



Battledress Times

The General Newsletter of the Herts at War Project

Comments & copy to (jontywild@hertsatwar.co.uk)

July 2024

In this newsletter you will find:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Our free talks & programme▪ News on the next battlefield tour▪ Brief updates on research and progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Analysis of where the Herts war dead lie▪ Help on photographs▪ Lieu C S Cautherley – Headstone Re-dedication |
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Our Free Talks

Thanks to Paul Johnson, Andy Palmer, Carole Gascoine and the rest of the team, our talks are going from strength to strength again.



You may have noticed that we are encouraging donations a little more strongly now, and when we advertise the talks you will see something like **"We suggest £5 per person - or whatever you can afford"**. We hope that you do not feel we are pushing this too much. Our talks remain free if you do not want to donate, but we must cover our costs (venue, speaker and complementary drinks) and although the venue is very reasonably priced, we are expecting a 20% increase shortly. Also, if we are able to generate a little excess, this will not only support the HAW Project, but give us more flexibility when we look at

who we can book and how far they have to come.

You will always find our latest program of speakers and full details of our talks on our website at www.hertsatwar.co.uk/events but the next few appear below:

- 18/7/2024 Tim Halstead - "More Than Victims of Horace - Public Schools 1914-1918"
- 15/8/2024 Ian Castle - "Germany's Bomber Offensive against London in the First World War"
- 19/9/2024 Steve Bacon - "A Very Lucky Sailor - The Merchant Navy in WW2"
- 17/10/2024 Nigel Crompton - "The Women's Police Service in the Great War"
- 21/11/2024 Roger Thompson - "The Korean War"

If you have suggestions for future speakers, please tell Paul via pauljohnson@hertsatwar.co.uk and if you have any ideas for how we can better advertise our talks to expand our audience, tell Paul or me jontywild@hertsatwar.co.uk.

Battlefield Tour - Important News!

For those of you interested in Battlefield Tours, we are planning a trip to Ypres. You will receive more information shortly and there will be a discount for members.

Although the trip is being planned well ahead (i.e. for next year), we are looking for early bookings in order to confirm the necessary facilities (hotel, crossings, size of coach etc.), and to help protect against price increases. So the dates for your diary are Friday 5th to Sunday 7th September 2025. Keep them available, read the information when received and please book early. The 1st of November 2024 is the deadline and after that there may be no opportunity to join the party.



Research News & Stats (all numbers approximate)

Perhaps this may be of limited interest to many, so the more detailed analysis of progress is saved for the "Research Reconnaissance" newsletter. Nevertheless, researching the men and women who died, recording their lives and sacrifice is the prime reason that the HAW Project exists.

In October last year we recorded the number of biographies we have online (all grades of completeness) as 12,625 war dead (Great War). These are spread across 950 memorials in 422 locations (cities, towns, villages and hamlets). We also have 838 survivor biographies. Now the figures stand at 12,727 war dead, 1018 memorials in 413 locations, 841 survivor biographies. You may think that shows little progress, but remember the total number of war dead will not change much, a few may be added and a few duplicates removed, so this does not tell us much. However, what we are doing is constantly improving the quality of the biographies we have, and, thanks to our wonderful volunteers, there have been



4,910 biography updates. This number may include a few new names, but mostly they represent edits to existing records. They can be anything from new comprehensive research, combining new research or a minor update, correction or photograph added. However you look at it, that is significant progress of which we can all be very proud.

Where are the Herts War Dead?

It is amazing how far and wide the men and women from Hertfordshire who died in the Great War are spread. A rough analysis (treat as approximate and work in progress), shows that they are recorded on 1548 different cemeteries and memorials across 40 countries (inc. the UK).

Impressive as I think these figures are, it is interesting to compare them with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) stats which record: 23,000 locations, in 150 countries including maintaining over 2,000 cemeteries, 1.1m headstones, and commemorating 1.7m individuals, of which 1,083,088 relate to the Great War.

Some standout Herts figures are:

- 2,427 souls lie in Belgium, of which 1,214 are on the Menin Gate or Tyne Cot memorials.
- 6,332 lie in France, of which 2,342 are on the memorials at Arras, Cambrai, Le Touret, Loos, Pozières, Soissons, Thiepval, Vimy & Vis-en-Artois.
- 213 souls lie in Turkey (including Gallipoli), of which 125 are on Helles memorial.
- 1,403 are buried or recorded on CWGC memorials in the UK, of which 185 are on the memorials at Chatham, Hollybrook, Plymouth & Portsmouth.

Note: If you want to see a more detailed breakdown visit: www.hertsatwar.co.uk/research/where-our-men-women-lie.

Photographs for the Men and Women

Where we can we would like to add a photograph to every Hertfordshire related man and woman's biography, preferable a photograph of the person themselves - where that is not possible, then their headstone or name on a memorial. So photographs are very important to us. As can be seen in the analysis above, this is an immense task and we are unlikely to be able to visit many of the countries where they lie, even if politics and wars allow, but there may be some of you who can help.

Perhaps, when on holiday in the UK or abroad, or on a battlefield visit, you might be able to visit a military or town cemetery or memorial and take some photographs. If so, do make contact with details, I can analyse whether we have anyone there and, if we do, create a list of names for which we have no photograph and might be able to guide you to their headstones or their names on memorials, which will save time.

Lieutenant Charles Stewart Cautherley – Headstone Rededication 21st March 2024

Back in March I promised more details of this event and here they are:

When we heard that an unknown Hertfordshire Officer buried at Poelcapelle British Cemetery had been identified, and that there was to be a ceremony for the rededication of the headstone, we felt that we must attend. This is something that I had not seen before, so four of us, Dan Hill, Paul Johnson, Stuart Osborne and I headed out to Belgium for the ceremony.

These are rare events, but despite this we were surprised to learn that over 4 or 5 days four such dedications had been organised - three of which were the results of the efforts of just one researcher. Sadly, although he was due to be there, he was unable to attend, so we have yet to meet him.



While travelling, we were told of the rededication of a headstone to Sergeant J H Bott (DCM), so we diverted to Hooge Crater Cemetery and witnessed that ceremony on our way to Ypres. Not really knowing what to expect, it was not only interesting but useful in helping me decide where to stand to take photographs at 'our Hertfordshire ceremony'. The



numbers here were certainly swollen by two coach loads of relatively new recruits from the Army Training Regiment at Winchester, who also just happened to be in the area and whose guides persuaded them to add this to their itinerary.

As brief background to Charles Catherley's rededication, for those who do not know, the Hertfordshires were a Territorial Force, small in number, fielding only one fighting Battalion during the war and, although not the first such regiment to go, they did go early, entering the war on November 6th, 1914. They were almost destroyed at St Julian on July 31st, 1917, and had other periods of terrible losses. The CWGC record their deaths as 840 men, of which 41 were officers, and of those 14 (now 13) were lost or buried beneath headstones inscribed "Known Unto God".

Campaign		(A) Where decoration was earned.		(B) Present situation			
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)	MEDAL	ROLL	PAGE
(A) CAUTHERLEY	H.A.C.	2/Cpl	441		VICTORY	OFF/240	52
(B) CHAS. Stewart	Hertfordshire				BRITISH	do	4
Action taken				1. v. 4657m 4/21.10.19. ws/1/4462. (18/10/1917) (10/1/15)			
Disembodiment Date				18-9-14.			
WS/1/4462				WS/1/4462			

I will only give the briefest of details for Charles, as since our visit, we have added considerably to his biography which can be seen on the HAW website "www.hertsatwar.co.uk/biographies/890432/charles-stewart-cautherley".

He was a Yorkshire man from Headingly, the son of middle class parents and with deep roots in Hertfordshire, although it took a while to find those roots. A newspaper article reported that after his father died in 1911, he was brought some 160 miles back to Royston (Herts) for burial. Coincidentally, I found that some of the family lived close to where I was brought up there. Charles joined the Honourable Artillery Company Territorial Service in 1909, rising to Company Sergeant Major before being commissioned to the Hertfordshire Regiment in October 1915, and joining them in the field in April 1916. He was probably at St Julian in 1917 (mentioned above), but died much later, probably by bullet, but possibly by shellfire (see biography) in April 1918.



The rededication service, conducted by the Rev. Tom Sander, Chaplain to the Household Cavalry, took place at 9:30am, under a grey sky, threatening rain which for the most part did not come. It was a moving and respectful ceremony organised by the Ministry of Defence's JCCC (Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre).



I would estimate that about 40 to 50 people were present, including a cousin, representatives from the organisers, the CWGC – including their Head of Commemorations, senior military personnel from Belgium, Colour Sergeant Andrew Evans and Sergeant Aron Walker from the 2nd Battalion, Royal Anglian Regiment, Royal British Legion, their standard bearers and a bugler. Fortunately, we had a wreath available - stored in case of need, and our project's Lead Historian, Paul Johnson, was permitted to lay it on behalf of Herts At War – a very proud moment for him and us.



Veterans TV have added a video which can be seen at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMmlA2WmWoA – Paul is fourth from the left in the wreath laying line-up facing the grave, and if you wish to see Sergeant J H Bott's ceremony, that is there too at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsGD1A7qPMw.

It has inspired us, and we are now working to identify another officer's grave, for which Charles Catherley was one of the possibilities, so that may prove a little easier now - I'll let you know if we are successful!

Jonty Wild