THE TIGER

Kuno – Dog of War

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND BRANCH
OF THE
WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION
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CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Welcome again, Ladies and Gentlemen, to *The Tiger*.

With the number and severity of lockdown restrictions seemingly growing by the hour, it cannot be any surprise that our October Branch Meeting cannot go ahead. We now approach what will undoubtedly be the very subdued commemorations on both 8th and 11th November. Government sources have confirmed the Remembrance Day Service will take place with representatives of the Royal Family, Government and Armed Forces present. The annual march past the Cenotaph will not, however, take place although around 100 veterans will be invited to attend with current Covid regulations applied. Additionally, it has already been confirmed that the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall will be pre-recorded without an audience present although it will be shown by the BBC on the eve of 7th Nov. Attendance at local events will be also, of course, be limited.

The reintroduction of quarantine requirements for British travelers visiting Belgium will prevent our personal attendance at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres, the first occasion since our Branch was formed that our wreath will not be laid during the ceremony. Spaces beneath the Menin Gate will be very limited and those wishing to participate in the Poppy Parade are required to pre-register with the Ypres Tourist Office to enable numbers to be strictly controlled.

The Last Post Association must again be congratulated on their determination to continue the nightly Service of Remembrance which, on the evening of 13th October, continued despite a major electrical power cut affecting a large percentage of Ypres. Undaunted and silhouetted against the headlights of a handily situated vehicle, as shown below, the three buglers performed their duty before a restricted crowd standing in almost total darkness. Once again, the Fallen are remembered!

At present, there is no way of knowing what level of restrictions any one of us will find ourselves under come November, but it is fairly obvious that any Acts of Remembrance will be solitary and personal. However disappointing, the important point is that they still happen at all . . .

Stay safe and well until we can all meet again.

D.S.H.

THEY ALSO SERVED

by

Valerie Jacques

Kuno

November will see a virtual ceremony taking place at which the PDSA will present the highest honour for military animal valour, The Dickin Medal, to *'Kuno'*, a Belgian Shepherd Malinois. It was in April 2019 during an operation to storm an Al Qaeda compound in mountainous terrain, that his extraordinary bravery, despite suffering horrific injuries and losing a paw, changed the course of an attack and saved many lives.

The Dickin Medal was not instituted until 1943 but *Kuno's* story reminded me, especially as we again approach Remembrancetide, of the existance of countless undocumented stories of canine bravery during the Great War. We read and hear of many, many courageous accounts of our equine heroes but not so many of "man's best friend". We can only imagine, however, how many occasions there must have been when a man lay injured and in hiding, perhaps rendered inarticulate from suffering and weakness and resigning himself to a terrible fate. How fortunate then, when all hope had gone, must have been that sudden sense of warm breath, a cold nose, a friendly lick, medicine and a small amount of food – help had arrived!

In 1914, during their first advance into Belgium and France, the Germans lost no time in siezing all suitable dogs for training. Charged with organising and directing their use to further the war effort, Colonel Konrad Most was appointed principal of the State Breeding and Training Establishment for Dogs in Berlin. With typical teutonic thoroughness, he went to great lengths to ensure that only dog-loving men were accepted as trainers and handlers as *"the efficiency of the dog heavily depends upon the choice of its attendants."* He saw to it that both canines and humans were extremely well cared for.

The French, too, had been experimenting with dogs for some years and, in December 1914, veterinarian and *Chasseur Alpins* (Alpine Hunter) Serjeant Paul Henri Mégnin, of the elite 11th Mountain Infantry Battalion, was given permission from Commander of the French 18th Corps, General Louis Ernest de Maud'huy, to establish a centre for training dogs for the French Army. A large training school was quickly established with sheep dogs proving to be particularly suitable. Very few, of any type, were rejected as, if considered unsuitable for sentry or messenger duties, they could be used for transport. Harnessed to a small cart, two dogs could easily pull 200 kilos of supplies and a lone pack dog could carry 12 to 15 kilos of supplies or ammunition.

The Belgians, of course, along with many other European countries, had long been using draught dogs and the military had swiftly identified that their breed of choice, the Belgian Mastiff, was far easier to care for, took up less space and was more economical than horses. It was a natural progression for them soon to be seen pulling Maxim machine guns as opposed to their pre-war civilian use of delivering provisions etc. to the population.

"En Guerre - Mitrailleuses Belges"
(At War – Belgian Machine Guns)

Major Richardson with a trio of his dogs – Airedale (centre) and two bloodhounds

In Britain the use of dogs in warfare had been the subject of discussion long before 1914. By 1898, Major Edwin Hautenville Richardson had begun studying their use in previous battle zones and he'd already bred and trained guard and ambulance dogs sending them to many parts of the world. At the outbreak of War, he petitioned the British Army to add his dogs to its ranks. He'd seen with his own eyes how useful they could be and stressed that allies and enemies alike would be using their own military dogs at the Front. He argued that war-dog readiness would serve the country well but the War Office could not be swayed – Britain, seemingly, was not ready for Richardson's vision of a battle-ready dog corps. It took until the spring of 1915 for it to become evident that trained dogs had, after all, a valuable role to play on the battlefield, an apparent change of heart which was advised to the nation when ***The Graphic*** carried an advertisement stating: "*Major Richardson's sentry dogs (Airedales) have been supplied to the Army in France."* The British Red Cross, however, **had** welcomed Richardson's earlier offer which had seen him travel to Belgium with several ready trained ambulance dogs during the first month of War.

Whilst on the Continent, Richardson began answering requests for sentry dogs, with Airedales being his preferred breed of choice for the job. In late 1916 the Royal Artillery asked for dogs to run communication lines between various chosen points and, after a number of trials, ***Wolf*** and ***Prince*** (both Airedales) were chosen and they regularly carried vital messages across distances of two miles. The War Office finally instructed Richardson to establish a War-Dog Training School at Shoeburyness in Essex and the ***Home for Lost Dogs***, Battersea, (now Battesea Dogs and Cats Home) quickly offered new recruits. The Police Force was ordered to send any strays with additional conscripts being identified and offered from other dog's homes. The government eventually issued an appeal to the public for canine "donations" and the response was overwhelming – thousands were "volunteered" for service – many arriving with accompanying notes such as this from a widow: *"My husband has gone, my son has gone, please take my dog to bring this cruel war to an end"* and from a child: *"We have let daddy go to fight the Kaiser and now we are sending Jack to do his bit."*

In the Trenches

A *Red Cross dog carrying the helmet of a wounded French soldier in the midst of a gas barrage by Alexander Pope*

Those who had given their often much loved pets must have wondered how they might be helping the war effort - be it at sea or on land; ammunition-carrying, dispatch carrying, wire-pulling, rat-catching, fund-raising, trench-pets, mascots, ambulance dogs, search & rescue, companions etc. etc. etc. - and for how long they survived. Many, of course, would have been obvious targets for enemy snipers. Below are just a few examples of their undoubted bravery and loyalty:

REPORT ON THE ATTACK ON VIMY RIDGE, FRANCE – *The dogs were employed with an artillery observation post. All the telephones were broken and visual signalling was impossible. The dogs were the first to bring back news.*

REPORT FROM A WOOD EAST OF BUCQUOY, FRANCE – *When the Germans withdrew their line in the Spring of 1917, the dogs were taken up the night before. They were then sent up to a forward observation post 4,000 yards east of the wood and were released with important messages. They found their way back, through masses of troops on the march, to the wood although they had only arrived there the night previously and the ground was unknown to them.*

BRUCE (a Terrier cross) – *Bruce* remained faithful to his master, Captain Arthur Noel Loxley RN, of the ill-fated *HMS Formidable*, even unto death. He refused to leave his master's side for the safety of a lifeboat when the ship was torpedoed 30 miles off Portland by *U-24* on New Year's Day 1915. Bruce's body was later washed ashore below Abbotsbury Castle and he was later buried in Abbotsbury Sub-tropical Gardens, Dorset, where his grave can still be visited today. Captain Loxley's body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial.

JACK (a small shepherd type) – During and after the War various animal charities used dogs to raise funds for their cause. One of the most famous was *Jack* who'd been owned for 10 years by English nurse, Edith Cavell, before she was executed by the Germans on 15th October 1915. *Jack* greatly mourned the death of his mistress, howling into the night for her. He became neglected, thin and in poor health but he was eventually taken in by Princess Marie, the Dowager Duchess de Cröy, who nursed him back to health. *Jack* occasionally accompanied her to exhibits and at one, in Lille, the public were invited to take photographs of him for the benefit of the French Red Cross. He lived to the ripe old age of sixteen and his preserved body can still be seen today by anyone visiting the Imperial War Museum, London.

FROM A CORPORAL, RGA – "*I found him half-starved in a dugout on the Somme battlefield and since then he has shared my meals and my blankets at night. He is such a faithful companion and I cannot think of leaving him behind when I return to Blighty*."

FROM A PRIVATE, ADVANCED SECTION, AP & SS – "*I have a little fox terrier. He came to our unit as a small puppy and is now about three years old. In all our movements, extending from time to time practically all over the Western Front, he has always been with us, standing side by side in times of danger. Apart from being such a companion, he has proved his worth over and over again, for in most of our moves we have had the company of rats. This*

little fellow has killed hundreds. Many nights he went without sleep at all and he's been a boon to us all."

Ideally, I would write more on this subject, particularly of Richardson's Training School but, as always in this newsletter, space precludes me from going into any great detail. For the dog lovers amongst us there is, as you might expect, much information to be found on the Internet and Richardson, too, is an extremely interesting career soldier in his own right - do look him up should time and wherewithal permit. Of further interest may be this enlightening website: www.worldwar1postcards.com - there you will find many fascinating facts, photographs and artistic representations of not only War Dogs but many, many aspects of The Great War.

You will all already be aware how much dogs continue to prove their worth within our armed forces and that here, in our home County, The Defence Animal Training Regiment, Melton Mowbray, continues to train them for an array of customers not only within the MOD but also for our Immigration Service, HM Prison Service, HM Revenue & Customs as well as Overseas Agencies. You may also be interested to know that a remarkable experiment has recently taken place at Stanton Lakes, Stoney Stanton, (also here in Leicestershire) where serving paramedic, Pete Lewin, has proven that his huge Newfoundland dogs can help former soldiers who've been diagnosed with PTSD. Swimming and interacting with Pete's furry giants has been of great help in assuaging a veteran's suffering and has had a calming effect on their emotions and mental health. The dogs seemed to enjoy it too!

Sadly, during the course of The Great War no fewer than 7,000 dogs were killed while serving with the warring nations but the sentimentalist in me likes to think that, over a century later, the descendants of many of those brave canine heroes continue to be wonderful companions for their owners in Belgium, France and beyond . . .

ARMS AND THE DOG

by Robert Chaloner

We bivouacked in an April wood,
Brewed up, and rolled our blankets out
To lie in silent company
Drinking the sweet enchanted tea
Old soldiers dream about.

When, caught against the sunken fire,
His ember-kindled eyes aglow,
Came that sad sycophantic hound
Who's immemorially bound
To go where soldiers go.

I know him well. His myriad breed
Are old and tired campaigning friends
Who's shared a hundred camps with me
From deep in enemy territory
To Terrier weekends.

And as he fussed with flattened ears
Then crawled across to lick my hand
I took the dues his tribe have paid
In homage to the soldier's trade
Since first they knew command.

He comes of that same lineage
Which shared the shadowed blanket-arc
With men-at-arms and musketeers
Condottieri, cuirassiers,
In his ancestral dark.

And this he knew; for, honours done
And ceremonials complete,
He sighed like one who'd travelled far
Down endless centuries of war
And slept across my feet.

EDWARD GEORGE HONEY
AND THE TWO MINUTES SILENCE
(PART I)
by Lynn Roffee

The annual "Two Minutes Silence" has been held since 11th November 1919, whereby Britain and the Commonwealth pause for "two minutes" in silence at 11.00 am to remember the fallen of the First World War, and all subsequent wars and conflicts. The date is the anniversary when the Germans signed the Armistice on 11th November 1918 in a remote railway siding in the forest at Compiegne, France, and 11.00 am is when hostilities ceased on that day. Today the anniversary is known as Remembrance Day.

It might be assumed by many people in the UK, that this occasion was conceived by the War Office or the British Government, when in fact, the man who is said to be responsible for its conception was an Australian. However, as can happen with many historical narratives, what started off as a straightforward story (or so it seemed) soon unearthed some conflicting views and unanswered questions.

The Author began to research Edward George Honey who is the man officially recognised by the Australian Government and credited for the conception of the "Two Minutes Silence". Honey was born in St Kilda, Melbourne, Victoria in 1885 and educated at Caulfield Grammar School, Melbourne. Later he studied journalism at Wellington College, New Zealand, and returned to Melbourne becoming part owner of a small magazine which later folded. He then worked for his father and, as that didn't work out either, he returned to New Zealand to work as a Journalist. He then returned to Melbourne to work at *The Argus* newspaper. In 1909, he decided to go to London and found employment with the *Daily Mail*. Shortly after starting work there he became ill with pneumonia. Lord Northcliffe, who was the owner of the *Daily Mail* at that time, it is alleged spared no expense to help Honey regain his health. Northcliffe suggested to Honey that he should go to a Hydro in Warwickshire to recuperate after spending many weeks in hospital.

Edward George Honey circa 1908

Sources suggest that whilst en-route to the Hydro, via St Pancras Station, Honey met a fellow journalist who was going to the races at Epsom. Reasoning that he could go to the Hydro the next day he accompanied the journalist to the races instead. Perhaps it was naivety, or over confidence, or possibly it didn't enter his head that he wouldn't be spotted by other journalists, but the "Fleet Street" mob where also at the races. News travels fast in the media world and Honey felt the impact of his action following his recuperation; he returned to London to find a cheque and a note saying he was no longer required by the newspaper.

The 1911 UK Census shows Honey staying at the New Inn Hotel, in Bourton on the Water, and his occupation is shown as Author/Journalist. It is mentioned in several sources that when it was announced that England was at war, his services were sought as a war correspondent by a leading newspaper editor. It seems he couldn't be found by his "wife" in his "usual haunts" in Fleet Street

so his chance of employment was missed and the opportunity given to someone else. He wasn't married at this time so this raises a question of accuracy. Records show he married Amelia (known as Millie) Josephine Toomey on 24th June 1915. Honey is alleged to have been disappointed about missing this opportunity so he tried to join the army in 1914 without success. Honey was a single man when he enlisted as Private 10124, in the Middlesex Regiment, on 16th April 1915, as a specially enlisted Clerk, and was stationed at Woolwich. He was discharged on 17th April 1916, having served 1 year and 2 days, as his *"Services were no longer required*" under para 392 XXV K.R. Military Records describe Honey as being a *"very good Clerk and had been employed so during his service"* on the discharge papers. Again, a number of articles suggest his discharge was for health reasons, including by his wife, and one source stated he was discharged due to shell shock. No official evidence has been found to support these assertions when researching this article other than his *"services were no longer required"* by the Army.

Honey's idea for a "silent tribute" to the fallen was first published, under his pen name of Warren Foster, in the London Evening News on the 8th May 1919. His wife was quoted as saying he received a cheque for £3.3.0 shillings (today equivalent to approx. £171.52 as at 28/6/2020) from Northcliffe Press for the published article. The following is an extract of his letter: -

A Peace Day Essential

Can we not spare some fragment of those hours of Peace rejoicing, for a silent tribute to these mighty dead? Individually, yes! Too many of us know we will for our own kith and kin, for the friends who will never come back. But nationally?

I would ask for five minutes only. Five silent minutes of national remembrance. A very sacred intercession.

When eight years ago a very great English King passed to his burial in silence. Impressive though the scenes surrounding his funeral cortege must have been, they could not have exceeded the impressiveness of the five minutes' pause every railway traveller in Britain knew that day. I myself chanced to be travelling in the West of England and just on the stroke of noon our train came to a standstill. There were five of us in the compartment, and all sat uncovered. A very beloved King was passing! Not a word was spoken during those minutes in waiting.

Honey's name appeared to have been unknown to the public in 1919 in connection with "Two Minutes Silence". However, given his journalist connections he would have had an ideal opportunity to ensure his name was promoted if he so wished. It is also possible that Honey may have been aware of the South African "Two Minutes Silence" through his connections to the media; but there is no record to substantiate this and its purely speculative. As far as South Africa is concerned, they claim they came up with the idea first.

According to the South African Legion's website the "Two Minutes Silence" started in Cape Town. In May 1918 the Mayor of Cape Town, Harry Hands, (later Sir Harry Hands) following a suggestion made by a fellow Councillor Robert Rutherford Brydon, (who was born and raised in Edinburgh, Scotland) wrote a letter to the Cape Times initiating holding a period of silence to pause for 3 minutes silence, to be preceded by the firing of the Noon Gun, to remember the sacrifices being made in Europe . It was on 20th April 1918 that Sir Harry had received a telegram notifying him that his eldest son Captain Reginald H M Hands, 73rd Siege Battery, South African Heavy Artillery, had died of gas wounds received while fighting on the Western Front.

On Monday 13th May 1918, the Cape Times published the following letter from Sir Harry:

Pause for three minutes

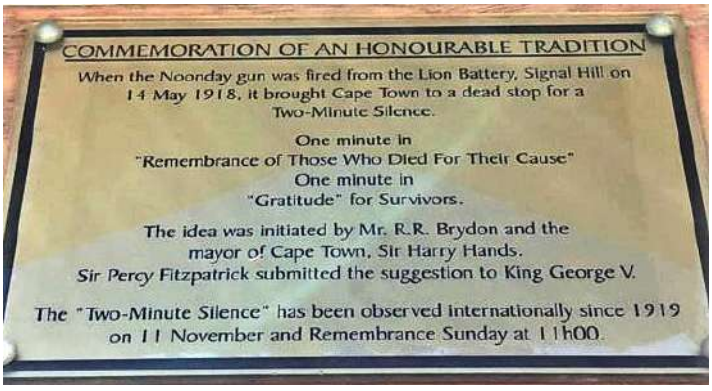
In some places in the Union it has been the practice during the past few weeks to call halt at midday in order to direct the minds of the people to the tremendous issues which are being fought out on the Western Front, and to afford a minute or two for silent prayer for the forces of the Allies engaged there. This seems to be an excellent example to copy. And I now appeal to all citizens to observe the same practice in Cape Town as from tomorrow (Tuesday). Upon the sound of the midday gun all tramway cars will become stationary for three minutes and other trams should halt wherever it may be, for the same period. Pedestrians are asked to remain standing wherever they may be when the gun sounds and everyone, however engaged, to desist from their occupations and observe silence for this short spell. Employers can greatly assist by advising their staff to this effect. I cannot conceive anything more calculated to bring home to us the critical time through which we are passing and its responsibilities for all of us and I hope most fervently that all our citizens will help to make the recognition of the solemnity of the occasion as real as possible.

(Signed) H. Hands
Mayor of Cape Town

Sir Harry felt 3 minutes was too long and published a notice the following day in the *Cape Argus*, that it had been altered to 2 minutes. It is suggested that a Reuters correspondent in Cape Town cabled a description of the event to London.

There were also two other South Africans who played roles of varying degrees in the silent pause. One was a Cape Town businessman, J. A. Eagar, and other was Sir James Percy Kirkpatrick, known as Percy, a Member of Parliament. Eagar proposed a silent pause after the first casualty lists from the Battle of the Somme were announced in 1916. He spoke to the congregation of the church that he and Sir Percy both attended to hold a silent pause to remember those on the South African casualty list who had fallen. Sir Percy approached Lord Northcliffe about the idea of holding an annual commemoration on an "Imperial Basis", but was disappointed with his reaction. Undeterred he then approached Lord Milner in October 1919 who forwarded the idea to Lord Stamfordham, the King's Private Secretary, who in turn informed King George V who approved of the suggestion. The War Cabinet met on 5th November 1919 and immediately approved the idea with only Lord Curzon dissenting.

There is a plaque in Cape Town (shown below) entitled "*Commemoration of an Honourable Tradition*". It reads "The idea was initiated by Mr R R Brydon and the Mayor of Cape Town, Sir Harry Hands, Sir Percy Fitzpatrick submitted the suggestion to King George V".



TO BE CONTINUED

ON THE NOTICEBOARD

NAVAL V.C. HONOURED

On 7th October, a new gymnasium at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, honouring former England player and Great War V.C. recipient, Lieutenant Commander Arthur Leyland Harrison, was opened by former Leicester Tigers and England Captain, Martin Johnson.

Having carried out *"a little bit of research of his own"* on the England front-row forward, 2003 World Cup winner Mr Johnson honoured the legacy of Lt. Cdr. Harrison who went on to become a naval war hero. Whilst Harrison's ability as a player was not in dispute, it was his gallantry during the Zeebrugge Raid in the early hours of 23rd April 1918 that led to the award of a posthumous Victoria Cross. Returning to the fray after a shell fragment knocked him unconscious with a broken jaw, Harrison led a suicidal charge against a German machine gun emplacement on the harbour wall. His body was never subsequently identified. *"His legacy lives on with the gym, which is fantastic, his name and his deeds linked with it,"* said Johnson, who also coached the international side between 2008 and 2011.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Captain Roger Readwin, Captain BRNC, Martin Johnson and Warrant Officer Physical Training Instructor Mac McCormick at the Opening Ceremony.

The new gym at Dartmouth replaces another built in 1905, likely to have been used during Lt. Cdr. Harrison's training period at the historic college. All around the latest facility are reminders of the naval hero's bravery. There will now be an annual commemorative rugby match between the cadets of Dartmouth and their French counterparts from the École Navale for the "Le Crunch" Trophy.

Captain Roger Readwin, Captain of BRNC Dartmouth and Director of Royal Navy Rugby, said: *"It's really important to ensure we train tomorrow's leaders with the same core values that Arthur Harrison experienced when he came through Britannia Royal Navy College in the early 1900s."*

Our thanks go to Paul Warry for making us aware of this item

AND SO WE PAY OUR FINAL TRIBUTES AND BID FAREWELL
by Roy-Anthony Birch

In drawing my extended series on matters agricultural, botanical, and horticultural, to a close, I am struck by certain parallels between the chief subject of my October 2020 "TIGER" article, Private H.A.V. Hull of the Bedfordshire Regiment; Leicestershire born and bred, and the man to whom I pay tribute here; one of our county's adopted gardening sons. By sheer coincidence, for example, I find that the life of the church and a love of its music were especially important to both men; sustaining them, we might say, throughout their professional as well as their military careers.

William Charles Pell was born on 21st December 1879 in the village of Great Staughton in the old county of Huntingdonshire (now Cambridgeshire); eight miles as the crow flies, south-west of the old county town – a little over 11 by road, and five miles north-west of St. Neots as the crow flies, eight, by road. William was the only child of Charles Pell, an agricultural labourer, born in 1855, and his wife Eliza (née Cowley), born in 1860. Both parents were native to Great Staughton, where William was Christened on 15th February 1880, almost certainly in the local parish church of St. Andrew. (William became and remained a lifelong member of the Anglican church). The 1881 Census gives the Pell's address as Highway, Great Staughton, where the four-person household included William's widowed maternal grandmother, Sarah Cowley, aged 66; here described as "a school charwoman".

Even from these brief details we can tell that this was a poor family; poor, both economically and regarding what would have been called "their station in life", and with only the most meagre prospect of lifting oneself out of their predicament for anyone born into it. So it would have been for young William Pell, even without the privations of the so-called "long depression" of the last quarter of the 19th century which drove agricultural workers especially into still deeper poverty, and not least through the additional burdens visited on the family with the death of his father Charles. (Charles Pell died aged just 28, in 1884, when William himself was only four).

William's now widowed mother, Eliza, remarried late in 1885 to become the spouse of John Mayes of Great Staughton; another agricultural labourer, two years her junior. She gave birth to a daughter - a half-sister to William, the following year, so that by the close of the decade William had, in practice, though not in name, inherited a new family; mother, Eliza, and stepfather John - Mr & Mrs Mayes, with half-sister Louisa plus his widowed maternal grandmother, Sarah Cowley, as before.

By 1891 the reconstituted household was based at "The Green" Great Staughton. At just 11 years of age, though by no means untypically - the minimum school leaving age at the time was 10, William was already employed as an agricultural labourer. Formal education had assuredly ended, and such as had been received would almost certainly have been confined to the most Elementary or rudimentary sort. ("Elementary" here, alludes to the Board and Council Schools established under the provisions attendant on the 1870 Forster Education Act. But William may well have attended a local church or similar charitable institution; even that at which his grandmother charred). With his mother's death in 1894, 14-year-old William was subject to yet another change of domestic circumstances. He moved into "The Yard" in Great Staughton, home of his paternal grandfather, James Pell, who was still employed as an agricultural labourer even at the age of 67, according to the 1901 Census. But by now, William has bucked the prevailing family trait of farm

working, seeming to retain a taste for life outdoors - ever "a country boy at heart", we surmise, but now engaged as a "domestic gardener" in Great Staughton, having embarked on the road to a perhaps more congenial and rewarding career.

The years 1910-11 were something of a honeymoon period for W. C. Pell, and not only in the literal or the strictest sense of the word. On February 26th 1910, two months after his 30th birthday, William married Emily Elizabeth Hackett, from his own native village of Great Staughton, which the newly-weds were soon to leave. That was almost certainly in 1910, and by 1911 the couple were established at "The Gardens" in Ulverscroft, then a separate settlement about a mile north of Markfield (though occasionally shown as "Woodhouse"), in north-west Leicestershire, having migrated, purely by chance, in virtually the exact opposite direction to Valentine Hull from the Copt Oak/Beacon Hill area, and at much the same time and for broadly similar reasons. Like young Mr Hull, W.C. Pell's move - in his case from Huntingdonshire to our own East Midlands, was chiefly for professional reasons and quite conceivably, in the hope of "bettering himself", much as Mr Hull hoped to do. But more so now, for the sake of the Pell's growing family. The first of William and Emily's children, Stanley William, was actually born in Ulverscroft on 12th January 1911, thereby enabling us to assess the point of their departure from Huntingdonshire. Their second and only other child, Gladys Emily, was born in Ulverscroft in 1912 and Christened at her parent's local parish church of St. Michael, Markfield, in November that year. (William Charles' widow, Emily Elizabeth, never remarried. She died in 1963 aged 82. Stanley William Pell died in 1984 aged 73, while his sister Gladys, later Mrs Warner, died in 1986 also aged 73).

What had not changed, with the Pell's move to Leicestershire, was the essential nature of William's employment. Early in 1911, we find him continuing as a "domestic gardener", and the understanding within the family is that his new situation arose in response to an invitation from Mrs Olive Theodora Lillingston, of Ulverscroft Manor (a.k.a. Ulverscroft House), to join what must have been a sizable team of people so engaged in the Leicestershire countryside. Set amidst extensive arable farmland, Ulverscroft in the years immediately preceding the 1914 War was very much a rural backwater; appearing to lack even a public house. With a population of a mere 89 souls in 1911, to have described it as "a hamlet" may almost have been to overstate the case, and while Mrs Lillingston was far from being the largest local land-owner (that distinction lay with Mrs T. Guy Paget), her several hundred acres would have presented various employment opportunities to "the locals" as well as for "incomers" such as W.C. Pell. And quite possibly, regarding the latter, the maintenance of her estate in good order may have been especially dependant on them.

The new arrangement would doubtless have benefited both parties, with Mrs Lillingston able to draw on William's now more than a decade's gardening experience, and the newcomer himself able to broaden his knowledge through a range of horticultural activities, perhaps greater than that available in Huntingdonshire. A kitchen garden was, of course, unlikely to have been unfamiliar; the only likely difference being one of scale by comparison with a third or a half acre plot perhaps, back in Great Staughton, although the character (rather than "quality") of the terrain in this part of Leicestershire - "light loam" topping "a rocky subsoil", according to Kelly's Leicestershire Directory, may have given pause for thought. Glasshouses and conservatories, possibly, and parkland, certainly, of which Mrs Lillingston had a significant proportion, offered openings onto as yet unexplored and equally enticing territories, as William approached professional maturity. (I am unable to say whether he possessed or developed any specific gardening skill. But the fact of his being first recommended and subsequently invited to join what must have been an already established Ulverscroft workforce at least provokes the thought).

W.C. Pell was of course among the teeming tens of thousands if not millions whose ambitions, in civilian life, were destined to be unfulfilled, while for countless others, what might have passed for maturity was often foisted on them or attained unwittingly and unlooked for in the cut and thrust of war. In time, William enlisted at Coalville's Recruiting Office within the Drill Hall on Ashby Road; a building which I understand was only comparatively recently demolished, having once overlooked the old Midland Red bus station and garage.

With service no. 122707, Gunner William Charles Pell was posted to 278th Siege Battery R.G.A. who we find serving on The Western Front in Spring and Summer 1917 in connection with operations in and around Messines. The Battery's diary for the period is more detailed than one often encounters in similar records, not least in noting the nature and extent of wounds sustained even by N.C.O.s and O.R.s. On 5th May, for example, Corporal E. Simpson *"received severe wound in left arm"*: Gunner H.A. Sprake was *"very severely wounded in abdomen"*; while J.B. Wood was *"slightly wounded about face and body"*. Other entries are more as one might expect: "*Bombarded obstinate trench CATTEAU FARM until 6.40 p.m. 80 rounds*" on 2nd May: "*working party of 30 men detailed to new position to assist in constructing DECAUVILLE RAILWAY*" on the 5th; and with fighting intensifying, on the 25th; "*330 rounds fired on enemy trench with great success; two dugouts destroyed and much material smashed up*". But damage was not all one way. At 11.40 p.m. on 28th May, for instance; "*Enemy batteries opened fire with HE, Shrapnel, and gas shells. Buildings damaged and DECAUVILLE RAILWAY cut in five places. Roadway smashed in three places. No casualties"*. Casualties had indeed been mercifully light. But at 7.15 p.m. on the 28th, no. 108368, Gnr. Meeks, had been buried in Kemmel Chateau Cemetery having been killed earlier that day.

Even on supposedly quiet days the Battery maintained desultory shelling – 10 to 20 projectiles in 20 minute bursts, just to keep the enemy interested, say, interspersed with seriously heavy bombardments and supporting barrages. The expenditure of 400 plus shells on some days was not uncommon. And the "quietness", naturally, related to the extent or otherwise of the enemy's attentions. Gun emplacements – "*entrenchments*", and the artillery pieces themselves had to be maintained; ammunition replenished, and the men themselves had to be primed, as far as possible, for any eventuality. We see the first of several similar entries on 23rd June 1917: "*15 men paraded at CANADA CORNER for Box Respirator fitting and test. One N.C.O. sent on gas course*". But offensive operations continued. At 8.45 p.m. on 5th June: "*commenced barrage on support trenches behind WYTSCHAETE WOOD*" and later that day; "*Received orders and targets for barrage in connection with a raid on BOIS QUARANTE & GRAND BOIS areas by 41st Div. on 7th June*". And on 29th June, 246 rounds were poured into a particularly "*obstinate trench*" at CATTEAU FARM; results reported "*well placed*" until, on 5th July, we read:

"*Enemy commenced shelling position very heavily at 2.15 p.m. Corporal Beams; Acting Bombardier Saunders; Gunners Davies, Wilkinson, and Pell, killed; Gnrs. Evans, Shinters, Worthgreaves, and Whitehead seriously wounded*". The dead, in the same order, were no. 38352, who died aged 27: no. 99561 aged 35: no. 108921 aged 18: no. 122701 aged 35: and no. 122707 W.C. Pell, who died aged 37, rather than 35 as stated in some sources. Then, on July 6th; "*Another very quiet day. No firing. Buried poor fellows yesterday at Dickebusch Cemetery*". All was indeed quiet for the next 10 days or so, with several men sent to rest camp, a handful sent to England on leave, and on July 8th, with nothing whatever on this topic hitherto; "*Raining very heavily*".

More than a month was to pass before Mrs Emily Pell of The Gardens, Ulverscroft, Markfield, nr. Leicester received this letter from her now late husband's Commanding Officer "in the field". Dated August 7th 1917. the complete text reads: -

Dear Madam.

It is with deepest feelings of regret that I write to inform you of the particulars of your husband's death. He was in a dug-out on the afternoon of the 5th July, when the enemy commenced shelling the Battery about 2.30., and whilst clearing a way to safety out of the shelling, a piece of Shrapnel struck him in the stomach. He was placed in an Ambulance and conveyed to the Dressing Station with all possible speed, and died within a couple of hours of admission. We did not think that he was so seriously injured, as on putting him into the Ambulance, he was in very good spirits, and remarked that he would soon be back at the Battery again.

He was buried the following morning in a nice cemetery, the location of which I am not permitted to furnish you with at the present. He was one of my best men; a most willing and devoted worker, and above all, always had a genial spirit, which counts for a lot out here. The entire sympathy of the Officers and men of the Battery go out to you in your terrible loss, and may you receive comfort in your hour of distress, in the sincere wish of Yours Sincerely, O.C. 278TH Siege Battery R.G.A.

W.C. Pell now rests in La Clytte Military Cemetery (grave reference I. F. 2.), five miles south-west of Ypres. From a tribute in ***The Leicester Daily Post*** of Wednesday August 8th 1917, referring to the deceased soldier's ties to Ulverscroft, we read that "***the assistance he rendered to the local Horticultural Society was much valued***" and that "***A memorial service was held on Sunday evening at the Parish Church, Markfield where, for several years, he was a chorister***". His name is indeed inscribed on a Roll of Honour displayed on the organ in St. Michael's Markfield, as surely befits a former chorister, while he is also remembered on a memorial plaque and window within the church. His is also the 11th of 20 names of the WW1 Fallen inscribed on the "new" Memorial adjacent to St. Michael's, though not actually on church land. Erected c. 2011 to replace the former Miners' Welfare Institute Memorial, this commemorative slab/tablet also records Captain Luke Theodore Lillingston among 18 fatalities from The Second World War. A son of the aforementioned Mrs Lillingston of Ulverscroft Manor, he was killed in France in August 1944 aged 36 while serving with 153rd Leicestershire Yeomanry Field Regiment Royal Artillery.

La Clytte Military Cemetery

The "new" Markfield War Memorial

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We thank once again those readers who contacted us following the production of previous issues of *The Tiger*. Your comments are valued and welcomed and we are always open to suggestions as to what you, our readers, would like to see included/excluded.

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Anyone wishing to submit material is more than welcome to contact us by e-mail at: foft@live.co.uk

The deadline date to ensure inclusion in your next edition of *The Tiger* is:

Friday 20th November 2020

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