



Military History Group **U3A Dorking**

Newsletter Number 16 **November 2021**

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

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Parish Notes

Fellow enthusiasts, greetings from Barrie Friend.

November is the time we especially remember those who fought and those who fell and in recognition of this a special article can be found in this edition of our Newsletter.

If you attended the Remembrance Day Ceremony at our West Street War Memorial, you may have spent a few minutes reviewing the poster display to its left highlighting some groups who don't always come to mind in our two minutes' reflection. Teresa brought this display to my notice, and I have sent a separate email about this. There is always something new to learn.

Our November meeting, chaired by Jim, was supported by a large group of members who heard Liz Lockhart - Mure give an inspiring talk on the WASBIES. A summary of her talk is below for those who missed or would like to revisit it.

At our next meeting on Tuesday 2nd December, we will welcome as guest speaker at The Pavilion Brockham RH37JT Julian Roberts from Bookham u3a Military History Group who will talk on **The Russian Japanese War (1904-1905)**. This war is an important subject in the history of the evolution of warfare as it was the first time the tactics of entrenched positions for infantry defended with machine guns and artillery was experienced. These would become dominant factors in World War I.

I hope that you all can make the date. Coffee at 1000 for 1030

2022

Our 2022 speaker schedule takes us to other areas and eras:

January: Guest speaker Ian Hutchinson from Milford u3a Military History Group: ***The Battle of Albuera in the Peninsula Wars.***

February: Group members Matt and Gareth: ***Aspects of Operation Husky***, the invasion of Sicily July/August 1943.

March: Guest speaker David Williams from Bookham u3a Military History Group: ***Significant Sideshows of World War 1***

April: Group Member Paul Wharham: ***Blitzkrieg***

May: Group member Bob Bartlett will give his second talk on ***Kicking sand into the eyes of the enemy: The Long Range Desert Group***

June: Group member Jim Barnes: ***The People's Vulcan Bomber***

July: Guest speaker Sue Tanton: ***A Lancashire Fusilier's First World Wa***

The Women's Auxiliary Service (Burma)

'The Wasbies' 1942-1946

Elizabeth Lockhart-Mure ¹

A talk given by author Elizabeth Lockhart-Mure to Dorking and District U3A Monthly Meeting 10th February 2012 and to the MHG 2 November 2021.

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?

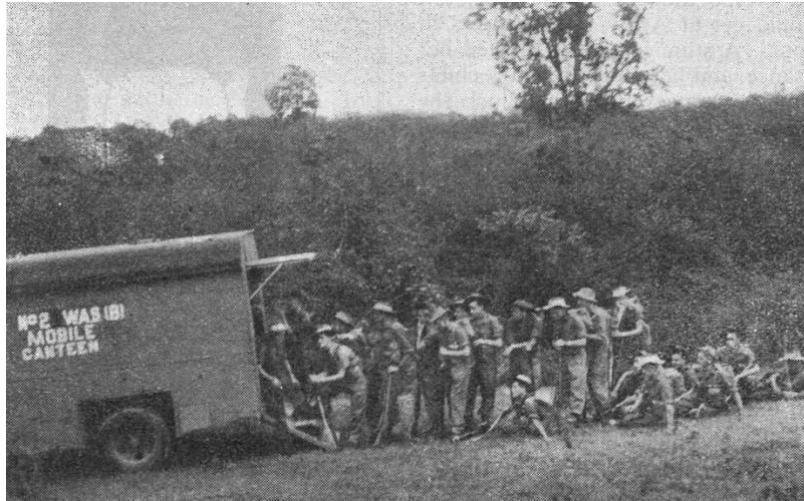
The Wasbies was one such a unit within the Fourteenth Army destined to be lost to memory until Elizabeth Lockhart-Mure discovered the war time diary, notes, photographic album, campaign medals, including The Burma Star, a Mentioned in Despatches bronze oak leaf, and MBE and citation of her late maternal aunt, Captain Maria Pilbrow ². Elizabeth drew much information from these highly significant primary sources for a book and for the talks she gives.

¹ Photographs Elizabeth Lockhart-Mure copyright

² The London Gazette announcements give her name as Jeanne Elspeth Pillbrow. Maria was a name used within the family

The Wasbies - The Women's' 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.

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 an MBE.

War did not 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 research 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.

FROM GENERAL SIR WILLIAM SLIM

I first met the Women's Auxiliary Service (Burma) during the testing time of the 1942 Retreat from Burma. Then they not only performed essential services for the Army, but played a great part in helping the many thousands of unfortunate refugees—British, Burmese and Indian—who were being driven from their homes in circumstances of terrible hardship. In this, and in the many air raids on defenceless Burmese towns they showed the highest standard of devotion and courage.

Later, reorganised in India, they joined the Fourteenth Army and devoted themselves with the same efficiency to the welfare of the troops. They carried their duties throughout the re-conquest of Burma, right up to forward formations. Their contribution, not only to the material welfare but to the morale of the Army, was a very real one. The men of the Fourteenth Army were proud to see them wearing their Army Sign, and they will long remember them for their unselfish cheerfulness, their tireless service, and for the breath of home they brought to them.

W. J. SLIM,

*General Sir William J. Slim,
G.B.E., K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C.*

2nd April, 1946.

The History of the Two Minutes' Silence – in Farnham and elsewhere

John Francis Moss

This year is the centenary of the unveiling of the Cenotaph in Whitehall, and the burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. As we gather at our war memorials on or around 11th November, have you ever wondered why we commemorate our war dead with an act of communal silence, or how it was decided that silence should be two minutes long – and not three minutes or five?

The armistice came into effect on Tuesday, 11th November 1918 – the First World War didn't formally end until Saturday, 28th June 1919 when the Treaty of Versailles was signed (which is why some war memorials show 1914-1919). The main event to celebrate the signing was a victory parade through the streets of London – which included troops marching past a temporary Cenotaph in Whitehall, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, but made of wood and plaster, and not intended to be a permanent memorial.



Farnham 1916

In anticipation of these celebrations, an Australian journalist working in London, Edward George Honey, wrote to *The Evening News* on Thursday, 8th May 1919:

Can we not spare some fragment of those hours of Peace rejoicing for a silent tribute to these mighty dead? Individually, yes! Too many of us know we will for our own kith and kin, for the friend who will never come back. But nationally? I would ask for five minutes, five little minutes only. Five *silent* minutes of national remembrance. A very sacred intercession!

Honey's suggestion was based on the silence held across the transport and communications network in Great Britain on Friday, 20th May 1910, the day of the funeral of King Edward VII, when the train he was on came to a halt for five minutes and all the travellers in his compartment removed their hats and stood in silence. Honey's suggestion was not taken up; however, in the lead-up to the first anniversary of the Armistice on Tuesday, 11th November 1919, a South African diplomat, Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, wrote to the War Cabinet, suggesting a silence based on the 'Three Minutes Pause' held in Cape Town during the war, where:

At noon each day all work, all talk and all movement were suspended for three minutes that we might concentrate as one in thinking of those – the living and the dead – who had pledged and given themselves for all that we believe in...³

Fitzpatrick describes the noonday gun which gave the signal for the silence to start, and the sirens and hooters used for the same purpose across the Rand Goldfields. In the centre of Cape Town, the silence was started by a bugler playing 'Last Post' from a balcony. He concludes that the 'the call at the hour would come from gun or belfry, from mine, factory or ship' – a reminder that there was no national time signal in 1919.

Honey's proposal was for five minutes of silence; Fitzpatrick's was for three: however, the Cabinet, who on Wednesday, 5th November 1919 considered only the latter proposal, concluded:

That a pause of three minutes would involve too great a strain and inconvenience, and that a pause of one minute, as adopted in the United States of America on the occasion of President Roosevelt's funeral [on Wednesday, 8th January 1919] and on other occasions, would be more impressive.⁴

There's a totally uncorroborated story that following the Cabinet's recommendation, there was a rehearsal of the silence involving King George, a guardsman and a stopwatch, at which the King decided that one minute was too short – so he decided to have two! What is known is that following the Cabinet meeting, Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary, lunched with the King where 'His Majesty's pleasure' was sought – and given, concluding a process whereby, in the space of two days and at the highest level of government, the proposed period of silence had been altered successively from three to one, and finally to two minutes – which it has remained ever since.

Although this would be the first ever national memorial silence for the war dead, some earlier local examples have come to light – one of the most interesting being held in Castle Street, Farnham, Surrey on Wednesday, 10th May 1916. It took place as part of the opening ceremony

³ Cabinet Paper, CAB/24/92, p. 2, found on-line at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk - the National Archives website.

⁴ *Ibid.*

of a country fair organised by a local auctioneer and estate agent, James Alfred Eggar, to raise funds for the local British Farmers' Red Cross Society.

The programme makes clear the nature and purpose of the silence...

11 a.m.—The OPENING CEREMONY will take place at the bottom of Castle Street. After the Bugles have sounded, there will be silence for 2 minutes as a token of respect to the memory of those who have fallen in the War, to the Wounded, to the Prisoners, and to those who are fighting for their Country.

The National Anthem will be sung.⁵

...while the sounding of bugles immediately beforehand, and the singing of the National Anthem afterwards, impose an additional military and patriotic setting – the experience of silence is always highly influenced by its context.

Several photographs of the event exist, showing a platform erected outside 74, Castle Street (once Eggar's offices, now a Pizza Express) with about thirty people standing on it, surrounded by a crowd of about 200. Everyone is standing to attention. Some of the men in uniform are saluting, while all the men not in uniform are standing bare headed. Eggar is identifiable on the platform, as is Canon Bertram Keir Cunningham, the Warden at the Bishop's Hostel, Farnham, standing with what appears to be a copy of the programme in his hand. The hostel was an Anglican training college for clergy in the grounds of Farnham Castle, the official residence of the Bishop of Winchester. However, it had closed for the war, and Cunningham had been helping in the parish as well as chaplain to Waverley Abbey Hospital. With both the Bishop and the Rector of Farnham (Rev. John MacLeod Campbell Crum) away, Cunningham was ideally placed to represent both the local church and the British Red Cross at this civic event. While Eggar and two representatives from Waverley Abbey spoke from the platform after the silence, it was Cunningham who introduced it.

Canon Cunningham, in opening the proceedings, said after the bugles had sounded there would be two minutes silence, during which they would think with thankfulness before God of those who laid down their lives for their country, the sick and the wounded, and those who were now fighting for King, Country, and Cause.⁶

His words, as recorded, are very similar to those printed in the programme, but arguably change the already complex nature of the silence from 'a token of respect' to prayer.

So, whose idea was the silence – an auctioneer, a clergyman, or someone else? Evidence that Eggar suggested the idea for the country fair is unambiguous, while correspondence after the war shows that he also claimed to be the originator of the silence. However, there are a number

⁵ National Archives: HO 45/11557.

⁶ *The Farnham Herald*, Saturday, 13th May 1916, pp. 4 & 5.

of examples of silence being used in the Church of England's wartime liturgies and rites – such as church bells being rung at noon each day, encouraging people to stop and pray silently for those fighting. At face value, Cunningham seems the more likely candidate. Sadly, no records of the meetings held before the fair which might have answered that question still exist. Eggar's post-war correspondence also corroborates that the only proposal considered by the Cabinet in November 1919 was Fitzpatrick's – a three-minute silence based on that held in Cape Town, rather than a two-minute silence held in Castle Street, Farnham. Nevertheless, the citizens of Farnham can be proud that they held what could well have been Britain's first civic two-minute silence – 3½ years before it became a national institution.

The King's Proclamation announcing the first national/imperial silence was published in newspapers across the British Empire on Friday, 7th November 1919. Although this was less than two days after his 'pleasure' had been sought, it was only four days before the event itself.

TO ALL MY PEOPLE.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

Tuesday next, November 11, is the first anniversary of the Armistice, which stayed the world-wide carnage of the four preceding years and marked the victory of Right and Freedom. I believe my people fervently wish to perpetuate the memory of that Great Deliverance, and of those who laid down their lives to achieve it.

To afford an opportunity for the universal expression of feeling it is my desire and hope that at the hour when the Armistice came into force, the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, there may be, for the brief space of two minutes, a complete suspension of all our normal activities. During that time, except in the rare cases where this may be impracticable, all work, all sound, and all locomotion should cease, so that, in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the Glorious Dead.

No elaborate organization appears to be necessary. At a given signal, which can be easily arranged to suit the circumstances of each locality, I believe that that we shall all gladly interrupt our business and pleasure, whatever it may be, and unite in this simple service of Silence and Remembrance.

GEORGE R.I.⁷

The intention was that people should keep the silence just where they were – a suspension of activity for two minutes in the middle of the working day, rather than a ritual activity in itself. However, from the very start, individuals felt the need to gather together in the open air rather than indoors, and for that gathering to be focused in an appropriate place. *The Farnham Herald*

⁷ Carried in most national newspapers that day, including *The Times*, Friday, 7th November 1919, p. 12.

comments that ‘no official arrangements had been made’, and during the morning ‘work proceeded as usual’, however:

...a few minutes before 11 o’clock a small crowd gathered at the bottom of Castle Street, and when the clock struck the hour and the signal was given by the fire hooters at the Brewery and the Water Works, the men present bared their heads and all stood in silence for the space of two minutes.⁸

This fits in moderately well with the tone of the proclamation. However, the article also reports the presence of the Chairman and members of the Urban District Council in Castle Street, which had already been acknowledged as having ‘become the spot to which all turn on such occasions’, as well as giving the names of the police officers⁹ in attendance, and those of the two trumpeters from Aldershot who sounded the ‘Last Post’ to mark the end of the silence. Later, the newspaper reports how the silence was kept at the Parish Church at the end of a short service of intercession conducted by the Bishop of Winchester and the Rector, as well as details of how the silence was kept in other churches and the schools in Farnham – all indicating a degree of organization beyond that originally inferred in the King’s Proclamation.

Yet the same phenomenon was experienced elsewhere. In London, the temporary Cenotaph in Whitehall became an even greater focus for the silence, and a year later, re-built in granite as a permanent memorial to ‘The Glorious Dead’, immediately became the primary commemorative site for the whole British Empire. Yet, for most people, the focus would remain local, at an ever-increasing number of war memorials in cities, towns and villages throughout Great Britain, where the warriors from that place who marched away to fight and had died for their country were known and remembered by name. One hundred years on, neither those physical memorials nor the silence have lost their impact but exist in a vastly changed world. Pausing for those two minutes on or around the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month remains one of the few means by which we can express a real sense of continuity with the men and women who experienced the First World War first-hand.

John Francis Moss writes: I served in the Surrey Constabulary as a PC and Sergeant from 1975-1986 – at both Oxted and Caterham. I then transferred to one of the Yorkshire forces and never looked back – I dare not, because I realised how much I missed working in Surrey! When I retired, I started studying part-time at university and my current research interests include the liturgy and music of the Church of England associated with the First World War.

⁸ *The Farnham Herald*, Saturday, 15th November 1919, p. 5.

⁹ The article mentions that ‘Supt. Simmons was also present, and Inspector Lucas was in the vicinity, whilst in the road were PS Vigar and a constable’.

A Military Reversal of Fortune

Barrie Friend

**“There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.”**

Shakespeare pointed out the parallel and used it in *Julius Caesar* in one of his most often-quoted passages spoken by Brutus.

The metaphor of the changing ebb and flow of the ocean's tides have been applied to warfare for many centuries.

Does it go beyond just metaphor?

YI SUN-SI'S MASTERFUL SEAMANSHIP in the BATTLE of THE MYEONGNYANG STRAITS, Oct. 26, 1597, demonstrates that it does.

The Myeongnyang Straits, off the southwestern tip of Korea, separate Jindo Island from the mainland. Ships have been travelling through the straits since the dawn of navigation, using them as a shortcut between the Yellow Sea and the South Sea.

Tidal forces make current of the Myeongnyang Straits reverse direction through the narrow straits roughly every three hours. Admiral Yi Sun-sin (1545-1598) used this natural phenomenon as part of his strategy for his last stand and to prevail against Tōdō Takatora's some 350 Japanese vessels (over 133 warships and 200 support ships) with the 13 panokseon warships that had survived the disaster of the Battle of Chilchonryang two months earlier.

The backbone of the Joseon Navy were his strong, oar and sail-propelled 25 to 30-meter long vessels, armed with naval artillery and rockets.

The precise time and maximum speed of the tidal currents the day of the Battle of Myeongnyang were determined by Hyun-Jong Kim at Mokpo National Maritime University in 2015:

-At 06:36 in the morning, the current started to flow northwest (from the side of the Japanese naval forces in the direction of Yi's 13 ships), and reached the maximum flow speed of 8.3 knots,

-the current was reversed at 09:30 and started to flow southeast,

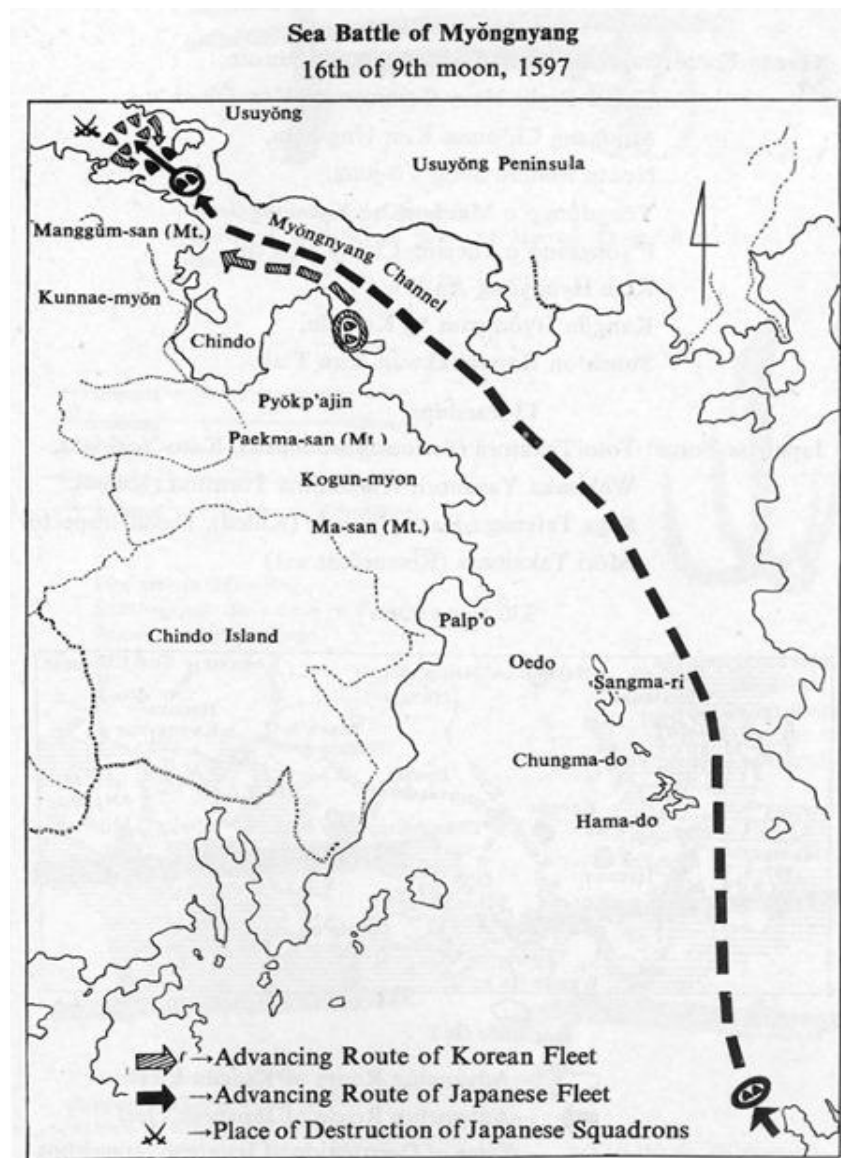
-at 12:48 it was reversed again and started to flow northwest,

-it started to flow southeast at 16:12 and reached the maximum flow rate of 9.9 knots,

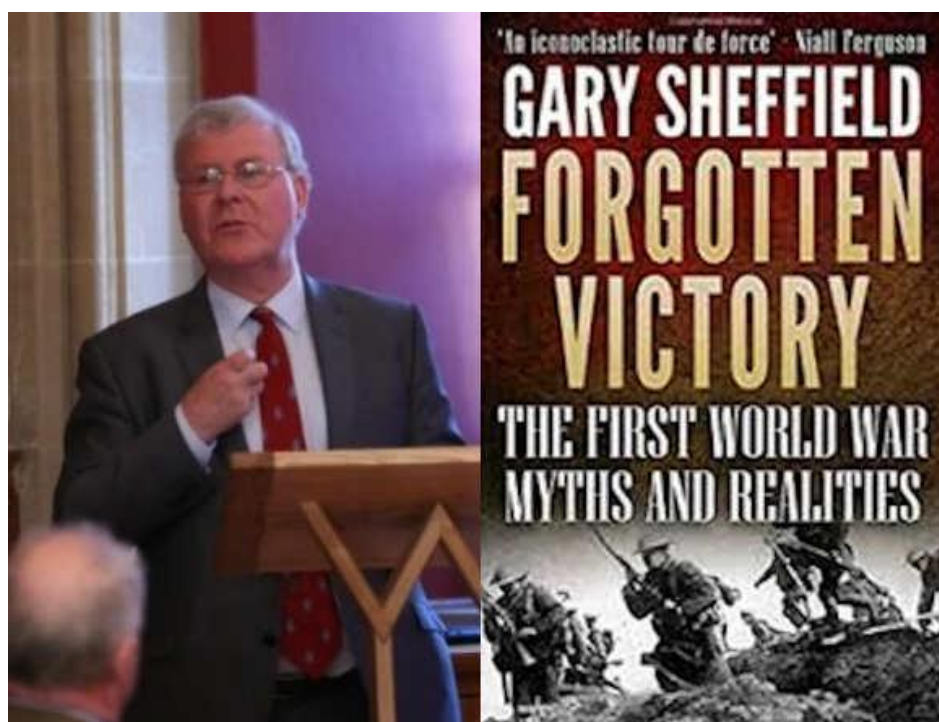
The current flowed northwest again at 19:06.

Yi managed to destroy 31 enemy ships, damaging another 91, forcing the Japanese to withdraw. Yi Sun-si's triumph of Myeongnyang literally "turned the tide" of the Imjin Asian War between Japan, Ming China and Joseon Korea and is regarded as perhaps the most remarkable naval victory in world history.

By the end of the summer 1598, the Ming, Joseon, and Japanese forces were locked in a stalemate in the south of the peninsula. After the death of Hideyoshi, in late October 1598 the Council of Five Elders led by Tokugawa Ieyasu issued orders for a general retreat. Japan had lost the Imjin War, partly because of Yi's phenomenal naval victories.



Shakespeare wrote Julius Ceaser in 1599 just two years after the Battle of Myeongnyang Straits giving substance to today's metaphor.



Professor Garry Sheffield: *The Historian* 2014

It is nothing new to suggest that poets and novelists have been more influential in shaping popular views of the First World War than historians. The children's writer Michael Morpurgo is a recent case in point. The author of *War Horse* and *Private Peaceful*, both of which have been turned into popular films, Morpurgo's work will have far greater influence on non-specialists' perceptions of the Great War than anything I am likely to write. I am not for one moment denying his right to put forward his perspective or the right of authors to spin imaginative fiction out of real-life events. However, I look at his work from the perspective of a historian who works from a basis of fact, not fiction. Take something Morpurgo wrote in *Private Peaceful*. Denouncing the British Army's disciplinary regime, he attacked the execution of two soldiers "for simply falling asleep at their posts." To put it no more strongly, this comment displays a lack of understanding of the realities of trench warfare. For a man to fall asleep at his post was not a trivial matter. It was a very serious offence which could have endangered the lives of his comrades: a sleeping sentry could allow an enemy raiding party into their trenches, with potentially catastrophic consequences.

In fact, only two men were executed for sleeping at their posts. They were Private Thomas Downing and Private Robert Burton, both of 6th Somerset Light Infantry, who were shot in Mesopotamia in February 1917. It is clear that these men were executed *pour encourager les autres*. Lieutenant General Marshall wrote of Burton: the "actual fact... [he was found] sitting

down shews [sic] such a want of appreciation of his duties as a sentry, responsible for the lives of his comrades [emphasis added]," that the sentence should be carried out. Historians Cathryn Corns and John Hughes Wilson have commented that Marshall was being over-zealous. In fact, a common practice in the trenches was for sympathetic officers to deliberately wake up dozing sentries. What is so often missing from fictional accounts of the First World War, and much popular history, is that executions in the British army were rare events. They tended to be used as an extreme method of maintaining discipline, or graphically demonstrating to the mass of soldiers the possible penalties. Out of the 5 million plus men who served in the army in 1914-18, only around 350 were executed. Around 90 per cent of men sentenced to death were not actually executed, their sentences being commuted. This was a "managed figure," it has been argued, the military authorities believing it would deter malefactors "without appearing excessively harsh."

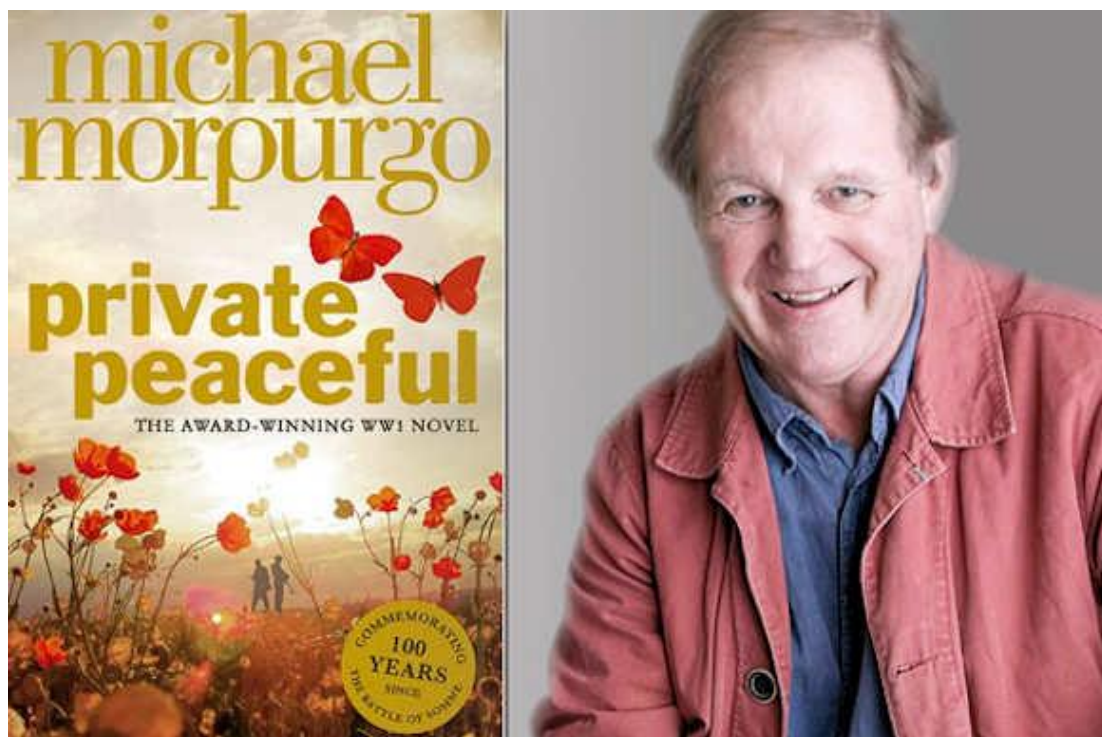
By modern-day standards, the fact that some men who were executed were suffering from psychiatric wounds ("shell-shock," in the parlance of 1914-18) is shocking, as is the rudimentary and unfair nature of some of the courts martial. Yet we need to have a sense of historical perspective. The army of the First World War needs to be judged by the standards of the age, not of our own time. We can deplore the way soldiers were treated, but it is profoundly ahistorical to apply 21st-century mores and sensibilities to individuals and organisations which were the products of a very different society, a century ago.

The centenary of the First World War, with the sheer volume of coverage it was given has led a number of public figures whose credentials for pontificating on the Great War are not readily apparent to do just that. In May 2013, a letter from a group of actors, musicians, poets, and politicians was published in the *Guardian*, a liberal-left British newspaper. It ran on predictable lines, and in some circles became known as the "Luvvies' letter." Cultural figures setting themselves up on experts on the history of the First World War have brought about criticism from historians and other knowledgeable commemorators.

Michael Morpurgo has gone on record that he opposes celebration of the First World War, particularly any events around the centenary of the outbreak (in August 1914) that engender any "sense of national pride—flag-waving." In some ways, I have sympathy with his position. The outbreak of war is certainly nothing to celebrate, and nationalism in any form I find unhealthy. But to regard the First World War as, in Morpurgo's words, simply as "a holocaust of a war in which 10 million people died" is to ignore the vital issues of why Britain went to war, and why the British people, with remarkably little dissent or coercion, stuck at it until victory was achieved. It also disregards the opinions of men who fought in the war. Much recent research has demonstrated that the idea of widespread disillusionment and pacifism among former soldiers is a myth. Morpurgo's view that it would be appropriate to wear white poppies alongside red ones prompted one tweet that declared: 'My granddad (R[oyal] A[rtilillery] 1914-18) would have kicked his arse.' The evidence suggests that this former soldier would not have been alone in being angered by and rejecting Morpurgo's viewpoint.

To differentiate between "nationalism" and "patriotism" involves semantics that I do not propose to explore here, but I see no contradiction in opposition to the former and celebrating, in a non-triumphalist way, the British national achievement in playing a leading role in defeating Imperial Germany's bid for hegemony in 1914-18. After all, celebrating the UK's role in defeating Nazi Germany is uncontroversial, as we saw during the 70th anniversary commemorations of D-Day which took place in June 2014. Because we tend to see 1914-18 through the distorting mirror of 1939-45, the gravity of threat posed by the Kaiser's Germany to Britain has been almost entirely forgotten. If it is right to celebrate victory in the Second World War, it is also right to celebrate victory in the First. Bizarrely, when the Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced in 2012 the events that the UK Government had chosen formally to commemorate, the list included such defeats as the First Day on the Somme but ignored the great Allied victories of 1918 which ended the war. As Professor Peter Simkins has observed, such historical illiteracy is akin to commemorating the Second World War by marking Dunkirk and the fall of Singapore but not D-Day.

To return to where I began: only a fool would deny the sheer horror and waste of the First World War. I defy anyone to visit a war cemetery on the Western Front, read the ages on the headstones and the messages from grieving families, and remain unmoved. Our horror and revulsion at mass death should not be allowed to obscure the true meaning of the war. That Britain and her allies won the First World War, and not Germany, is a fact of the utmost significance. The world that emerged from the First World War was imperfect. A world in which Europe was dominated by a victorious German empire that stretched from the Channel to the Ukraine in which liberal democracy had been extinguished would have been far worse. Unpopular as it undoubtedly is to say so, between 1914 and 1918 Britain fought a defensive, just war.



Source: *The Historian*, Summer 2014

Second World War in Surrey

Robert Bartlett

Continued from Newsletters 15 and 16

The following is to be found at www.surrey-constabulary.com. Every war related incident was a job for the police who because men went to the colours were severely understrength.



Surrey Constabulary on guard to stop souvenir hunters before recovery by the RAF

PC 3 Norman Croxton (25) 4 February 1940 PC Croxton died because of injuries received in a road traffic accident in Leatherhead Road, Ashted. PC Croxton was killed riding a motorcycle.

1940 January: Ten members of the Guildford Borough (strength pre-war about 40) were serving in the armed forces ¹⁰

¹⁰ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

1940 February: Internment Camps established for enemy aliens including at Lingfield and Kempton Park. Home Office Alien's Department established tribunals which examined 70,000 registered aliens over the age of 16 to divided them into three categories: Category A to be **interned in camps established for 569 internees across the country.**

1940 March 9: Buckland: Buckland Lodge hit by bombs and a woman was killed, one third of the house and two cars were destroyed. Three other people were wounded.

1940 April: Invasion scares led to the fear of fifth columnists and many reports were made to the police all of which had to be investigated. A Security Department was immediately formed consisting of specially selected detective officers and they undertook a tremendous amount of secret and important work.

1940 April 27: Wyke and Normandy: Police sergeant assaulted by Lily Javes, 1 Stoke Villas, Station Road, Normandy. She stole from Mrs Prior of Ladythorpe, Elm Hill, Normandy from chair in welfare centre at Normandy.¹¹

1940 May: Huge task at all police stations to register **Local Defence Volunteers** (Home Guard)

1940 May: It seemed likely that Britain would be invaded. Although the regular army had rescued many troops from Dunkirk, they had to leave their heavy equipment behind. The resulting crisis saw the raising of the **Local Defence Volunteers**. On 18 May, three hundred volunteers assembled at the county police station in Woodbridge Road, Guildford.

1940 May: Secretary for War, Anthony Eden, set up the Home Guard with radio broadcasts to the nation at 6pm and 9pm, although at this early stage it was known as the Local Volunteer Force (LDV), an unpaid body that was to be a uniformed part of the Armed Forces of the country. All a man had to do to join, if he was aged between 17 and 65, was to volunteer at his local police station. All Head Constables had been forewarned by telegram on the morning of the broadcast. The Government hoped for half a million men to answer the call but by the end of June had almost three times that figure nationally. Eight hundred registered in Redhill and Reigate within the first twenty-four hours and fifteen hundred within forty-eight hours.¹²

1940 May 24: In the Dorking Police Division over 1400 men have offered their services for the **Local Defence Volunteers**.¹³

Surrey Mirror - Friday 29 December 1944: The **Reigate Borough's Home Guard:** A Short History of the 8th Surrey Battalion: The Days of the L.D.V: How many people lining the route of the 8th Surrey (Reigate) Battalion Home Guard's farewell march on Sunday, December 3rd, gave more than a passing thought to the significance of the event, or cast their minds back to Tuesday, May 14th, 1940. when, with the field-grey hordes of Germany spreading like an

¹¹ Surrey Advertiser

¹² <http://www.redhill-reigate-history.co.uk/homeguard.htm>

¹³ Dorking in Wartime – David Knight

evil canker across Europe, the Secretary for War. Mr. Anthony Eden, came to a B.B.C. microphone with the appeal that brought old soldiers, well past the age of soldiering, back to arms, and set youth, not yet quite old enough for full-time soldiering, drilling, shooting and stalking?

The story starts at mid-day on that memorable Tuesday with a telegram over the signature of the Under Secretary of State. It went to every Chief Constable in the country. Mr. W. H. Beacher, sitting in his office in Reigate, read it: "Broadcast Will be made at 9.10 pm. to-day inviting male British subjects between the ages of 17 and 65 to register for Local Defence Volunteer Corps against enemy landings by parachute or otherwise. Registrations will be at any police station. Circular follows. In meantime, please ensure forthwith that all stations are prepared to receive registrations." There followed details of particulars to be taken. While the then Reigate Borough Police were making the necessary arrangements there came a second telegram notifying them of a broadcast appeal to be made for rifles and ammunition and asking the police to be ready also to record details of all weapons offered to the new Volunteer Force.

The broadcasts which gave first news of the new Force to the public came in the bulletins at 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. It was during the latter that Mr. Eden outlined the enemy's methods of parachute attack and made his now famous appeal. In the Borough, as elsewhere in the country, the response was astounding. Almost before the broadcast was over the telephone lines to the police stations were busy and personal calls at the stations to register mounted rapidly. Mr. Beacher and his staff worked almost without pause to keep pace with the applications, 1,500 of which poured in in 48 hours.

Reigate Hill Patrol: Some of the Volunteers had their first taste of duty only three days after the broadcast, for it was on May 17th that the late Capt. E. H. Tuckwell came from Guildford Headquarters to the Chief Constable - at 4 p.m. - to make arrangements for night patrols to be on Reigate Hill. Capt. W. E. Hill, M.C., was contacted, and was acquainted on his arrival, shortly before 7 p.m., with what was required. A police car took him to the addresses of several of the Volunteers, and, armed with six "P.14" rifles, all that could be mustered at that stage, the little party set off in police cars for their patrol ground. The twelve men who comprised this first patrol were Messrs' Chalcraft, Cook, Cuss, Dungate, Elliott, Hunt, Jarrett, Laker, Lott, Lovegrove, Pilbeam and Rumble, under the command of Capt. Hill, who, however, found the chosen site for the observation post, a spot near the water tower on Colley Hill, to be unsatisfactory, the view to the southward being impeded by Reigate Park. On the following night therefore, the same patrol moved to Reigate Park itself, and were under the command of Mr. Vigers, Capt. Hill having been summoned to Guildford to an urgent conference. Most of the men on these early patrols were unfamiliar with the "P.14" rifle, not having handled firearms since the last war, and so the commanders divided their small force into two, one keeping up the patrol of the area whilst the other received some instruction as to the handling of the unfamiliar weapons. These night watches were divided into three periods - 10 p.m. to 1 a.m., 1 a.m. to 4 a.m., and 4 a.m. to 7 am.

The Borough Company Formed: Meanwhile at the conference to which Capt. Hill had gone, and which was also attended by Alderman Lieutenant-Col. F. J. Spranger, Mr. W. H. Beacher, Capt. Mansfield (Redhill) and Capt. Charlesworth (Merstham), it had been decided that Reigate (including Redhill, Earlswood and Merstham) should be allotted one Company of the L D.V. The work of registration was continuing, and preliminary details of the scheme were being worked out, so that on May 20th at a meeting at the Town Hall, convened by the Chief Constable and presided over by Alderman Spranger, it was possible to get down to the work of organisation. At this meeting, at which Alderman Spranger intimated that he was unable to take command of the Reigate Company but at which he introduced Mr. R. J. V. Hake, of the White House, Reigate Heath, as Company Commander, it was decided that the Company should comprise a Reigate Town Platoon under Capt. W. E. Hill, a Redhill Platoon under Capt. E. T. Mansfield, and a Merstham Platoon under Capt. W. G. Charlesworth.

The Platoon Commanders quickly organised their own divisions. Capt. Hill sub-divided his command into Reigate North and Reigate South Platoons, under Lieut. A. W. G. Dewar and Capt. J. Gibson respectively, while at Redhill, Capt. Mansfield, with Major Strickland as his Second-in-Command, organised his Platoon into four sections under the commands of Mr. Cutcliffe, Major Bowyer, Lieutenant W. R. Howe Pringle, and Capt. Ferguson. At Merstham, Capt. Charlesworth, with Capt. D. J. Smith as Second-in-Command, set up two sections under Capt. C. Bowring and Lieut. V. H. Winson. At the outset the approximate strength of the Borough of Reigate Company was 930 officers and men, but the numbers expanded as more and more names were registered.¹⁴

1940 May 24 Dorking: German parachutist lands: Reports were made at the police station. So many phone calls made to the police station the operators were asked to put no more calls through but to reassure the callers all was in hand. It turned out not to be a parachutist, but an escaped barrage balloon shot down by the RAF. A second and similar incident happened on Sunday the balloon coming down near Broome Hall, Coldharbour.¹⁵

1940 May 31: Superintendent Hilton is OIC the police at Dorking¹⁶

1940: A child's recollections: When we heard or saw a plane coming down, we would try and beat the local policeman, **Sergeant Bishop**, and the RAF to the scene for souvenirs. We used to pick up bullets and all sorts of other items. One day there was this plane that crashed on Holmwood Common, and we got there first, the wreckage was strewn over a wide area as it had exploded and it was still on fire. Whilst searching the wreckage one of us found a gauntlet after picking it up they found the Gauntlet still had a hand in it, needless to say it was soon dropped. Shortly after we heard several loud bangs, the bullets had started to explode, and we ran for our lives. At these crash sites there was always a terrible smell that you will never forget. We had a Junkers 88 that came over our house just missing our chimney, this crashed in the Paddock about 50 yards behind Folley Farm House, where the Adam's family lived. One

¹⁴ Surrey Mirror - Friday 29 December 1944 <http://sussexhistoryforum.co.uk/index.php?topic=7355.0>

¹⁵ Dorking in Wartime – David Knight

¹⁶ Dorking in Wartime – David Knight

of the engines from the Plane was dug up in 1976 and is now in the Brooklands Museum at Weybridge.¹⁷

1940 First (temporary) pay rise since 1919.¹⁸ For the first time since Desborough, police pay was increased, thanks to five shillings a week supplementary payment to take into account wartime inflation, plus a war duty allowance of three shillings in lieu of overtime. This only applied to men receiving less than £5 a week.

1940: During the Dunkirk evacuation May 27th to June 4th, 1940, the public service of trains were withdrawn for nine days around six hundred trains some ambulance trains conveying troops, many in a bad way, traversed the line across the county.¹⁹

1940 22 June: Road accident claim: A motor accident at Normandy on July 25th last year had a sequel at Guildford County Court on Thursday when Douglas Hamilton Johnson of 75 Okeburn Road, Tooting claimed damages for negligence from Victor George Dann, 3 Alfold Cottages, Alfold and R T W Marshall, 2 Station Road, Normandy. Mr Johnson, employed at Aldershot said he was motoring, after work, towards London, and a motor lorry in front suddenly turned right in Normandy without warning. 'I braked and turned to the remaining few feet of the road, cleared the lorry and drew up', he said. As soon as he stopped, he felt an impact and saw the driver of a motorcycle, Mr Dann, thrown off on the roadside, the motorcyclist having come up from behind, in the same direction. The lorry driver maintained that he had put out his hand, which plaintiff said was not the case. Plaintiff's evidence was supported by his passenger. Mr Victor G Dann, the motorcyclist said he had a pillion passenger. He was overtaken by the car, which pulled to the nearside and braked suddenly, causing the motorcycle to collide with the car, throwing him five or six feet off the road into the ditch.

Police Sergeant C Harwood, Farnham, gave measurements and Ronald Davis the pillion rider also gave evidence, saying that he was thrown off on to the grass.

Mr Reginald Marshall driver of a two-ton commercial lorry, said he put out his hand when eighty to one hundred yards from where he was going to turn, and then started to slow his pace. When he heard the 'bump' he stopped at once. Mr Thomas G James of the Normandy Garage also said that the lorry driver slowed and extended his hand. Judge E M Konstam found that the lorry driver was in the first instance to blame for the 'mix up' and said that the motorcyclist aggravated it by his negligence in driving too close to the vehicles in front. Accordingly, he said, both Dann and Messrs Marshall were equally liable for the damage to the car.

¹⁷ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/10/a1982810.shtml>

¹⁸ <http://www.polfed.org/aboutus/69DD9AB47F534348AD5D1415843163AA.asp> 19 Jan 2010

¹⁹ <http://website.lineone.net/~alan.c.edwards/chilworthtalk040228.html>

Repairs would come to £16,2s and he would award £22 damages payable half and half by both defendants. 'I am sorry to have to come to such a conclusion, because obviously the man who has suffered most is Mr Dann the judge added.'²⁰

1940 June 30 first bomb fell on Surrey. From 30 June – 31 December 1940 **5,668** high explosive bombs were dropped on the Surrey Constabulary area.²¹

1940 police at the gas school at Artington



Left to right: Cecil Smith, Clifford Luff, Findon, Stan Norton, Dowding, Gilmartin, Sgt Blackmore, Corney, Tom Wyeth, Rose.



PC Bruce and PC Bradley at Guildford police station

July 1940 with “Old Faithful” a Wolseley 18/85

Arthur Bruce: Bruce and Bradley were in the yard at the police station in Guildford unloading firearms surrendered by the public from the above vehicle when a report came in of parachutists landing at Pitch Hill, Ewhurst. Without completing the unloading they piled into the car being joined by PCs George Young and Bob Rackham. “I should point out that car drivers were issued with a .303 rifle and five rounds of live ammunition. It was cynically suggested that the

²⁰ Surrey Advertiser <http://normandyhistorians.co.uk/press12.html>

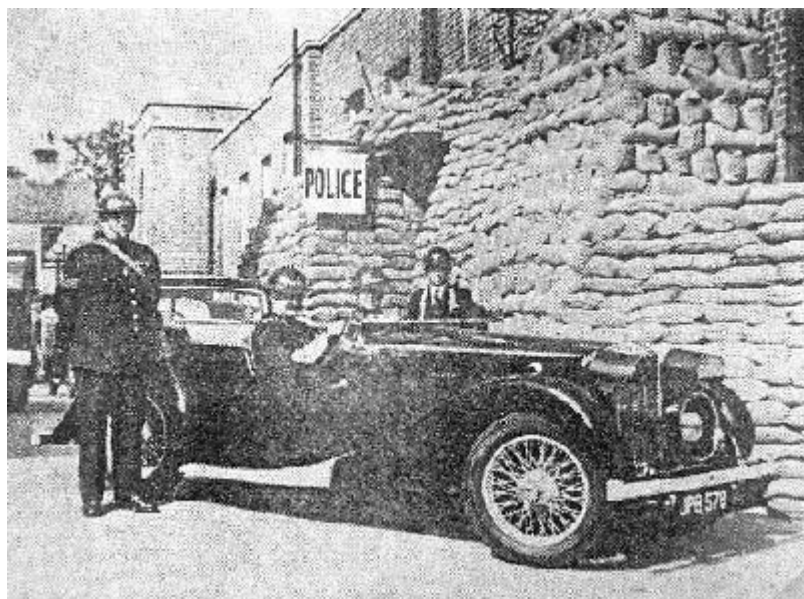
²¹ Durrant Surrey Constabulary 1851-1951 page 59

four rounds were for the enemy and the fifth being for us.” Arriving at Pitch Hill the only people about were road menders who were not aware of “the invasion”. They were given a 12-bore doubled barrelled shotgun and a handful of cartridges each with the injunction to “do their best.” The police then drove nearer to the foot of the hill prepared to “repel boarders.” Bert was armed with a revolver, George armed with Bert’s .303 went off in one direction, and Bob armed with a 12 bore and me with my .303. Bob was a little behind me and we had not gone far when from behind there was the report of a 12-bore followed by a surprised “@#@# that is not the safety position!” Thereafter I walked abreast of him. It was “A false alarm – good intent” – a police term passed down the years.²²

1940 PC Tiny Oliver was involved in a case involving Lt Hemmant after he **shot a woman** in Quarry Street, Guildford.²³

1940 PC Robert McBrien awarded BEM at great personal risk rescued a woman trapped under the ruins of a house demolished by an enemy bomb at Horsley

1940 Item ref: SCC Archive CC98/11/10 Wadkin family triple murder and suicide



*During WW 2 police officers wearing tin helmets, alongside the Redhill police station' had a heavily sandbagged entrance. The car was equipped with a loudspeaker and was used to tour the area issuing information, including warning of impending air raids when the siren on the Co-op roof froze in winter.*²⁴

William Flower Symonds: With the outbreak of the Second World War, Symonds was approaching 50 years of age and was told that he was far too old to re-enlist in the Army on active service. Instead, Symonds joined the Reigate Borough Constabulary as a Special Constable, and served in that capacity throughout the war

²² Arthur Bruce wrote to Off Beat in January 1980

²³ From a biographical note from Mr Oliver below

²⁴ Picture Alan Moore



William Flower Symonds, collar number SC186, pictured in 1940 Reigate²⁵



William Flower Symonds, collar number SC186, pictured in 1940²⁶

²⁵ <http://www.redhill-reigate-history.co.uk/bridger.htm>

²⁶ <http://www.redhill-reigate-history.co.uk/bridger.htm>

The above photos²⁷ of special constable William Flower Symonds, collar number SC186, pictured in 1940 and in 1941. Formerly in the army – a Lieutenant in the Dorset Regiment - he was in the Mesopotamia theatre of war during WWI. He was a member of the Reigate Special Constabulary during WW2 and lived in Reigate for many years.

1940: Following invasion scares **Guildford Borough Police** purchased several motorcycles and the riders issued with service revolvers.²⁸



An unusual picture of an armed PC Weekes of Guildford Borough

1939-1945: PC Burbidge serve in the Guildford Borough throughout the War as a uniform beat officer and station officer in North Street. There were a great number of Canadian troops billeted nearby and they caused a great deal of trouble in Guildford as this was their nearest town for recreation. Fights were common and police often ended up with their backs to the wall with truncheons drawn.²⁹

1939-1945: During the war there was an **additional police station** at St Michael's Road off the Epsom Road, Guildford where the Chief Constable had his office. North Street was under an inspector. The borough was split into inner and outer rings with a lookout tower at the top of Abbots Hospital for tracking bombs, manned by a PC.³⁰

Each sergeant had a large book where he entered references to all reports handed in by men on his relief and details of points made with the men. These were inspected and initialled every morning by the Chief Constable. All original notes were entered by the PC in his notebook.

²⁷ Photographs courtesy Richard Symonds and taken from Allen Moore's borough history site

²⁸ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

²⁹ Biographical note from Mr Burbage

³⁰ Biographical note from Mr Gower

1939-1945: Air raid alarms were controlled by the station officer from North Street police station, Guildford Borough. ³¹

1939–1945 Life on the beat: The parade room in the police station in North Street Guildford was a large room leading to the cells that also served as a mess room with one gas ring and as a charge room for the prisoners. Meal breaks were only half an hour, and all the men took their breaks at North Street, but the High Street beat was always covered. Cycle beats were covered using locally provided bikes from Jackson’s Cycle Agents of The Parade, Woodbridge Road.
³²

1939-1945: PC Gilbert Guildford Borough: During World War two private houses were used as police posts and air raid shelters. There were two shifts (1st and 2nd Siren) which were worked by police after a normal 12 hour shift. Initially they were granted one day off a week but later they were able to alter this so that they only performed 8 hour shifts but did not have any days off. PC Gilbert was the first Guildford PC to deal with enemy bombs falling in Shalford meadows causing no damage other than craters. There was a stick of about 5 bombs of 50kg each. PC Woodford was also there. ³³

Haslemere at War³⁴

The First Air Raid Warning

Haslemere had its first air raid warning on the Wednesday morning after the declaration of war. It had been reported that enemy aeroplanes were approaching our seacoasts and the first warning was received at 7am. At 8.20am the sirens were sounded as well as the hooter at the Gas Works and the A.R.P. services were mobilised in a very short space of time. The A.T.S was called out and men and women were seen hurrying to their posts where they remained until all clear was given at 9.15.

The enemy made several air attacks on the Haslemere district during the war, and the most serious was on March 8th, when high explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped over a wide area. One private house (Heath Edge) in the High Street, which had a bomb dropped in its garden during a fugitive raid some two years before on this occasion, received a direct hit and considerable structural damage was done to the back part of the premises. This was the only direct hit reported. All the other high explosive bombs fell either in roads or in gardens and although a large number of incendiary bombs were dropped, they did not go off or came down in open ground and no fires resulted.

One of the bombs, which fell in the garden of a house near the Ambulance Station in Pathfields, caused the death of Miss Marion Clarke, a volunteer ambulance driver for the Council since

³¹ Biographical note from Mr Burbage below

³² Biographical note from Mr Burbage below

³³ From a biographical note from Mr Gilbert below

³⁴ <http://www.haslemere.com/warmemorial/sillick.html#air>

1939, and seriously injured Mr Douglas Hunter, the ARP Transport officer, both on night duty in the Ambulance Station. Three other persons were seriously injured - Mr Samuel Blair, a despatch rider for the NFS, Mr C. V. Brine, a railwayman living in High Lane, and his daughter, Mrs Mabel Coussie. Shrapnel injured Mr Brine whilst he was on fire guard duty in front of his house and his house was so extensively damaged that it had to be evacuated. Damage was also caused to the Infants School and a large house nearby. Other damage was mainly to doors, roofs and windows in various parts of the town. Plate glass windows in some High Street shops were smashed.

One of the earliest raids occurred shortly after 10 O'clock on Sunday night, August 25th, 1940, when the Museum in the High Street was extensively damaged. Bombs fell on two sides of the building but there was no direct hit. One bomb fell on the lawn only a few yards from the Curator's house and the Peasant Arts Galleries. All the windows and the roofs on that side of the house were badly damaged. The Curator and his wife (Mr and Mrs Swanton) had a narrow escape for the windows of the room in which they were sleeping were blown upon them. Repairs to the Peasant Arts Galleries included alterations in the windows. The Loss of exhibits in the galleries was surprisingly small. The collections were cleaned and re-arranged by the staff, assisted by several ladies. In the raid of March 1943, the Museum escaped with few scars.

In another raid on February 9th, 1943, considerable damage was done to cottages in Fernhurst and eight persons were injured. The bomb fell on a roadside bank between the Post Office and the Church. The road leads to the village school but happily no-one was there at the time. Several trees were destroyed, and large boughs torn away caused a temporary stoppage in the road. The gate of the cemetery nearby was blown out. Two cottages were so badly damaged that they were uninhabitable for some time.

The last raid in June 1944 was by a flying bomb which approached from a south-easterly direction and fell in the garden of Amerley, Three Gates Lane, almost on the spot where a bomb had fallen in the early days of the war. Several people in the house suffered from shock but no serious damage was done.

Rex Cinema Damaged in Aeroplane Crash

Several Haslemere and Shottermill people returning from work on an evening in September 1942, were eyewitnesses to a tragedy from the air. A British aircraft had come out of the clouds and attention was drawn to it by the unusual noises the engines were making. "It was flying at a moderate height", said one witness, "and it was obviously in great difficulties. Suddenly there was an explosion and the machine seemed to break in pieces in mid-air. As I lost sight of it one part came down in a spiral dive and this was followed by the noise of a crash."

Several people saw the machine break up in the air and come down in three parts. The starboard engine crashed into the top part of the high wall of the Rex Cinema and finally landed in the space in front of the stage known as the orchestra pit. The port engine fell in the garden of Holy Cross Sanatorium, nearly a quarter of a mile away, and the wings and fuselage came down in

the public thoroughfare between the Cinema and the Sanatorium and close to the junction of the two main roads. On striking the road it immediately burst into flames. The crew of three in the aircraft were instantaneously killed, and it was almost a miracle that there were not many more civilian casualties. There is usually a great deal of traffic round about the road junction and public service vehicles were timed to arrive nearby only a short time after the accident. But fortunately, there was no one very near at the time the crash occurred, and the only persons injured were those in the Cinema.

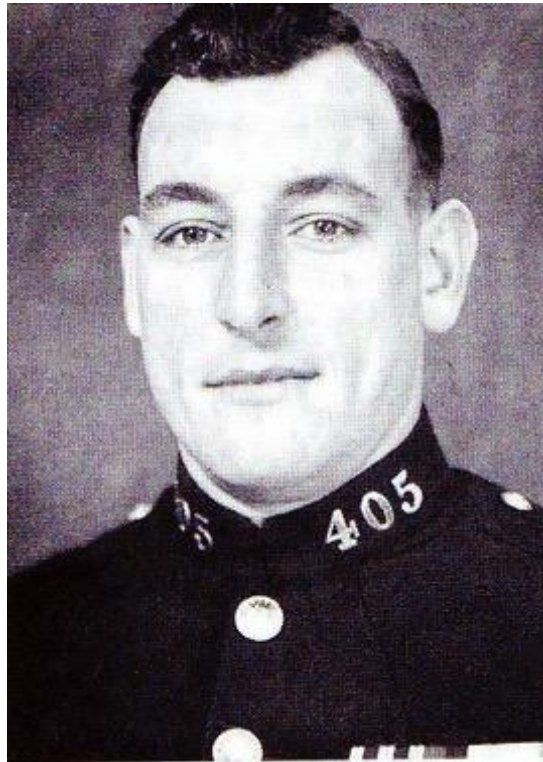
At this Cinema there were continuous performances but at the time of the crash there were fewer people there than at any other time of the day. The matinee was over, and the audience had dispersed, and the bulk of the people had not yet arrived for the evening performance. The starboard engine and the propeller went through the west wall of the tall building immediately above one of the buttresses and at a point near the roof. A hole about 16ft deep and 8ft wide was made in the wall but fortunately only two of the bricks fell inside. The propeller dropped in front of the front row of seats and the engine, after rocketing from one place to another, finally came to rest on the left side of the orchestra pit. Luckily there were no people in the front seats, but debris was thrown about all over the theatre causing damage to the seats and many parts of the interior of the building. Large holes were burst in the screen and the engine fell upon, and irretrievably damaged, a reserve screen kept under the stage for use in case of emergency. Altogether 12 persons were injured, 11 of them were taken to local hospitals and detained the other was taken to her home by a nurse. There were other cases of slight injury, which did not require hospital treatment. Several ambulances were quickly on the scene and did good work. The cinema had to be closed while repairs were carried out.

The only other building damaged was the lodge of the Sanatorium, tenanted by Mr and Mrs R.H. Mudd. Many tiles were broken and displaced, the top of the chimney was smashed, the inside of the north well was fractured, and the ceiling in the front bedroom collapsed. The wall separating the Sanatorium property from the main road was considerably damaged and the top part of the masonry over an area of 40ft was knocked down and fell into the roadway.

The accident caused much consternation in the district and a large crowd quickly assembled. For about two hours the main road was blocked, and traffic was diverted to Church (or Liphook) Road. Three sections of the National Fire Service attended with their pumps and working with much energy soon had the fire under control. Good work was also by police, the ARP services, and a number of troops in clearing the debris and regulating the traffic.

1940 February: PC Alfred James Everitt awarded **King's Police Medal for Gallantry** arresting an armed soldier who from the top of a railway carriage at Dorking attempted to shoot him at close range. On February 27, 1940, PC Everitt was called to Dorking North railway station to deal with a Canadian soldier who, while under the influence of drink, had climbed upon the roof of a railway carriage. The soldier had previously pointed a revolver at a railway guard who had told him to "scram". Everitt climbed to the roof of the carriage where he saw the soldier on his back with a revolver in his hand. The soldier pointed the revolver in the constable's direction, but the constable went towards him. As he did so he heard a click in the

revolver. The soldier had pulled the trigger but, as was found afterwards, the hammer had fallen on an empty chamber. In the next chamber there was a live cartridge. Everitt got the soldier down to the ground and with the help of two railwaymen took him to Dorking Police Station. When at Dorking Police Court the soldier was sent to prison for one month and fined £2 the magistrates commended PC Everitt for showing considerable presence of mind and pluck in this incident which took place at about midnight. The announcement of the award of the King's Police medal – the most honoured of all police distinctions – was made last Saturday. PC Everitt will be commanded to attend Buckingham Palace to receive his award.³⁵



PC 405 Alfred Everitt.

1940 People in Surrey towns complained that in the evening the streets were full of **drunken and profane Canadians**, mostly making their way back to their barracks, which they found so disagreeable.³⁶

³⁵ Dorking Advertiser 21 July 2011 – 70 Years On and 23 June 2016 75 years on

³⁶ “The Gentlemen at War” Policing Britain 1939-1945 Roy Ingleton Cranborne Publications 1994 p96