analysis in general, in addition to his analysis of individual factors, and how one is linked to the rest. Yet his writing is rambling and repetitive. Therefore to get a really systematic presentation of Clausewitz's thought one must study his theories as they are set out by Clausewitzian scholars, as the author of this paper has done, notably Sir Michael Howard, Emeritus Professor of History at Oxford and Hew Strachan, Chichele Professor of War at Oxford.

Clausewitz's theory of the waging of war, I suggest, embraces eleven basic principles, each of which flows from the previous one:

1. War is the continuation of foreign policy by other means. Political considerations might present a range of objectives, but fighting is the one way of attaining them. If the achievement of the end of a war cannot be achieved by military means at the disposal of the aggressor, the political objective will have to be modified. The original policy would be at fault. The most splendid victory is nothing, unless it is means of attaining a political end.

Clausewitz argued that the strategist, the director of the war, should best be an individual, a Napoleon or Frederick, combining in their own person political and military leadership and being able to ignore public opinion. Waging war can be confusing and cumbersome. Political leadership must have the last say. It must have a good grasp of military policy and military affairs. It must be in constant consultation with the military command. The commander-in-chief should be familiar with the higher affairs of state.

2. Before embarking on war, governments and commanders should recognise that warfare is bedevilled by the sheer scale of uncertainties, which intervene between the intentions and achievements of even the best-informed general: what Clausewitz called friction. The vast range of possibilities and the array of factors that had to be taken into account by politicians and the military alike could lead to serious miscalculations which made it very dangerous to embark on war. In the Second World War ultra was to reduce friction, but not abolish it.

3. While the normal aim of warfare is to conquer and destroy the adversary's armed- forces, victory does not always imply annihilation. It may be enough to destroy the adversary's ability to resist, get possession of the material elements of the adversary's forces, or greatly weaken him sufficiently so that he will do the victor's will.

4. The importance of recognising ends and means and the interaction between quantifiable physical factors and unquantifiable moral factors.

5. The fundamental nature of the moral factor. For all his penetrating analysis of the implementation of strategy and tactics, Clausewitz came to recognise that ultimately moral forces, those of the commander, those of the soldier and those of the people, are the major determinants of war. Waging war has its political objective, its operational considerations and popular passions, the social forces they express. He was the first major thinker to draw attention to the need for the military to have popular support, from which came the commitment, enthusiasm, and readiness for self-denial on which the logistical power of the army depended. Clausewitz's experience of modern battle was that the regular armies were so much alike in weapons, training and equipment that there is little difference in such matters between the best

and the worst of them. What settled the outcome was either superior morale or superior numbers.

6. Understanding the relationship between strategy and tactics. Clausewitz has two basic considerations for the strategist before starting a war: to be very strong in general and at the decisive point of a campaign. Superior forces offer the best chance of victory even if the skill of the commander, the training of his soldiers and the morale of his forces are not so great as those of his adversary. It is wisest for those thinking of engaging in war to recognise that the qualities of the two adversaries will be evenly matched. No matter how populous a country may be, to prosecute a war it needs the mechanisms to tap the human, industrial and financial resources embedded within itself, resources which should exceed those of their adversary. This is the lesson that comes from Napoleon's downfall.

Strategy embraces the triad of time, space and mass to decide where a battle is to be fought. It links together several battles into a single whole which leads to the final decisive battle. It might be necessary to fight a number of preliminary battles to gain advantage over the enemy logistically so that eventually the commander is able to create the conditions for contest in a single concentrated battle and pursuit in its aftermath.

In practice, the commander should have a number of aims: to reduce the weight of the enemy's power into as few centres of gravity as is possible, and into one if it can be done; to confine the attack to as few principal undertakings as is possible; to employ resources with the utmost energy; to concentrate force at the point where the decisive blows are to be struck; to act as swiftly as possible; and to surprise the adversary. Surprise is the most powerful element of victory. If an army does not have superiority in numbers, the forces available must be deployed with such skill that relative superiority is achieved at the decisive point in the battle.

7. Tactics underpin strategy. Tactics are concerned with planning and execution. Only tactical success permits strategic success. Tactics shape strategic outcomes. The intermediate stages of a campaign are to contain the objectives of the campaign are the means by which the strategist attains his final objective. No military success can be judged in isolation, whether it is the capture of a fortress, or the occupation of a city or province.

8. A strong belief in concentration strategically and tactically and the rejection of the principle of tactical envelopment. All available forces should be massed in time and space. The corps system meant that the part of the army which was concentrated to face the enemy could turn to face its flank and rear without forfeiting either overall unity of command or its capacity. Thus the would-be enveloper might himself be enveloped, having exposed his own flank in the bid to seek his opponents.

9. The importance of the commander in assessing the point of gravity and weakness in his opponent's order of battle and political situation: that point in the enemy's hub of power, military and political, on which everything depends. The three examples of such centres of gravity are the opponent's army, his capital, and, possibly, the army of the enemy's ally. As all three are vulnerable to attack, the ideal strategy is to identify the enemy's centre of gravity and then to defeat and destroy his army ideally in a single major decisive battle. If political considerations necessitate the modification or postponement of such an objective, it might be best to wage minimal war which might bring the enemy to negotiate. This is one of the most important of Clausewitz's theories because it governs the grand strategic aim of a war.

10. That the combatant with overwhelming superiority and with massive concentration of forces available to him should be able to quickly draw his adversary into fighting the battle that will decide the war.

11. The nature of the skills of a commander. Military genius consists of high intelligence and moral courage the bass of two vital qualities: first, the instinctive capacity to discern through the fog of war in both strategic and tactical situations and analyse what is happening and what needed to be done. And, second, the capacity, having taken a decision to stick to it, despite criticism or conflicting intelligence. To this, Napoleon would have added the masterful use of propaganda to create a mystique of genius among his troops and at home. Clausewitz attributed boldness more to generals than to soldiers. But the effects could be reciprocal. Generals' victories could invigorate the military spirit in the armies. A soldier's commitment should be reflected in the acceptance of order and discipline.

Absolute and Limited War

During the course of writing the constituent parts of On War, Clausewitz came to recognise in the fullest sense that there was a difference between absolute war and limited war, that is philosophical in nature but is still of the greatest significance for politicians, the military and student of war rather than a set of principles to influence governments and commanders in conducting war. Making war could be measured against the absolute concept of war, although in reality a war was unlikely to be absolute in character.

Absolute war can be seen as some sort of Platonic ideal, a standard by which all forms of war are judged and to which most wars are imperfect approximations. Absolute war could result from the conflict of forces left to themselves, obeying no other but their own inner laws. The intrinsic nature of war is total. The object of war is to compel the enemy to do your will, having destroyed his power to resist. If you do not, he will try to make you powerless in his turn. So long as your enemy has any capacity to resist, you are logically bound, in self-defence to destroy him.

Clausewitz's recognition that absolute war was an abstraction comes from his principle that war could not be considered as distinct from policy, however subordinate it might be to it. War never consists of a single decisive action or of simultaneous acts occurring in a political vacuum. The intentions of belligerents are shaped by a range of factors, such as the international environment, the terrain of the theatre of war and perceptions of the new situation the war would produce.

Two interconnected factors prevent war becoming absolute. Both stem from his analysis of the interaction between attack and defence. The first arises from the uncertainties facing combatants, the Clausewitzian concept of friction. The second arises from the effects of reciprocity, what today is called escalation, forcing wars to extremes. To avoid escalation requires a decisive battle as quickly as possible. This may be difficult to achieve and can lead to an eventual failure of morale. It is seldom that both sides simultaneously have a strong incentive to take the initiative – 1914 was an exception. One side might wait until it had built up strength to remain on the defensive and its defensive posture might then deter an opponent.

The Superiority of the Defensive

Clausewitz made two principal points about defence. First, that although it is negative, it is stronger force of war than attack. It is easier to hold ground than to take it. A weaker force stays on the defensive and makes up for its weakness by maximising advantages of a defensive position. Second, that defence essentially consists of two phases: waiting for the attack, and then parrying it from a strong defensive position.

Moreover, an attacker can suffer from a range of difficulties which reduce the advantages, including the positive effects on morale, which his initial victory may have given him.
He becomes increasingly exhausted, his lines of communication lengthen, his flanks are exposed and his manpower is diminished by casualties and the needed to cover his rear.

A defensive strategy consists of finding the right balance between waiting and parrying, involving a whole range of possibilities, from an immediate counter-attack to a long withdrawal into the interior of the country, along his own supply lines and with the support of a friendly population. Eventually, the balance of advantage will change: the attacker reaches his low point of weakness and the defender has amassed strength.

Clausewitz adds that a prolongation of the defence by a carefully planned and hard-fought withdrawal might increase the defender's resources in four respects: resources afforded by the environment and terrain; the strength of his fortifications; the support of native populations, notable in Germany after Jena; and neutral states coming to the assistance of the country under attack, although one can point out that this did not happen when Prussia was overrun and Russia attacked.

Shortcomings in Clausewitz's Theory of War

There are three areas affecting warfare that Clausewitz overlooked: the maritime, economic and technological dimensions of war. His disregard of the maritime factor is striking but not surprising. The oceans lay beyond his comprehension. Ignoring economics seems odd. Prussia had been established as a great power as much through the skill of economic management as through military victories. Ignoring technology seems to have been unconscious but understandable. No more than anyone else could. Clausewitz did not appreciate that he was living on the eve of a vast technological transformation in the human condition.

Clausewitz's Legacy and German Strategy in the Offensive against France in 1940

The enormous influence of Clausewitz's thinking on war is not surprising. Much of what he said has outlasted his time and has remained relevant to subsequent generations.

He greatly influenced the elder von Moltke, a profound student of war, the victor over Austria and France in 1866 and 1870. Moltke's own writings echoed Clausewitz. Statecraft and generalship are closely related. Victory alone breaks the will of the enemy and compels him to do the will of the victor. Clausewitz's theories were studied and taught in the staff colleges of the major military powers. The German General Staff acquired enormous prestige and provided advice to foreign armies on organisation and other matters. Admission to the General Staff entailed a successful passage in its final examination after which there was a two-year probationary period. On the other side of the Rhine, Clausewitz stress on the moral factor was seen to fit in with the traditions of the French army. Foch's *Principles of War* contained virtually an abstract of Clausewitz's views.

In 1914, strategists seem to have been increasingly hypnotised by the belief in the concentration of massive strength to win the decisive battle and overthrow the enemy at his centre of gravity. War would be brief. Such thinking is reflected in the Schlieffen Plan and in Joffre's imprudent offensives against the Germans. It shows that the prominence in Clausewitz's thinking about the primacy of the defensive and of the two types of war, limited and total had been ignored. Social and material conditions in Europe in the early twentieth century had produced armed forces for whom the fighting of a limited war was not possible. Even if the activities had been able to fine-tune the that Clausewitz had admired in Frederick the Great, the passions of the people, the third factor in his triad of factors causing wars, would have made it impossible.

Between the wars, liberals in the US and Britain tended to regard the aphorism that war was an instrument of policy by other means as shocking evidence of militaristic cynicism. In Britain, Sir Basil Liddell Hart became very influential in advocating that this country should adopt a policy of indirect approach rather than wage war through a continental strategy.

The Second World War lent itself to every level of Clausewitzian analysis. The German offensive against France in 1940, one of the most remarkable campaigns in the history of warfare, can clearly be seen as being pursued according to Clausewitz's principles for the waging of war: the centre of gravity, the decisive battle, strength, concentration, morale, speed and surprise, although Hitler's conduct of the war would have amazed Clausewitz. He was indeed the acknowledged guru of the German High Command, although there are doubts as to whether he was widely read. Erich von Manstein, widely regarded as the finest operational commander the German army possessed in the Second World War, absorbed Clausewitz's theories through his admiration of the elder Moltke.

Following the discarding of two earlier plans for an offensive through Holland and Belgium, Hitler directed his enthusiasm to the idea advocated by Manstein, then chief of staff to Field Marshall Runstedt, of Army Group A, who held Manstein in high regard, and then by Halder, head of the General Staff, (OKH) to make the main thrust of the offensive against the Allies on their southern front at Sedan and across the Meuse, Manstein also advocating a push west all the way to the coast.

1. Plan Yellow, which was developed by Halder from Manstein's original idea of a break-through was directed to the weak point, thus the weak centre of gravity in France's order of battle based on the belief that the German offensive would be concentrated through Holland and Belgium. The attack and subsequent advance was not just based on tanks and dive-bombers, fundamental as they were, but was also an audacious, highly-risky infantry-based plan which would lead to the decisive battle of the campaign: one of penetration, not envelopment, like the March 1918 offensive.

2. The part of the German army organised to undertake the offensive at Sedan was of greater strength in material and morale than the French army which opposed it. Seven of Germany's ten Panzer divisions in Army Group A were concentrated in the Namur to Sedan area, with five at Sedan itself. Five were allotted to army groups and five to army corps. All were grouped under the command of the able von Kleist. By deploying resources skilfully, Plan Yellow sought to avoid the sort of drawn-out, attritional contest where statistics of the number of troops and other factors might carry weight.

3. The main part of the French army was in the north-east so that it could move rapidly to confront a German invasion of Belgium and Holland. France had 3,524 of her 4,688 tanks in

this sector. The French tanks were superior in fire-power and armour, although not in speed. They were supported by a better ant-tank gun. The allies had not regarded the Ardennes as penetrable.

4. The German offensive began on 10 May. On 11 May, French troops in the Ardennes were driven westwards. On 13 May, Guderian, commanding the spearhead, the XIX armoured corps, of the German army, under the cover of dive-bomber attacks, whose psychological damage was devastating, crossed and bridged the Meuse. Surprise was complete. At the moment of attack on 10 May, the only available means of defence in the Sedan area were four reserve divisions and a small Belgian force. Totally wrong-footed, the allies were slow to recognise the direction and weight of the German thrust. French withdrawal on 15 May, which led to the enlargement of the German bridgehead, enabled the Germans to sustain the momentum of their offensive northwards effecting a deep strategic penetration in excellent tank country across the allied flank and rear and along the north bank of the Somme towards Abbeville and the coast

5. That the main German weakness, the vulnerability of the long columns, constricted by terrain, did not jeopardise the German advance reflected serious shortcomings in the French conduct of the war: the ridiculously decentralised organisation of the Allied command, exemplified in the lack of unity between the French and the RAF; that the French army was too widely dispersed to fight in depth; and the poor handling of the tank attacks coupled with the failure to deploy superior artillery to plug the gap in the French defences following the German break-through. The French air force which aimed to give tactical support was greatly outnumbered by the Luftwaffe in operational aircraft.

6. By 16 May, the whole stretch of country between the Scarpe and the Somme rivers was in German hands and the two main parts of the allied armies were split in two. The decision, which has been called one of the principal enigmas of the war, to halt the German forces for three days on 24 May, 16 miles from Dunkirk, requested by Rundstedt and had Hitler's full backing. This would allow the allies a vital breathing space to enable them to strengthen the Dunkirk perimeter and was the main reason for the salvation of the BEF.

The military justification for the order was that the campaign had moved on from am armoured pursuit to an infantry struggle and required a pause to bring forward more divisions for tanks and defence. It was strongly opposed by the panzer commanders. It was far more than about operations strategy and was due to Hitler's determination to exert his dominance, shown by his admonishment of Brauchitsch, the commander-in-chief, at a meeting on 24 May. One sees that the rapid advance meant that the German flanks became increasingly vulnerable and reliant on the Luftwaffe, and that there was the need to preserve tank forces and give a rest to troops before opening the offensive against the French in the south, in addition to which Hitler's belief that the marshy ground round Dunkirk was not fit or tanks. The limited British counter-attack at Arras on 21 May may have justified his fears. Plan Yellow had emphasised the prior importance of a southward rather than northward sweep after the break-through.

It is plausible but unlikely that the halt order was prompted by Hitler's hope for an understanding with Britain and that wished to refrain from inflicting a humiliation which might make such an understanding impossible. He had no plan for continuing the war against Britain. Hitler also is said to have accepted Goering's assurance that the Luftwaffe could finish off the BEF, which would no longer threaten German strategic purposes.

The succession of German victories continued. The Channel ports were taken and the grand attack on the French army on the southward was launched on 5 June to be followed by the armistice on 22 June.

To sum up, the success of Plan Yellow, as it embodied a maturity of military doctrine for the achievements of the German army in 1940, not least because it led to the largest encirclement in military history, one sees a number of basic factors, which have been set
out in Lloyd Clark's *Blitzkrieg*:

1. The careful nurturing of the German armed forces before 1940, particularly in the development of a military doctrine.

2. That in this process, the *Wehrmacht* and *Luftwaffe* were allowed to operate flexibly.

3. Remarkable improvisation considering the scale of the challenges the Germans faced from their enemies and the frictions within the High Command.

4. The exploitation of French weaknesses. Plan Yellow, because of its daring nature, exploited inherent systematic weaknesses in structure, command and control, and above all will and morale in the French army, which was incapable of quick reaction or adaptation, and quite incapable of taking the offensive. French strategic decision-making had limited their forces' abilities to coping with a rerun of the Schlieffen plan but not with anything else.

5. Success was the result of a sophisticated inter-service all-arms team effort in which infantry played a central role.

Ultimate control of German strategy, including Plan Yellow, was in the hands of Hitler. The victory was his. The collapse of France convinced him he was a great military commander. To quote Hew Strachan, the decisiveness of the defeat of France masked a real weakness in Germany's conduct of war: that Germany had no strategy. It revolved round Hitler. War for him was total. His grand strategy was the product of impulse and fantasy and was too ambitious in relation to the resources Germany could muster. Decisions were often reactive. The success of Blitzkrieg in the earlier days of the war became a liability in a war, which required sustained effort and deliberate planning. He became more concerned with low-level tactics rather than with strategy. Believing he understood war better than his generals, his interventions became increasingly pettifogging.

From 1935 onwards Hitler succeeded in frightening the British and French in seeking a deal with him to meet his objectives of territorial expansion to avoid war. It may be said that in a sense, Hitler made policy a form of war by other means. It was all quite contrary to Clausewitzian theory. and to the professionalism of the German General Staff.

National Army Museum Evening Series

Churchill, Attlee and the Generals

19 January 2017, 7pm
Army & Navy Club, London

Roger Hermiston will tell the story of the political and military leaders who steered Britain through its darkest hour, showing how they helped to win the Second World War.

Wellington's Eastern Front: The Campaigns on the East Coast of Spain, 1810-14

2 December 2016, 12.30pm
Royal Marsden Conference Centre, London
Colonel Nick Lipscombe will examine how the east coast of Spain was important to the Spanish, French and British for very different reasons during the Peninsular War.

Soldiers' Stories: Major Allen Holford-Walker

Somme, November 1916
Major Allen Holford-Walker's papers demonstrate how the British struggled to make the most of their new weapon - the tank - on the Somme.

Book Review

Special Forces Hero

Anders Lassen VC, MC**

By Thomas Harder

Imprint: Pen & Sword Military
Pages: 416
Illustrations: 60 black and white illustrations
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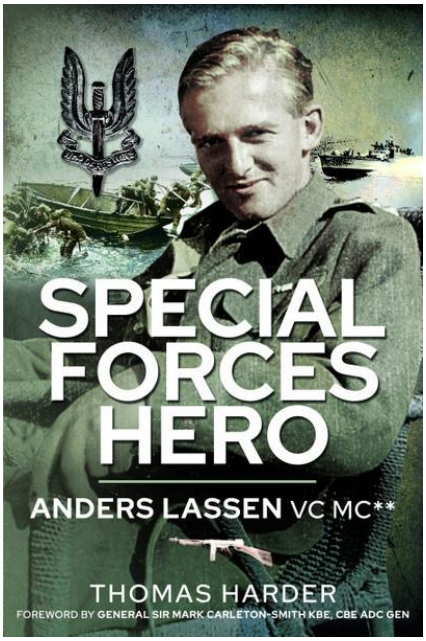

Thomas Harder

Thomas Harder is a Danish historian and literary translator. He is the author of twenty books on Italian subjects and four biographies.

He has translated works by numerous authors notably Salman Rushdie, Umberto Eco and most recently, Giovanni Boccaccio's medieval classic Decameron. He also works as a freelance conference interpreter.

Thomas has received a number of Danish, Swedish and Italian awards for his historical research and writing and for his translations. He lives in Copenhagen with his wife.

Synopsis

Until the German occupation of his native Denmark in April 1940 Anders Lassen had no interest in the War. Yet over the next five years he became a highly decorated Special Forces legend and the only non-Commonwealth recipient of the Victoria Cross.

After taking part in a mutiny on board a Danish ship, he made his way to Scotland. He first joined the Special Operations Executive before serving with the Small Scale Raiding Force, Special Air Service and Special Boat Service. He took part in the daring Operation Postmaster, off West Africa, and raided the Channel Islands and the Normandy coast. He saw most action in Eastern Mediterranean, fighting in Crete, the Dodecanese, Yugoslavia, mainland Greece and finally Italy.

In April 1945, now a major aged 24, he was killed at Lake Comacchio, where his gallantry earned him his posthumous VC. This superb biography is not just a worthy tribute to an outstanding soldier, but a superb account of the numerous special force operations Anders was involved in.

Review

Your reviewer has to admit that from childhood he has had a high regard for Anders Lassen the seaborne raider from the SBS operating in the warm waters around Greek islands. This book has not lessened that regard but has brought the balance that he was a human, a young man, a man with huge responsibilities who served Denmark well to the point of losing his life.

This is not the first Biography of Lassen. The first was by his mother Suzanne published in 1949, and 40-years years later Mike Langley with a 2016 reprint. This new work by Thomas Harder a Dane as was Lassen, is a significant book on the role of British Special Forces, SAS, SOE and SBS during World War Two. Yet another reminder of the courage and spirit of adventure and the opportunities for men to reach the limit and beyond of their capabilities.

One thing is very clear, the pressure of constant operations is debilitating, a maxim re-learned during the sheer grind of constant raiding by Special Forces during the Iraqi and Afghanistan wars. Lassen and George Jellico were key players in the evolution of the SBS though temperamentally Lassen was less suitable for high rank. The book makes it clear that he was volatile, would act quickly and not always how he would have done had there been time for reflection. But that is often what warfare and emergency response frequently is. Go with what you have and know and change things as the operation develops. If you spend a great deal of

your life operating at this level then it will always be possible to find areas of criticism. It was once said that a moments action or reaction can keep lawyers deliberating for months if not years!

One is drawn by the book to consider what would have happened to Lassen had he not the opportunity to use his energies and aggression in such a good and noble cause as defeating Fascism? He may well have come to a dishonourable or sticky end. He came from a privileged background, from a caring family but he had a tendency to violence and unruliness as a young man who was living without direction. The war gave him purpose, a chance to test himself, an opportunity to funnel his aggression towards an acceptable goal. During his British military training he was able to all of the things he was good at and liked doing and was appreciated for what he did. The training and the people he met gave him a sense of purpose a meaningful preparation for battle.

Lassen early military career was with the Small Scale Raiding Force operating mostly in the Channel and down to the Channel Islands. This evolved into operations in France, acceptance in the SAS and because of his previous experience, working as a member of the SBS in which he became a temporary major. He showed extraordinary bravery and cold bloodiness winning 3 MCs and a final action where he was killed and for which he was awarded the VC. He was just 24. Those that knew him well thought him to be a wonderful man to be with in a tight corner. Off duty he drank a great deal as did a lot of his companions, was very sociable, quick to violence even to those he worked with, insubordinate on a grand scale and frequently high on Benzedrine/amphetamine.

The many testimonies to Lassen's mood swings, restlessness and enormous energy and stamina in the field as well as his corresponding periods of depression during leave, make it reasonable to believe he was but one of the thousands of soldiers who developed a prolonged amphetamine habit. The pressure was intense and over years, Lassen recording "You can do some of it part of the time, for quite a while. But you can't do all of it, all of the time for very long."

He may have been a difficult subordinate at times, an officer that revelled in the freedom of Special Forces which gave him as he saw it, the right to argue his corner against the regular army no matter of what rank, over a range of discipline issues.

This is an excellent book. The level of research is a tribute to the author as is his drive to ensure what he has written is balanced and fair not just to Lassen but his comrades. There are numerous pages of reference and notes, a bibliography and a detailed index all supporting the detailed and humbling story of this young man.