

# THE TIGER



*The ANZAC Commemorative Medalion,  
awarded in 1967 to surviving members of the Australian forces  
who served on the Gallipoli Peninsula  
or their next of kin*

**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*.

It would be improper for me to begin this month's column without first acknowledging those readers who contacted me to offer their condolences on my recent bereavement. Your cards and messages were very much appreciated and I hope to be able to thank you all in person once circumstances permit.

Another recent passing, reported via social media, was that of military writer and historian Lyn Macdonald, whose Great War books, based on eyewitness accounts of Great War veterans, may be familiar to many of our readers. Over the twenty years between 1978 and 1998, Lyn completed a series of seven volumes, the first of which, *They Called It Passchendaele*, was one of my earliest purchases when I began to seriously study the Great War. I suspect it will not surprise those of you who know me well to learn that all her other works also adorn my bookshelves!



The recent announcement in early March of a proposed memorial to honour Indian Great War pilot Hardit Singh Malik (shown right) will doubtless be of interest to our “aviation buffs”. Malik was the first Indian ever to fly for the Royal Flying Corps, having previously served as an Ambulance driver with the French Red Cross. A graduate of Balliol College, Oxford, it was the intervention of his tutor that finally obtained Malik a cadetship in the R.F.C. before he was commissioned in April 1917. As a practicing Singh, Malik wore a turban and as a result of wearing a specially designed flying helmet to accommodate this, he was nicknamed “The Flying Hobgoblin”.



Transferring to the Western Front, he saw action for the first time on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1917 and claimed his first “kill” that same day. Eight days later, he doubled his tally but was attacked during his return and crashed behind Allied lines, his plane receiving over 450 “hits”. In a later interview Malik stated: *“It was the greatest luck. They shot all they had at me but not a single one hit me or any vital part of the plane. I definitely thought I was going to be killed. My mechanic said it was quite amazing how I ever got down. It was like a miracle. My pursuers just did not have the bullet with my name on it.”* However, two bullets remained in one of his legs for the rest of his life. After recovering, Malik briefly served in Italy prior to his return to the Western Front in the summer of 1918.

Post-war he returned to India before enjoying a long and distinguished career as a civil servant and diplomat. Awarded the O.B.E. in 1938, Malik retired in 1957 and died in Delhi in October 1985 at ninety years of age. One of only two Indian Pilots who survived the Great War, Malik has been recently described as: *“a true giant in what he achieved in ending segregationist practices in our British armed forces”*. The statue (as shown above left), to commemorate the lost history of minorities fighting for Britain, has been designed by West Midlands artist Luke Perry and is due to be erected in Southampton in April 2023.

Malik was also a talented cricketer, appearing on 18 occasions for Sussex either side of the War.

Another largely forgotten sportsman who recently came to my attention was motorcyclist Graham Walker, who attained the rank of Serjeant in the Royal Engineers whilst serving as a motor cycle dispatch rider during the War. An injury to his leg caused by a German shell necessitated the use of a modified brake pedal when Walker began competitive racing in the 1920s. A regular at the Isle of Man TT tournaments between 1920 and 1934, he emerged victorious in the Lightweight Class race in 1931, finishing second and third in the same Class for the next three years.

During his War convalescence, Walker met his future wife and their only son was born in 1923. At the end of his racing career, her began a second career as a radio and later television commentator, being joined in 1949 by his son before the latter went on to attain legendary status commentating on Formula One Grand Prix races. The son is, of course, Murray Walker, whose passing on 13<sup>th</sup> March brought his father's story to my attention.

I am indebted to Branch Treasurer Paul Warry for informing me that Andy Garford has now resurrected the [www.ww1.LeicesterTigers.com](http://www.ww1.LeicesterTigers.com) website previously run by the late Jonathan Capewell and has placed certain portraits of "Tigers" on the local BBC website to see if they can now be identified. If anyone can help Andy in his appeal or provide new images for the website, he can be contacted at [andy@ww1leicestertigers.com](mailto:andy@ww1leicestertigers.com)



Another piece of recent news is that a new Memorial Plaque (shown left) has been erected in Wigston Magna on the corner of Long Street and Elizabeth Court (next to the latter's road sign and just a stone's throw from where we hold our monthly meetings). It commemorates the six Polish airmen killed near that site on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1946. Their Lancaster Bomber A1 PA 269, on a training flight from R.A.F. Faldingworth, was flying low over the village in a severe thunderstorm when it appeared to be struck by lightning. The Pilot managed to avoid the buildings on Long Street and crashed the plane in a field

near the site of what is now All Saints School, at the cost of the lives of all onboard. The Plaque, perhaps more accurately described as an "Information Board", was erected on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this tragedy. Whilst not, of course, a Great War Memorial, I am sure this will be of interest to many of our readers, particularly our aviation enthusiasts.

Their names liveth for evermore:

- Wing Commander Romuld Sulinski KSOVM, D.S.O., D.F.C – Pilot and Commanding Officer
- Flying Officer Wladyslaw Jedrzejczyk – Navigator
- Warrant Officer Michal Szwandt – Air Bomber
- Flying Officer Czeslaw K. Sulgut – Air Gunner
- Warrant Officer Waclaw Brzezinski
- Flight Sargent Feliks Mikula – Flight Engineer

Happy Easter everyone and stay safe until we can meet again.

D.S.H.

## THE GREATEST ANZAC OF THEM ALL? by David Humberston

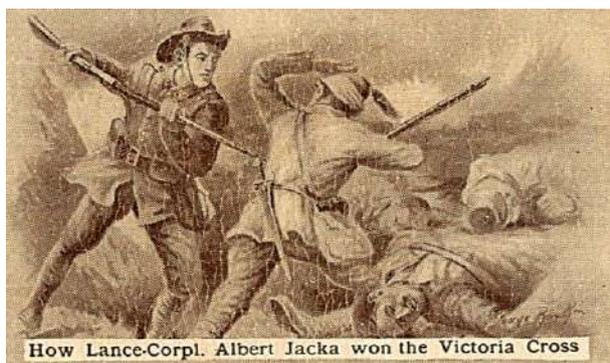
*With our ANZAC Day commemorations on 25<sup>th</sup> April once more having to be abandoned, we pay tribute to the ANZACs with our cover photograph and with this article about the man many consider the greatest ANZAC of them all . . .*

Albert Jacka was born on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1893 near Winchelsea, Victoria, to an Australian father and an English mother, Elizabeth Jacka, née Kettle, who was born in Oakham, Rutland, in 1864. Young Albert, the fourth son of a large family, worked with his father as a farm labourer before enlisting upon the outbreak of War in September 1914. By the end of November, Private Jacka, having been posted to the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion, was made acting Lance Corporal. After training, the men embarked for Egypt from where, after further training, they were to be deployed in the now infamous Gallipoli landings on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915.



*Albert Jacka*

The invading forces faced stiff resistance as they attempted to scale the heights of the Peninsula and progress was inevitably slow and at heavy cost. To their credit, the ANZACs managed to establish positions above the cliffs of what today is known as ANZAC Cove and it was here, on 19<sup>th</sup> May that the Ottoman forces launched a major assault against the entire ANZAC front lines. At about 4.00 a.m. they rushed a position known as Courtney's Post, named after the Lieutenant Colonel of the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion, in which Albert Jacka served. Amid frenzied fighting a number of Turks captured 12 yards of Australian trench lines, their bombs killing two men, wounding two others and causing the rest to flee. One man, however, refused to retire! Jacka, standing at the end of a trench perpendicular to that under attack, drilled a volley of warning shots into the wall of the occupied trench and, for over fifteen minutes, remained the only obstacle to a Turkish advance.



When reinforcements arrived, he and three other men sprang into the trench, but the others were instantly wounded and Jacka leapt back to his original position. A second plan was agreed and two bombs were thrown towards the Turks, throwing up a cloud of smoke and dust. Jacka, having climbed out of his trench, leapt amongst the Turks, shooting five and bayoneting a further two as the remainder fled. When an Officer arrived, he declared: *"I managed to get the beggars, Sir"*. For his actions that day, he was awarded the Victoria Cross, the first to an Australian in that War.

When news of the award of his V.C. reached Australia, Jacka became a national hero, receiving the sum of £500 and a gold watch promised to the first man to win the award. With his image appearing on recruiting posters, he now rose swiftly through the ranks, becoming a Company Serjeant Major by November 1915. By now Gallipoli had become nothing more than another costly stalemate, with the subsequent evacuation of the Peninsula in early January 1916 being the only real successful operation of the entire campaign. Returned to Egypt, Jacka attended Officer

Training School and by the following April was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. He was one of the lucky ones – the Campaign had cost the ANZACs 7,600 dead and 19,000 wounded.

Amongst his men Jacka had now achieved the status of a legend and his Battalion, the 14<sup>th</sup>, was widely known throughout the Australian forces as “Jacka’s Mob”. There was no doubt whatsoever that he was an outstanding fighter and soldier and possessed confidence in his own judgement and ability. He was, however, often scornful of his superiors and was not shy of letting his opinions be known.

Jacka, shown right, remained with the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion and accompanied his men to the rolling plains of Picardy, where the British and French forces had launched a massive assault against German defences in what would later become known as the Battle of the Somme. On 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1916 “Jacka’s Mob” were part of the Australian forces that attacked the German lines around the ruined remnants of the village of Pozières. In keeping with the Battle in entirety, the assault became a bloodbath, with the Australians succeeding after three days of heavy battle at a cost of 5,285 casualties. According to one source the fight was so fierce that the Australians could only identify their trenches by the red and white shoulder patches visible on the bodies of their fallen comrades. The Germans, however, planned a counter-attack.



On the morning of 7<sup>th</sup> August, after a night of heavy shelling, the Germans began to overrun a portion of the line, which included a dug out occupied by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Albert Jacka. Two Germans reached its entrance and rolled a bomb down the doorway, killing two men. Emerging from the debris, Jacka found a large number of Germans rounding up some forty Australians as prisoners. With the seven men from his platoon who had recovered from the blast, he charged the enemy and heavy hand-to-hand fighting ensued, with the Australian prisoners turning on their captors. Every man was now wounded, including Jacka himself who had seven wounds including two to his head. Despite this, 42 Germans were captured, the line was retaken and Jacka was personally credited with killing between twelve and twenty of the enemy.

Evacuated to England to recover from his wounds, he received his Victoria Cross from King George V at Windsor Castle in September 1916 before returning to the Front two months later. For his actions at Pozières, Jacka was recommended for a Distinguished Service Order, which was “downgraded” to a Military Cross. Many thought his actions warranted a Bar to his V.C., and claimed that Jacka had been deliberately penalised for his attitude towards his superiors.

Promoted to Captain in March 1917, Jacka returned to 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion as Intelligence Officer and proceeded to lead a series of hazardous patrols into No Man’s Land, culminating on the night of 8<sup>th</sup> April, near Bullecourt, 12 miles from the French city of Arras, to inspect enemy defences before the beginning of a major assault the following morning. Penetrating the German wire, he reported his findings and then returned to lay tapes across the ground to guide the forthcoming assault. During this foray, he single-handedly captured a two-man German patrol. For his actions he was awarded a Bar to his Military Cross.

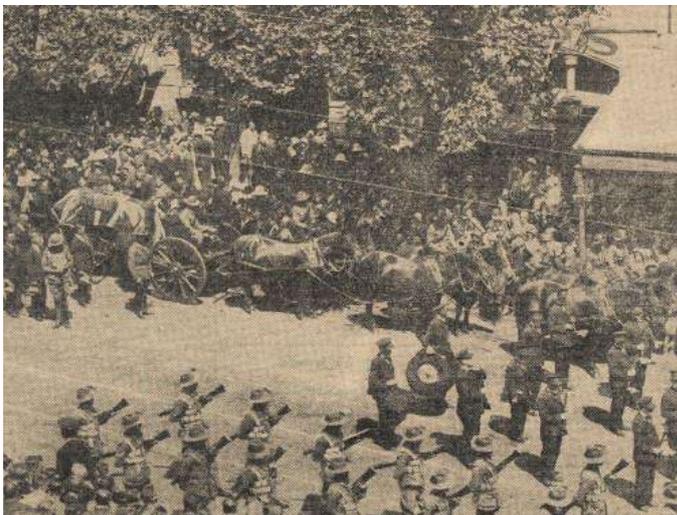
During the battle of Messines Ridge in June the same year, Jacka once more led his men with great skill. During their advance, they overran German machine gun posts and captured a field gun.

Three months later, whilst recovering from yet another wound, he distinguished himself once more during the Australian assault against Polygon Wood during the Battle of Passchendaele. The 14<sup>th</sup> captured and held their positions against heavy counter-attacks, but a recommendation for Jacka to receive a D.S.O. was declined

In May 1918 this remarkable warrior sustained wounds of such severity that his War was effectively at an end. Badly gassed and hit by shrapnel in his throat near the French village of Villers-Bretonneux, Jacka was not expected to live, but following two operations and a long recuperation he received a hero's welcome on his return to Melbourne in January 1920. He established an electrical goods Import and Export business and in 1921 married Frances Carey, a typist in his office. The couple settled in the St. Kilda district of Melbourne and later adopted a daughter.



In September 1929, Jacka was elected to the St. Kilda Council and the following year, as shown left, he became Mayor. Much of his civic work was devoted to helping the unemployed, but few realised his own business had been hit by a slump and his health was in serious decline. In December 1931, he collapsed at a Council Meeting and was admitted to hospital, where he died of chronic nephritis (inflammation of the kidneys) on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1932. He was held in such esteem that nearly 6,000 people filed past his coffin as it lay in state at Anzac House, 1,000 veterans attended his State funeral, and he was carried on a gun carriage to St Kilda's Cemetery, where eight holders of the Victoria Cross acted as pall bearers. A public appeal raised funds to erect a headstone and an annual memorial service continues to be held at his grave.



*Jacka's funeral procession and headstone, St Kilda Cemetery, Melbourne*

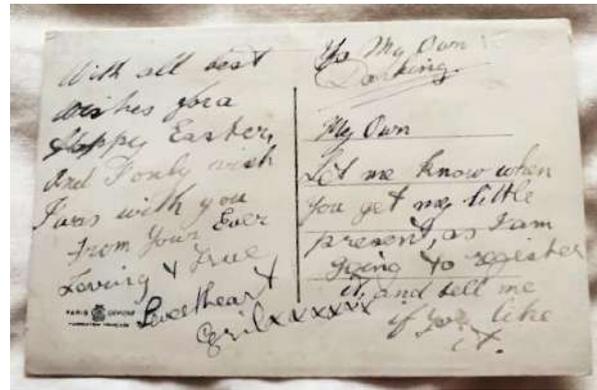
One tribute later stated: *“He was not one of those whose character, manner, or outlook was changed by the high decorations which he had received. His confident, frank, outspoken personality never changed. His leadership in his last battle was as audacious and capable as his first. He deserved the Victoria Cross as thoroughly at Pozieres, Bullecourt and Ypres as at Gallipoli. Not we only, but the Brigade and the whole A.I.F. came to look upon him as a rock of strength that never failed. We of the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion never ceased to be thrilled when we heard ourselves referred to in the estaminet or by passing units on the march as some of Jacka's mob”*.



**CHERISHED  
MESH**  
by  
**Valerie Jacques**



During the Great War, as you're all no doubt aware, servicemen wrote home to loved ones often using the beautifully embroidered cards that were very popular at the time and which have since become treasured heirlooms for families and collectors alike. The undated card shown below, and addressed to "My Own Dear Darling", has been reproduced by kind permission of our Committee Member, Angela Hall. I'm sure she won't mind me mentioning that she has a wonderful collection of Embroidered Postcards from the Great War era but just this one which relates to Easter. Despite being one of the most important events in the Christian calendar, it would appear that Christmas and Valentine's Day were far more popular occasions to warrant the sending of commemorate cards, much as they are today . . .



The history of sending greeting cards dates back to the ancient Chinese who shared written messages of goodwill with one another. Similarly the early Egyptians conveyed their greetings on papyrus scrolls. It was not until the 15<sup>th</sup> century that the custom would arrive in Europe and Germanic tribes began spreading New Year greetings on woodcuts as early as 1400. Handmade paper Valentines would follow and were exchanged throughout the Continent. Dated 1477, the oldest known is housed in the British Museum and was sent by Charles, Duke of Orléans, who was imprisoned in the Tower of London at the time, to his wife, Bonne of Armagnac. It is not particularly romantic and simply reads: "I am already sick of love / my very gentle Valentine."

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century things had moved on apace and greeting cards were now a popular and affordable means of personal communication, particularly due to advances in printing and the introduction of the postage stamp. Embroidered postcards from the Great War are generally known as "WW1 Silks" and were first produced in 1914 through to 1918 but declined substantially from 1919 onwards and it is unusual to find any after 1923. Expertly worked by mainly French and Belgian women refugees, their production became quite an industry with a myriad of designs being machine-embroidered onto large sheets of mesh, using different colours of silk yarn. A single pattern would be repeated many times across each sheet with the finished designs cut, mounted onto card and edged with an embossed card frame. Two main formats were used; a panel style, where a rectangle of embroidered mesh would be fixed to a larger card, and an envelope style, in



which two pieces of embroidered mesh were sewn and mounted to form a pocket or flap which opened to reveal a small printed card or silk handkerchief tucked inside. Designs varied from flowers (particularly forget-me-nots, pansies and “lucky” heather) to patriotic messages, flags of the Allies and Regimental Crests and Badges. The motif of the Easter Egg was used in various creative ways, often extended to military themes and also for its symbolism of regeneration and hope.

Sold as souvenirs to soldiers and sailors, it’s been estimated that as many as 10 million cards were produced during the war years which today remain highly collectable for their uniqueness and beauty. They gave no indication of what the sender was experiencing at sea or on land, sparing families at home from the true horrors of the War and became treasured mementos of much loved and missed family members, many of whom never came home . . .

## ***IN MEMORIAM (EASTER, 1915)***

by

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. (Philip) Edward Thomas, R.G.A.

Poet, Essayist and Novelist

Killed in Action during The Battle of Arras

on Easter Sunday (9<sup>th</sup> April) 1917

*“The flowers left thick at nightfall in the  
wood*

*This Eastertide call into mind the men,  
Now far from home, who, with their  
sweethearts, should*

*Have gathered them and will do never  
again.”*



## THE SHELL SCANDAL OF 1915 AND H M FACTORY - GRETNA by Lynn Roffee

While there were many munitions factories across Britain during the First World War producing ammunition, what stood HM Factory – Gretna apart, was the fact it was the largest munitions factory operating in the wartime nation.



*Charles à Court  
Repington*

In 1915 Britain was in danger of losing the war due to the lack of shells, which were being heavily rationed for use on the front lines. On 14<sup>th</sup> May 1915, The Times Newspaper ran the headline “*Need for shells, British attacks checked; Limited supply the cause; A lesson from France*”. The war correspondent was Colonel Charles à Court Repington, formerly of the Rifles Brigade, who had witnessed the failed British attack at Aubers Ridge. He had dispatched a telegram to The Times stating that the failure to advance was due to the lack of artillery ammunition. Sir John French, Commander-in-Chief to the British Expeditionary Force, is said to have leaked this information to Repington. It caused an unprecedented wartime political crisis, referred to as the Shell Crisis, and the Government was forced to give way to a new political coalition.

As a result, David Lloyd George was appointed Minister for the Ministry of Munitions of War in June 1915 and tasked with ensuring there was sufficient supply of ammunitions. The Munition of War Act provided the Ministry with the power to declare factories “*controlled establishments*” if engaged in war production, and this included those producing textiles and dockyards. It restricted the freedom of workers to leave, regulated wages, hours and employment conditions. These reductions in working conditions along with the construction of new factories saw the production of armaments increased. Lloyd George changed the munition supply system and ran it on a business basis using the experience and expertise of both industrialists and government resources; enabling the efficient control and supply of ammunition.

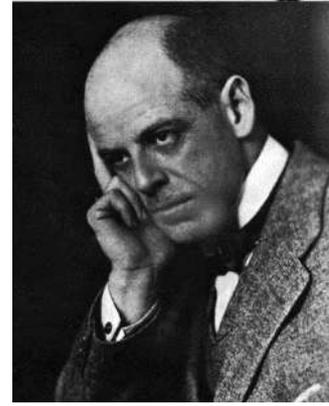
A new nationalised cordite factory was built at Gretna, known as HM Factory – Gretna, located on the Anglo-Scottish border. The factory, located on a rural site, was chosen for its remoteness from a populated area and stretched some nine miles long and two miles wide (9,000 acres), from Longtown in England to Dornock in Scotland. It was well connected to local transport, being near three railways that ran through or close to the area; the North British, Caledonia and Glasgow & South-Western lines, and just 8 miles away in Carlisle there were eight other railway lines. The factory comprised four large production sites together with two purpose-built townships to accommodate the workers.



*HM Factory – Gretna*

To enable the production of RDB Cordite (Research Dept Formula B) hundreds of chemists, explosives experts and engineers were recruited from across Britain and the wider British Empire.

An American chemical engineer, Kenneth Bingham Quinan, a self-taught explosive's expert and self-proclaimed hands-on engineer, was to play a key role. Quinan had been working as General Manager at de Beer's Cape Explosive Works in South Africa. He had arrived in Britain in early 1915 following a request for his services for the war effort to oversee the development of 20 new chemical plants. Lloyd George is recorded in Hansard as giving thanks to Quinan in the House of Commons stating "*It is hard to point to anyone who did more to win the war than Kenneth Bingham Quinan*". Along with Quinan, Gretna's factory Superintendent was John Charles Burnham, a chemist who had been loaned by the Government of India Explosives factory in Nilgiris in the State of Tamil Nadu.



*Kenneth Bingham Quinan*

In the autumn of 1915, more than 10,000 navvies mostly of Irish descent, were brought into the area and began the construction of HM Factory – Gretna. At the same time two new townships at Gretna and Eastriggs were created to house the 20,000 munition workers. The construction workers worked hard and endured long hours to get the factory into production quickly and by April 1916 production had begun. The factory had its own narrow-gauge railway to move materials and supplies around the site and had a network of 125 miles of track comprising 78 miles of ordinary broad-gauge railway track and 47 miles of 2ft gauge track. It had 20 conventional type and 14 fireless type locomotives. The latter being charged with steam (at a pressure of 160lbs) before working, enabling them to go through dangerous areas without fear of sending out sparks, something that would clearly be a risk in a munition's factory.

The Sydney Sunday Times, in its article titled "*The Wonderful Secret City*" suggested the factory cost over £10,000,000 to build. The factory and the two new townships had their own purpose-built coal-fired power station. Water for the factory was obtained from the Esk which was about 5½ miles away and brought in by 33 inch pipes to the water treatment centre. There were 900 telephones in the factory with 1 ordinary and 2 auto telephone exchanges. Both of the townships had their own bakeries making 13,000 loaves a day, with a kitchen capable of making 14,000 meals a day as well a laundry cleaning 6,000 items each day. The site had a hospital, two schools, tennis courts, reading and games rooms, churches and its own Police force. The township at Gretna had two cinemas seating 1,100 people, a public hall seating 1,100 and another holding 650.



*Munitionettes kneading the Cordite by hand*

Britain had previously imported cordite from America but as soon as it was able to produce it at home, the production costs halved and savings were also made on transportation. Cordite is a highly explosive mixture of nitro-glycerine with nitro-cotton, which was so volatile that workers had to knead the mixture by hand in vats. They were not allowed to wear any loose items of jewelry or clothing in case it fell into the mixture. It was a hazardous process and environment to work in. The mixture created toxic fumes and there was constant danger of receiving acid burns from splashes.

Workers' skin often turned yellow due to handling the dangerous materials. The mixed paste was dried, rolled into lengths producing cordite propellant destined for shell-filling factories. The sheer

number of workers involved meant that the factory could turn out 1000 tons of the paste every week; more than all the other plants in Britain combined. RDB Cordite was found to be unstable if stored for long periods so it was later replaced by Cordite MD (MoDified).

The name Devil's Porridge was coined by Sir Arthur Canon Doyle after he visited the factory in 1916 as a war correspondent. Doyle was impressed with the bravery of the women and wrote "*Hats off to the Women of Britain! Even all exertions of the militants shall in future not prevent me from being an advocate for their vote, for those who have helped save the State should be allowed to guide it.... The nitroglycerin on the one side the gun-cotton on the other are kneaded into a sort of devil's porridge*".

The newly created Ministry of Munitions forced factories to employ more women, due to shortages in workers available caused by the fact so many men were engaged in frontline duties. Many women went to work in munitions factories to support the war effort. For some, it meant better pay and working hours compared to what they received whilst working in domestic service.



*Some of the female workforce of  
HM Factory - Gretna*

The female workforce of 12,000 at Gretna, was mainly comprised of young girls from working-class backgrounds from across Britain. Approximately 80% were single and 62% were aged 18 and under. They worked 12-hour shifts, sharing beds with other women on opposite shifts in order to keep accommodation costs to a minimum.

The long hours left little time for recreation and the authorities restricted local train services in order to restrict access to entertainment found in Carlisle. There had been accusations in the press of drunkenness of some workers and navvies. As a direct response to this continuing negative press coverage, the government introduced the Statement Management Scheme, also known as the Carlisle Experiment. The scheme nationalised the breweries, public houses and licensed premises around Carlisle, Gretna and the Scottish side of the Solway. It was introduced in an attempt to control heavy drinking, reduce drunkenness and reduce hangovers; it was a safety issue when working with highly explosive materials. This was one of several areas that the State took control of to keep vital munitions workers' sober.

On 18<sup>th</sup> October 1924, The News newspaper in Adelaide ran an article titled "*Gretna Sale Fiasco – Thirty Bungalows for £900*". It describes the difficulty in selling buildings on the Dornock section of the factory even at low prices. Two bids were made for the "*glycerine distillery*"; the auctioneer had assessed the scrap value as £10,000 but the highest bid was £5,000. The sale of Section houses at the Eastriggs township was considered "*gift*" prices and a four bedroomed house could be bought for £150.00. Large batches of bungalows were offered for sale but to no avail. The paper reported a few were sold to individuals and gave an example of one having roses around the door being sold for a record sum of £56.00, and a group of three fetching £92.00.

In a desperate attempt to sell the entire factory combined with the railway sidings, the highest bid was only £26,000, resulting in the withdrawal from sale. Part of the site was later sold to contractors Messrs. D Thomson & Sons, of Carlisle, for an unknown price.

The creation of the factory and townships swiftly followed by the production of cordite in April 1916 was an amazing achievement even by today's standards. Parts of the former site were used during World War Two; the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) was stationed on the former Longtown and Eastriggs sites and known as the Central Ammunition Depots.



*Sir James – the fireless locomotive*



*The Devil's Porridge Museum, Eastriggs*

Today, there is a museum called The Devil's Porridge Museum, located in Eastriggs, which tells the story of HM Factory - Gretna from the WWI; then the Solway Military Coast, Gretna and Eastriggs area during WWII; the Cold War and RAF Annan. There are various displays and objects to view, including railway heritage Sir James – one of the original Great War fireless locomotives used to transport cordite around the factory site, a Virtual Reality tour of Scotland's first nuclear reactor and the Animals in War memorial. The museum is a fitting tribute to a remarkable historic accomplishment.

**Sources used:**

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- The Maitland Weekly Mercury NSW, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1919
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- The Times, 14<sup>th</sup> May 1915
- [WWW.Parliament.UK](http://WWW.Parliament.UK)
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- Munitions of War Act 1915



## ANOTHER LOST PRINCE . . .

by David Humberston

The largest gathering of European royalty ever to take place arrived in London to attend the funeral of King Edward VII on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 1910. Held fourteen days after the King's death, huge crowds, estimated at between three and five million people, gathered to watch the Procession, the route of which was lined by 35,000 soldiers. Commencing at Buckingham Palace this would consist of nearly fifty male royal representatives riding on horseback, followed by eleven carriages carrying



*“Procession of the Nine Kings”*

*A contemporary post card by Harry Payne*

the ladies of the family. It would make its way via Westminster Hall, Whitehall, The Mall, Hyde Park Corner and Marble Arch to Paddington Station, from where a funeral train conveyed the mourners to Windsor, where the King was laid to rest.

The Procession was headed by the new King, George V, flanked by his cousin, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and his uncle, Prince Arthur of Connaught. Seven other ruling monarchs came next, followed by the Dukes, Grand Dukes and Princes in order of precedence, with Prince Wolrad of

Waldeck and Pyrmont and Prince Bovaradej of Siam bringing up the rear. Prince Wolrad, who had accompanied his half-brother, Prince Friedrich, to the funeral, could at least claim one thing in common with the new King at the head of the Procession as both men were four times great grandsons of Britain's Hanoverian King George II.

The principality of Waldeck and Pyrmont, two separate territories close to the River Weser in central Germany, had been guaranteed its independence at the 1815 Congress of Vienna and became a member of the German Confederation. From 1868, as part of the North German Confederation, the principality was administered by Prussia before becoming part of the German Empire three years later. Prince Wolrad was born at Arolsen, the capital of Waldeck, on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1892, the only child of the second marriage of the reigning Prince, George Victor and Princess Louise of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg. Both parents were descended from Britain's King George II, giving Prince Wolrad a distant link to the British Royal Family.



*Prince Wolrad of  
Waldeck and Pyrmont*

A closer tie, however, was the Prince's elder half-sister, Princess Helena who, in April 1882, married Queen Victoria's youngest son, Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany. Although the Prince, a sufferer of haemophilia, died two years later, as a sister-in-law of the departed King Edward, Princess Helena was present in one of the eleven carriages taking part in the procession. Riding ahead of Prince Wolrad was Helena's son, Charles Edward, Duke of Saxe Coburg and Gotha since 1900 and her son-in-law, Prince Alexander of Teck (brother of the now Queen Mary)

who, in 1904, had married Helena's daughter, Alice. It must also be mentioned that amongst the other riders were Prince Henry of the Netherlands, who had married Princess Helena's niece, Queen Wilhelmina, in 1901 and Prince Wolrad's own half-brother, Prince Friedrich.

With his father dying within one year of his birth, Prince Wolrad was raised by his mother, Princess Louise and was educated at New College, Oxford, Grenoble, France, and finally at Heidelberg University, where he was a member of the Student Corps Saxo-Borussia, described by one writer as: "*the most distinguished Corps of Christendom*". When it became apparent that a military life held more appeal than his studies, Prince Wolrad became a Lieutenant in the Dragoon Regiment of the Grand Ducal Hesse (25<sup>th</sup>) Infantry Division of the Imperial German Army.

Having seen action in the Ardennes and on the Marne in the early days of the War, on the evening of 17<sup>th</sup> October 1914, Prince Wolrad led a cavalry patrol towards the Belgian village of Moorslede, some 13 miles east of Ypres. The patrol came under fire from advancing British troops and several of the Dragoons were hit and unseated. With his own horse wounded, the Prince and his aide reached a nearby trench, but when Prince Wolrad saw an injured man a short distance away, he crawled out to him and attempted to pull him to safety. In doing so, he himself was hit by gunfire and later died from his wounds. He was only 22 years of age.

His orderly would later write: "*He took care of his people as if they were his own. He was very popular among us. You cannot imagine how sad the Dragoons were when His Highness fell. He was the best Officer in the Regiment. He carried out more patrols than anyone else because he could orientate himself so well. Everybody wanted to go on patrol with him*".



The body of the young Prince was returned to Waldeck to rest at the family mausoleum and cemetery at Rhoden, shown left. Originally constructed in 1794, the Cemetery remains the burial place for the descendants of the family to this day.

In the immediate aftermath of the War, Prince Friedrich, the half-brother of Prince Wolrad, abdicated and negotiated an agreement with the new German government that allowed him and his future

descendants to retain ownership of the ancestral home, Arolsen Castle, and the adjoining Forest. Today the former territories of Waldeck and Pymont can be found in the current German states of Hesse and Lower Saxony.

With all the German royals abdicating post-war, one final footnote to this story may be of interest. Before the conflict began, Kaiser Wilhelm received a visit from Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, the niece of Prince Wolstad. Hoping to impress the ruler of a smaller nation, the Kaiser remarked to the Queen: "*My guards are seven feet tall and yours are only shoulder-high to them*". The Queen apparently smiled politely and replied: "*Quite true, Your Majesty, your guards are seven feet tall but when we open our dykes, the water is ten feet deep!*" Under the Queen's influence, the Netherlands remained neutral throughout the War. Ironically, when the Kaiser fled to the Netherlands to seek sanctuary in 1918, it was the same Queen who refused all pressures to extradite him, even summoning the ambassadors of the Allied nations to her presence to lecture them of the rights of asylum . . .

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