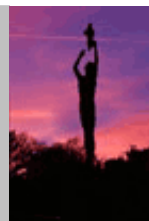


FROM THE FRONT



Issue 11

Autumn 2012

The Newsletter of The Dover War Memorial Project

Patrons:

Dame Vera Lynn DBE, LL.D, M.Mus

Admiral the Lord Boyce, KG, GCB, OBE, DL

“DOVER REMEMBERS!”



Good news - further names will be commemorated on a new plaque for Dover Town War Memorial. The War Memorial will be also be rededicated and re-inscribed to include Dovorian Fallen from all conflicts.

The resolution follows meetings between partners The Dover War Memorial Project and Dover Town Council. The dedication and commemoration will take place in the new year.

OUR FALLEN

Robert Bean is one of the Fallen who will be commemorated on the new plaque.



He lost his life, along with many other Dovorians, when HMS Eclipse struck a mine. She was just off the Greek island of Leros, and was carrying The Buffs to reinforce defences after the nearby island of Kos had fallen.

Bob was 23, and the eldest of the family. He was called away so quickly his mother was unable to say goodbye. She ran down the road to hug him. As he marched away with his company she knew she would never see him again.

135 Buffs died with the Eclipse, and amongst them was Percy Macdonnell, who will also be commemorated.

Percy was born in Dover in 1903, and joined the army when he was 18. He married his school sweetheart, Emily, in 1929 at St Andrew's, Buckland, Dover. She travelled with him when he

was posted to India and there the couple had three daughters.



During World War II Percy served in Malta; after the siege was lifted Percy and his battalion boarded the Eclipse for Leros.

Percy swam strongly, often from Dover beach to the Breakwater. He was last seen handing his lifejacket to a young soldier who could not swim.

Emily died in 1974 and is buried at St Mary's, Dover. Her name and her husband's are together on the stone.



photo by Joyce Banks

In service during both World Wars was William Pearce. He had been at sea since he was 16, working on the Harbour Board Salvage tugs, and was renowned for his knowledge of the Channel.



Involved in military action against Ostend in 1918, he also saw the loss of a ship that had seen no action at all – HMS Glatton.

The Glatton had been in service only a couple of weeks when a fire threatened to explode her magazine. Despite the best efforts of William Pearce and others, the fire could not be contained. With Dover itself in peril the Glatton was torpedoed, and sank with heavy loss of life.

Lt Pearce was fatally injured when a mooring rope snapped during war operations on 5 February 1941. He died two days later. Many dignitaries attended his funeral at St James, including representatives of Admiral Ramsey.

Like HMS Glatton, a loss that is still often mentioned in Dover was that of the Cable Ship Alert. She was sunk in February 1945 while repairing an undersea cable off Ramsgate. All 59 men on board were lost.

Amongst them was keen musician Richard Wakefield, right, the Second Steward, and, Percy Ellis, below, a Seaman.



Both men left a wife and child, as did Quartermaster Frank Drury, another casualty of the Alert who will be commemorated. Frank's daughter later married the son of one of the men who went to sea searching for survivors from the Alert.



"Paddy" and "Bobby", above, were engaged to be married when Henry (Bobby) Morris was killed in a mid-air collision over Spithead on 11 June 1941. Bobby had turned 21 just a few days before, and had just had time to celebrate with his family before being recalled urgently to the Ark Royal.

*"Memories are treasures no one can steal,
Death leaves a heartache no one can heal."*

wrote Paddy, when Bobby died. She is still in touch with Bobby's family

THE CHANNEL DASH

Three enemy ships, the Gneisenau, the Scharnhorst, and the Prinz Eugen had been under repair in Brest harbour. Under constant raiding from the RAF, and with Hitler requiring them to help protect occupied Norway, the ships were ordered back to Germany. The shortest – and most dangerous – route was along the English Channel.

On 11 February 1942, in the evening, the three ships slipped away. Luck was with them. The submarine on lookout at the harbour had gone off watch just ten minutes before. Low cloud and radar faults prevented reconnaissance planes spotting them, while two Spitfires that did were

ordered to radio silence so reported only after they landed. Believing the ships had not sailed, British forces were stood down. By Dover there were but five motor torpedo boats and six Swordfish aircraft, supported by only ten Spitfires, to engage with the battleships and their accompanying e-boats and heavy air cover.

Within twenty minutes of leaving Manston, all the Swordfish were shot down, and 13 of their crew dead. Later only 39 from 242 bombers dispatched found the ships, none of their bombs struck. The RAF unknowingly attacked destroyers sent from Harwich. The three ships reached home with some mine damage but minimal losses. From the RAF, RN, and Fleet Air Arm, 140 men died.

Channel Dash Memorial



In the 70th Anniversary year, in warm sunshine, a Memorial to the actions of the Channel Dash was unveiled on the sea front at Dover on 22 September 2012.

Realised by The Channel Dash Memorial Trust (CDMT), the Memorial is inscribed with the history of Operation Fuller, or Operation Cerberus as it was known to the German military.

Above, by the Memorial, are, from left to right, Malcolm Godfrey, Vice Chairman of the CDMT, with the sons of the two commanders during the Channel Dash - Admiral Otto Cilius and Major General Charles Ramsey. Next is the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope GCB OBE ADC, with Rear-Admiral Karl-Wilhelm Ohlms, Peter Nixon, Chairman of the CDMT, Brigadier Simon Wolsey OBE, and a veteran of the Dash



A Spitfire opened the unveiling ceremony, with Malcolm Godfrey welcoming everyone and introducing the service.

“The theme for today can be summed up in three words, Remembrance, Recognition, and Reconciliation,” he said.

“**Remembrance** of the bravery shown by all those that answered the call of duty on that day and particularly those that paid the ultimate sacrifice.

“**Recognition** in that all participants in Operation Fuller masterminded here in Dover by Admiral Bertram Ramsey now have a lasting memorial to their significant contribution to the defence of this nation in time of war are represented here today in person by Reg Mitchell and Bernie Coot both of whom served in MTBs that sailed from Dover and Bill Wedge an officer in HMS Worcester that suffered direct hits and significant loss of life on the 12th of February 1942.

“**Reconciliation** in that not only are the British Military represented here today but we also have an official delegation from the Federal German Navy as we mark bravery on both sides.”



“To the British ‘Operation Fuller’, to the Germans ‘Operation Cerberus’”, said The First Sea Lord. “However we recall it, the response was the same - that noble human response of duty prevailing over danger.

“For this is a story of selfless bravery against

impossible odds - odds that were exacerbated by ferocious weather conditions, and odds that were heightened by the ‘fog of war’.

“Significantly today, we recognise the bravery on both sides. The bravery of the German Fleet, in opting to take the shortest route back to their home port. And, in response, the bravery of British Forces, particularly those who paid the ultimate sacrifice: the aircrew of 825 Naval Air Squadron, the ship’s company of HMS Worcester, and aircrew within Fighter, Bomber and Coastal Commands - but not forgetting those in the Shore Batteries of the Royal Artillery, and the Motor Torpedo Boats from Dover.

“This magnificent memorial stands as a permanent, dignified and worthy legacy to all those who contributed to and supported Operation Fuller. It symbolises and celebrates many fine qualities of human endeavour - of duty, absolutely, but also of service and loyalty.

“It stands too, as a witness of courage, leadership and professionalism, so that the quiet heroism displayed by previous generations might serve as a source of inspiration for current and future generations.

“In this memorial, we also observe the enduring qualities of our Armed Forces today, and of Armed Forces around the world that are committed to the noble and immutable pursuit of peace.”

“It is therefore a great honour that this splendid memorial is now unveiled, with pride and gratitude, as a lasting symbol of heroism and sacrifice - the legacy of Operation Fuller.”





Following the hymn, “Oh God our Help in Ages Past”, the Chaplain, The Reverend Peter Adams, dedicated the Memorial “Let us remember those who have died for their country in war and

peace; those whom we knew, and those whose memory we treasure, and all who lived and died in the service of their country and mankind.”

The exhortation was given by Peter Nixon. “They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them.”



A minute’s silence followed the Last Post, played by The Central Band of the RAF. The Kohima epitaph was read by Malcolm Godfrey, after which the band played Nimrod, from the Enigma Variations by Elgar, as the wreaths were laid.



The First Sea Lord’s wreath was followed by MP Charlie Elphicke’s, and by that of the German naval attaché, Karl-Wilhelm Ohlms.



The service concluded with the hymn, “I Vow to Thee my Country”, the Lord’s Prayer, and the National Anthem.



The 800 NAS Air Cadets of Kettering provided a drum head ceremony, while HMS Kent provided the Honour Guard.

24 Standard Bearers attended, with many dignitaries, veterans, and cadets, and hundreds of members of the public. Displays included replicas of an Me109 and a Spitfire.



The anti-submarine warfare frigate HMS Kent welcomed visitors during the day, and patrolling the seas just as seven decades before was Motor Torpedo Boat No 102. One of the “little boats” of Dunkirk, she served mainly in the English Channel during the early years of that war.



With a slow and low flypast over the Memorial, the only Swordfish still flying ended the service.

Aftermath

Directly after the Dash, the Gneisenau was damaged in an RAF raid; she would never be used again. On Boxing Day 1943, the Scharnhorst was sunk in the North Sea with the loss of 1,698 men. The Prinz Eugen, though having suffered severe damage on several occasions, survived the war and was used in US atomic testing, finally being sunk in 1946.

The crews of the Fairey Swordfish all received decorations, with Lt Cdr Edmonde, DSO, gaining a posthumous VC.

Admiral Ramsey, commanding in Dover, stated, “The gallant sortie of those six Swordfish aircraft constitutes one of the finest exhibitions of self-

sacrifice and devotion to duty the war had ever witnessed”

Admiral Ciliax, commanding the Dash, called it “The mothball attack of a handful of ancient planes, piloted by men whose bravery surpasses any other action by either side that day.”



IN THE ANDERSON

Obituary

We were very sorry and deeply saddened to learn of the death of Roger Marples. He was 61.



Roger worked for British Rail, and later, with his wife Pauline, opened The Cabin, a small restaurant in the basement of a town house in London Road. Celebrating all that was fine in English food, the menu was always a surprise, dependent on what Roger had gathered – or even caught! – that day.

A member of the Dover Society, the Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club (RCPYC), and of CAMRA, Roger was renowned for his easy gentlemanly conversation and ways – and for his love and knowledge of real ales.



Above, Roger at the RCPYC beer festival, with two friends, Roger Walkden on the left, and in the centre, Mike Webb.

Roger's funeral was at Barham crematorium on 20 September; mourners were so many they had to stand in the aisle of the chapel. The wake was at the RCPYC; Roger would have loved it – conversation, real ales, and an English buffet, including a huge Stilton! Over it all, his picture gazed.

We send our deepest condolences to Pauline and the family. Roger was a super chap, and Dover is much the poorer for his passing.

Exhibition

The Dover War Memorial Project have just installed a new cabinet exhibition in Dover Library. Entitled "Dover Remembers" it features

the Fallen who are to be commemorated on the new plaque for Dover Town War Memorial.



The red poppies in the centre of the display were dropped from an Avro Lancaster when the Bomber Command Memorial was unveiled in London on 28 June 2012. There are three Bomber Boys to be commemorated on the new plaque; John Hulse, Raymond Brett, and Dennis Hopper. The poppies were collected the day after the unveiling by volunteer Dean Sumner, great nephew of Frank Sumner, a Battle of Britain veteran who died in 1941 serving as a Bomber Boy.

"Silly" Firefighters!



photo Toni Hopkins

We thank very much the Firefighters in Dover, who most kindly chose The Dover War Memorial Project as one of their good causes this year..

The "Silly" committee has been raising funds since 1978, and over Christmas 2011 raised

several thousand pounds from Santa tours in Dover and displays of the fire engines.

The cheque was received by DWMP super-volunteers Joyce and Brian Banks, who thanked and paid tribute to the firefighters.

Several firefighters in Dover lost their lives during the wars, including Ernest Carberry, who died in 1941, after having been injured at a sub-Fire Station. Firemen formed a Guard of Honour at his

funeral, as they did for Alexander Bocutt, who died in 1943 from illness sustained on war duties. Ellen Blackford too lost her life after being injured, in 1944.

They are all commemorated on Dover's Virtual Memorial, www.doverwarmemorialproject.org.uk, as is Alfred Craven, who served for seven years as a fireman before leaving in 1943 to join the RAF. He and six other crew members lost their lives in July 1944, shot down over France.

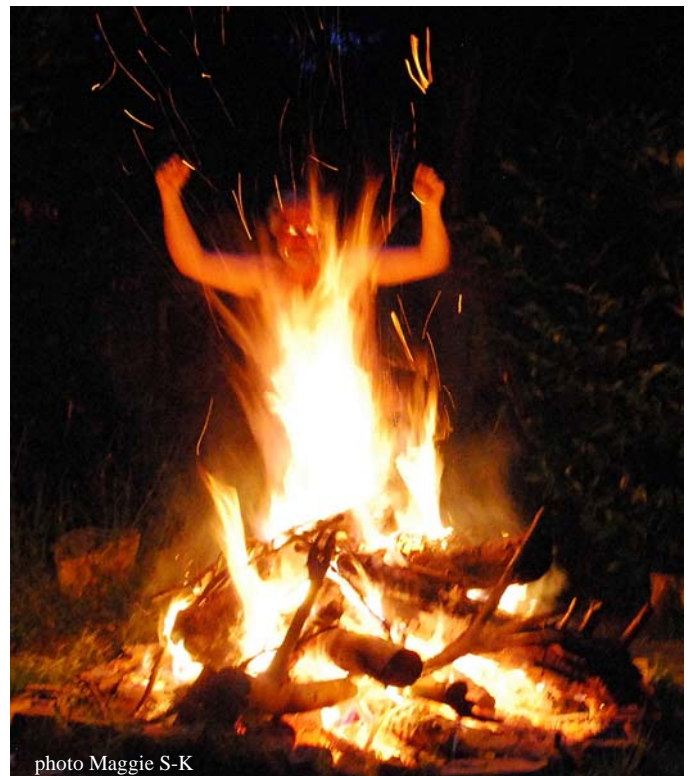
AND FINALLY ...



<<<< Up, Up, and Away!

At the back of the basket, third from left, is one of the DWMP's great volunteers, Jean Marsh.

The flight was a Christmas present from her husband. Acrophobia notwithstanding ... wow!



Meanwhile, below ... far, far below ... >>>>

It seems it takes some stoking to heat the air to get those balloons up in the sky!

Or is it simply that Simon gets a trifle over-enthusiastic with his garden bonfires?

Whatever the case, beware. **Hallowe'en** is on its way!

"From the Front", the e-newsletters from The Dover War Memorial Project, is also available online at Dover's Virtual Memorial and in the Local Studies area at Dover Town Library.

Dover's Virtual Memorial - www.doverwarmemorialproject.org.uk

phone: 07876 240701 - email: frontline@doverwarmemorialproject.org.uk

This newsletter was created by Marilyn Stephenson-Knight. Photos of casualties appear by courtesy of their families. All other photographs, except where stated, are by Simon John Chambers.

Issue 12 is due out on 31 December 2012

The Dover War Memorial Project works in the past, present, and future to remember with honour 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 and/or you have enjoyed the newsletter, please consider a donation via PayPal or by cheque payable to The Dover War Memorial Project. Please help us remember those who gave all they could.