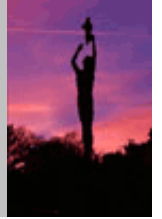


FROM THE FRONT

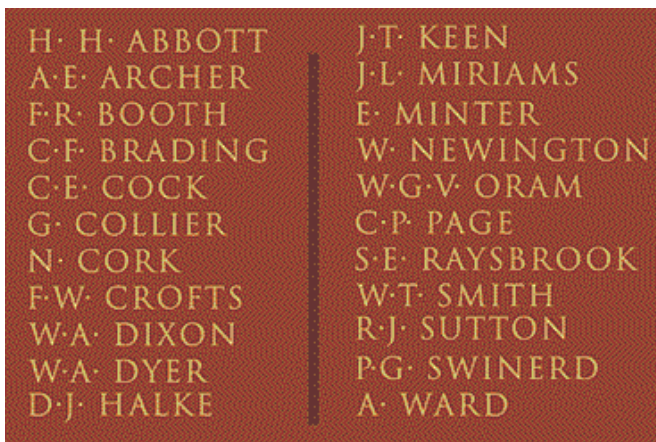


Issue 1

Spring 2010

The Newsletter of the Dover War Memorial Project

DEDICATION OF NEW PLAQUE ON THE TOWN MEMORIAL



Foundry template for the new plaque

During the last quarter, one highlight of our work on the Dover War Memorial Project (DWMP) was the unveiling and dedication of the new plaque on our Town Memorial on 1 November 2009.

This wonderful occasion was one result of several years' work. We often visit relatives of casualties and a number asked why their loved one wasn't commemorated. We asked the Town Council, in whose care is the War Memorial, to consider whether further names could be included. In 2006 they resolved that the Memorial would be updated every three years, were sufficient names forthcoming.

The first update was scheduled for November 2009. The previous January, together with all the supporting information we'd gathered, we put forward all the requests, which the Council agreed. "I would like to thank you," wrote a Royal Navy relative, "for the hard work and time that must have been involved in getting the dedication of the plaque

under way. The time spent in visiting all the relatives, collating all the details, and the travelling alone must have involved many many hours! Take a big, BRAVO ZULU. (In naval signalese, a big well done)."

The dedication, conducted by the Reverend David Ridley, was organised by the Town Council. In the crowd were some 100 relatives and friends of 22 men newly-commemorated, who went on to a reception in the Council Chamber, where we mounted an exhibition about our casualties. The day was wonderful and meant so much.

"My mother is crying with joy that after 65 years her brother's name is on the War Memorial" said one. "My grandparents would be so proud of their son and brother going on the Dover War Memorial." said another "I feel that a part of my uncle is coming back to Dover where he belonged."



David Ridley at the dedication

Since then we have received a number of new requests for names to be included; they are listed on

Dover's Virtual Memorial, online at (www.doverwarmemorialproject.org.uk). If you would like your Dovorian loved one to be included, Please do contact The Dover War Memorial Project (07876 240701)

THE DWMP ICEBERG!

We always say that The Dover War Memorial Project is a bit like an iceberg; only around a tenth of the work we do is publicly visible!

Amongst the nine-tenths that are hidden are all the enquiries we receive from around the world. We're often asked for information - The Dover War Memorial Project is cited in a number of books and articles - and other requests include advice on organising dedication or remembrance ceremonies, and contacts from various media.

In the last quarter some queries we've been involved with are the Remembrance Day article for the Daily Mirror, and Belgian TV, for a programme about the raid on Zeebrugge on St George's Day 1918. You may have spotted them filming in Dover, by the Memorial and up at St James' cemetery.



Belgian TV filming at St James for Zeebrugge

We've also, as always, helped more families discover more about their lost loved ones. One

family now know how their relative lost his life (in a road traffic accident), and we also found his grave, a non-CWGC commemorated one in a Kent cemetery. Now, nearly 70 years later, the family have been able to visit and lay flowers.



Jack Pulham

Meanwhile we helped other long-lost relatives get back in touch. Jack Pulham, just 19, lost his life over Scotland in April 1945. An aviation archaeologist working on the crash site was hoping too to erect a memorial to the crew of the destroyed Vickers Wellington, and wondered if we had a photograph of Jack. We didn't then – but we do now! That's his picture, above.

Jack's two nieces saw the appeal on the DWMP website and kindly sent several. We put them in touch with two of Jack's cousins, who are themselves also related to other casualties on our Virtual Memorial. Several members of the family recently enjoyed a grand reunion in Dover.

Thanks to that archaeologist, we were also able to inform the family exactly what had happened when Jack lost his life, something they'd often wondered but never knew.

There are so many more examples like this – and even Maggie finds some surprises! The boyhood best friend of one of the casualties commemorated

on the new plaque turned out to have been her neighbour when she was growing up in Dover.

CONTINUING RESEARCH

Research in to our casualties continues; before Christmas we spent several days in Kent archives, and have been exchanging information with various other Remembrance projects. Please do continue to let us know if you have any information at all about our Dovorians Fallen.

One of the most rewarding parts of our work is visiting people who wish to tell us more about their lost loved ones; there are currently eight families we've arranged to see during our next trip to Dover. We love browsing through the photo albums with their owners, reminiscing, and hearing the family stories; quite often these are things that haven't been spoken of for many years.

In some instances we've been privileged to be entrusted with the memories of those last in their family line, who wish to ensure that their loved one will be always remembered. Indeed, one of the aims of the DWMP is to preserve and archive all that we learn and gather, so that it will be accessible to future generations, even when we ourselves (Simon and Maggie) have long passed on.

One thing we sorely need for this, though, is a reliable digital voice recorder; Maggie's shorthand isn't what it was!



Sarah, our work experience volunteer

Another archive we have is one of photos; Simon has taken over 15,000 for the DWMP, including many from our visits to relatives, to graves and memorials, and from archives. We also have a number of super volunteers who take pictures of Dovorians casualty graves whenever they can; there's a large archive of these along with much other information currently going online.

We're truly pleased that this has enabled the DWMP to offer training and voluntary work experience to Sarah, a job-seeking graduate (pictured left). This Remembrance work she says she'll be proud to put on her CV!

MUNDELLA MEMORIAL



Presentation to Mundella School – Maggie with Mrs Lynn Seal, Headteacher, and Mr Neil Hearn, Chair of Governors

We're still involved in education for our youngsters too.

On 11th November we presented to Mundella School in Folkestone an image of their War Memorial as part of their work on Walter Tull. The original memorial, we believe, was destroyed during bombing raid in World War II.

The year-long commemorations for Walter Tull generated many Key Stage educational resources; there is now a new project in planning with featuring another of our Dovorians casualties.

But whether it can go ahead depends on our being granted the funding

BATTLE OF BRITAIN 70th

And finally this year is the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few", said Winston Churchill on 20 August 1940.

We have several of The Few amongst our casualties, including the iconic Keith Gillman, and David Kirton, from a family who truly suffered the costs of war.

The sky was their battlefield; on Dover descended many from the national press, who joined Doverians on the cliff-tops to watch. One of our hard-working volunteers sent me this snippet he'd found.

"The Daily Express's Hilde Marchant watched from Dover's Shakespeare Cliff, the thundering phalanxes of planes, seeming "to make an aluminium ceiling to the sky".



"At Dover's Grand Hotel, one luncheon guest complained bitterly of shrapnel in his soup, but headwaiter George Garland coaxed him to rise above it, and greeted newcomers to the dining room with, "Good morning, sir! A nice table here, sir, away from the broken window glass...."

Our volunteer somewhat mischievously suggested that this might be an idea for a future DWMP 1940s themed lunch ... shrapnel soup! So here's the suggested menu for our next war-time commemoration

MENU

Shrapnel Soup

Ceiling Steak, served with Bullet Peas and Woodchips

Chalk Crumble with Custard

Ground Coffee and After-Raid Mints

Would it catch on, do you think?

Best wishes to you all!

Maggie Stephenson-Knight

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Pictures:

Foundry template, by Dover Town Council

David Ridley at the dedication, by Simon John Chambers

Belgian TV filming at St James, from Geert Cleerbout

Jack Pulham, courtesy of his family

Sarah, by Simon John Chambers

Presentation to Mundella, by Simon John Chambers

Grand Hotel, postcard sent in 1916, from collection of MS-K

This newsletter was created by Marilyn Stephenson-Knight. The publication date for "From the Front" Issue 2 is 30 June 2010.

If there is anything you would like included, please let us know!

The Dover War Memorial Project remembers all those from our front-line town, Dover, Kent, England, who fell in the two World Wars. Work on the Project is entirely voluntary, and the Project itself is totally dependent on donations to survive. If we have helped you, please consider making a donation via PayPal or by cheque payable to The Dover War Memorial Project. Please help us remember those who gave all they could.