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MOTOCYCLE CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN
&

THE CLUB WITH NO NAME

"The Battlefield Trip 8"

"The WW1 Tank"

"The Battle of the Bulge"

Thursday 31st March 2011

To

Monday 4th April 2011



Picture taken on the Vengeance Weapons trip - April 2009

The Battlefield Trip 8 - Cont.

Overview

Take the ferry from North Shields to Ijmuiden and ride to Cambrai in France. Stay one night in a hotel in Cambrai and visit the tank "D51 Deborah". Next day ride to La Roche-en-Ardenne, stay one more night and visit the Musée De La Bataille Des Ardennes. Sunday back to Ijmuiden and catch the ferry back to North shields.

Thursday 31st March - 2011: North Shields Docks.

Meet at the dock at 16.00pm and book on to the North Shields to Ijmuiden ferry, we must be on board for 16.30 pm.

Friday 1st April - 2011:AM - Ijmuiden.

Arrive 08.30am; leave the ship for the ride to Cambrai in France. Approximately 230 miles.



The Battlefield Trip 8 - Cont.

Friday 1st April - 2011: PM - Cambrai.

Arrive at our hotel, we are booked in for dinner, bed and breakfast for Friday night.

Hotel Beatus

718 Avenue de Paris

59400 Cambrai

France

Phone: +0033 3 27 81 45 70

Fax: +0033 3 27 78 00 83

Web: <http://www.beatus-cambrai.com>

Mail: hotel.beatus@wanadoo.fr



Friday 1st April - 2011: Late PM - Cambrai.

Dinner in the hotel followed by a night on the town.

The Battlefield Trip 8 - Cont.

Saturday 2nd April - 2011: AM - Cambrai. - Visit to tank "D51 "Deborah".

Crew of Deborah D51 on the 20th of November 1917

What do we know about the eight men on board D51 as she went into action on that morning of November 20th, 1917?

We know a lot about the Tank Commander, 2/Lt Frank Gustave Heap. He won a Military Cross for leading some of his crew to safety after his tank had reached the final objective where she was destroyed. Deborah D51 was the only tank to have been through the village on that morning.

We have a picture of 2/Lt Heap. He survived the war, and went on to have a successful business

career in the north west of England. He wrote books and was a keen mountaineer. His family has preserved his memory, and many of his descendants have visited Flesquieres and seen Deborah. But what about the men under his command?

For a long time, it was accepted that four of the crew died when the tank received five direct hits from German field guns. The citation for 2/Lt Heap's MC referred specifically to 'four of his crew' dying. Inside the neat Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at Flesquieres Hill, on the outskirts of the village, there are four headstones, side-by-side. The names engraved are those of: Gunner J Cheverton, Gunner W Galway, Gunner F W Tipping and Private W G Robinson. They were all killed on November 20th and were members of the 4th [D] Btn. Tank Corps. Were these men, therefore, the four who died together when Deborah was destroyed and are now buried together?

It seemed like a fair assumption, but there was a complication: a fifth 4th Btn Tank Corp man buried very near the others. Lance Corporal George Charles Foot, DCM, was also killed on November 20th. How can we be sure which of these men died when Deborah was shelled?

In an effort to explain the riddle, we examined the files of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It was common for casualties to be buried hastily on the battlefield, and then exhumed for reburial after the war in the new military cemeteries. CWGC records show that Lance Corporal Foot, and Gunners Cheverton, Galway and Tipping, were originally buried together (Map Ref 57C K 18d). Private Robinson was at first interred in another place (Map Ref 57E L 13a).

So we concluded that the four men who died in 'Mr Heap's bus' were Foot, Cheverton, Galway and Tipping; Robinson must have been killed elsewhere in the village, in another tank.

Or so we thought. We began to gather as much information as possible on all these individuals, and the personal details are gathered together on this website. We assembled family portraits, military medals, obituaries, memorial cards, and best of all, we traced descendants – some of whom had no or little idea of what had happened to their brave ancestors.

Then: a major and unexpected development. A nephew of George Foot showed us a hand-written letter from Frank Heap to George's father, expressing his 'deepest sympathy'. It is an extraordinarily poignant document.

In the letter, dated November 26th, Frank Heap said: "I am having a bitter evening now, as four more of my men have also gone, all finer fellows than I shall ever be". This indicates that despite everything we believed before, and despite Frank Heap's citation, the death toll in Deborah was five, not four. Only two men must have survived with their commander.

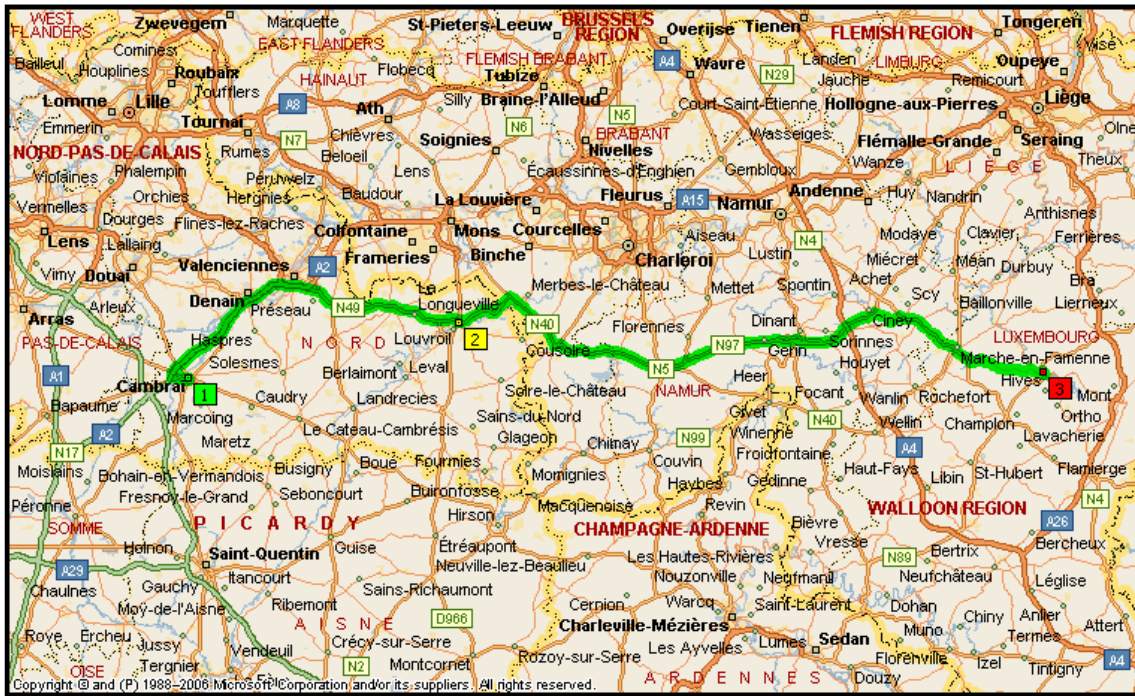
We must therefore add Private W.G.Robinson to the casualty list.



The Battlefield Trip 8 - Cont.

Saturday 2nd April - 2011: Late AM - Cambrai.

Set off on the ride to La Roche-en-Ardenne to stay the night and visit the Musée De La Bataille Des Ardennes. Approximately 100 miles.



Saturday 2nd April - 2011: PM - La Roche-en-Ardenne.

Book into our hotel to La Roche-en-Ardenne and visit the Musée De La Bataille Des Ardennes.

Hotel Floreal - La Roche-en-Ardenne

6 Avenue De Villez,
La Roche-en-Ardenne,
6980 Belgium

Near the town of La Roche-en-Ardenne, the imposing castle Floreal La Roche combines historic charm and modern facilities. The buildings are located in an area of 4 hectares on the banks of the river Ourthe and only 800 meters from downtown. 76 renovated rooms, 38 flats with balcony and parking space individually, 8 meeting rooms equipped (10 to 170 people) with interpretation booths, WiFi and daylight ... and many other benefits.

The castle also has a private disco and a tavern, parking for customers, not to mention the gastronomic restaurant 'Le Parc'.



The Battlefield Trip 8 - Cont.

Saturday 2nd April - 2011: PM - La Roche-en-Ardenne.

Visit the Musée De La Bataille Des Ardenne, which is a short walk down from the hotel.

Musée De La Bataille Des Ardennes - La Roche-en-Ardenne - Belgium

5 Rue Chamont,

6980 La Roche

Telephone: +32 84-411725

or +32 84-411880

Website: <http://www.batarden.be>



Saturday 2nd April - 2011: Late PM - La Roche-en-Ardenne.

Dinner in the hotel followed by a night on the town.

The Battlefield Trip 8 - Cont.

Sunday 3rd April - 2011: AM - La Roche-en-Ardenne. After breakfast depart for the ride to Ijmuiden. Approximately 200 miles.



Sunday 3rd April - 2011: PM - Ijmuiden. Board the ferry for the overnight trip to North Shields.

Monday 4th April - 2011: AM - Dock at North Shields