



THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT



In Association
with the CWGC



News from the Front line

Winter 2010

First of all we would like to wish everyone supporting the Project a Very Happy and Prosperous New Year and we look forward to continuing our affiliations throughout 2010 and into the future.

We have experienced a very busy three months since the Autumn edition primarily because this quarter embraces the Remembrance period of November. As usual site hits went up as the time of year made people remember those that have died in conflict and perhaps for the first time start looking on the Internet for more information and then find us. What is particularly poignant is the number of ladies who, now in their 90's, are coming forward sometimes via grandchildren in the hope of finding an 'old flame' or even husband to whom they were only married to for a short period prior to him being killed in the war. The ladies had subsequently remarried and now widowed again wanted to find their first loves. I am pleased to say that we have managed to fulfil all such requests including one to a lady who had not known that her first husband even had a grave and had spent the last fifty plus years believing he had been lost in the jungle of Burma.

In November we passed the 1.4 million mark of graves and memorial images on site which included the memorial at Arras which we had been waiting to photograph for some time. Other areas of note have been all those in Sierra Leone by Catherine Chatham, Ethiopia by Gail and Markus. Dave Ruddlesden completed many sites in Italy and all the Germans in Crete. Kjersti Meyer is coordinating a purge on Norway and David Milborrow is planning on completing Libya and Egypt in January so we hope to have a report in the next edition.



**Not a good week for photography in
Tonsberg, Norway !**

The downside of doing so well in such a short period is that large group trips as we have undertaken in France, Belgium, Netherlands and Gallipoli are now no longer feasible though popular at the time when large numbers of cemeteries could be completed in small areas like the Somme or Ypres. Cemeteries that are still required are now quite distant so coach travel is prohibitive and can be more efficiently completed in a car with fewer people. We will be looking at the potential of some smaller, independent, visits to Germany and other locations.

The CWGC have now provided us with the re engraving programme covering a three year period in France so this will enable Derek to programme revisits more efficiently and therefore maintain good quality images in the archive. In some cemeteries, like Beny sur Mer, the stones are being replaced over the period so these are coming in as replaced.

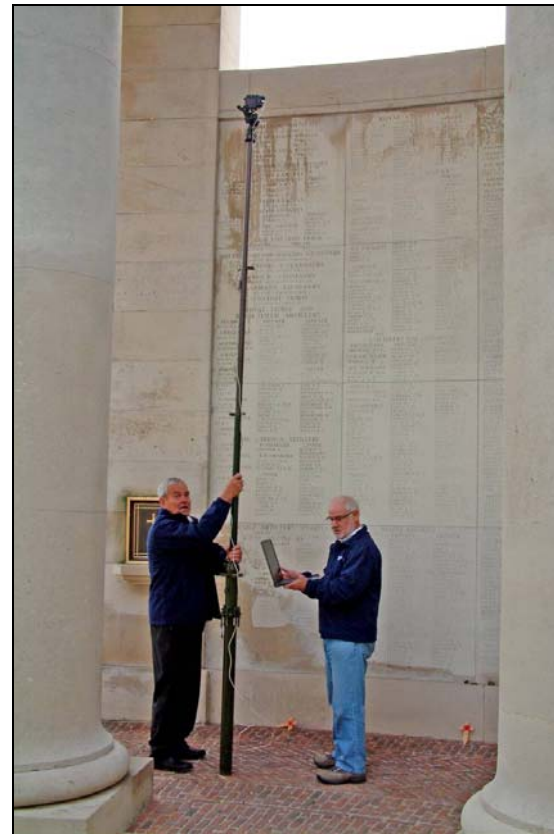
With best wishes

Steve

'Up a Pole' or 'A Birds eye view – Steve Rogers

Arras memorial to the missing has been outstanding for TWGPP for some time now. For those that have not seen it, the names are difficult to read as they are not blacked in like those on the Menin Gate or weathered, like Thiepval or Tyne cot, so the contrast between engraving and stone colour can be quite faint. This tends to confuse an automatic focus camera when trying to take pictures standing back from the panels as there is nothing clear to focus on. Numerous visits have resulted in the upper panels failing to achieve the standards we require when asked for requests.

In 2009 we considered hiring a moveable platform to give the camera the height required to enable us to take a photograph relatively closely and 90 degrees to the upper panels but at a cost of well over £350 for two days hire this was prohibitive. We then discovered that Canon produce a camera that can be 'tethered' or operated remotely from a laptop. This includes a zoom, focus and operation 'hot key' and so effectively using the camera, including viewfinder, from a considerable distance from where the camera is situated. BT had recently made a donation to the project via Dave Docherty so this was used to purchase the camera which was actually less than the cost of the two day tower hire.



The next task was how to deploy the camera up to a height of 25 feet. This was achieved by utilising a second hand telescopic radio mast on top of which was attached a camera tripod housing. 'Heath Robinson' would have been proud of it! With the camera fitted and attached to a laptop via a 5 metre USB cable we were ready to go. With spare laptops, batteries and a paraphernalia of other cameras and accessories Vernon, Terry and Steve, otherwise known as the 'human tripod' set off over the channel to Arras.

Everything went well and to save time we photographed all the top panels in one go transporting the pole mast by one pace forward for each shot.



We even utilised the pole to take a birds eye view of Faubourg cemetery which was an added bonus.

Apart from some panels that had brilliant sunshine on, we had completed Arras within 4 hours. The next day, which was spare, we decided to travel into Belgium and completed a revisit of Ploegsteert memorial using the same process and then drove into Ypres where we photographed recently cleaned Canadian panels using conventional cameras.

Given the success of this first trial we will now be re photographing a number of memorials where the names are high up on panels, the next one being Tower Hill Merchant Navy Memorial In London.



A Family at War

Those in UK may remember a programme on TV some time ago called 'A Family at War' which was based in Australia and if my memory serves me right was based around WW2 probably a precursor to 'Neighbours'. Greg Amey, a recent volunteer in Australia, must have been a fan of the programme as he now gets involved in a re-enactment organisation along with his son Eric (14) and daughter Jessica (16). They are now all helping the project photograph the cemeteries in the State of Queensland.

Not from Greg but another note from 'Down under'. *"Firstly to you and the team, a big WELL DONE. You all have done a magnificent job of photographing graves. I would like to ask if when we next come to your part of the world, can we come in and buy a photo over the counter?"*

– Perhaps we should consider taking over the Woolies shops? - Steve



An Englishman (woman) in New York – Marian Bushby

Marian Bushby has been assisting TWGPP since it's start and recently visited New York where she managed to locate BROOKLYN (HOLY TRINITY) CEMETERY and BROOKLYN (THE EVERGREENS) CEMETERY. We only needed thirteen in total from both sites but even with 500,000 plots to search through she still came up with the goods.

"I had wanted to get more cemeteries but we didn't get ashore till noon due to the nutty US immigration officials -do I look like a terrorist or someone who wants to stay there - let's face it- I come from the REAL God's own county (Yorkshire). We took the subway and when we came out of the station in Brooklyn we just wandered off as if we knew where we were - our appearance was plenty to flag up the fact we were strangers without getting a map out. Holy Trinity was easy - we had a map and the cemetery was quite small. The Evergreens were in 4 separate areas and involved a lot of walking on a hot afternoon - I'd definitely have been no use in Cassino. The workers were very helpful if we got lost - including the cemetery superintendent and the local mason who were like a double act.

They were all amazed that we were on foot!! Eventually we managed to find our way out back onto the road and after asking 3 Mr T lookalikes who were peering at a car engine we found the subway back to Brooklyn Bridge.

So far, I've never regretted meeting Steve at Avrils! The places we go and people we meet in this project are always worthwhile - in NYC if we hadn't been doing this we'd have been round the usual places that we've seen before. The main disappointment of the trip was that the weather wasn't suitable for a tender landing at Newport RI where there was just one cemetery with a number of graves all in the same area, so we'll have to go there another time.

Unusual Stone

Photographers often find unusual variations of headstones but one version we have not seen before at TWGPP has been submitted from Belgium which shows the grave of Lance Corporal Hinkinson of the Welsh Guards in AUDERGHEM (OUDERGEM) COMMUNAL CEMETERY. The plot is predominantly Belgium casualties so the British graves follow the same pattern of stone although even for a Belgian stone this version has not been seen yet.



Sergeant Harcourt, Bergen (Mollendal Church) Cemetery



Kåre and Kjærsti

Since the last newsletter **Kjærsti Meyer**, in Norway, has joined us as a volunteer and has also taken on Co ordinating the remaining sites in Norway by making contact with locals in various areas and encouraging assistance. This has borne fruition with many sites coming in although the current darkness being experienced in Norway has delayed some sites until the Spring.

Kjærsti first made contact because of an interest in the grave of Sergeant E.R. Harcourt buried in Bergen (Mollendal) Church Cemetery. Her father **Kåre Pedersen** now aged 86 was implemental in ensuring Sergeant Harcourt had a decent burial. His account of the circumstances is reproduced below (*with slight editing by Steve*)

It was the night of Wednesday the 13. August 1941. People at the little place Bærøy woke up to the sound of shooting. From Kåre's parents house they had a good view over the sea and the little islands nearby and saw lights from a German coastguard ship. After a while a Bristol Beaufort from 42 Squadron Coastal Command came out the fjord with one engine obviously in trouble and suddenly there was a great crack as it crashed into the sea.

The people entered their boats at once and made for the crash site but they only found one dead person, that of Sergeant Harcourt. They took his body to an islet named "Flatøy" and went to inform the local police. The next day Kåre O. Pedersen, aged 18, arrived from Bergen, where he lived at the time, and heard what had happened. He did not like the fact that the body Sergeant Harcourt lay uncovered at the islet of Flatøy and decided, as a mark of respect, to cover his body. It would appear that although Harcourt still had his lifejacket on, he had tried to take his boots off as one was missing and apart from a scratch on his face there appeared to be no other injuries so he most probably drowned. Inside his pockets were 50 Norwegian Crowns (at that time a weeks salary) and a small notebook with lots of 'W's and 'X's inside. Perhaps a kind of code book? In this book Harcourt had written "Damaged in flight, maybe found to land."

Kåre along with his uncle Erling wrapped Harcourt in a sheet and then stayed with him until the local police arrived, together with the Germans. The Germans did not treat the body with respect. One of them kicked the body and said : "verdamter Schweinhund ". Another spoke ironically when he found the 50 crown note and joked that "he intended to be on holiday with Norwegian relatives."

Later on they put Harcourt in a coffin which had been made for an elderly lady named Laura, who lived at nearby Bærøy. She died about a week later. Harcourts body was first taken to Mosterhamn and then onto Bergen where he was buried. When Kåre returned to Bergen he went to Mollendal Cemetery and found Harcourts first grave with a wooden cross on it. At the end of the war graves of other British soldiers were interred at the same site.

At Bømlø there is a monument for the aircraft and its crew. In 1991, fifty years after the crash, they raised the monument at "Ytre Håvik" and Kåre was invited to this ceremony and met relatives who told him that Harcourts mother slept with her door unlocked in the hope that he would return home. Kåre gave them a piece of the plane that was found in the sea.



My Grandfather - Dawn Scott

My name is Dawn Scott (Hattie). I am the Granddaughter of the late Private John Ernest Hattie of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Ever since I was a little girl I remember hearing stories about a Grandfather I only knew through pictures. My mother never knew him either. He left for overseas three months before she was born. He left behind a wife and three other children having lost his life on Sept. 21st 1944 on a battlefield in Italy. I don't think my Grandmother ever had closure due to the fact that she never had the opportunity to visit his grave. Last year around Mother's Day, I heard her tell the familiar story. I decided to see what I could find.



Through my searches via the internet I was directed The War Graves Photographic Project. Just in time for Mother's Day I was able to present my Grandmother with a picture of my Grandfather's grave and tombstone. She could finally see that he had been and is still being looked after as the graves are kept very neat.

Just recently I wrote to Ottawa and requested a copy of my Grandfather's records to keep with the family history. I took them to the nursing home where my grandmother (age 92) now lives. We read over them together and as we got to the letter that notified of his death she began a story. "It seems like yesterday", she said. "I was out in the yard with family when I saw two people walking up the lane". "I already knew that he was gone", she told me. She recounted several times she felt that his spirit had tried to let her know that he had been killed.

She went into the house and picked up her baby daughter. She cried as she told her that she would never meet her father. Later that night, her oldest son (8 yrs) knelt to say his prayers; he asked God to bless his father and then cried out that he didn't have a dad anymore. After all these years she says that it still makes her heart ache. Fast-forward sixty-five years. Unfortunately, a mother's heart aches when she tells her son/daughter that they will never see their dad again.

Thanks to the War Graves Photographic Project. As they say A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS! You made my Grandmother's day.

SISTERS IN ARMS – Tony and Sue Wege

We volunteers of TWGPP world wide no doubt frequently come across snippets of history that are something special. We certainly have. The account that follows is quite a unique story and comes from two family memorials on graves we have found here in South Australia and photographed for the Project.

On the 16th February 1942 on a beach of Banka Island located off the Sumatran coast (in present day Indonesia), 22 captured Australian army nursing sisters and one British civilian lady were forced at bayonet point by Japanese soldiers to wade into the sea. They were then ruthlessly machine gunned by these troops. Only one woman, (Captain) Sister Vivian Bullwinkel (born Kapunda, South Australia, army number VFX 61330) survived, after feigning death and with a bullet through her spleen, and was later held as a PoW for the rest of the war. One of the 21 Australian nursing sisters cold bloodedly murdered on that beach was Lt. Florence Rebecca Casson (born Warracknbeal, Victoria). Her body like the other 21 women shot dead (including the British civilian), was never found. She is commemorated on the Singapore memorial located in the Kranji CWGC cemetery.

Two days before this massacre, the ship S.S. "Vyner Brooke" that was carrying 65 Australian Army nurses and 250 other people including a number of sick and wounded British soldiers and European civilians all being evacuated from Singapore, was sunk by Japanese bombers. Three Australian nurses were killed in the bombing attack carried out on the 16th February 1942. Nine others were drowned when the ship went down. One of those nurses who drowned and whose body was never recovered was Lt. Annie Merle Trenerry (born Moonta, South Australia). She too is commemorated on the Singapore memorial, Kranji CWGC cemetery.

Vivian Bullwinkel AO MBE, postwar became a significant leader in Australia for women's issues, particularly health. Rightly her views were canvassed and respected nation wide for the decades that followed. She died at the age of 84 in Western Australia.

Although born in Victoria, Lt Florence Casson's family were living in Adelaide at the time of the outbreak of WW2. She was nursing at Pinnaroo, a small SA country town near the SA/Victorian border. Lt Merle Trenerry's family lived in the small SA mining town of Moonta upon the outbreak of war, the town in which she was born. Both women joined the Australian Army Nursing Service at about the same time: **Annie Merle Trenerry** volunteered for military service at the Wayville recruiting centre, Adelaide on 7th February 1941. **Florence Rebecca Casson** volunteered also at Wayville on 10th March 1941. Lt Trenerry's army number was SFX 13419. Lt Casson's number was SFX 13418, one before Lt. Trenerry although she joined up some five weeks later. Regardless, their army numbers are uniquely sequential.



Some sources have mistakenly omitted the "F" in these numbers but the correct prefix includes the "F" (The "S" indicates the person joined the army at a South Australian recruiting centre, "V" means recruitment was in the state of Victoria and so on. The "F" means the person is female – there was no "M" for the men however. The "X" means that the person voluntarily joined the Second Australian Imperial Force – the 2/AIF: the first AIF being the army of WW1). Both women, highly experienced in nursing, were posted to the same newly formed (in August 1941) 2/13th Australian General Hospital of the Australian army. This hospital was sent to Singapore (September 1941) but was re-located to Malaya in November 1941.

But after 8th December 1941 when allied forces were attacked in Malaya by the invading Japanese, the hospital was relocated to Singapore. With allied defeat imminent on the island of Singapore in early February, Australian army command ordered the evacuation of the nursing sisters from the three Australian Army hospital units there: the 2/13th AGH, the 2/10th AGH and the 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station. All the sisters left the island on 12th February 1942 on board the British merchant ship "SS Vyner Brooke". The ship was carrying the 65 sisters of the three Australian hospital units and some 250 other evacuees. These included many wounded British soldiers, British civilian government staff and their families and some Dutch nationals. The "Vyner Brooke" was attacked and sunk by Japanese bombers on the 14th February 1942 very close to the southern coast of Sumatra.

Amongst those who died as part of this sinking and its aftermath included the two women whose memorials we have found here in South Australia.



This disaster, or at least the Banka Island massacre, is still remembered to some extent in Australia today. But apart from Vivian Bullwinkel, it would be fairly safe to say almost no-one knows the names of any of the other 64 nurses of the three hospital units who either died during the war or were released in September 1945 haggard and starving but still alive . And up until now, that included us.

It was with a good deal of satisfaction that we came across these two family memorials when we were searching both Moonta and Payneham cemeteries here in SA in the last few weeks for the Project. They are both in reasonable condition although they were placed there decades ago but they will not last forever. We hope to find similar memorials to a couple of other South Australian sisters from this incident when we search more cemeteries here. There were at least six South Australian sisters from these three units who died during WW2. Apart from the fact that the memory of these women is still maintained locally to some extent via those rather forgotten and transient memorials, TWGPP will ensure that those we find like Lieutenants Casson and Trenerry, will have a permanent world wide remembrance. And that is to be greatly valued.

Spooky - David Halstead

David recently requested a photograph of the grave of Sgt. Bryan Steward who is buried in El Alamein Cemetery in Egypt.



I am a Methodist Minister and in the 80's while serving Ainsdale Methodist Church near Southport I was preparing a children's address for Remembrance Sunday. I asked some members of the congregation if any of them had a photographic slide of ranks of head stones in a war grave cemetery that I might screen on our chancel wall to give the children and young people some sense of what it was all about. One member who had served in North Africa had recently returned from a visit to El Alamein and he produced a slide which was exactly what I wanted. On Remembrance Sunday I started my talk and turned on the projector. As I stood by the image I noticed for the first time the detail on the head stone in the front centre of the picture. I read out Sgt. Steward's name and then the date of his death 19 April 1942 - at that point I experienced a shiver down my spine the like of which I had never had before. Sgt. Steward had died on the day that I was born. I vowed then that one day I would visit his grave.

I am now retired and will be visiting Egypt with friends in North Wales in March 2010. It turns out that the father of one of the party is also buried in El Alamein so we have extended our trip to spend two days visiting the War Cemetery there. My request for the photograph was by way of preparation for the trip as I no longer have the slide mentioned above.

The last flight of Lancaster LL919 - Anne Grimshaw.

On 26 April 1944 at 21:32, Lancaster LL919, one of thirteen from 619 Squadron, took off from RAF Dunholme Lodge, near Lincoln. The target was Schweinfurt in Bavaria, southern Germany.

The crew comprised Guy Gunzi (pilot), Ernest George Cass (flight engineer), Nikolas Vlassie RCAF (navigator), Jack Mills (bomb aimer), Alan Pickstone (wireless operator), Lewis Leslie Feindell RCAF (mid upper gunner) and Kenneth Frank (rear gunner). The original 'core' of the crew (Gunzi, Pickstone, Feindell and Frank) were on their seventeenth operation.



Guy Gunzi

Nikolas Vlassie

Alan Pickstone

Kenneth Frank

Lewis Fiendell

Because of the strong head winds many aircraft were blown off course "due to inaccurate broadcast winds" and LL919 may have been amongst them. It flew over a heavily defended area where German fighters were out in force and one from the fighter station at St Dizier closed in. LL919 was shot down near the small village of Landéville to the north-east of Chaumont in the department of Haute-Marne at 01:30 on the morning of 27 April 1944. Nothing was heard from LL919 after take-off; it was one of twenty-one aircraft which did not return from the Schweinfurt operation.

Eyewitness accounts in Landéville say that LL919 was on fire and circled low over the village twice, perhaps looking for a place to land, before crashing on a wooded hillside some distance from the village. Flames lit up the night sky so that it was as bright as day. The brilliant, white light was probably caused by burning magnesium, an ingredient of its 1,200 incendiary bombs.

The bodies of four other crew members were quickly found and identified as Gunzi, Vlassie, Feindell and Frank but two more who were badly burnt were later identified as those of Pickstone and Cass.

A funeral was held for the identified bodies on 29 April 1944. The church at Landéville was too small to hold all those who wanted to attend; everyone in Landéville came as did people from nearby villages. Many were in tears. Wreaths and floral tributes covered the graves, their cards bearing the words 'Remembrance', 'Regrets' and 'To our liberators'. Over the following weeks several hundred people came to visit the graves. On the liberation of France the villagers placed small British and French flags over the graves. "They are ours – they are our soldiers," wrote Mariette Coutret.

The only survivor **Jack Mills**, the bomb aimer, was badly injured (his parachute had not had chance to open fully) and was unconscious for six hours. On regaining consciousness one of the villagers, Mariette Coutret, offered him coffee and warm milk but he was unable to eat because of a fractured jaw. The local doctor bandaged his jaw and tried to make him comfortable. Jack could speak no French and no one in the village spoke English but he wrote his address and gave it to Mariette Coutret hoping that she would get a message to his family.



As Jack was so badly injured he was handed over to the German authorities who would take care of him and treat his injuries at a local hospital. Once he had recovered sufficiently he was sent to the prisoner-of-war camp, Stalag Luft VII at Bankau in Silesia, now Poland where he became a member of the exclusive 'Caterpillar Club' for those whose lives had been saved by parachute.

Shortly before his death in 1993, Jack said: "LL919 was a new plane. It had flown only one mission before 26 April 1944. We usually flew Lancaster [ED859] V-Vic which was a real old veteran. V-Vic was being overhauled and we were allotted W-Willy. I expect the Air Ministry was annoyed at losing it so soon!"

In 1994, the 50th anniversary of the shooting down of Lancaster LL919, a two-day commemoration and exhibition was held in Landéville which was attended by friends and family of some of the crew members.

There are memorials to the crew of LL919 at the former RAF Dunholme Lodge, Welton, Lincolnshire, and Thorpe Camp, Tattershall Thorpe, near Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire.

Lost in Translation - Фотопроект Могилы войны



Dave Lovell, based in Paris, is in the fortunate position where his job takes him around the Globe. A recent e mail from his wife Kay in France mentioned that Dave had managed to arrange a two day stopover in Sofia in Bulgaria so was there anything required. A quick check of archive revealed that Plovdiv and Sofia war cemeteries required outstanding work so within a few minutes the list was on Daves Laptop. Dave discovered that above and beyond the Commonwealth Forces there was a large German and Russian contingent to photograph.

With the images firmly in the bag then begins the process of renaming and by good luck and fortune we had a request from a Russian, Roman Firsov, for a German Grave in Cannock Chase. Not slow in coming forward I asked Roman if he would mind translating the Russian names which looked all Greek to me and he agreed. Amongst all those in the Russian graves were many Bulgarian nationals all of which are on site now.

Roman runs his own site www.group9may.com and now investigating the fact that it would appear that a number of 'Germans' buried in Cannock Chase are in fact Russian, something he wishes to highlight and perhaps get corrected in due course.

Coincidence?

In the November 2008 Newsletter we had an article written by Laurence Bertholet about a visit to Rachecourt where she found herself in the midst of a remembrance ceremony and found it perhaps too much of a coincidence that she had planned a visit without even knowing it was the anniversary of the crash in which the casualties had died. This year, without realising we had previously written about the site, Judy Mayo, who lives in Australia, sent in some photographs of the crew which we have now added to their pages on site.



Judy's interest started whilst researching her family history and especially her cousin Peter Newland:

"Stories of the War Hero Peter, absolutely enthralled me. However the whole of the Newlands in Australia thought that Peter had died in a Lancaster which crashed into the Dutch Sea. They all mourned him because he was a great favourite among them. Peter came to Australia in the 1930's and left Doonside to travel back to enlist in England. They were all upset that Peter had no proper grave and that he had died so young.



In 1997 when my son got his first computer, he almost had to force me to learn to use it. That is when my family research took hold and it has become a wonderful and enlightening journey taking me back to the 1600's in every branch my family. The first person I researched was of course Peter and it did not take me long to discover that he had a grave in France. My cousins were all very surprised and all very, very interested. They were all too old to travel to France by this time but took a lot of comfort in finding out that the French people were there at Peter's death to take care of his body and those of the rest of the crew who died. As did I because by this time I felt (and still do) very close to Peter.

The next surprise was when I discovered that Peter had married. He and Joyce were married only 6 short weeks by the time he died. I was so upset when I finally found Joyce's death record, I had been trying so hard to find her. I was only a few months too late. It appears that she never remarried. I wonder if she had a happy life after the war. I do hope that she did not spend her whole life grieving for the husband that she lost so soon.

Peter and the crew had not flown together for long. Peter was only with them for a short time. He was only with the Air Force for a short time for that matter.

I find it so interesting that Laurence arrived in Rachecourt on the Anniversary of the crash. For some reason she must have been guided to that particular place on that day. Thank you so much for sending those pictures. It is wonderful to know that the French people are still so grateful for the sacrifices that took place on their land.



It seems that in Australia people are beginning to forget about why we are here, free in this country. However, there is a growing interest again in Australian teenagers and 20 year olds. I hope this keeps on and our Patriotic Spirit returns also.



Over the recent months TWGPP has been advertised in a number of Genealogical magazines which has extended our popularity considerably and maintained a greater interest than that usually experienced over the November Remembrance period. Over the next two months we will appear in the January edition of 'Family History' magazine published by ABM Publishing Ltd. and further to that we have, once again, been invited to the 'Who Do You Think You Are Exhibition 2010' which will be held at Olympia in London over the weekend 26th -28th February. We will be joining the CWGC team on their stand on the first floor in a larger area than previous which will give us the facility for two laptops to search the site and the archive at the same time. We will be armed with a box of tissues this time! If you are planning a visit then please pop in a say hello.

<http://www.whodoyouthinkyouarelive.co.uk/>

French Royalty

It is not often that we come across French Royalty when photographing war graves so thought that this one was worth mentioning as the setting was quite grandeur.

Prince Antoine Gaston Phillipe of Bourbon – Orleans was the great Grandson of King Louise Phillipe of France and son of Prince Gaston, Count D'Eu and Princess Isabella of Braganza.

He was born in 1881 and during WW1 was a Captain in the Royal Canadian Dragoons. He was unfortunate enough to die a few days after the First World War ended.

On November 29th he was flying from France to England and was forced to make a landing at Old Southgate where the plane got out of control and collided with a cottage. The pilot of the machine was killed instantly and the Prince fatally injured and died soon after in a military hospital from his injuries.

He now lies in a family vault at Dreux Royal Chapel, France which was visited by Kay Lovell on behalf of TWGPP.



Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery, Poland – Peter Beaven

Going overseas on business can be a very lonely experience. I should know: I've been to 12-15 countries around the globe every year for the past 3 years. I've met some interesting people on my travels, none more so than the Scottish wedding party that had invaded the normally quiet hotel at Lask in central Poland in August. This was to be my last business trip for the company.

One of the hotel staff had just told the Scottish guests to make less noise as it was getting rather late. But when you're hundreds of miles from home, eating late and feeling a little homesick, it is great to hear English being spoken (admittedly by some Scottish people).

After being reprimanded, a couple of the guests seemed to titter quietly to themselves, rather like naughty schoolchildren. I mentioned to one of them that I was actually quite pleased to hear them speaking English. Before I knew it, I was talking to this Scottish man, a Mr Bain, about history. He said he was researching the names on a war memorial in Scotland. Was I interested in history? I had to admit that I wasn't really. Then he hummed the music to *The Great Escape* movie. Of course I recognised the tune immediately (probably as the film has been on TV every Christmas, as regularly as *The Sound of Music* and the Queen's Speech).



Mr Bain told me that the real escapees from the POW camp at Stalag Luft III were buried at Poznan in NW Poland. (I'd already let slip that my last 3 days of business meetings were in Poznan). So his next request was whether I wouldn't mind visiting the Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery for him? It just so happened that I'd only got 3 meetings scheduled for my final 3 days in Poland, so unusually I had plenty of free time to do this.

Before I went to bed, Mr Bain had provided me with a print out from the CWGC website showing how to locate the cemetery, and the details of the two soldiers whose graves he wanted me to locate and photograph.

When I arrived in Poznan the following afternoon I drove immediately to the Old Garrison Cemetery. I'd been told to find the Book of Remembrance as "...this holds the key to the whole cemetery". However when I opened the cupboard at the cemetery I was disappointed to discover that the book was missing (it was being held in the Citadel Office for safekeeping). I asked around, but those people who did speak English didn't know where the office was situated.

By cold searching the graves, I managed to find one of the two headstones and photographed it. But the other grave eluded me. That night, using the Internet access in my hotel room, I looked up "Buchanan" and "Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery" on Google. I thought that there just might be something about him on the Web that would help me to locate the grave.

There was! I had stumbled into The War Graves Photography Project!

Now I have to admit that I've never really been one for history or visiting cemeteries before. But what I found (and photographed) at the Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery has affected me very deeply. But I'll have to tell you more about this some other time!

Editorial – Pauline Pedersen

I'm masquerading under false pretences this time to be credited with anything to do with the editing of this Newsletter. It's all down to Steve. There was some material I forwarded to him but after that he forged ahead whilst I was bogged down with family domestic stuff and lost track of time.

Having reported in the last issue about the trip to France with Marsha & Geoff Thorndike I was subsequently mortified to learn that at some point the settings on my camera had changed and a large majority of the images I'd taken were next to useless. Oh woe! Jim only discovered this when he began to rename them. So whoever does the revisit, thanks!



Memorials turn up in the most unexpected places though. During the autumn we had a day out at Kew Gardens, Richmond, Surrey. Amongst the wonderful collection of trees there we came across a very special oak; the plaque beneath it told the story, which I pass on to you because I know you'll appreciate it.

A very Happy New Year to everyone.

Points from the Post

Dear sir, After many years of searching for an available source to gain a photo of her fathers grave who, was killed in WW2, when she was a small child, I was able to fulfill a dream and give pleasure beyond belief, to my Mum , yesterday through this wonderful site. For the first time ever I was able to view my grandfathers grave, and was the first family member in all these years to see it. words cannot describe what this has meant to myself, my Mum, and my children for without the kindness of the volunteers and every single person involved in this project this would never have been possible. My personal thanks go to Mr. Jon Wort who gave his time to take this photograph and will never know how much that time was worth to our family. Such a pity my Nana is no longer alive to share our joy but, am sure that many, many family members will share this joy over the decades. Kind regards and grateful thanks Jan Cook

Many thanks we are so grateful, my daughter had some printed for my Mum today and gave them to her as she does not have a computer; this was the first time that she was able to see the images, very emotional experience as you can imagine. I am very grateful that you were able to pass on my personal thanks to Jon Wort and am very happy to say that I received a lovely e mail from him today, like yours it was a wonderful surprise, we will always remember this great kindness. Kind Regards Jan.

Thank you so much for the photos of Taukkyan war cemetery and George Bradley's grave received today. It has been a long trawl through the Internet pages trying to find someone who might have a photo of Uncle George's grave although we, as a family, have always said we would like to go and see it for ourselves but we have never had the money and Burma might as well be on the moon to us. I am going to send them to his daughter tomorrow, she never knew him, Joan was born in 1941. I am so very grateful to whoever took the photo's, I cannot say thank you enough. Yours sincerely Barbara Woodward

Thank you for such wonderful generosity of time and spirit. Ken Hinkley

Thank you seems far too small a word to use for the pictures. I am the first person from our family to every have seen the grave of my great Uncle, without the skill and dedication of your team, it would not have been possible. I am aware that you probably get lots of people saying thank you but please pass on my most sincere gratitude to all involved. One day I hope to visit the grave in person but for now I can be happy that my Great Uncle lays in peace and dignity. On Friday I will be showing the photographs to my Father and he will finally see the grave of the person he is named after. Many thanks seems so insufficient, but it is the best I can do. Yours in sincere gratitude Mark Songhurst

I am writing on behalf of the wife of Reginald Ernest Brown buried in Taukkyan Cemetery, Burma. His wife Lily, now aged 94, has never known his resting place and is now very happy to know that he was buried properly and would like to thank TWGPP for providing this service. Yours faithfully. Mr C Mulhearn

Thank you so much for sending over these photos, they are brilliant and so brilliant that it could have come before Remembrance Day - thank you so so much for this, it will mean the world to my family, you do a great job. Thank you once again from the bottom of my heart. Julie Cotterill

Thank you so much for your swift reply with the photos of Douglas Colman's grave. I will print this off and present it to his Great Nephew this evening. It is purely coincidental that I will be meeting him tonight on Remembrance Sunday for dinner and I know he will be very touched. Douglas Colman's daughter is still alive aged 98 and living in a nursing home. It is my friend's wish that he can show her a picture of her father's grave, which she has never seen, before she passes on. The work that you do is priceless and much appreciated. Thank you and God Bless. William

First I want to express my appreciation on behalf of the family here in BC, Canada to all those involved in the work on this particular project!! I am doing research on behalf of my children's grandmother, Virginia (Pierre) Wallace of the Lil'wat Nation, recently passed on. Not too many years before she passed on she learned from a priest in a neighboring community that she did not share the same birth father as her siblings. Her birth father was Private Joseph Henry Johnson and he died while serving in France when she was 20 months old. Her dream was to bring him home; however, I found that he is well taken care of and greatly honored at Beny-Sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery. She suffered a stroke and passed before I was able to share my findings with her. I continue to work to honor her loss and to honor her father's sacrifice. I hope one day that maybe we can have inscription added to his headstone; however, that will take a lot of work to figure out and may not even be possible. It may not be possible for us to ever be there; however, I dream of that also. So to have a photo of the cemetery was beautiful and now to be able to obtain a photo of his actual headstone is touching beyond words!! I am sure that you receive many emails like this; but, still I hope that you are able to receive and express our gratitude! I am very excited to receive and pass on this treasure to Virginia's living sons! And to show her grandchildren! Joseph's great grandchildren!! Sincerely, Karrie Thornitt

Lisbon Maru – Marian Bushby

I was interested to read the account of the sinking of the 'Lisbon Maru', in October 1942, in the last newsletter since one of the men killed aboard, Gunner Ken Burdett, grew up next door to my Mother. This short part of his family's history illustrates the great change in world communications since then and also the effect that the Second World War had on one family which we tend to associate more with the First World War.

Ken's elder brother, Sergeant Frank Burdett was a regular in the Royal Artillery and at the outbreak of war was based in Hong Kong. Ken applied to join the same regiment in order to join his elder brother. However on arrival in Hong Kong he discovered Frank had died on October 25th 1940, possibly the result of a swimming accident, while Ken was in transit.

In contrast to today's world of instant communication an item in the 'South Yorkshire Times' of October 7th 1944 states

'Mr W Burdett has received a communication from the War Office with reference to the notification sent to him on June 8th 1943 that Gunner K Burdett was reported 'missing at sea'. It states all hope abandoned, that his son must have been lost when the ship on which he was being conveyed from Hong Kong to Japan was sunk. His brother Sergeant Frank Burdett died from illness since the war began. Another brother Albert is a POW in Germany. Mr Burdett's son-in-law Pte Douglas Rouse, whose brother's death was reported a few weeks ago, is serving in Italy.'



Albert returned home and went into business with one of his other brothers, Sid, as the local undertakers. Their parents are buried in Denaby Main cemetery with Frank and Ken commemorated on their headstone.

When is a war grave not a war grave? - Martin Harvey



I gave a short presentation on TWGPP recently, and as part of this I used some local war graves as examples of what the Project does. One of these was a family grave containing, amongst others, two brothers who died in service in WW1.

The grave also had other characteristics, one being that it was delineated using kerb-stone type markers that, in this case, were sinking into the ground and likely to disappear in the foreseeable future. Also, one of the engraved names was no longer visible.

As chance would have it a lady I know said, during question time, that this was a grave belonging to her family! She was very realistic about it all, but her punch line came when she said that her family never considered this to be war grave.

Very interesting really- when is a war grave not a war grave? The technical definition of a war casualty is that he or she died in service, in the case of WW1 between 4 August 1914 and 31 August 1921. However, in this case, presumably because of the passage of time and perhaps family dispersal and so on, the awareness within the family that these were indeed two war burials seems to have gone.

Having said that, she did understand what was happening to her family's grave and I think that she is now in touch with other relatives to decide what is best to do about its condition.

A couple of months ago I was fortunate to be able to have an on site meeting with Val Sargeson and Andy Stillman at Brookwood Military cemetery in Surrey. The object of the meeting was to discuss how we could help the CWGC UK Area office, based in Leamington Spa, via our network of volunteers. Many of you find stones which we believe may have been neglected, vandalized or may be totally missing!

In some cases we find that the names do not relate to data or it may be a case of the spelling or rank different. Many of these discrepancies were due to problem with scanning when the ledgers were transferred to digital media. However, some slipped through the net and are not noticed until we have to rename the images taken and associate them to the names on our spreadsheet lines. All such anomalies directed to TWGPP are forwarded to CWGC enquiries to investigate and rectify if required.

The UK office, tasked with maintaining the headstones, are aware that many local authority sites have toppled the larger headstones under 'Elf & safety' rules and many of these are reported to us. We have been asked to follow the guidelines that if the inscription is still visible, ie not toppled face down then the casualty is considered to be sufficiently commemorated. If we think of the war cemeteries like Boulogne and Wimereux all the stones are flat on the ground by design.

If you find a stone that has obviously been vandalized then please continue to report these to TWGPP and we can send details. A photo is always beneficial.

Val also asked us if we could also reiterate the CWGC policy on the cleaning of headstones which I copy below.

GUIDANCE ON MAINTENANCE OF WAR GRAVES

Background

In many cemeteries and churchyards the Commission does not have any more right of access than anyone else or any authority to carry out maintenance in its own right. Any work undertaken has to be agreed by a third party (usually the controlling authority) and we have to operate within any constraints they wish to place upon that work. Most of our work is undertaken by contractors and we have numerous agreements with local councils and churches for the maintenance of the war graves.

In addition to the routine maintenance carried out by contractors all the headstones are cleaned by Commission staff on a biennial basis and the fabric of the headstones are checked every three years to ensure that commemorations of the casualties are still legible. We also have an ongoing renovation programme where sites are earmarked for renovation by Commission staff provided that subsequent ongoing maintenance can be assured. In most sites where we have a commitment much depends upon the resources that the controlling authority can bring to bear. Whilst the Commission has resources to direct towards war graves it cannot take on responsibility for maintaining the whole site.

Cleaning Headstones

Whilst we treat our headstone markers with a masonry biocide every two years a lot depends upon the location of the marker. If under heavy tree cover it is probable that the marker will "green up" more quickly than if located in the open air. Often those situated under tree cover also suffer from extensive soil splash due to the fact that ground cover cannot establish fully in such shady conditions.

In such circumstances a brush down with water and a bristle brush will be effective. It is important that no bleach or any other product is applied to the headstone as this can cause damage to the structure of the stone.

It must be stressed that any work undertaken is entirely at the individuals own risk and that the cleaning should only be undertaken on Commission headstones, not private family memorials.