

August 2018

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



On the cover: Billy Drinkwater, war blinded veteran, and Kirk Bowett in This Is Not For You, a play set in WWI. Billy says Farewell to Kirk who plays his brother as he goes to war. Information on page 26.

Back page: Billy Drinkwater and Kirk Bowett celebrate. Also featured is Laurie Chattington. Cover and back page photos by Ali Baskerville.



Aug 2018 | No 1095

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The Booking Office for the Brighton centre: To book accommodation at the Brighton centre telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500. If you have care needs please first contact your Team Leader or Community Support Worker (CSW).

The Booking Office for the Llandudno centre: To book accommodation at the Llandudno centre please telephone 01492 868700 bookings and ask for the Booking Office. If you have care needs please first contact your Team Leader or CSW.

ROVI IT Helpline: If you need to speak with the ROVI IT Helpdesk please telephone the staff at the Sheffield centre on 01273 391447 for ROVI and IT enquiries.

New members: If you know someone who could be eligible to join Blind Veterans UK they can phone our Membership Department on freephone 0800 389 7979.

Review Editor: You can telephone Catherine Goodier, Review Editor, on 020 7616 8367 or email revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk or write to her at Review Editor, Blind Veterans UK, 12 - 14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

Blind Veterans UK Calendar

August.

Widows' Week 12th to 18th.

Activities Week 12th to 18th.

Archery Club 19th to 25th.

Adrenaline Weekend 31st to 3rd September.

September.

Driving Week 2nd to 8th.

Fishing Week 9th to 15th.

Wood Week 24th to 28th

Dance Week 23rd to 29th.

Amateur Radio Week 30th to 6th October.

October.

Technology Week 14th to 20th.

Bowling Club Fortnight 14th to 27th.

November.

Cuisine Week 18th to 24th.

December.

Turkey & Tinsel Week 9th to 15th.

To book Themed and Club Weeks at the Brighton centre.

For further information and to book your place at the Brighton centre please telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500. If you have care needs please first speak with your Team Leader or Community Support Worker.

Activities from the Llandudno centre in 2018.

August.

Strolling Week 6th. Amateur Radio Week 6th. Creative Crafts 13th.

Water Week 19th.

September.

Recreation Taster Week 17th. Music Week 3rd. Sea Fishing Week 9th.

Cycling Week 23rd.

October.

Shooting & Archery Week 8th. Live Well 15th. Golf Week 21st.

Creative Crafts 29th.

November.

Military Week 4th. Wood Week 19th.

December. Christmas Crafts 3rd and 10th.

To book Themed and Club Weeks at the Llandudno centre.

For further information or to book your place please telephone: 01492 868700. If you have care needs please first speak with your Team Leader or Community Support Worker.

From the Chairman.

Your message from Air Vice Marshal Paul Luker CB OBE AFC DL.

In order to meet Catherine's publishing deadlines, I have to submit my piece for the Review about a month before you read it. However, I've been a little tardy this month in writing my letter — not this time because of my usual idleness but deliberately so because I had an instinct that three events in July might give me a theme that made taking to the keyboard a little easier. I was right.

The first, on 10th July, was the celebration at Buckingham Palace to mark the centenary of the Royal Air Force. I confess that I wasn't there. In truth I was enjoying a reunion lunch over a few pints of cider in a Somerset pub but later that evening I watched the whole thing on catch-up TV. I was genuinely moved by the broadcast, which seemed to me to capture completely the aim of RAF100: Commemorate, Celebrate and Inspire. The whole day was carried off with the precision, professionalism and pride which we expect from the UK's Armed Forces but more importantly, together with the excellent BBC coverage, it allowed everyone who has served or followed the flag to feel part of it.

The second, on 11th July, was a little more premature than I had hoped. I would prefer to call it England getting through to the World Cup semi-finals, rather than being knocked out in them. I'm not a big footie fan but I can absolutely understand why Gareth Southgate and his team seized the nation's attention. For the first time in decades we had a national football team that played as one, not just a side made up of talented individuals. Largely dismissed when they left for Russia, they should come back with heads held high for getting as far as they did against all the odds.

And the third, perhaps a little oddly in the context of the first two, was the Royal Marine band concert for Blind Veterans UK at the Brighton centre, also on 11th July. It is the first time I have been able to attend since becoming a Trustee. I'm told that this was the 21st occasion on which they have performed for us. On the evidence of this year I have been missing out badly. It was a simply superb day. And it was notable for a couple of other reasons. Because the inner courtyard is now home to the prize-winning Blind Veterans UK garden from the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show last year, the venue had to be moved to the front lawn. A few regular attenders might have thought that would

diminish the event, but in fact staging the concert there meant that the centre itself became a tremendously impressive backdrop for the band. With over 360 seats filled in the marquee, this is the biggest attendance we have had so far. And the centre's staff took on the logistical first of providing everyone who attended with Pimms, strawberries and cream teas down on the front lawn — and did it with great style.



Picture: Her Majesty's Band of the Royal Marines perform at the Brighton centre. Photograph by Mark Pile.

So why did I think these unconnected events might be important? Well for me much of what they demonstrated also epitomises many of the values that we hold dear in Blind Veterans UK. This is much more than the obvious linkage to seemingly effortless performances that only come as the result of long and hard training. It is also not just military nostalgia about the pageantry and ceremonial that for many of us started from relentless square bashing in basic training. For me it is about what can be achieved when we understand the importance of belonging — to working within a team and functioning within a wider family. The most telling point for me in the RAF100 celebrations was that the BBC and the RAF went to tremendous lengths to ensure that everybody with any connection to the RAF — no matter when that might have been or in

whatever role — could feel part of what was going on that day. The England squad gave a bravura example of what can be achieved when a team has a clear sense of purpose and works to the common good.

And the Royal Marine Band concert? Well, at the least it ought to tell us a lot about how we are respected and supported by our current Armed Forces. Speaking to the two band sergeants afterwards it was clear that they felt a sense of duty to and respect for their audience of veterans. It showed in the nice balance they struck between formality and fun in their performance. They were a class act but they weren't the only class act on display that day. So too were the members who attended, to whom the concert was dedicated, who demonstrated volubly how much they had enjoyed it. But for me the laurels go to the Brighton centre staff, volunteers and supporters, who worked so hard to stage the day. It was a masterclass in teamwork.

Overpaid consultants would probably use terms like "holistic approach", to describe what we are striving to do in Blind Veterans UK. I prefer the notion that team and family lies at our heart. We achieve so much more within that framework. Certainly, the goal may be that every individual member receives bespoke support. But the means by which we get there relies on all of us working together, with a shared understanding of what it takes to do so. This isn't aimed solely at the staff and volunteers by the way. It is equally true of you, the members. Time and again you tell me how important the support, experiences and comradeship of your fellow members has been for you throughout your time with us. Your partners say the same. So, as we gear up and grow the charity, let's ensure we never lose that.

For all that I enjoy the military spectacle, I ought to come clean; I'm not very good at it myself. In an earlier letter I described how my little brother destroyed a parade when he cycled through it at full tilt on his Triang trike, head firmly down on the handlebars (for several years he had a hexagonal nut imprint on his forehead because of the way he rode that thing). I can have the same effect even when I'm part of the parade. I was appointed standard bearer when I joined my first squadron. Initially I imagined it was because the boss thought I would be good at it, having spent over two years learning drill at Cranwell. Later I learnt that, unlike other officers on parade, standard bearers rarely have to draw their swords and the boss thought that would make me a far less dangerous prospect. Now I'm retired, I actually seem to spend far more

time on parades than when I was serving, either as the reviewing officer for cadets or deputising for the Lord Lieutenant as Her Majesty's representative in Hampshire. So, for the first time in my life, I can be the only person who is in step. Even that's not all plain sailing. On one occasion, laying a wreath on Remembrance Day, we were very crammed in around the war memorial. I was concentrating hard on saluting at the right time, as everyone was taking their cue from my lead. The Last Post sounded. My arm swept up in a perfect arc. I really should have noticed earlier the tiny Brownie standard bearer on my right. When my right hand clouted her on the side of her head, she created mayhem as she went skittering off through all the other standard bearers. Lukers and parades don't mix.



Picture: Blind Veterans UK's Chairman Air Vice Marshal Paul Luker CB OBE AFC DL addresses the audience at the Royal Marines Band concert at the Brighton centre. **Photograph** by Mark Pile.

Calling all blind veterans. By Lynette Denzey.

Would you like to become an amateur radio ham and communicate with people across the globe?

Blind Veterans UK's Amateur Radio Society meet regularly at our Brighton and Llandudno centres when they learn how to operate the systems and create networks with support from long standing members of the Society. It's a great opportunity to make new friends and learn new skills alongside other members.

The current chairman of the Society is Ray Peart, 72, from Abbeydale, who lost his sight, and incurred other serious injuries, in a bomb blast in 1973 while serving with the Army in Northern Ireland. This year Ray was recognised in Her Majesty's Birthday Honours with the award of the British Empire Medal (Civil Division). Since he was blinded in Northern Ireland while serving with the Gloucestershire Regiment Ray has worked tirelessly to help others.

In 1978 a friend, who was ex-Royal Signals and had worked at Bletchley Park, introduced Ray to amateur radio. Ray studied for his Licence and he also learned Morse code, which he went on to teach and he still operates a key pad.

Ray explains, "The Amateur Radio Society was formed in 1976 by Ted John, a St Dunstaner who lived at the Brighton centre". Ted has since gone "silent key" which is how radio hams refer to deceased former members.

The first formal meeting, of what was then St Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society (with the call sign G3STD for St Dunstan's), was in January 1976. Ted John was the convenor and he said the purpose was to draw up the Articles of Association, elect officers and "properly launch the Society".

At the Society's next meeting in May 1976, with 21 members attending, it was reported that their call sign had been answered by two radio hams in Australia, one originally from Brighton and the other from Saltdean near Brighton — a small world indeed!

The Society currently has 50 members and they get together three times a year. Ray says they "fly the flag for Blind Veterans UK by transmitting all over the world". The Society members "talk" every weekday, except Wednesday, between 9.30 and 10 am on their dedicated radio frequency (with the call sign

MX0SBV – for Society of Blind Veterans).

Each year the G3MOW Memorial Trophy (named after the call sign of a founding member) is awarded. The Society operates from Radio Shacks and in Llandudno they have help maintaining their equipment from the North Wales Radio Club, who share use of the Radio Shack and maintain the equipment, as Ray says, "scratching each other's backs" and Ray was delighted to present the Award to Alistair and Gron, of the Club, for all their help in keeping the Society operating and on air.

Ray also thanked John and Rob for taking care of the radio equipment in the Brighton centre's Radio Shack.

The Amateur Radio Society is in keeping with our pioneering tradition, and in particular with the work of our charity's second Chairman, Lord Fraser of Lonsdale. As Lieutenant William Jocelyn Ian Fraser of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry he was blinded on 23rd July 1916 during the Battle of the Somme when he was just 18 years of age. He was particularly proud of the part he played in drafting and piloting a Bill through Parliament allowing for every blind person to have a radio, without the need for a licence.

Anyone interested in joining the Amateur Radio Society can contact Ray on 01452 533839 or email Raymond.Peart@btinternet.com



Picture: Claire and Ray Peart BEM with Hudson.

The ROVI IT helpline is here to help.

We have moved out of the Sheffield centre and into our lovely new office at Blind Veterans UK, Unit 4 President Buildings, Saville St East, Sheffield, S4 7UQ.

As our phone number remains unchanged you can still contact us on 01273 391 447. You can also send your queries direct to our email address rovi-it@blindveterans.org.uk

Our opening hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm. We will respond to out of hours voicemail messages as quickly as possible. If we can't help directly, we can do some research for you, or find the right person to help. Your case worker or local ROVI can also contact us on your behalf. In the coming months we will be featured in the Review magazine with useful hints and tips.

How we can help you.

Help with replacing or repairing broken or lost equipment.

Simple assessments to recommend new equipment that doesn't require specialist ROVI input.

Equipment returns and deliveries from our recycled stock with the capacity for set up and demonstrations from our ROVI technicians.

Organising couriers where necessary on your behalf.

Redirecting queries to relevant staff and departments

ROVI on duty to deal with complex queries that require assessments

IT technical support to help you with all computer issues

If you are in any in doubt please do contact us!



Picture: The wonderful ROVI/IT team of from left to right, Lauren Layzelle, Imke Carruthers, Lucy Bradshaw, Sarah Hughes and Craig Vaughton.

Ron Russell's Mish Mash Quiz.

1. Which of these sports was discontinued as an Olympic event in 1990?
A. Tug of War? B. Polo? C. Cricket?
2. Are there six or seven colours in a rainbow?
3. Is the Oxford vs Cambridge boat race rowed upstream or downstream?
4. The peregrine falcon is the fastest bird of prey. Fact or fiction?
5. The giraffe is the tallest animal on earth. Fact or fiction?
6. After the Battle of Waterloo, which country was mapped first by the ordnance survey Dorset, Hampshire or Kent?
7. Which of these bridges is the longest?
A Forth? B Severn? C The Humber?
8. According to the Law of Averages what is the law of average?
9. What is a dogger?
Is it a steam engine? A horse drawn carriage? A fishing boat?
10. Which of these products was banned in Denmark in 2011 Nutella, Marmite or peanut butter?

Answers on pages 44.

Appalachian Trail to commemorate the D-Day Landings. By RJ Cruice.

Another spin off from our highly successful Project Gemini was a joint venture with Blind Veterans UK and the American Blinded Veterans (Blind Endeavour) to commemorate the D-Day Landings on the 6th June. The idea was initially set up by Danny Wallace and Joe Amerling from the American side to walk 74 miles of the Appalachian trail in Georgia USA to coincide with the anniversary of the landings in Normandy. Veterans from the US along with Colin Penaluna, myself and Russell Scullion from the Sports and Recreation team at the Brighton centre were privileged to take part in this venture. Our first task before we set off was to research individual divisions that landed on the beach heads around Normandy, and also the air drops and glider landings by 6th Airborne division. Luckily I know blind veteran Ray Shuck who attends the Llandudno centre who gave a first-hand account of the day's events leading up to the main assaults on that historic day for which I was grateful to Ray who served with the 12th Parachute Battalion.

We arrived at Atlanta International airport, met up with our brothers in arms, and went off to the hotel to prepare for the trek. On the first day myself, Colin and Russell were not sure what to expect, we were all paired off with sighted guides five American BV and two British BV trekking through the forest and mountains of Georgia. The terrain was heavy going, loose rocks and tree roots made it difficult to traverse the ground and two weeks earlier a huge storm blew over trees across the trail. The heat was at 90 degrees, the humidity was very close and it was very welcome when we got a slight breeze on the east side of the mountains. There were all manner of poisonous snakes and spiders, plus bears, but thankfully we did not come into contact with these deadly animals. I did ask Danny Wallace were there contingency plans for any event of someone getting bitten. He said no, which was a bit worrying. Each night we all took it in turn to give our summary talks on the D-Day Landings, both from the British side and American contingent. All talks were very emotional on the events that happened that day and everyone was proud that we still come together in times of war to defend our shores and recognise the lives that people gave in the Second World War on both sides of the water.

Overall the trip was fantastic as I met great friends who I will stay in contact with. The highest point of the trip was getting to the top of Blood Mountain

4,450 feet high, an amazing day ending with the last day arriving at the 5th Ranger Camp parading the Union Jack, which we carried through the trip along with the Stars and Stripes which the Americans carried at the camp. There was a cliff called Point du hoc where all the blind veterans had to repel down. Colin Penaluna did not know what repel was and he got a shock when I told him what we were going to do. All the blind veterans managed with great dignity to abseil down the cliff with the sound of the 5th Rangers bag pipers playing along and the local news teams were on hand to get our stories of the Appalachian Walk.

We were presented with a 5th Ranger coin from the sergeant major of the camp and handmade quilts by the women of a veterans charity, The Quilts of Valour Foundation, who make individual quilts for ex-servicemen and woman. That was a really nice surprise.

Overall the experience was amazing, camping out under the stars each night, listening to the snoring and getting bitten by the bugs was great and given the chance I would do it again. Lastly, a massive big thank you to all the volunteers as without their help and giving up their free time this Appalachian Trail Memorial Walk would not have taken place. Also thanks to the Lumpkin County Sheriff's office for helping with the logistics. The man who spent four months walking the route mapping the area was Tom, himself an ex Ranger, along with Stan, Mike who is retiring soon from the Police force, Kevin, Chris, so many names a big thank you to you all and God bless to you all. Hoo Raaar.



Three Times Lucky. A story of survival during the Warsaw Rising. By Zbigniew Pelczynski.

I have just turned 92 and am living quietly in a small, pleasant Cotswolds village. I am a retired Oxford don, a former college fellow and politics tutor, and ostensibly my life is much the same as that of other elderly retirees who surround me. But things were very different indeed some seven decades earlier when as a youth I lived in my native Poland under the rule of Nazi Germany.

This story is a story of survival — in fact at least a triple survival — in the course of six weeks during August and September 1944. Its location was a leafy southern suburb of Warsaw called Mokotow, where as a soldier of the wartime underground Home Army I found myself fighting the seasoned German army occupying the city. Together with some 30,000 other conspirators we were ordered on 1st August, by the high command of our Army, to launch a surprise attack against the Germans in the hope (futile, as it turned out) of forestalling the arrival of the Soviet Army approaching the city from the east. My "regiment" was called Baszta, my company B1, and my fellow-combatants were mostly the same age as I, around 20. We had a most elementary military training, conducted mostly in private flats in Warsaw during the previous eight months, and though I learnt e.g. how to take a rifle apart and put it together again with my eyes shut I had not actually fired a single shot.

Although poorly armed the Polish forces succeeded in clearing a large part of Mokotow of the Germans, but the victory was limited. They withdrew to their fortified barracks and easily repelled all further attacks while being reluctant to counterattack. They expected fierce resistance, and probably heavy casualties, although our improvised defence positions were just private houses which the civilians had been made to abandon. So instead the German command resorted in Mokotow and often elsewhere to rather safer, so to speak long-arm, methods of crushing the uprising: aerial bombing and artillery shelling. This knocked out quite a few insurgents, but did what in today's language is euphemistically called heavy "collateral damage" — destroying vast numbers of houses and killing probably ten times as many civilians as insurgents. (Estimates of overall deaths vary between 150,000 and 250,000.)

The date of my first narrow escape from death, recorded by a friend who kept a sketchy diary of the rising, was 10th August, the day the bombing of Mokotow

began. It was usually the work of just three dive bombers, so called Stukas, operating from a nearby airport at regular intervals, and against whom we had no defence. On that day I got leave from my unit to visit a large hospital, filled with wounded civilians and insurgents (soon to be bombed out of existence) where allegedly my younger brother, separated earlier from our unit, had been seen. Noticing a Stuka flying in my direction I took shelter in the basement of the nearest house — a two storey solid looking small apartment block. The basement was divided, on both sides of a central corridor, into lock-up cellars. Descending to the basement from the street I unthinkingly chose the left arm of the corridor. There was almost total darkness, but one could sense from the pressure and whispers of people around one that the basement was packed.

Soon the droning of the bomber got louder, followed by a few seconds of a characteristic whistling or whining sound, then by a second of ominous silence, and WHAM! — the bang and shock of explosion and of collapsing masonry. An entire half of the building, just where I was sheltering, crashed down. I found myself trapped under the fallen wreckage, completely immobilised by the rubble, yet feeling virtually no pain. All around me people were retching, moaning or screaming in agony, but all I felt was my mouth and nose clogging up with fine brick dust. After a while it was all still and silent like a tomb, and indeed I was convinced my end had arrived. It was not instantaneous, though. I continued to breathe, but as air was becoming increasingly scarce so breathing became more and more difficult. I was panting, but just inhaling more dust. Eventually I lost consciousness, thinking as I was dropping off, that this must be death.

I was wrong. Some two hours later I woke up hearing at first faint, and then increasingly louder, hammering noises. I realised a search party was looking for survivors. I began shouting to guide them towards me, and though my voice must have been very feeble, they heard me. One final bang, and they got through. A beam of light raptured the darkness and lit up my dusty head, sticking out from the rubble. Then various hands and arms were clearing away the debris around me and gently pulling me out. Next to me, on my right, they uncovered the head of a woman smashed by masonry. I lifted my eyes and in the dim light saw what had happened. By sheer chance I had chosen to stand in a spot directly under an enormous beam that spanned the bottom the building. When the building collapsed it cracked in the middle and formed a kind of "V" letter, but did not break. The beam saved my life. The falling masonry, even the

biggest chunks, just bounced off it. Only some rather small pieces managed to hit me, and injure my left wrist. When I got to the surface, saw the sun and the blue sky, I cried like a baby. For the first (and last) time in life I had a palpable, physical, intense feeling of Being Alive.

After less than a week I was released from an improvised basement hospital and rejoined B1 company. The only effect of the accident, beside the wobbly wrist, was a traumatic fear of planes which lasted to the end of the rising. Their noise, as it was getting nearer, turned me temporarily into a nervous wreck and almost overwhelmed me with an urge to hide somewhere, anywhere. Otherwise nothing distinguished me from my fellow-insurgents, and I went about my soldierly business as if nothing had happened.

Perhaps this was one of the reasons why I was promoted lance-corporal a few weeks later and promptly put in charge of a small night patrol of three men. I felt proud, especially because as a commander I was able to exchange my old Polish army rifle for a brand-new British Sten submachine gun, somehow delivered by the SOE to the Polish resistance before the rising. My orders were to reconnoitre a part of a large allotment field (a prewar race course) which stretched from ours to the Germans' positions. This no-man's land was quiet in daytime, but came alive at night when Polish and German patrols scoured the area. Our usual patrol "operation base" was a tiny building, practically one large room, which had served as a shelter for people guarding the allotments. We jokingly called it "gardener's cottage". It was completely gutted, roofless and empty except for a macabre pair of burned skeletons lying on an iron bedstead. They were the occupants whom an SS-unit from the neighbouring barracks disposed of together with their shelter after the rising broke out. The patrol was a routine matter. One tried to get to the "gardener's cottage" as quietly as possible and from there, slowly and cautiously, probed the land nearer the barracks.

This time, no sooner had we reached the "cottage" and I positioned my men at what was left of the door and windows, we became aware that the enemy was extremely near. First, we noticed the glow of two or three cigarettes close to the ground. Then the glow lifted, whispering could be clearly heard, followed by slow but quite loud steps advancing towards us. I signalled to the patrol to get their rifles ready and pointed my Sten towards the sound. And then there was a slightly muffled explosion, flash of light, screams of pain, loud German

voices and the noise of several jackboots running away. I guessed that one of the soldiers, getting ready to throw a grenade into the "cottage", must have accidentally pulled on the ringed string inside the handle of his grenade and blown up himself, and possibly some others. It was another miracle. Had the grenade landed where it was meant to, our small group would have been wiped out or at least terribly injured, leaving it to the attackers to finish us off with individual shots. The friend who kept the diary, and took part in the patrol, recorded the exact date of the incident: 12th September.

As the month advanced it became obvious that the days of our short-lived liberation were drawing to an end. On Sunday, 24th September, about 11 a.m, the Germans let loose an avalanche of bombs, artillery shells and dreaded rocket fired mortars, which we called "baying cows", and which could rip a whole building apart. Under cover of darkness a fierce attack by tanks and heavily armed infantry, from three sides of Mokotow at once, began. Half of my B1 company, transferred rapidly to the front, was killed fighting that night. My survival chances were therefore no better than 50:50. But again something extremely fortunate, if not exactly heroic, occurred to save me.

The massive morning bombardment brought to a rapid end the joint Sunday mass attended by the whole company. To avoid the risk of all of us perishing at once, we were ordered to disperse into as many neighbouring houses as possible. Once more I took shelter in a basement, more accurately a large cellar, full of civilians. There was a small upper window facing the street, blocked by a neatly arranged stack of bricks instead of the more usual sandbags, and I stood nearest to them. Less than five minutes later there was a terrific explosion in the street. A shell must have landed just outside the window for the whole stack of bricks flew inwards, and I was exactly in its way. One hit the back of my head and cracked the skull; to this day I can feel through the hair a small indentation where the edge of a brick hit me. Had I stood an inch or two nearer, it would have reached my brain. I suffered a severe concussion, with nausea, vomiting, splitting headache, blurred vision and impaired hearing. There was also some blood on the head. Though alive, I was not in a fit state for military action. Friends carried me to the nearest casualty point in another basement, where the girl nurses could only offer me a camp bed and some aspirins. The same night my company suffered their terrible losses.

The symptoms gradually eased, but lasted till Tuesday night. Meanwhile

the resistance in Mokotow was collapsing and the whole Baszta regiment was retreating street by street. There is no guessing how the rising in our suburb might have ended for me; perhaps through another, more lethal bomb; perhaps from a burst of submachine fire from an SS-man barging into the cellar. There had been stories that some Germans did not bother to take wounded insurgents prisoner and just dispatched them where they lay. Fearing this might happen to me, and against orders, a friend came to tell me that the company was being evacuated through the sewers to central Warsaw, which was still resisting. At daybreak of 27th September I climbed down into the sewers with my unit. What soon was to happen there was an inferno of another kind, but that is a different story. Suffice to say that with hundreds of others, insurgents and civilians, I spent hours underneath, creeping in darkness and up to the knees in stinking filth, only to find the passage blocked by a huge German barricade. Chaos and panic ensued, made worse by the Germans throwing grenades down the manholes. Obsessed by the fear that "I would end like a rat, not a soldier" I decided to surrender together with the only two company friends who were still with me. By yet another lucky chance we were taken prisoner by soldiers of the regular army, the Wehrmacht, who generally obeyed the Geneva conventions — unlike the SS and their Asiatic auxiliaries, members of the notorious Soviet renegade army led by General Vlassov, who shot surrendering Poles without scruples. With a head swathed in a blood-soaked bandage I was marched out of Warsaw with what was left of B1 company to a transit camp, and then transported in a goods train to a POW camp near Bremen — the next stage of a long, eventful journey to the west, and to a happy and successful life in Britain.

Dr Zbigniew Pelczynski OBE (for Anglo-Polish cooperation) arrived in Britain in January 1946 and after completing university studies at St. Andrews and Oxford became a Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford. He joined Blind Veterans UK in January 2018.

Dr Zbigniew Pelczynski's book *A Life Remembered* is available from Amazon online and at all good booksellers.

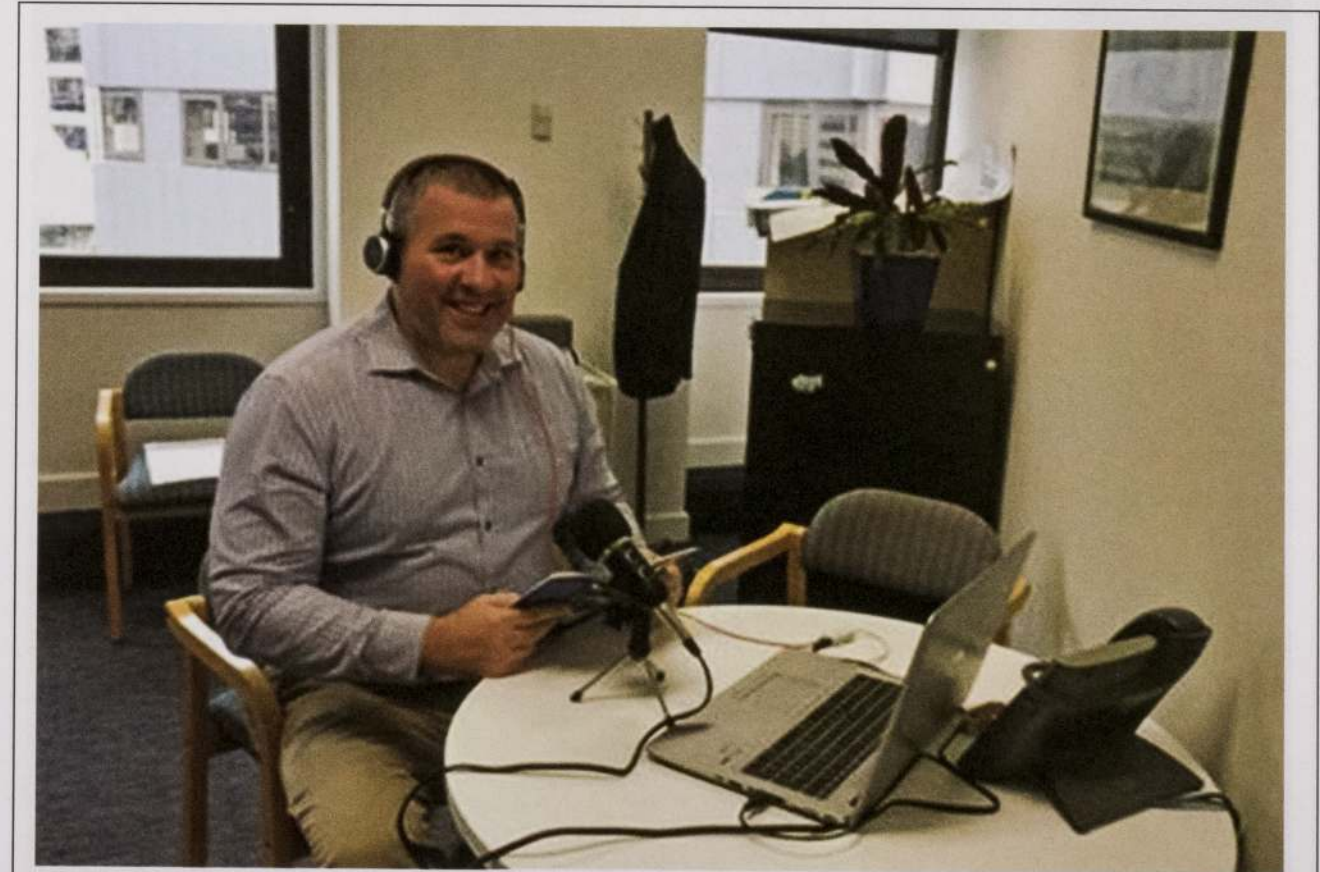
Steve Nixon's book, *Recovery from Hell*, is now available in audio.

It's been 15 years since I published my book *Recovery from Hell* and Blind Veterans UK has now made it available in audio format.

Thanks to amazing technology Scott, a fellow Sunderland lad who now lives in New Zealand, has skilfully recorded this audio version. It is my personal tale of recovery after a life-changing accident whilst serving in the Royal Marines, this led me to become a St. Dunstaner in 1992. My book may interest many at Blind Veterans UK as I interviewed many veterans at the charity, some of whom are sadly no longer with us but their accounts are poignant.

To obtain a copy of this audio book contact Blind Veterans UK's Ashington office on telephone 0191 249 5542.

I would like to thank Carol Johnson for arranging for Scott to record *Recovery from Hell*.



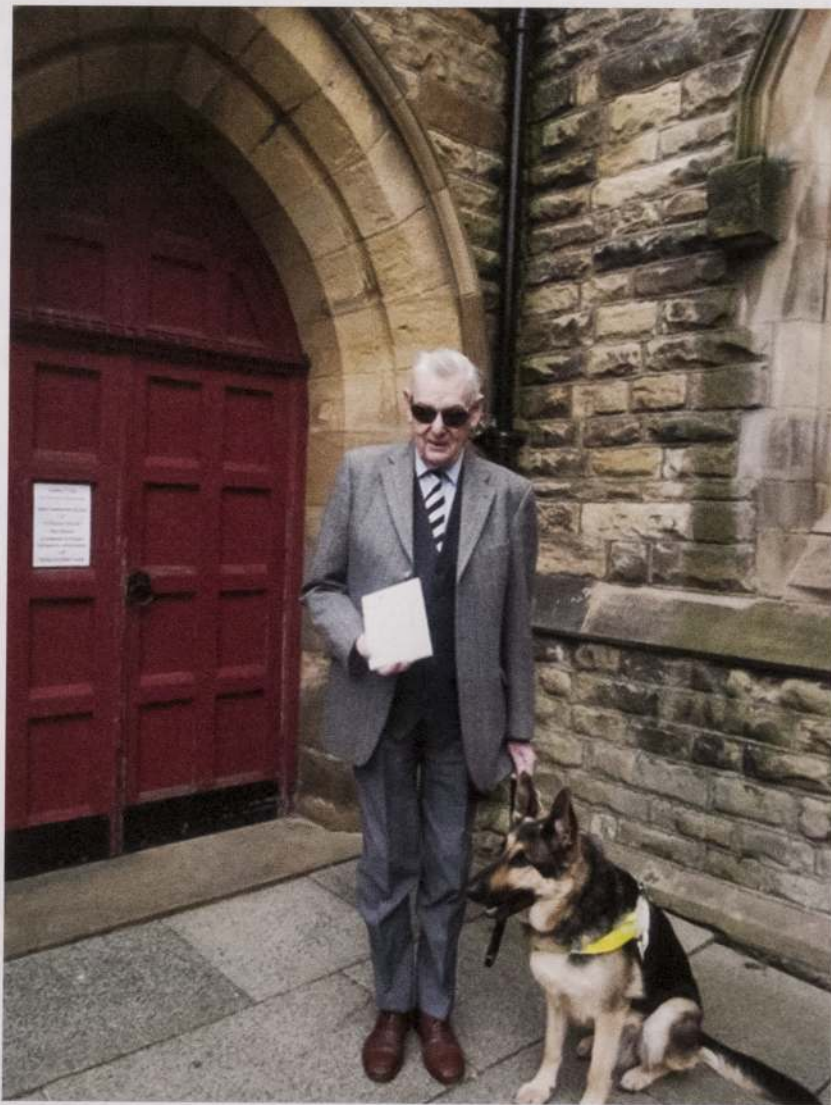
Picture: Scott recording *Recovery From Hell*. Steve Nixon's book that is now available in audio format from the Ashington Office.

Telling our Tales 17 short Bible stories narrated by Roger Elgood.

Telling our Tales is available at £8.95 per copy, £10.50 inc. post and packing and all profits will go to Emmanuel Church, Saltburn.

Well-known biblical tales are retold from the standpoint of a character who, while present, is not necessarily mentioned in the text. The hope is that these tales may catch the imagination of children (and adults, too) and that they may feel motivated to return to the original source.

To order, contact F. R. H. Elgood, 20 Upleatham St, Saltburn-by-Sea, TS12 1LP
Tel. 01287 626924 Email insight@elgood.ndo.co.uk



Picture: Standing outside Emmanuel Church in Saltburn with his guide dog Rexel, Roger Elgood holds his book Telling our Tales.

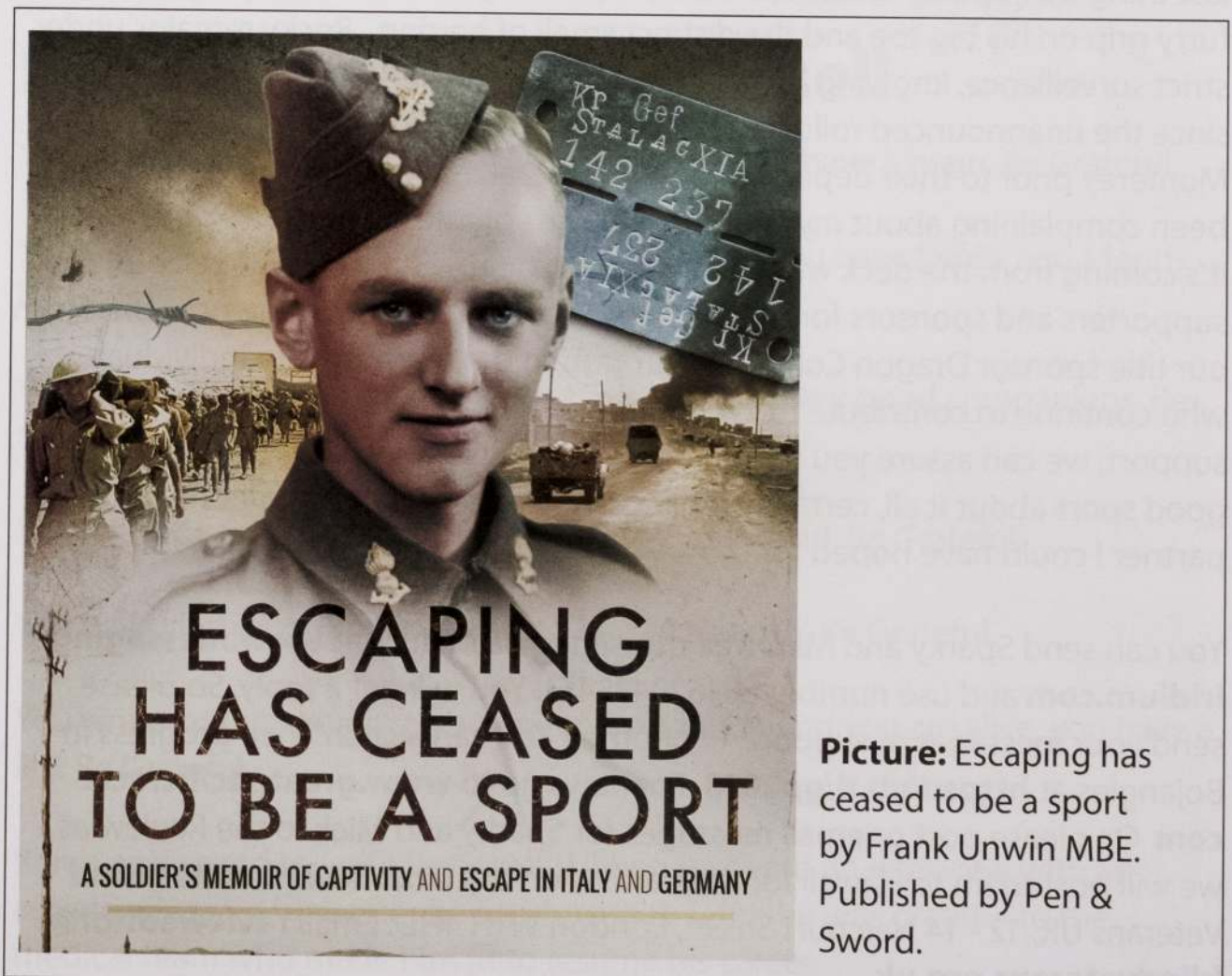
Escaping has ceased to be a sport. By Frank Unwin.

Born in Liverpool in July 1920, Frank Unwin joined the Territorial Army, enlisting in the Royal Artillery aged 18. He saw action in North Africa, Greece and Crete before he was captured at Tobruk in June 1942. His experiences as a prisoner of war are the subject of this memoir. Tragically his 12-year-old sister was lost at sea as a child evacuee bound for Canada.

After the war, Frank worked for the Ordnance Survey. Having tasted other cultures in the war he joined the Foreign Office and, together with his wife Marjorie and children, served in Cuba, Israel, Laos, Italy, Canada and Nigeria, mostly as a consular officer.

Frank has returned year after year to Tuscany and kept up with his wartime friends and their descendants around Montebenichi and the surrounding area. Now widowed, Frank lives in Kent.

Priced at £25 his book is available from all good bookshops and online.



Picture: Escaping has ceased to be a sport by Frank Unwin MBE. Published by Pen & Sword.

Sparky and Mick are rowing well and will have just 78 teabags left when they arrive in Hawaii.

The 13th July update from the Great Pacific Race's website showed that Uniting Nations Row (Classic Fours) had just 657 nautical miles (NM) to finish. Pacific Terrific (Classic Trio) had 1242 NM to finish and Cockleshell Pacific Endeavour/Bojangles, our own Sparky and Mick Dawson (Open Pairs), 1382 NM to finish. Preparations are underway in Hawaii at the Waikiki Yacht Club for the anticipated first arrival of Uniting Nations Row between 22nd to 28th July.

The mystery of how Sparky came to break a number of oars as they row, and his nose, may have been solved. In true Sparky bootneck style he carried on and didn't let his nose bother him, as long as he had enough tea he was happy.

Here's the latest update from Mick. "A hacksaw and some bits of carbon fibre have been found near Rocky's [their penguin mascot] bedding, so suspicions are running that he had something to do with the oars breaking. Besides, the last thing that Sparky remembers before planting his nose on Bojangles was a furry grip on his big toe and the distinct smell of herring. Rocky remains under strict surveillance, knowing he may not have forgiven his human shipmates since the unannounced rollover test [part of the scrutineering process back in Monterey prior to their departure]. Otherwise, all is well on Bojangles. Sparky's been complaining about my snoring! Not the volume or the pitch more that it's coming from the deck when I'm meant to be rowing. Thanks to all our supporters and sponsors for helping make this incredible voyage possible. From our title sponsor Dragon Coin right through to the many private individuals who continue to contribute thank you. Hope we're proving worthy of that support, we can assure you we're doing our best! Sparky has proven to be a good sport about it all, certainly pulling his weight in the expedition. Best partner I could have hoped for."

You can send Sparky and Mick free messages via iridium at www.messaging.iridium.com and use number 881623435461. You will get a reply. So please send your messages of support — or other! You can 'watch' their progress in Bojangles at <https://yb.tl/gp2018> For news go to www.greatpacificrace.com Or, please post or email messages for Sparky and Mick to the Review as we will post them to Hawaii for their arrival on dry land. Review editor, Blind Veterans UK, 12 - 14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. Email revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk



Picture: Mick and Sparky rowing together 'onboard' Bojangles. **Credit:** www.GreatPacificRace.com ©Ellen Hoke.

Be Grateful. By Ron Russell.

You may be blind or partially sighted. However you have a brain. Be Grateful.

You may be feeling upset or depressed. However you have family and friends. Be Grateful.

You may feel all alone and insecure. However you have good companions. Be Grateful.

You have food in your belly and a roof over your head. Be Grateful.

You have clothes on your back and a bed to sleep in. Be Grateful.

You woke up this morning, you opened your eyes and you are alive, you have a life. Be Grateful.

Ron was inspired to write Be Grateful when he heard an interview with an athlete who said how after he was forced to retire he was grateful to the medical team who made him fit to resume his career.

Gifts in Wills. By Amara Gordi.

The Gifts in Wills Team at Blind Veterans UK is looking forward to a very busy autumn with plenty of events across the country that will allow us to meet some of our most valued supporters.

At these events, we aim to connect with our supporters in different communities and explain how they can continue to help blind veterans in the future with a gift in their Will. As you may know, gifts left in wills are 60% of the charity's voluntary income. Spreading the word is crucial for us to raise awareness about this special way of giving so that we can continue our work and reach out to more members for many years to come.

We will start the season this August in London when our first event will take us to the Thames River, on-board HMS Belfast. You may have served on-board HMS Belfast before it became an iconic landmark of the city.

Chief Executive Major General Nick Caplin and Corporal Simon Brown will join us for the day. Simon is a high profile member of the charity who is also a member of staff. Since he was wounded in Iraq, losing most of his sight, he has recruited many new members and acted as an ambassador for our charity for more than a decade. Like us, they are excited to meet our supporters, let them know about our ambitious plans for the future and how they can help Blind Veterans UK. They'll also have the chance to explore the ship and learn how life was for the brave Royal Marines who lived and fought on it in such crucial events as the D-Day Landings.



Picture: Simon Brown at a Blind Veterans UK reception at Westminster that took place earlier this summer.

In September we will host an event at the National Memorial Arboretum. We will visit the beautiful gardens and the Blind Veterans UK walkway and show our respects to those who had the charity in their hearts and gave us one final gift. And of course to remember the many brave servicemen and women who fought for our tomorrow.

October will see us discovering even more about our Armed Forces as we drop anchor in Kent to visit the Historic Dockyard in Chatham. We will discover all about the old bustling dockyard where so many warships have been built for the Royal Navy since the mid-16th century. Cambridgeshire's Imperial War Museum will be our next stopover and there Blind Veterans UK supporters will be amazed by the old Royal Air Force Duxford hangar, witnessing first-hand the evolution of civil and military aviation: from Second World War combat aircraft to the famous Concorde and modern ones used in Iraq and Afghanistan.

More on the Air Forces in November when we visit the Air Museum in Yorkshire, the only Allied Air Forces Memorial Museum in Europe. The day before we will go through over 300 years of the history of the Lancashire Fusiliers and the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

With such a busy autumn the winter will be here before we know it! In the meantime however the Legacy team and Blind Veterans UK supporters will enjoy these enticing visits around the country, finding out more about our forces past and present while hearing all about our wonderful work and what we can do to make it long lasting.

To find out more about the events or gifts in Wills contact Amara Gordi on 020 7616 7923 or email amara.gordi@blindveterans.org.uk

Review format changes.

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Billy Drinkwater. Actor.

Billy Drinkwater showed real presence and talent in *This Is Not For You* as he played a young blind man who unable to serve his country during the First World War remains at home as his brother and friends go to war. Billy could relate to his character as he was unable to join his friends in the Royal Anglian Regiment when they returned to Afghanistan, the place where he lost his sight.

This Is Not For You is an epic outdoor performance that pays moving tribute to Britain's wounded veterans from the First World War as well as more recent conflicts, both men and women, whose contributions to history often go unnoticed. The piece is directed by Jenny Sealey, written by Mike Kenny and performed by Blesma, The Limbless Veterans, professional performers and local community choirs. Interviews with Billy Drinkwater and Kirk Bowett, also a veteran, who plays Billy's brother will feature in the September Review.

This Is Not For You, part of 14-18 NOW, the UK's arts programme for the First World War centenary, is a story of veterans' fight for respect and remembrance, told with heft, beauty and wry humour, both on the ground and off it, with audio description and sign language as integral parts of the production. Graeae, with the National Centre for Circus Arts, has trained 25 wounded veterans in performance especially for the piece.

Alongside its performances in Greenwich and Stockton, the work will inspire an extensive education and engagement programme, encouraging veterans and members of the public to share their experiences and stories on this important subject.

Co-commissioned by 14-18 NOW and Blesma, The Limbless Veterans, supported by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch), Arts Council England, The Drive Project and National Centre for Circus Arts.

There are audio descriptions for the performances on Thursday 2nd August at 8.30pm and Friday 3rd August at 2.30pm and 7.30pm Stockton High Street as part of the International Stockton Festival. Tickets are free.

With the Legions on Hadrian's Wall. By Richard Haynes.

"Caesar adsum jam forte, Brutus aderat, Cassius sic in omnibus and that's the end of that!" (Schoolboy Latin Doggerel)

Until you get personal with the Wall it is difficult to understand the enormity of the task Hadrian set three of his Legions. Eighty four miles long, rising from sea level to 1132ft (345M), whilst predominately built of stone the western end was made of turf. Fortlets every roman mile with signal stations and turrets in between and backed up by large garrison forts behind the Wall, the Roman Empire's Northern defence line was constructed in less than seven years; compare that to the time it takes to complete major projects today with heavy earth moving equipment!

Back in 2016, whilst on a Walking Week in Wales, the idea of tackling the Wall was conjured up by 'three blind mice' John Cantwell, Chris Cardwell and Richard Haynes. Despite the initial slight hesitancy of staff, who no doubt envisaged headlines of "First fatalities of the season — three blind veterans mistake their left from their right and disappear over the highest drop along the Wall", plans were put forward by Chris and in inevitable military style, amended, amended further and amended yet again. Nevertheless, the itinerary eventually appeared in final form and on 4th June 2018 we unwound ourselves from the rear seats of a Blind Veterans UK minibus and savoured the smell of the sea and flowering hawthorn as we overlooked the turf Wall at Bowness on Solway.



Picture: Three blind mice John Cantwell, Chris Cardwell and Richard Haynes.

"Right you manky excuse for the military get fell in. Sound off!"

"Sinister" (Left)

"Centrum" (Centre)

"Dexter" (right)

"Advance, but mind that rabbit hole, duck and avoid the hawthorn, look out there's a stone just in front of you".

We were going to walk the Wall rather than march along it with the support of Lee Evans, Matt Lee and Nicky Shaw, and Chris Cardwell's wife, Sue, acting as both guide and Accident & Emergency Sister should we have decided to do VI gymnastics and go 'base over apex'! Providing steadfast support was the party's experienced driver and jack of all trades, Gron, a volunteer, who amongst other impressive skills served up excellent burgers on day two. We also had a welcome visit from Paul Lawless, the recently appointed Head of Community Engagement, who turned out to be an experienced long-distance walker. Paul walked with us for the first two days. "Thank you all", for without you we would never have started let alone finished.

In the warm afternoon sunshine, we covered some six miles along the Wall or alongside the Vallum (ditch) and through attractive red stone hamlets as we headed towards Carlisle. In the course of the afternoon we proved to Lee that we were walking fit to tackle some distinctly strenuous parts of the Wall later in the week. Then it was back into Carlisle to see the Poppy Cascade in Carlisle Castle — one of two touring the Country and made up of some of the 880,000 ceramic poppies that filled the Tower of London moat in 2014. Then into the Regimental Museum of the Kings Own Royal Border Regiment, who seemed to take delight in capturing other Nation's drums.

A fat boys' greasy breakfast presented itself the following morning (a full fry-up) — thank goodness we were not eating roman style; porridge, bread and a stinking fish sauce called garrum would more than likely have been on offer. So, it was back on the Wall, this time along the stone section. Sadly, much of the cut stone, estimated at over two million pieces, has been looted over the last one and a half millennia. It was here we discovered why Lee Evans took so long composing snaps; no he was not seeking to emulate Lord Snowdon, he was inserting images of Storm Troopers, Ewoks and other creatures from the Star Wars films. (Lee, I know I signed the media declaration, but I can distinctly recall there being no mention of Storm Troopers being allowed into the imagery!)

As the temperature rose that late morning and early afternoon so did we in height and perhaps in frustration as we wandered along a wood line looking for our first Fort only to discover it had been subsumed into someone's walled garden! Fortunately, Gron's lunchtime cooking, Sue's delicious cake and shortbread and Nicky buying gorgeous Cumbrian ice creams soothed the savage beasts. Girding our loins and after an interesting talk from Chris about why the Romans invaded Britannia, the challenge proved more difficult than earlier in the day. Walking poles to the fore it was onwards and eastwards with the one sour note of the walk when a farmer was adamant that the Ordnance Survey was wrong, and we had no right of access across his land — funny that, when we could clearly see a bridleway marker!

At last a clearly defined remnant of the stone wall was found and hearts soared as the soft breeze rustled the leafy canopy or was it the ghost of Batavian legionaries breathing down our necks? More and more of the wall appeared as we strode out to our finishing point, Turret 52A. Time to consult GPS, Fitbits and other devices as to how far we had walked, no two were even close to one another but the consensus was 12 miles, just under the distance a legion was expected to cover in full fighting order when marching. We were off for a shower and supper, whilst they would have constructed a marching camp. Tough nuts I am sure we would all agree.

Day Three and Lee springs a surprise on us — "right which blind mouse is going to map read for us today?" Electronic mapping is excellent in the comfort of home but the glare off the screen made it very difficult to see, nevertheless, with much pointing in the right direction we set off Eastwards towards Birdoswald Fort and the best-preserved remnants of the Wall. A stop at the English Heritage Centre to recharge caffeine levels was augmented by an excellent talk about the Fort itself. From now on the Wall was clearly visible, turrets and signal posts rolled by and we met the first of the Wall guardians, in this case a very friendly tortoiseshell cat that condescended to have its photo taken. Sinister, dexter, sinister (come on — every legionary had to speak and read Latin whatever their mother tongue was). We walked on enjoying spectacular views — I may be VI but I can still see landscapes through the filthiest of net curtains that constitutes my vision. The end point of today, the Roman Army Museum where we learnt it wasn't sandals and short tunics on the Wall, but furs, socks and underpants! A replica gladius (the short roman infantry sword), was passed round, it weighed more than a modern ceremonial sword.

Fitbit check; another 10 miles had been covered; don't sit down soldier, you will never get up!



Picture: Richard Haynes aptly named tortoiseshell wall guardian.

So, onto Housesteads Fort, and further beyond the next day. The Forts communal latrine still flushes in the wetter months, much to the amazement of visiting school children. It was here that the term 'wrong end of the stick' was explained, you would have made every effort to ensure you got the right end back then (if this requires explanation then in order to spare blushes, you may need to look it up!). Always planned as the longest day, we then had some 14 miles to cover, across difficult terrain. Up and over the highest point with all its false crest lines; even up here turrets were the statutory mile apart. Along this stretch we were regularly advised to keep right — a 300 foot drop awaited us on the northern (left) side.

To bolster spirits Matt regaled us with snippets from various Monty Python films and sketches so that we half expected to come across that "very naughty boy" Brian or the sentry with the "filthy French accent". As we dug deep to climb the ridges, Nicky, mobile phone to one ear and discussing matters of strategic importance managed to navigate without a stumble whilst Lee, our Health and Safety guardian, kisses the grass twice, but then he needed eyes in the back of his head as he ensured the mice were safe. So, it is true women do multi-task! We came down off the Wall after 6pm knowing that what we had hoped to achieve had been completed and the outstanding weather definitely went a long way to make it possible.

So, Friday had arrived and it was time to exercise those 'little grey cells' on our final day spent at Vindolanda, the gem of the Wall. Nine phases of building

took place on the site, with the largest Fort capable of holding 1000 legionaries. Guided around the site by Paul, who brought it alive, we talked to the archaeologist leading this year's dig and even handled some of the day's finds, leather and pottery, still covered in the clay that has preserved them for over 1500 years. Amazing!

Then to the eastern extremities of the Wall to Arbeia, a supply fort at South Shields where there is a replica fort gate, soldiers' accommodation and the Commandant's quarters. If time travel ever becomes available then make sure you return as the commandant, unless you are happy to share a bunk with three other trained thugs! The final piece of 'grey cell' training was to adjourn to Coleman's, the best fish and chips certainly in the North East if not the UK, its only downside politicians have been known to frequent it!



Picture: Arbeia Fort's replica gatehouse The eastern Fort on the Wall complex. Chris Cardwell, John Cantwell and Richard Haynes.

All in all, an excellent training week encouraging fitness, teamwork and intellectual stimulation. So what lessons can be drawn from a week of strenuous walking, across wonderful countryside and in excellent company whilst bathed in glorious sunshine, something rarely seen on consecutive days on the Wall? Firstly; the importance of understanding history — despite those who consider it to be of no consequence, it has shaped our today and will leave its mark on the future.

Secondly; with the encouragement of friends and the support of Blind Veterans UK, members can truly do amazing things.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Review caught up with Peter Francis, Media and PR Executive, at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to hear about its inception, future and of their 1914-18 commemorations.

"It has been a remarkable four years for the centenary of the First World War and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has really been at the heart of those commemorations. It's perhaps difficult for all of us who have grown up with Remembrance, and perhaps visited the cemeteries or worn our poppy on Remembrance Day, to really appreciate that the act of Remembrance as we've come to know it was really a revolutionary concept. Before the First World War there was no system in place to remember the sacrifice of the ordinary, if I can put it that way, soldiers. There were lots of statues to Generals and Kings, but very little to mark the sacrifice of the rank and file of the Army.

"Just a hundred years before the First World War at the end of the Battle of Waterloo most of the dead were simply thrown into pits and forgotten. A few years later those bodies were exhumed, but it wasn't to give them a proper burial, or to bring the bodies home, I'm afraid the truth is a little more shocking. The bodies were burnt so that the ashes could be used as fertiliser and the teeth were taken to make dentures, so, there's such a thing as Waterloo teeth.

"A 100 years after that our attitude to the Army had changed, and indeed the First World War changed it out of all recognition, because for the first time this wasn't just a small army of Empire, it was a volunteer army. It was our brothers, our fathers, our friends, our work colleagues volunteering to fight. As that army started to suffer terrible casualties on the Western Front the public demanded that something be done to remember their sacrifice, and cometh the hour, cometh the rather unusual gentleman called Fabian Ware. He had enjoyed a varied career when he had been a teacher and a newspaper editor, but he was considered too old to fight in the First World War. He was nevertheless keen to do his bit and he went to the Royal Automobile Club in London with a few of his friends in their private motor vehicles, where they volunteered for the British Red Cross. Fabian Ware went to France to look after the wounded and very quickly he was shocked when he saw there was no system in place to care for the graves and that caused huge distress to the families at home and so his unit, under his own initiative, started to mark and care for all the graves that they could. By 1915 that work is believed to be so important that Ware and his men

were relieved of their Red Cross duties to become part of the British Army, the Army Graves Registration Service.

"But Ware was still not happy. 'What will happen to the graves once the war's over and the armies have left France and Belgium?' He became convinced of the need for an independent organisation that would look after the graves forever, and with the support of the Prince of Wales he admitted a memorandum to the Imperial War Conference in 1917. It was unanimously approved and by Royal Charter on 21st May 1917 the Imperial, now Commonwealth War Graves Commission, came into being. But there was no template for this work as it had never been done before. There was no budget. No one had any idea what it would look like, and although the Commission had this very fancy sounding name, none of the mechanics of Remembrance had been worked out.

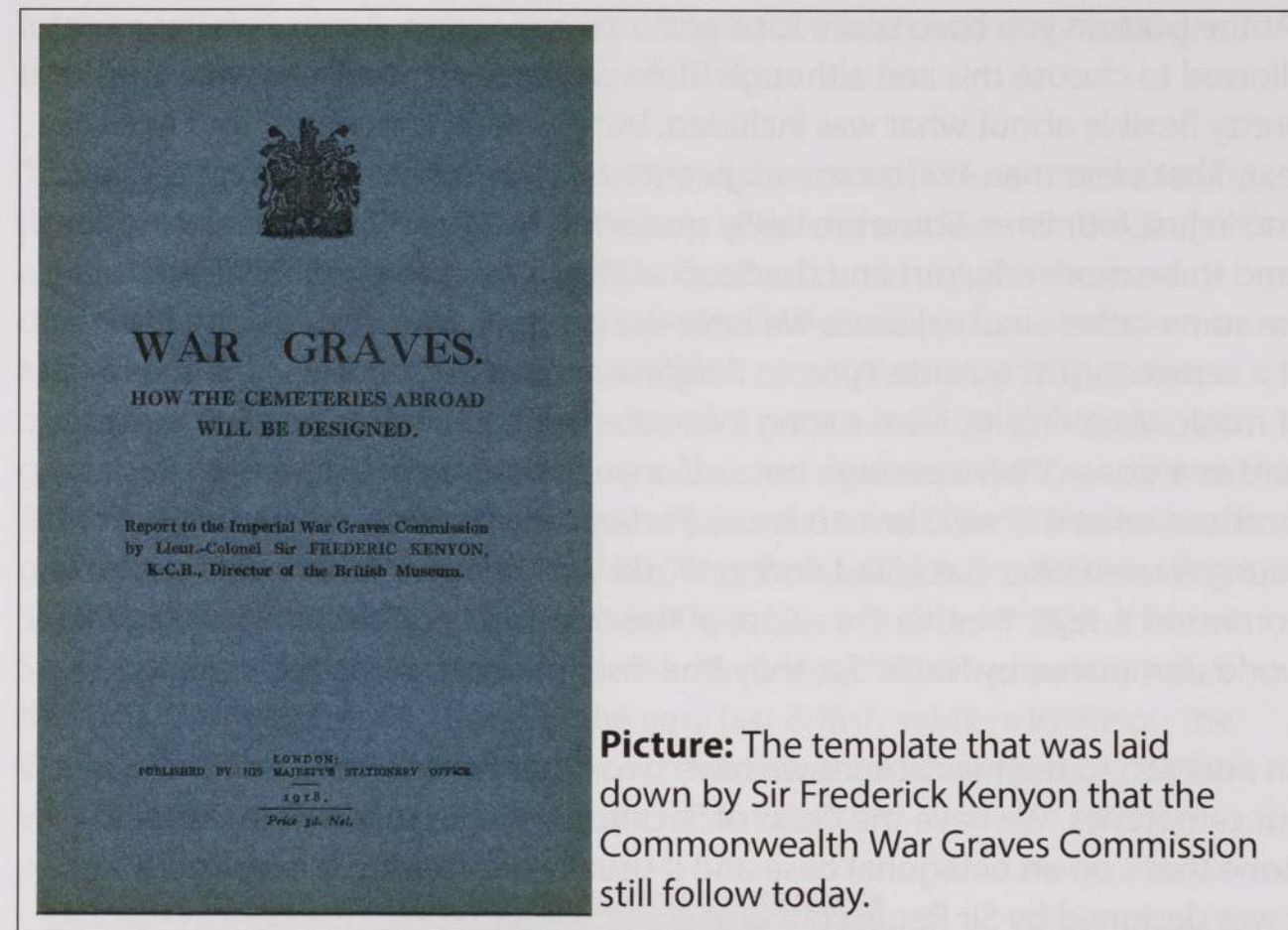
"So, he turned to the very best that the Empire had to offer, architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker and Reginald Blomfield. Gertrude Jekyll the garden designer and the author Rudyard Kipling, who is responsible for all the inscriptions we use and who lost his own son in the war. Together these individuals started to articulate how the Commission would remember the dead and one of the first things they decided was that we would treat absolutely everybody equally. Remarkably far sighted for the time and it caused a huge fuss too because it meant that we wouldn't bring the bodies home. It meant that we would use a headstone rather than a cross to mark the grave of the fallen because of the many different faiths that we were commemorating. People got very angry about this almost state controlled bereavement and there was quite a vocal and powerful opposition to the Commission in the early days. In particular the non repatriation, which we felt only the very rich would have been able to afford, and that wouldn't have been right. And the fact that we were going to use a headstone rather than a cross to mark the grave. People were angry about the lack of crosses and it all came to a head in 1920 in a Parliamentary debate when thankfully our Chairman, who was a rather powerful speaker by the name of Winston Churchill spoke. The motion was defeated in Parliament and the work of the Commission could really start — what Rudyard Kipling called, 'The biggest single bit of work since the Pharaohs, and they only worked in their own country'.

"Today the Commission is responsible for caring for the graves and memorials to 1.7 million Commonwealth Service men and women. We look after their

graves and memorials at 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries and territories around the world. We're probably the world's biggest gardening organisation too. You might measure your borders at home in metres, but we measure ours in kilometres and our gardeners mow the equivalent of about a thousand football pitches every single week. But it's always about the individual. It's always making sure that man or woman, whoever they are, or wherever they died, no matter how they died, will be remembered forever. That is what we are all about.

"A lot of the rooms at the Commission are named after our founding fathers and we're sitting here in the Kenyon room that is named after Sir Frederick Kenyon. Most people don't have a clue who he is or who he was. He was the director of the British Museum and he became a lifelong friend of Fabian Ware. When Fabian Ware turned to those best of the Empire, Lutyens, Baker and Blomfield, Rudyard Kipling and Gertrude Jekyll, he took them out to France while the war was still going on. So long before the war was won they were looking at that battle scarred landscape and trying to work out how the cemeteries would look. Being artistic people they perhaps found it difficult to agree and it wasn't helped by the fact that Luytens and Baker really didn't get on very well as they'd fallen out earlier on in their careers. When they came back to the UK their disagreements started to become public and the public themselves started to get a little bit nervous about this new organisation.

"So almost in desperation Ware turned to Kenyon to try and pull all of this together. Kenyon went out to the Western Front, again while the war was still raging, and in 1918 he produced this extraordinary blue pamphlet called 'How the cemeteries abroad will be designed' and it absolutely became the template for the Commission's work. It's remarkable to think how he was able to see this vision when he was looking at a battle scarred landscape with wooden crosses strewn across it, land destroyed by shell fire, and yet he speaks about treating everybody equally and that we should use a headstone to mark the graves. There shouldn't be anything gloomy about the cemeteries and they should have plants and flowers and grass. They should have trees for people to shelter under. There should be a register of the dead so that we can help people find the graves. Absolutely everything we take for granted today he spelled out in this really simple little blue pamphlet and it's probably the most cherished and most important document in the Commission's archive.



Picture: The template that was laid down by Sir Frederick Kenyon that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission still follow today.

"He really was a remarkable individual. But once he'd spelt out that vision it was very much left to the architects to realise it and without doubt each of them brought their own characteristics to the work, but Lutyens was probably the most extraordinary of them. I mean an absolute genius and although the Commission's headstone can't be attributed to any one individual, it's perhaps one of those few occasions when designed by committee was successful, you can see the influence of Lutyens on it. The headstones are made from a limestone, usually Portland, but we use different stones depending where we are in the world. They sit in concrete beams to keep them upright and level. They stand 830mm, very exact, above the ground and they are curved. The curve at the top allows the rainwater to wash off and doesn't obscure the inscription and they allow a lot more information about the individual to be included. At the top you usually have a country emblem or a regimental badge. The font that we use was specifically designed for the Commission by Donald Gill and it's very deeply engraved so that you can read the names as you scan down a row of headstones. Lutyens always said they were designed to be 'a whisper rather than a shout'. You have the name at the top and the service details of that person. The age if we know it. If families wished they could choose not to have a symbol or they could choose a cross or a Star of David and Muslim graves face towards Mecca.

"At the bottom you have space for a personal inscription. Again, families were allowed to choose this and although there were some guidelines we were pretty flexible about what was included, but it was 66 characters, four lines of text. That's less than Twitter so imagine trying to articulate the loss of a loved one in just four lines. Some are really powerful. The First World War inscriptions tend to be more religious and the Second World War more personal and there are some rather unusual ones. We have the grave of a young musician buried at a cemetery just outside Ypres in Belgium and his personal inscription is a bar of music. We think it's from a song 'After the Ball is Over,' but we can't quite be sure as it doesn't have enough notes. If anyone reading or listening to this can work out what it is we'd love to know. Perhaps my favourite inscription is from a young airman who was killed during World War Two and it's from his last letter home and it says, 'Mother I'm aware of the risks but I prefer them to living in a world dominated by Nazis.' So, they [the inscriptions] can really get you.

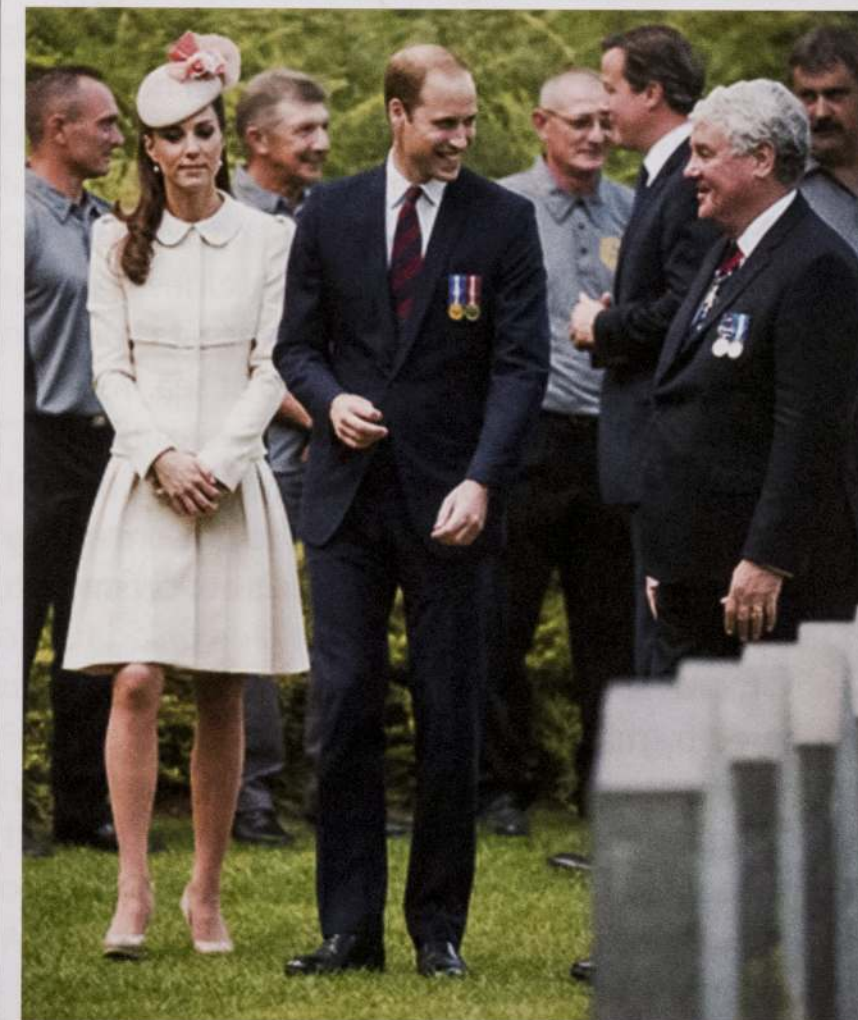
"In addition to the headstones we have two other central features in most of our cemeteries. We have the Cross of Sacrifice, which is made from Portland stone that's on an octagonal base and it usually has fixed to it a bronze sword. It was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield and it represents the faith of the majority of people we commemorate. It is in four different sizes depending on how big the cemetery is and most war cemeteries with more than 40 graves will have a Cross of Sacrifice. We also have the Stone of Remembrance which was designed by Lutyens. It's an alter shaped stone that sits on three stone steps and they weigh about three tonnes each, they are absolutely enormous and the Stone of Remembrance commemorates those of all faiths and none. On it are words chosen by Rudyard Kipling from the Book of Ecclesiasticus 'Their Name Liveth For Evermore'. If anything sums up what the Commission is about it's that."

When asked to speak about the CWCG's work over the past past four years to commemorate the 1914 to 1918 centenary Peter continued.

"The planning started about four years before the First World War centenary. We wanted to make sure that we had in place not only our own plans, but that the cemeteries and memorials would be ready for the huge numbers of people that thankfully have come over the last few years. We wanted to make sure that we had all of our maintenance programmes in place so that we didn't have scaffolding around our big cemeteries and memorials. We had to accelerate a

lot of our maintenance programmes before 2014, which was quite hard given the sheer scale of what we do, but we did it.

"Then in August 2014 we were at the start of the crux of the commemoration. It was at St Symphorium Military Cemetery, which is near Mons in Belgium. It's a beautiful little site that was originally a German cemetery, so it looks very different to any of our other Commonwealth Cemeteries. It has a lot more trees and it's quite small and it's on different levels, so you come up these steps and you're not really confronted by masses of graves initially. In fact, the first graves you see are German graves and a German memorial that was erected in 1914. You then go around the corner and you start to see the Commonwealth graves and it contains the very first British soldier to die on the Western Front, a gentleman called Private John Parr who was killed in August 1914 at Mons. Sadly just a few feet away from him is Private George Ellison who was killed on the 11th of November 1918, one of the very last British soldiers to die on the Western Front. It was the perfect place to have that commemoration. It was very different as it was at night time and it was dark.



Picture: His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge greet former Commissioner of The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Air Chief Marshal Sir Joe French KCB, CBE. Photo copyright © CWGC.

"We were honoured to have HRH The Duke of Cambridge and HRH The Duchess of Cambridge at St Symphorium, which I think was absolutely vital as we wanted to be able to enlighten people, educate them about the war and we really wanted to pass on that baton of Remembrance to the next generation. Having the young Royals with us was a really powerful message to say, 'This is something you could be interested in'. I think St Symphorium is perhaps one of the most poignant cemeteries we've ever had. The symbolism of having those two graves, four years of war, almost 10 million dead, and yet the men are buried no more than two feet away from each other, it's difficult to escape that.

"That was the very first commemoration for 1914-18 and then very quickly we moved on to Gallipoli in Turkey. That's usually considered to be an Australian and New Zealand event because that is where the Anzacs fought the First World War, but there were huge numbers of British and Indian and French soldiers who lost their lives. The cemeteries have a unique quality and the landscape really hasn't changed from 1915. As you stand on the beeches that the troops landed on and look up at the mountainous ranges of the Gallipoli Peninsula you see the topographical feature that the soldiers who had just come from Egypt nicknamed the Sphinx. The cemeteries don't have headstones on Gallipoli, because of the risk of earth quake we use a much lower ground level marker, called a pedestal marker or a Gallipoli marker. So, there's a very different look and feel to it. There we were honoured to have His Royal Highness Prince Charles and His Royal Highness Prince Harry attend.

"Then 2016 and the Jutland commemorations. This was really the first change we had to remember the sacrifice of those who served and died at sea. You have to remember that Britain was a maritime power in 1914 and yet sadly when you mention the First World War to most people they probably think of mud and trenches on the Western Front. It was nice to be able to do something in Orkney to mark that and there are a lot of big naval memorials at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham.

"But 2016 was perhaps remembered by many for The Somme, the huge commemorations on the Somme to mark what was the worst day in the British army's history on 1st July 1916 when tens of thousands of young men, many of them from the Pals Battalions who had volunteered to fight, were killed. So, friends and work colleagues who'd enlisted together, trained together, served together, and sadly died together on the first day of the Somme. The initial

commemoration was extremely powerful and we were able to sustain that interest over the whole 141 days of the Somme offensive through our community engagement initiative in the UK. That really helped us to raise awareness of the fact that we have war graves no more than three miles from your doorstep and we want people to go and visit them and remember them too.

"2017 was all about Passchendaele, perhaps the one battle of the First World War that has come to dominate our understanding of it. When we think of the mud it is usually Passchendaele. It was deeply moving to be a part of that and to have the descendants there with us. Sadly, we don't have the veterans anymore, but we still have the descendants. One of the things that has really pleased me with the centenary is the record numbers of people who are coming to our sites or using our services. Sometimes people say, 'Well the Commission's just a maintenance organisation'. No, we're not. That's part of what we do, but we have all of that under control. Perhaps the biggest challenge for us is engaging that next generation and in making them appreciate what they're looking at and hopefully understanding the human stories behind the names engraved on stone and that's where we're focussing a lot of our attention now. So, education resources and partnerships with other organisations like Blind Veterans UK. Looking at our new fellowship, as for the very first time we've created a charity for the Commission that will allow us to go and do the things that our Royal Charter doesn't talk about. Going out and recruiting volunteers around the UK to hold events in our UK sites. Really raising the bar and using the 2014 to 2018 period for a springboard to the next hundred years of Remembrance.

"The testimony that you provided from the unveiling of the Menin Gate in 1927 meant that last year we also marked the anniversary of perhaps our most famous memorial, The Menin Gate. We had this wonderful account from a blind veteran who had gone with his wife to that unveiling in 1927 and he talked about being able to run his hand across just some of the names of the 54,000 missing who are commemorated on that memorial and what it meant to him. So little of that survives here in our Archives. We have all the discussions about how memorials should be built, but having such a personal account from a 1927 Review, and to read what it meant to that individual who'd served, and obviously knew the people who were named on that memorial was incredible. And then to be able to go to The Menin Gate Memorial 90 years later and see

the power it still has for the many thousands of visitors who cram underneath those arches each night and listen to the Last Post, it is still one of the most moving places I think I've ever been to.

"August 2018 is the start of what came to be known as the 100 days. The 100 days is the start of the allied advance on the 8th of August at Amiens when the Allied armies really turned the tide against the German forces and began an incredible advance towards the Armistice on the 11th November in 1918. We're supporting all of our member states in marking those events and again we're trying to focus on the human stories rather than battles, because we think it's the human stories that resonate. So, trying to look at a story for each day that reveals something of — yes, we're on the home straight, but sadly there is still a high price to be paid.

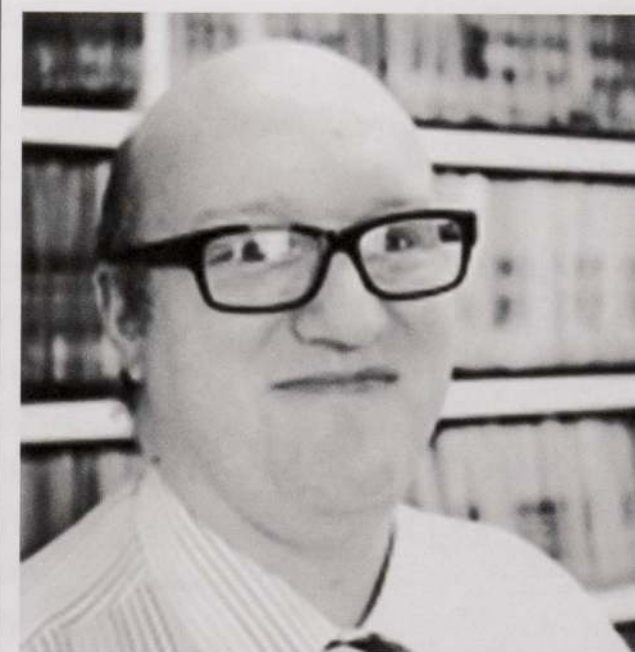
"We're in the middle of constructing our very first visitor centre right at the heart of our operations in France at a place called Borraine, just outside Arras. It's where we have our big European headquarters and it's where we manufacture all of our headstones that go around the world. The headstones used to be engraved by hand and a skilled stone mason could perhaps do three a day, depending on how complicated the badges were. It's now all done by computer controlled engraving machines and if we really wanted to we could manufacture 24,000 headstones a year. We don't do that because we have a conservation approach to our estate and we try and prolong the life of the headstones we have by re-engraving them in situ. We have teams of stone masons who literally squat in front of the grave and with a hand held drill that's a little bit like a dentist's drill, it certainly sounds like one, they deepen the inscription and prolong the life of that headstone for another 60 or 70 years. We want to explain to visitors all the work that goes on behind the scenes to make sure those cemeteries and memorials are a fitting tribute to those who died. The visitors centre will open in 2019 and we're busy finalising the content for it, which is really exciting as we've never done anything quite like that before.

"We have a new guide book coming out later this year, which again talks about the history and work of the Commission, but it also recommends some of the places we think you'd like to visit, encouraging people to perhaps get off the well trodden track and go and visit some of our cemeteries that perhaps they don't know too much about.

"And then of course we start to look ahead to the Second World War anniversaries and planning is already underway for the anniversaries of the D-Day Landings. Our work never stops, and long may that continue.

"If you want to find out more our website at www.cwgc.org is always the best place to start to keep up to date with our latest news and events. We have our blog where we try to give an insight into the work of the Commission and we have some great articles there from our horticultural colleagues, including gardening tips. There's a few things from me too. You can also search our casualty records. That is completely free, so you can find out where anybody we commemorate is buried or remembered. And you can take part in some of our projects and there are details about volunteering and about the sales of books. Also two of the projects that we're working on this year are Shrouds of the Somme, an art installation designed to commemorate those who are commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme. And There But Not There, the perspex Tommy figures, which people can purchase and bring back to their community to remember the men and women who didn't get a chance to come home.

"You can also follow us on social media, we're on Twitter and Facebook and we love to hear what you think so please do get in touch."



Picture: Peter Francis, Media and PR Executive Commonwealth War Graves Commission. **Website** www.cwgc.org

Trooping the Colour 2018. By Graham Forshaw.

London on a bright morning in June: crowds saunter along Whitehall to see Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Parade.

Scarlet and black Foot Guards, the red, white and blue of the Household Cavalry, rank upon rank awaiting the arrival of Her Majesty and the Royal Family. Beyond the parade ground tall trees nod in a slight breeze as the Royal carriages enter from The Mall. Shouted orders, the band strikes up, scarlet and black lines of soldiers march into position. The crunch of boots on gravel as the troops march and countermarch is followed by the jingle of gleaming harness as the horses and their plumed riders swing by.

Escort for the Colour is provided by 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards. A lone drummer plays a field signal, the Drummer's Call, to begin the ceremony. To the tune of The British Grenadier the Escort marches forward and halts in front of The Regimental Sergeant Major. The Colour is passed to the Ensign who places it in a white belt. The Colour is paraded through the ranks. The music of the massed bands, the precision of the marching soldiers, must be one of the most stirring ceremonies of the British year. A proud moment for the small group of Blind Veterans UK's members who were present on Saturday, June 9th.



Letters to the Editor.

As we always want to hear from you please send your letters to the editor to revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk or post to Review Editor, Blind Veterans UK, 12 - 14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

Dear Editor,

I'm The Head of Engagement at Transreport, a technology company that develops smart apps for the rail industry with the specific aim of improving the journey experience of passengers. The company was founded in late 2015, and since then Transreport has always put the needs of the passengers first; for a better journey experience. In 2017, Transreport began focusing on improving accessibility within the rail industry through innovative ways that provide passengers with a seamless journey experience. We believe that every individual using these services should feel confident, comfortable and in control of their journeys. As a result, we developed the Transreport Passenger Assist App. This is a ground-breaking new system that allows disabled passengers to simply and efficiently request assistance with the push of a button. Our app removes the need for online forms and phone calls; which can be a very time-consuming process. Instead, a passenger creates a profile on our app and plans their journey in a few simple clicks; whether this is booking assistance in advance or seeking immediate assistance at a station. We are working very closely with train companies and wider stakeholders, to ensure that passenger needs are put first. We are currently delivering a very successful trial of the Transreport Passenger Assist App with West Midlands Trains across their network. We are now preparing for a wider rollout and would like to get even more passengers involved. Transreport has recently had the privilege of working with Blind Veterans UK to better understand the needs of vision impaired individuals who use rail transport. We would be honoured to invite Blind Veteran UK members to take part in a workshop with us at a Blind Veterans UK centre. At the workshop, members will have the opportunity to discuss their journey experiences whilst using rail transport; share thoughts on the app; and provide personal feedback. If this is an opportunity that you would like to get involved in, please contact Dr Renata Gomes, Head of Research and Innovation, and her team at Blind Veterans UK in the Research Dept on 020 7616 8371 or email research@blindveterans.org.uk

Yours faithfully,
Emma Taylor.

Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

**Pamper week Monday 17th to Friday 21st
September at the Brighton centre.**

The pamper week in the Brighton centre has been running for a few years now. The week was started by blind veteran Iain Millard who is the therapist at the Brighton centre as a way of giving back to the charity. The week started as a themed week with the proceeds of any treatments being donated to fundraising. Two years ago it was changed from a themed week to a fundraising week so that more people could take advantage of the treatments on offer.

There are a number of our members and volunteers who are qualified therapists who also join us for the week offering treatments such as Indian head massages, head, shoulder and leg massages, balabachi or a facial to name but a few. If you want to join us for the week you just need to book in as a holiday maker. During your week you can still take full advantage of the facilities at the centre but with the added benefit of (for a small charge) being pampered for the week. Telephone bookings on 01273 391500.

Wood themed week, more of a topic than a themed week, at the Brighton centre.

From 24th to 28th September at the Brighton centre the Art & Craft Workshop will theme all of their sessions around wood and trees. They will set up a pole lathe and saw horse in the Inner Garden for wood turning taster sessions, a carving demo, and woodturning demos. A wood cut printmaker will talk about his work and offer a wood cut printmaking workshop. There will be a Friday trip to Bentley Wood Fair and you can book a holiday during this week and take part in some of the activities. To book or for information telephone 01273 391500.

Answers to Ron Russell's Mish Mash Quiz from page 11.

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Cricket. | 2. There are seven. | 3. Upstream. |
| 4. Fact. | 5. Fact. | 6. Kent. |
| 7. The Humber. | 8. There's no such thing. | 9. A fishing boat. |
| 10. Marmite. | | |

Family News.

Congratulations to:

Birthdays.

Stefan Ciesla who celebrated his 106th birthday on 18th August.

Walter Sharp who celebrated his 104th birthday on 7th August.

Huw Williams who celebrated his 103rd birthday on 24th August.

Marjorie Wakeford who celebrated her 102nd birthday on 4th August.

Herbert Macklin who celebrated his 100th birthday on 3rd August.

Ronald Preston who celebrated his 100th birthday on 11th August.

Doris Henley who celebrated her 100th birthday on 11th August.

John Hanley who celebrated his 100th birthday on 15th August.

Bertram Watterson who celebrated his 100th birthday on 18th August.

Anniversaries.

Platinum 70 years married.

Arthur & Mildred Hollands of Halifax, West Yorkshire on 7th August.

Daniel & Mary Maher of Weston Super Mare, North Somerset on 7th August.

Luke & Mary Devlin of Dundee on 28th August.

Blue Sapphire 65 years married.

Ken & Brenda Beale of King's Lynn, Norfolk on 1st August.

Leonard & Daphne Pugsley of Potters Bar, Hertfordshire on 1st August.

Donald & Jessie Macleod of Tain, Ross-Shire on 6th August.

John & Elizabeth Barbour of Edinburgh on 29th August.

Norman & Jean Roper of Witney, Oxfordshire on 29th August.

John & Mavis Tillyer of Buckfastleigh, Devon on 29th August.

Diamond Yellow 60 years married.

Mike & Jill Smith of Colchester, Essex on 9th August.

Donald & Doris Evans of Rhyl, Clwyd on 23rd August.

Giles & Ann Currie of Amesbury, Wiltshire on 30th August.

Golden 50 years married.

Alex & Janice Potts of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands on 3rd August.

Ruby 40 years married.

David & June Orr on 18th August.

Tony & Linda Hebditch of Long Eaton, Nottingham on 19th August.

Jim & Daphne Taylor of Carnforth, Lancashire on 22nd August.

Pearl 30 years married.

Allan & Ally Cowie of Buckie, Banffshire on 5th August.

Ron & Carolyn Colbourne of Worthing, West Sussex on 20th August.

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following and we offer our heartfelt condolences to their widows, widowers, families and friends.

Blanche Buffee who died on 1st July 2018. She was the widow of the late Ronald Buffee.

Cynthia Fearn who died on 1st July 2018. She was the widow of the late George Fearn.

Mary Gill who died on 6th July 2018. She was the wife of Thomas Gill.

Joan Hatfield who died on 22nd June 2018. She was the wife of Robert Hatfield.

Jean Moretti who died on 16th July 2018. She was the wife of William Moretti.

Kathleen Mort who died on 16th July 2018. She was the wife of Emlyn Mort.

Dorothy Procter who died on 24th June 2018. She was the wife of William Procter.

Jenny Scott who died on 13th June 2018. She was the spouse of Neville Scott.

In Memory.

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following members and we offer our heartfelt condolences to their widows, widowers, families and friends.

Reginald 'Reg' Ayers of Brackley, Northamptonshire died on 25th June 2018, aged 88. From 1948 to 1949 he served in the UK and Germany in the Suffolk Regiment and Parachute Regiment.

Keith Barwick of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 2nd June 2018, aged 80. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1959 in England and Hong Kong, discharging as a Senior Aircraftman.

John Best of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 1st July 2018, aged 95. From 1942 to 1946 he served as an Abel Seaman in the Royal Navy in the North Atlantic, Far East and the Pacific Ocean.

Dixon 'Allen' Buxton of Houghton Le Spring, Tyne And Wear died on 4th April 2018, aged 91. From 1944 to 1947 he served in India as a Corporal in the RAF.

Kenneth 'Ken' Carr of Derby, Derbyshire died on 25th June 2018, aged 83. From 1954 to 1956 he served as a Fusilier in the Lancashire Fusiliers in Germany. Then from 1957 to 1965 as a Leading Engineer in the Royal Navy.

Edgar 'Ed' Croshaw of Solihull, West Midlands died on 14th June 2018, aged 91. From 1945 to 1948 he served in Jerusalem in the North Staffordshire Regiment.

Desmond Davies of Haverfordwest, Dyfed died on 7th June 2018, aged 83. From 1956 to 1958 he served in the Royal Artillery in Malaya during the Insurgency.

George Dean of Aylsham, Norfolk died on 9th June 2018, aged 99. From 1953 to 1955 he served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery in Korea for the entirety of his service.

John Evans of Wantage, Oxfordshire died on 22nd June 2018, aged 89. From 1948 to 1978 he served in the RAF as a Warrant Officer in Singapore, Malaya, Aden, Cyprus and the UK.

Leslie Farmer of Wellingborough, Northamptonshire died on 3rd July 2018, aged 96. From 1945 to 1948 he served in the Royal Berkshire Regiment and the Royal Pay Corps in Reading, Colchester and Warwick.

Hugh Gillan of Neath, West Glamorgan died on 26th May 2018, aged 87. From 1950 to 1955 he served in the Royal Army Medical Corps in Northern Ireland.

Joseph Hall of Anfield, Merseyside died on 20th June 2018, aged 79. From 1957 to 1972 he served as a Trooper in The Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Corps of Transport in England and Germany.

Charles 'Frank' Hearn of Loughborough, Leicestershire died on 23rd June 2018, aged 97. From 1939 to 1946 he served in the Royal Artillery in North Africa, Sicily and Europe.

Douglas Hewitt of Hythe, Kent died on 1st July 2018, aged 100. From 1939 to 1946 he served as a Warrant Officer in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in Northern Ireland, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

Anthony 'Tony' Hughes of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd died on 25th June 2018, aged 98. From 1940 to 1946 he served as a Sergeant in the Royal Army Medical Corps in India, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.

Harold Hyde of Manchester, Greater Manchester died on 20th May 2018, aged 85. From 1951 to 1956 he served in the Royal Armoured Corps in Catterick.

Cyril Jones of Bilston, West Midlands died on 1st June 2018, aged 95. From 1942 to 1947 he served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps in France and Germany.

Raymond Le Page of Painswick, Gloucestershire died on 1st May 2018, aged 91. From 1926 to 1948 he served as a Lieutenant in the Parachute Regiment in India and Egypt.

Ronald Marsden of Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire died on 28th June 2018, aged 96. From 1940 to 1947 he served as a Flight Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force in Germany.

Derek McConnell of Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire died on 19th June 2018, aged 88. From 1948 to 1949 he served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in Glasgow.

Archibald McNeice of St. Clement, Jersey died on 5th July 2018, aged 91. From 1944 to 1947 he served in the Royal Navy as an Ordinary Telegrapher.

Henry Moss of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 21st June 2018, aged 86. From 1950 to 1956 he served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Betty Oliver née Biggs of Thetford, Norfolk died on 17th June 2018, aged 95. From 1942 to 1945 she served in Colchester Military Hospital with the Voluntary Aid Detachment as a Private (Sister) Grade I.

Joseph 'Joe' Page of Wolverhampton died on 1st July 2018, aged 96. From 1944 to 1959 he served as a Sergeant in the South Staffordshire Regiment, King's Own Scottish Borderers and the Royal Army Service Corps in India, Europe, and Malaya.

Ivor Parry of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd died on 26th June 2018, aged 86. From 1952 to 1955 he served as a Senior Aircraftman in the RAF in Singapore.

Harry Phelps of Sale, Cheshire died on 14th June 2018, aged 93. From 1943 to 1947 he served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in Palestine.

Arthur 'John' Phillips of Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan died on 1st July 2018, aged 80. From 1954 to 1959 he served in the South Wales Borderers in Wales.

Trevor Plackett of Morecambe, Lancashire died on 22nd December 2017, aged 84. From 1951 to 1955 he served in the Royal Navy as a Stoker then Mechanic 1st Class.

Francis Plaistowe of St. Brelade, Jersey died on 1st June 2018, aged 94. From 1942 to 1947 he served as a Captain in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Japan.

John Powell of Woodingdean, East Sussex died on 23rd May 2018, aged 91. From 1945 to 1959 he served as a Private in the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment in South East Asia and the Middle East.

William 'Stewart' Reid of Fulbourn, Cambridgeshire died on 7th July 2018, aged 90. From 1946 to 1948 he served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in the UK and Germany.

John Scott of Dunfermline, Fife died on 1st March 2018, aged 82. From 1953 to 1960 he served in the UK and the Suez Canal Zone with the Royal Pioneer Corps.

John Sephton of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 1st July 2018, aged 81. From 1959 to 1961 he served in the Royal Signals in Germany.

John Sharples of Haverhill, Suffolk died on 20th June 2018, aged 82. From 1954 to 1957 he served in the Army Scots Guards 2nd Battalion in England and Malta.

Aleksander 'Alek' Skiba of Blackpool, Lancashire died on 31st May 2018, aged 93. He served in the Polish Navy from 1944 to 1947.

John Smith of Southwell, Nottinghamshire died on 25th May 2018, aged 84. From 1953 to 1955 he served in the RAF as an Aircraftman First Class.

Phillip Stevens of Woolwell, Plymouth died on 7th October 2017, aged 81. From 1954 to 1956 he served in Germany as a Gunner in the Light Anti Aircraft Regiment.

Ronald Strong of Eastbourne, East Sussex died on 24th June 2018, aged 98. From 1944 to 1947 he served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in Germany and England until demobbed as a Lance Corporal.

Roland 'Rolly' Talbutt of Wigan, Lancashire died on 1st July 2018, aged 95. From 1945 to 1947 he served in the Merchant Navy.

John Thomson of Spondon, Derbyshire died on 21st June 2018, aged 83. From 1956 to 1958 he served as a Senior Aircraftman in the RAF at RAF Lindholme.

Arthur Turner of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire died on 1st March 2018, aged 87. From 1949 to 1951 he served in the Royal Air Force as a Leading Aircraftman.

George Turner of Hampton, Middlesex died on 16th June 2018, aged 94. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Signals in the Middle East from 1943 to 1947.

Walter 'Wally' Wagg of Norwich, Norfolk died on 25th June 2018, aged 95. From 1945 to 1947 he served in the Royal West Kent Regiment.

Robert Ware of Prescot, Merseyside died on 8th July 2018, aged 94. From 1942 to 1946 he served as a Stoker 1st Class in the Royal Navy in the North Atlantic and India.

Eric Westerman of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 21st January 2018, aged 81. From 1958 to 1960 he served in France in the Royal Army Service Corps.

William Whelan of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 30th June 2018, aged 93. From 1943 to 1946 he served in the Royal Navy in Malta as a Sick Berth Attendant.

John Wilson of Lambeth, London died on 3rd July 2018, aged 93. From 1943 to 1946 he served as an Air Mechanic in the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm in Gosport, Scotland and Sri Lanka.

Henry 'Harry' Winter of Cardigan, Dyfed died on 4th June 2018, aged 78. He served in Germany in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1958 to 1960.

Pamela Woodford née Weightman of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne And Wear died on 22nd June 2018, aged 96. From 1942 to 1946 she served as a Leading WRN in the Women's Royal Naval Service in Portsmouth and Newcastle.

George Wrightson of Emsworth, Hampshire died on 14th June 2018, aged 97. From 1941 to 1946 he served in the Royal Air Force in England, Northern Ireland and Burma until demobbed as a Corporal.

