



In memory of twelve children
of **LLANWRTYD WELLS**
fallen down
in the battlefields
of France and Flanders

1914 - 1918

CONTACT
MERIEL - LLANWRTYD

Mériel (France) - 2018

This booklet would never have seen the light of day without the historical works of LDHAC (Llanwrtyd and District Heritage and Arts Centre).

Many thanks

<http://history-arts-wales.org.uk/>

Other sources and cooperations are mentioned at the end of the book

And all this madness, all this rage, all this flaming death of our civilization and our hopes, has been brought about because a set of official gentlemen, living luxurious lives, most stupid, and with imagination or heart, have chosen that it should occur rather than that any one of them should suffer some infinitesimal rebuff to his country's

pride.

British Philosopher, Bertrand Russell 1914

LDHAC Mars 2018

SUMMARY

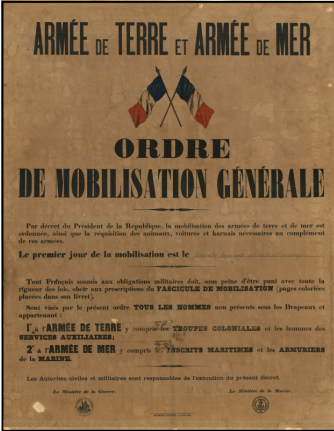
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« et toute cette folie, toute cette fureur, toute cette mort flamboyante de notre civilisation et de nos espérances, a été provoquée parce qu'un petit groupe de messieurs officiels, vivant des vies luxueuses, les plus stupides et sans imagination ou sans coeur, ont choisi que cela se produise plutôt que chacun d'entre eux ne souffre d'une infinitésimale atteinte à la fierté de son pays »

*To my grand fathers
Gustave, Alexandre
Henri et Clovis
who lived through these horrors
and survive*

FOREWORD



The commemoration of a centenary requires a reflection on the past, an understanding of and perspective on the circumstances of that time.

The evocation of a trauma that affected our two communities (Llanwrtyd Wells-UK and Mériel-France) today unite us in memory; it is also necessary to compare the conditions of that time in France, in Wales and of the scene of the war. In France, the territory was threatened.

It had to be defended. The words engraved on the pediments of most of our Monuments aux Morts, after the Armistice, after the unleashing of horrors, resonate in our minds:

- « Mort pour la France »
Dead for France
- « Mort pour la Patrie »
Dead for Fatherland



In Mériel :
« Dead for the fatherland »

What about the state of mind of the people at the time? In the years preceding the birth of the conflict, the pacifist movements, sensing the smell of death arriving, sounded the alarm (Jean Jaurès).

From the declaration of war, then during the conflict, the popular sentiment was duplicated. The "Fleur au fusil » (flower on the Rifle), the "Der des Ders" (the war to end all wars), the recovery of Alsace-Moselle, the mutinies and the shots of 1917 ... the whirlwind of the alliances of the Great whose people would suffer.

It is recalled on page 6 the family ties of these Great, and the alliances that 'justified' the ignoble butchery



Against war
To its victims
To the fraternity
of peoples



Cursed be the war
To the children of...
dead during the war

After the war, the momentum of the commemorations was also shared.

The Monuments aux Morts, often financed by public subscriptions, extolled the sacrifice of heroes. Emotional certainly, but perhaps also a balm so that these soldiers did not die in vain.

Some municipalities have dedicated their Peace Monument to define their dead (military and civilian) as "Victims". Synthesized, these notions become: "They sacrificed themselves" on one side, "They were sacrificed" on the other side.

Naturally, the frontier, as in every human adventure, is permeable. Of course, these victims were heroes; of course, these heroes were victims.

No doubt, they only wanted to keep their family free and alive.

Historians have told us everything. It's up to us to listen to them.

WAR DECLARATION

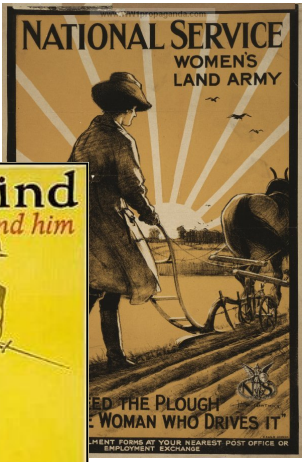


WAKOPMUND-ZEITUNG
 Gröschel, Jänisch & Sosaubel, Jänisch.
 Donnerstag, den 4. August 1914.

Krieg mit England!
 Swakopmund, 6. Juli (12 Uhr Mittags). Ein den
 Gouvernement zugegangenes
amtliches Telegramm
 das in Windhuk soeben öffentlich bekannt gemacht wird
 meldet, daß
**England auf Seiten
 des Zweibundes**
am Kriege teil nimmt.
 Der Anschlag des Gouvernements lautet
**„Krieg Deutschland gegen
 England, Frankreich**
**Nach einer weiteren Windhuke
 land den Krieg erklärt.**

www.alamy.com

La Propagande



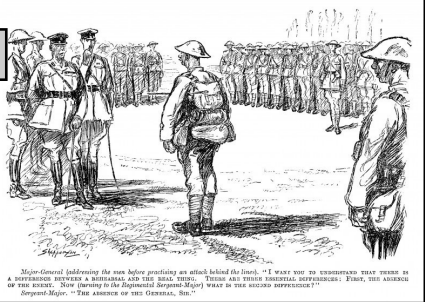
TO THE WOMEN OF BRITAIN.

1. You have read what the Germans have done in Belgium. Have you thought what they would do if they invaded this Country?
2. Do you realise that the safety of your home and children depends on our getting more men **NOW**?
3. Do you realise that the one word "GO" from you may send another man to fight for our King and Country?
4. When the War is over and someone asks your husband or your son what he did in the great War, is he to hang his head because you would not let him go?

WON'T YOU HELP AND SEND A MAN TO JOIN THE ARMY TO-DAY?

© Onslow-BNPS

Guilt



In Wales, the population was even more circumspect.



England !

In addition to the pacifist sentiments we knew in France, there was a strong Welsh identity that fostered a mistrust of a conflict that the Welsh saw as the affair of the English alone.

According to historian Lester Mason, "there was a perception that the Welsh were less inclined to make war than people from elsewhere in Britain."

In his book *'The Englishman who went up a hill and came down a mountain'* Christopher Monger writes: '(The Welsh) had little time for the English and the war they were waging with their European cousins. As far as they were concerned the English were German. After all, isn't that where the Saxons came from when they invaded the British Isles? ". It is sometimes in the humorous writing that hides the deepest truth.



The Welsh territory was not threatened. The conflict arose from a quarrel between three cousins (see next page the descendants of Queen Victoria), ... English, Anglo-Saxon perceived as closer to the German Saxons than the Welsh Celtic people.

Let us also recall here that the English language was little spoken in Wales, especially in rural areas, which increased the 'foreign' aspect of this war.

Also it must be remembered the emergence of feminism that asserted itself. Many texts, monuments and 'memorials' celebrate the martyrdom of women whilst engaged in the theatre of combat, or the sufferings of mothers, wives, and fiancées. After 50 years of struggle, on February 6, 1918, the British Parliament passed a law enfranchising all men, as well as all women over the age of 30 who met minimum property qualifications the right to vote. In 1928, the Conservative government passed the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act giving the vote to all women over the age of 21 on equal terms with men. In France, equal rights to vote was not established until 1944 – and then only if they were literate.

Christmas 1914

I was lying on with me mess-mates on the cold and rocky ground...Now listen up me boys !
One young german voice sang out so clear...
Soon one by one each german voice joined in in harmony.

The cannons rested silent the gas clouds rolled no more as christmas brought us respite from the war...

« Still Nacht, 'tis Silent night »...

in two tongues one song filled up that sky.

J'étais allongé avec mes compagnons de galère, sur le sol froid et pierreux..Ecoutez bien, les amis... Une voix allemande, jeune et claire, s'est mise à chanter... bientôt une à une chaque voix allemande l'a rejointe en harmonie. Les canons se sont tus et Noël nous a apporté un instant de répit dans cette guerre ...

« Still Nacht ! 'tis Silent night »...

Dans les deux langues une chanson emplît le ciel.

Taken from *Christmas In The Trenches* by John McDermott

HISTORICAL REFERENCES

THE COUSINS

VICTORIA

Albert de Saxe Cobourg Gotha

VICKIE

Frederic III d'Allemagne

EDOUARD VII

ALICE

Louis IV de Hesse

GUILLAUME II d'Allemagne

GEORGES V

ALIX

Nicolas II de Russie

NOTES

Sarajevo June 28, 1914

Nicholas II supports the Serbs who murdered the heir to the empire Austria Hungary

- 600 million soldiers
- 10 million military deaths
- 9 million civilian deaths
- 20 million wounded (disabled, gassed, amputees, blind, shell-shocked ...)

TRIPLE ENTENTE 1904

Entente Cordiale (FR-UK) 1830 - 1870 - 1904

France-Russia agreement 1892

TRIPLICE 1882

German Empire + Austro-Hungarian Empire + Italy (Italy, however, remains neutral at the beginning of the war, then enters into conflict with the Austro-Hungarian empire. Italy will lose 650,000 men)



Guillaume II et Georges V
Deux cousins, petits-fils de la reine Victoria.

Nicholas II was the son of Alexander III and Mary Fedorovna, daughter of Christian IX King of Denmark who was the great-grandson of George II of England

Queen Victoria was a great-granddaughter of George II of England.

Nicholas II was married to Princess Alix of Hesse and Rhine, grand-daughter of Queen Victoria, first cousin of William II of Germany and George V of England.

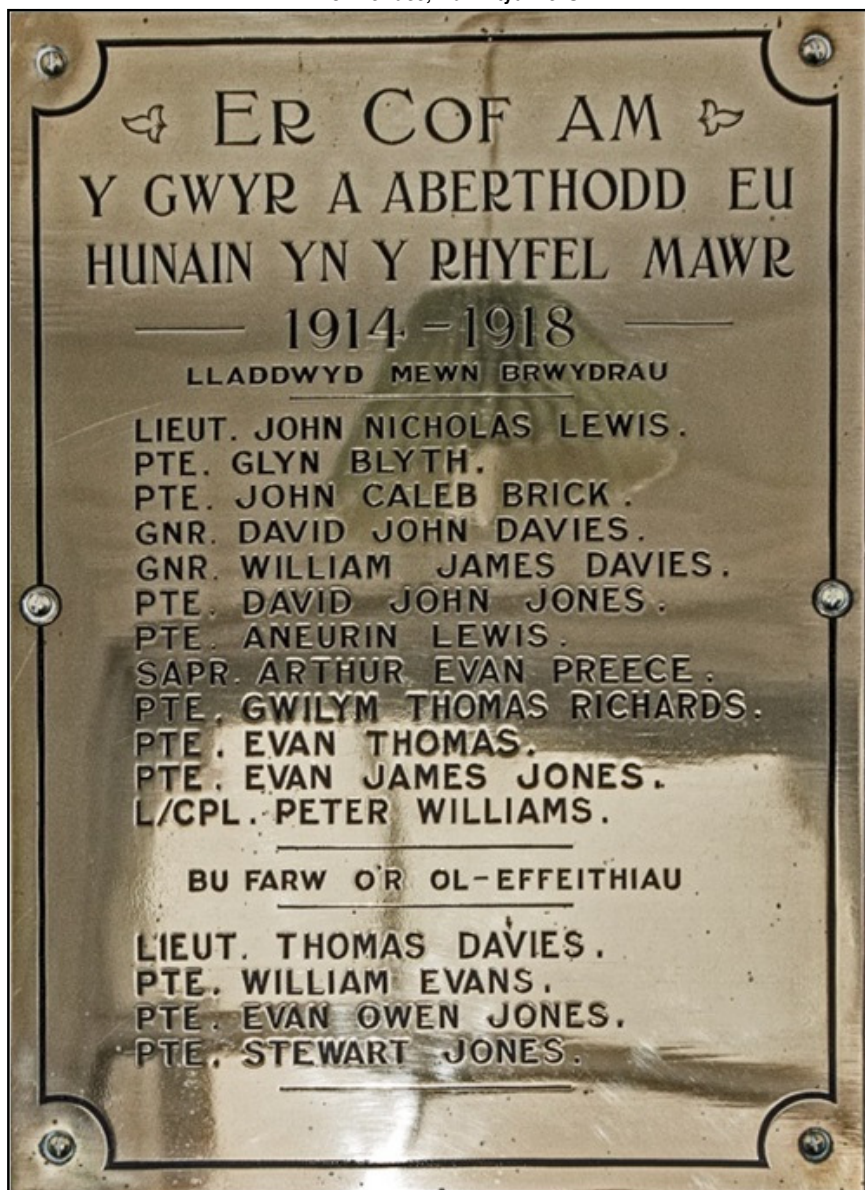
Nicholas II (Nicolai Alexandrovich Romanov), Alix and their five children were murdered on July 17, 1918 by order of Lenin.

THE ALLIANCES



The 'Memorial' of Llanwrtyd

Photography of the plaque inside the British Legion War Memorial Institute
Irfon Terrace, Llanwrtyd Wells.



« en mémoire de ceux qui se sont sacrifiés dans la grande guerre »
« in memory of the Gower who sacrificed themselves in the great war »



8 August /Août 1915



Lieut. John Nicholas LEWIS

- Lewis, John Nicholas, Lieutenant. Died 08/08/1915 aged 22. Welsh Regiment. Helles Memorial. Son of Mrs Mary Lewis of Ffynnonau. Educated at Llanwrtyd Council School and St John's College, Oxford.

LLANWRTYD OFFICER WOUNDED AND MISSING.



Photo by) [H. Mack, Llanwrtyd Wells.

Lieut. Jack N. Lewis,

8th Welsh Regt., reported wounded and missing at the Dardanelles, is the second son of Mrs M. Lewis, Ffynnonau, Llanwrtyd Wells, and nephew of V. T. Rees, Penfro, and Dr. J. Arthur late of Llanwrtyd.

8

From the post office, which was situated where the statue of Red Kite now stands near the bridge over the Afon Irfon, the town sergeant turns the telegram in his trembling hands.

In two hundred yards, at Victoria Road, he goes to Mary Lewis: Jack, her son, has died in the costly battle of the Dardanelles.

He will be the first of twelve children in Llanwrtyd to be a victim of the Great War.



Ffynnonau (Les Sources) was used as a small hospital during this war

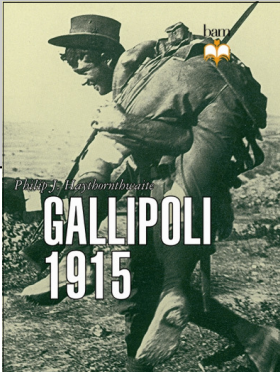
John was born in Islington (London) in 1893, to Mary and Jonah LEWIS. He had three brothers James, Arthur, and Cyril and a sister, Annie. Later the family moved to Fynnonau in Victoria Road, Llanwrtyd Wells.

Fynnonau was once used as a small hospital. Jonah, the father, died around 1913, and did not know of the death of his son. John was educated in Llandoverly (20 km south of Llanwrtyd) from 1903 to 1905.

He enlisted in the army in 1914 in the 8th Welsh Regiment (Welch Regiment)

John's brother, Arthur T. LEWIS Second Lieutenant also served in the forces but survived the war. Commemorative plaques can be found at St James Church and at the War Memorial Institute in Llanwrtyd.

The Battle of the Dardanelles, also called the Battle of Gallipoli, was a campaign of the First World War that took place on the Gallipoli peninsula (Gelibolu in modern Turkey) in the Ottoman Empire between 17 February 1915 and 9 January 1916. The peninsula forms the northern bank of the Dardanelles, a strait that provided a vital sea route to the Russian Empire, one of the Allied powers during the war. The control of the straits (Bosphorus, Dardanelles) was essential with the aim of capturing the Ottoman capital of Constantinople (modern Istanbul) and to be able to supply the troops on the spot with stores and ammunition.



John Nicholas LEWIS's awards



Star Medal



Victory Medal



British War Medal

John and his battalion sailed from Lemnos to arrive on August 6, 1915 at Gaba Tepe, (renamed later as Anzac Cove), Gallipoli. From here they walked to Chailak Dere.

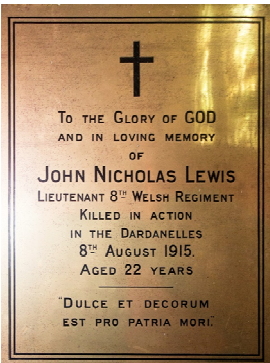
On August 8, they attempted to take the heights of Chunuk Bair. Some men from the 8th Welsh Battalion were part of a troop that reached and held the summit for a few hours. However, crossing the Apex Ridge, the battalion was separated. John was in charge of the bomber section, which reached the other side successfully even though under the fire from Ottoman bullets.



John was hit on the arm, chest and leg by rifle and machine gun bullets. He fell into a gully, his second ran to help him but found him severely wounded. As he was applying a bandage, he asked for a match to light his cigarette and handed his pocket watch to his corporal.

When asked if there was anything else that could be done for him, he said, "No, guys, I'm done, but continue, do your homework, because there's one up there that will take care of us".

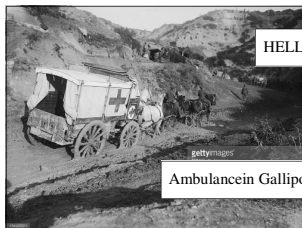
A few days later, Lieutenant Wynne Jones and a squad of stretcher-bearers went in search of John, but were unable to reach the ravine due to a dense fire. His body was never found. He was 22 years old.



The realities of war

The months pass and the spirits of the troops becomes disconsolate. Living conditions become unsustainable under overwhelming heat. The lack of food and care is heavily felt and there is a proliferation of rats, flies and diseases such as dysentery and typhus.

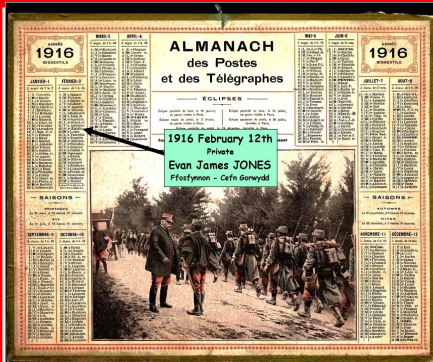
John is commemorated at the Helles Memorial in Gallipoli, Turkey.



Ambulance in Gallipoli



HELLES Memorial - Turkey



12 February/Février 1916



Pte. Evan James JONES

- Jones, Evan James, Private 39775. Died at Grantham Red Cross Hospital on 12/02/1916 aged 19. Welsh Regiment, later transferred to Machine Gun Corps. Buried Cefn Gorwydd (Gosen) Calvinistic Methodist Chapelyard. Lived at Ffosyfynon. Worked for William Williams of Myrtle House.



'Welch Regiment'

Six months of anguish follow for the families and then a second telegram arrives. The sergeant takes the road towards Cefn Gorwydd, passing by the Dolwen Fields. Seeing him enter the farmyard at Ffosyfynon, Mary Ann and her parents Mary and Evan immediately understand that they will never see Evan again, their son and grandson.

Aged 19, he does not survive his injuries.

From the Grantham Red Cross Hospital, his young body was brought back to the Chapel graveyard of Cefn Gorwydd, a hamlet on the road from Llanwrtyd to Llangammarch Wells.

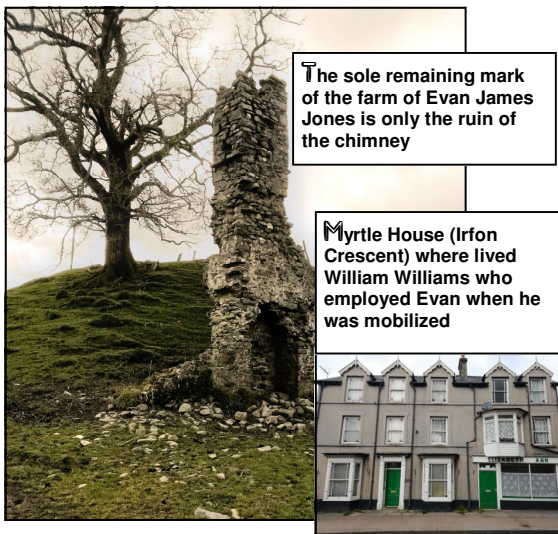
Evan was born in 1898 in Ffosyfynon, Llanwrtyd Wells and lived there with his mother Mary Ann JONES and his grandparents Mary and Evan JONES.

He worked for William WILLIAMS of Myrtle House, Llanwrtyd Wells.

He joined the 3rd battalion of the Welsh regiment, number 39775, and was later transferred to the battalion of the gunners.

He died at Grantham Red Cross Hospital on February 12, 1916 at the age of 19 years of pneumonia.

He is buried at Cefn Gorwydd Chapel graveyard.





The sole remaining mark of the farm of Evan James Jones is only the ruin of the chimney

Myrtle House (Irfon Crescent) where lived William Williams who employed Evan when he was mobilized



In Memory of
Private
Evan James Jones
19775, 3rd Bn., Welsh Regiment who died on 12 February 1916

Remembered with Honour
Cefn Gorwydd (Gorse) Calvinistic Methodist Chapelyard

Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Evan James JONES - left, 2nd row
photo given to LDHAC by the family JONES
(Mrs Betti Jones, daughter of Evan James)



The MACHINE GUN CORPS consisted of three branches.
Infantry: The Machine Gun Brigade sections were regrouped in 1917 into specialised battalions assigned to each Machine Gun Battalion regiment.
The Cavalry: Motorised units made up of squadrons. The batteries were mounted on motorcycles, light armoured vehicles and automobiles (Rolls Royce, Ford T)
The Heavy Section: went into action in the Battle of the Somme (1916) and in 1917 became the Royal Tank Regiment.



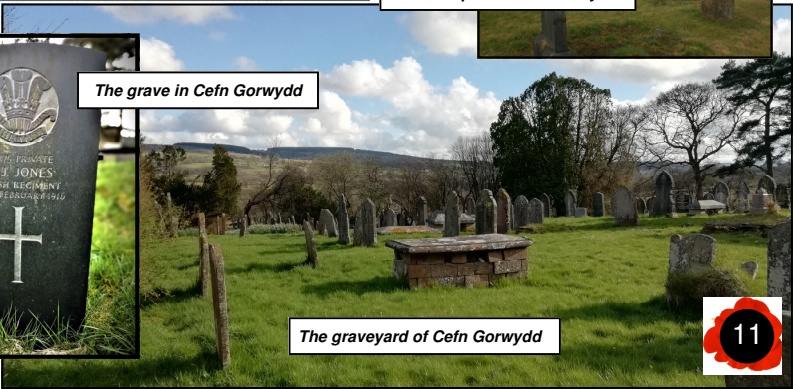
The Machine Gun Corps was based in Grantham (North East England) where the Red Cross had established the hospital where Evan died from his injuries.



The Chapel of Cefn Gorwydd



The grave in Cefn Gorwydd



The graveyard of Cefn Gorwydd



L/Cpl. Peter Roderick WILLIAMS

- Williams, Peter Roderick, Lance Corporal 22895. Died 10/07/1916 aged 23. Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried Flatiron Copse Cemetery. Son of Roderick and Sarah Williams.



Monday, July 10 - At 10 Irfon Terrace, 200m from the post office at the time near the bridge, where is currently the sculpture of Red Kite, there was the hair salon of Sarah and Roderick. The town police sergeant sadly climbs the street to place in Roderick's father's hands the telegram that all the families of Llanwrtyd fear: Peter is gone. He was swept away in the disastrous 'Battle of the Somme'. He will not illuminate his 21 year old family salon where he worked.

Peter was born in 1895 and lived at 10 Irfon Terrace. His siblings were Minnie, John Percy, Elisabeth Mary and Elsie.





According to the 1911 census, he was a hairdresser, as was his father, who had been widowed for 8 years. He was mobilized in the 15th Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He attained the rank of corporal. He was killed in action on the Western Front (Battle of the Somme). His body rests at Flatiron Copse Cemetery of Mametz, in the Somme. Several military honors were awarded to him (p.13)



Peter had connections to the family of the current milkman, Huw DAVIES, who delivers milk to houses in Llanwrtyd.

In Memory of
Lance Corporal
Peter Roderick Williams
22895, "D" Coy 16th Bn, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, who died on 10 July 1916 Age 23
Son of Frederick and Sarah Williams, of Llanfihyd Wells, Wales.
Remembered with Honour
Flintton Copse Cemetery, Mametz

Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The monument to the 38th British Division, the Welsh Division, faces the southern edge of Mametz Wood. It represents a red dragon, symbol of Wales, tearing barbed wire.



The Mametz Wood was captured by the Welsh Division on July 12, 1916 after eight days of fighting and heavy losses (25% of the division).

It was on the first day of this offensive that Peter Roderick fell.

For most soldiers, it was their baptism of fire: 4,000 men were put out of action including 1,200 killed. Having lost a quarter of its strength, the 38th Welsh Division was relieved after a week and did not participate in a major offensive until July 31, 1917.



Star Medal



Victory Medal



British War Medal

Conceived in December 1915, by Joffre, commander-in-chief of the French armies, the Somme offensive had to be amended because of the outbreak of the battle of Verdun on February 21, 1916. Foch was charged by Joffre with its implementation. The French, who were to supply the main effort, exhausted by the battle of Verdun, had to entrust it to the British.



This was the first joint Franco-British offensive of the Great War.

The British forces launched their first major operation, and attempted with the French troops to break through the fortified German lines on a 45 km north-south line near the Somme, in a triangle between the towns of Albert on the British side, Péronne and Bapaume on the German side.

This was one of the deadliest battles in history with some 1,060,000 casualties (excluding civilian casualties), among the belligerents, including about 442,000 dead or missing.

The first day of this battle, July 1, 1916, was, for the British army, a real disaster, with 58,000 soldiers put out of action, of which 19,240 died. The battle ended on November 18, 1916. The result was, in military terms, unconvincing. The territorial gains for the Allies were very modest, a dozen kilometers to the east at most, the front was not pierced





Pte. John Caleb BRICK

• Brick, John Caleb, Private 14519. Died 14/07/1916 aged 32. King's Shropshire Light Infantry. Thiepval Memorial. Son of Aaron and Margaret Brick of Providence Place.



Kings Shropshire Light Infantry

Last Monday, the town police sergeant announced the death of Peter the hairdresser.

Four days later on Friday 14 July, another horror. One of those disastrous telegrams arrived again at the post office. The town police Sergeant crosses the bridge, runs along the river in Irfon Crescent, knocks on the door of Providence House, the wrong name. Margaret and Aaron receive the blow to the heart: the telegram is for them ... it's John Caleb, their son!

The same week, the disastrous Battle of the Somme killed, for the second time, a child from Llanwrtyd.



Cae Redhyn

John was born in 1884. In 1891, the family lived in Cae Rhedyn (Llanwrtyd). John had 5 brothers and sisters: Elisabeth, Mary, Edward, Ann and William.

In 1901, he worked as a cowherd at Erwbelli, home of Aneurin LEWIS (see p.30). The parents moved to Sugar Loaf House (neighbouring town of Cynhordy).

In 1911 he was registered with the REES family in Ammanford, where he worked at the mine (Photo).

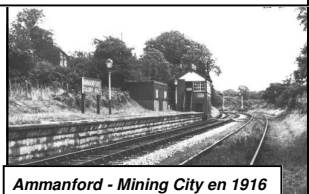
John was mobilized in the 7th Kings Shropshire Light Infantry Battalion. He died at the Battle of the Somme.

His name is on the THIEPVAL Memorial.

Providence House residence of John's parents



Sugarloaf Cottages no longer exist. The few ruins are lost in the grasses.



Ammanford - Mining City en 1916

In Memory of
Private
John Caleb Brick

14519, 7th Bn., King's Shropshire Light Infantry who died on 14 July 1916 Age 32

Son of Aaron and Margaret Brick, of Providence Place, Llarnwyd Wells, Breconshire.

Remembered with Honour
Thiepval Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



The MEMORIAL and The NECROPOLE

The memorial is dedicated to the missing of the Somme and "to the French and British armies". The Anglo-French military cemetery of Thiepval is located just behind the memorial to the missing. It contains the graves of three hundred Commonwealth soldiers and three hundred French soldiers (253 unknown).



Star Medal



Victory Medal

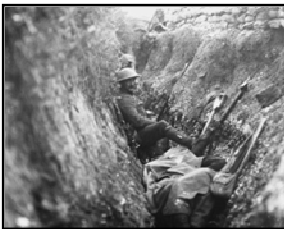


British War Medal

At 7.30 am on July 1, the British infantrymen come out of the trenches and, arranged in line, undertake to cross the no man's land at a slow and steady pace. They are quickly exposed to the unleashing of German machine guns and rifles. The German artillery, guided with precision, undertakes to strike the regrouping trenches where the soldiers are massed who wait to mount the assault.

The losses are huge

During the first day of the offensive, the British seized enemy lines in several points. But they were exposed to enemy artillery, while German reinforcements flocked in. Counter-attacks force the British to withdraw from certain sectors conquered during the previous days. The initial results of the offensive were better in the southern part of the British front, thanks to the effectiveness of the French attack launched south of the Somme. But here too, staaemate occurred quickly.



"On the evening of July 1, 1916, it is clear that the attack is a complete disaster for the British army: 19,240 men (including nearly 1,000 officers) were killed in twelve hours.

This is one of the most tragic days in the history of the nation.

The impact is particularly strong on UK society, as the "New Army" was organized on the basis of communities, geographical (*) or professional, which lost, in a few hours, a significant part of their youth. "

*Yves LE MANER - Director of La Coupole,
Centre of History and Memory of Nord-Pas-de-Calais*



(*) of which Welsh



10 September /Septembre 1916



Pte. Evan THOMAS

- Thomas, Evan, Private 713. Died 10/09/1916. Welsh Guards. Thiepval Memorial. Lived at Llwynheilog.



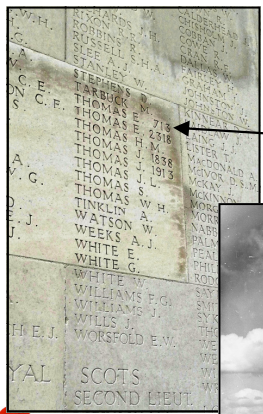
Insigne des
Welch Guards

Of Evan THOMAS, we know little. He was from Llwynheilog. Perhaps he was a seasonal worker employed on a farm?

The battle of the Somme prevailed on September 10, 1916. The French troops, having been weakened by the Battle of Verdun, appealed to the British reinforcements to lead the offensive of the Somme. This was the most lethal episode of this appalling war in which a quarter of the engaged troops died.

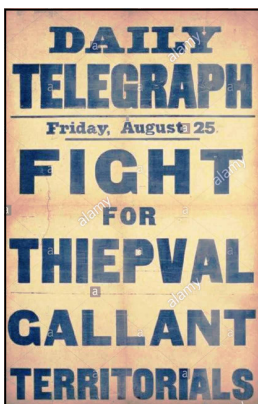
Evan's body is interred at the Thiepval Memorial, the same cemetery where one other Llanwrtyd boys, John Caleb BRICK, was buried two months earlier (see page 14).

THIEPVAL MEMORIAL



Evan THOMAS





The Battle of Thiepval Ridge took place from September 25th to 28th 1916, during the Battle of the Somme.

This was the first offensive of the British reserve army. This offensive is triggered 24 hours after the attack of the 4th British Army on Morval and was designed to take advantage of the disorganisation of the German troops. The battle took place on a front stretching east from Courcellette near the Albert-Bapaume road to Thiepval and the Schwaben redoubt (Feste Schwaben) to the west. This fortified point dominates the German defences farther north in the Anchor Valley.



The Thiepval Ridge was heavily fortified, the British could not take this ridge on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.



During this new attempt towards the end of September 1916, the German defenders fought with great determination.

British troops find it increasingly difficult to coordinate infantry and artillery action after September 26th due to the confused nature of fighting in labyrinths of the trenches, shell craters or case-mates (fortified gun emplacements).

The British goal of taking the peak is not achieved. It was not until the reorganisation of the army reserve and Battle of the Ancre Heights (1st October – 11th November 1916 that the ridge of Thiepval was finally conquered.

The hill - as well as the village itself and the now defunct castle - was with Hamel one of the pillars of German defences on the northern part of the British sector. The site was indeed a natural fortress protected at its base by the marshes of Ancre.

'Schwaben Redoubt' had deep dugouts for accommodation with several entrances each, a battalion command post, first aid post, signalling station and strong points, with three heavy machine-guns and four light machine-guns.

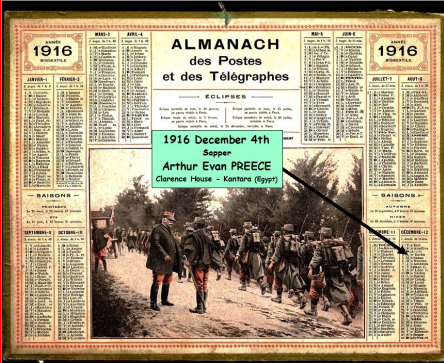


Thiepval was, on July 1, 1916, one of the main battlefields of the British left wing.

Having lost 58,000 soldiers (including 20,000 killed), Great Britain suffered the greatest military tragedy in its history.

The fighting for the capture of Thiepval, begun on July 1st 1916, ends on September 26th 1916.

Evan died on September 10th.



4 Décembre/Décembre 1916

Sapr. Arthur Evan PREECE

- Preece, Arthur Evan, Sapper 88473. Died 04/12/1916 aged 37. Royal Engineers. Buried Kantara War Memorial Cemetery. Husband of Alice Preece of Clarence House. Worked as a railway platelayer. Taught in the Sunday school at St James' Church, Llanwrtyd.

SAPPER E. PREECE.
Memorial Service at Llanwrtyd Wells.



On Sunday evening last a service was held at the church of St. James's, Llanwrtyd Wells, to the memory of Sapper Arthur E. Preece, Cross House, Llanwrtyd Wells, who was killed in Egypt on the 4th inst.

The end of the year 1916 will see for the first time the death of a father. Because of his skills Arthur Evan PREECE was assigned as a sapper to the construction of a railway near the Suez Canal. In the area, fighting was raging.

His body rests in KANTARA military cemetery 50km south of Port Said far from his wife Alice DAVIES and his 4 children.

Arthur was born in 1879 in Knighton to Harriet Maria JONES and Thomas PREECE. The family lived at School Terrace. Arthur moved to Llandrindod Wells where he lived at Cambrian Terrace. There he met Alice DAVIES who had been previously married and lived in Cross House, Llanwrtyd.



They were married on October 8th 1907 and had three children, Thomas Charles, Eileen and Megan Leuven. Alice's son from her previous marriage lived with the family.



In April 1911, they lived at 3 Riverside Cottages, but returned later to Cross House. Arthur was a track setter and also gave classes on Sundays at St. James Church.

He was killed in Egypt in action on December 4th 1916.

In Memory of
Sapper
Arthur Evan Preece

88473, 115th Railway Coy., Royal Engineers who died on 04 December 1916 Age 37

Husband of Alice Preece, of Clarence House, Llanerfyl, Wrexhamshire

Remembered with Honour
Kantara War Memorial Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

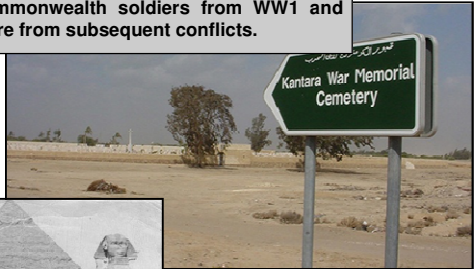
In Kantara were the supply depots of the British, Australian and New Zealand forces engaged in the Suez and Sinai campaigns.

At the beginning of January 1916, the construction of a new railroad in the city of Rumani was started, going eastwards through Sinai near the border with the Ottoman Empire. On the same route, a water pipeline was built by the Regiment of the Royal Engineers.

In February, a new cemetery was built near the city, to cope with the many victims of fighting with the Ottoman forces.

After the Armistice, the cemetery was more than doubled in size when graves were brought in from other cemeteries and desert battlefields, notably those at Rumani, Qatia, El Arish and Rafa.

The cemetery contains the graves of 1562 Commonwealth soldiers from WW1 and more from subsequent conflicts.



Star Medal



Victory Medal



British War Medal



Sapper 88473 Arthur Evan Preece is buried at Kantara War Memorial Cemetery, located on the eastern side of the Suez Canal. Tomb number B136.

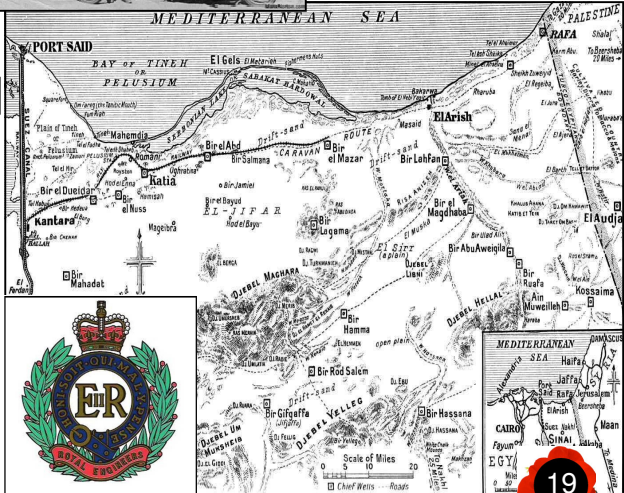
ROYAL ENGINEERS
HEAD QUARTERS
12th NORTH MIDLAND FIELD COMPANY R.E.
AND
NORTH MIDLAND DIVISIONAL TELEGRAPH COMPANY

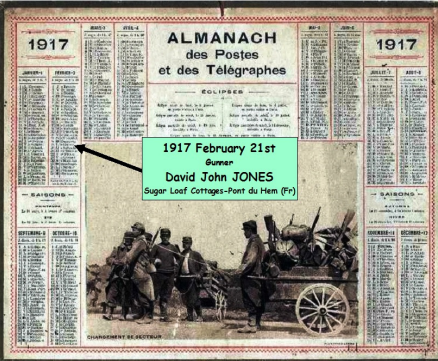
SMETHWICK, NORTON, CANNOCK CHASE, AND SHELTON

THE FOLLOWING ARE ELIGIBLE TO JOIN,
(1) N.C.O.s and Men of Years 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

JOIN THE CREWS OF SOLDIER CRAFTSMEN
The Best Paid MEN IN THE SERVICE.

Sergeant, 3s. 3d., Corporal, 2s. 6d., & Sapper, 1s. 10d., per day
These rates of pay and allowances are paid during training.





21 February /Février 1917



Pte. David John JONES

- Jones, David John, Private 18809. Died 21/02/1917 aged 37. Auckland Regiment. Buried Pont-du-Hem Military Cemetery. Son of David and Margaret Jones of Sugar Loaf Cottages.



Auckland Regiment

The new year does not give a break from bad news. As early as February 1917, the cursed telegraph crackled again. The Sergeant goes to deliver his dark message to Sugar Loaf Cottage, 8 km south on the Llandovery Road.

Margaret and David will learn what they fear most, David will not see his home again. For Ann, Mary and Daniel will remain only the memory of the big brother.

David was born in 1880 in Cilycwm near Cynhordy and was the eldest child of Margaret and David JONES. The family moved to Sugar Loaf Cottage, Llanwrtyd. His brothers and sisters were Ann, Mary and Daniel.

David joined the 2nd battalion of the Auckland Regiment (NZE), number 18809, and was killed in action in Flanders on February 21st 1917 at the age of 37. He is commemorated at the military cemetery of Pont-Du-Hem at La Gorgue, near Armentieres, in the Nord department (France).



THE WINTER THAT KILLS

Winter has always been a difficult season for the soldiers since the beginning of the war, although bad weather, snow and cold often led to a slowdown in combat activities. But the third winter of war (and especially the months of January and February 1917) remained in everyone's memories as particularly harsh, aggravating the evils of the previous two winters.

In 'Les Poilus' (*) Pierre Miquel writes: "The winter of 1916-1917 is unusually cold. It is not uncommon for the thermometer to go down to -25°C. To save trucks, all body movements are done by foot in this weather and the entire front was affected by sector changes. They managed to winter in their corners skillfully protected from the cold. Here they are exposed to ice and wind under the pretext of "giving them back legs". They march through stages of fifteen, twenty, twenty-five kilometres. When they arrive at the cantonment exercises begin ...

The witnesses who were at the front all mentioned the cold winter of 1917, frozen food, bread and especially wine.

20

(*) "Les Poilus" means 'hairy'. It is an appellation of these soldiers, from a military slang, probably because the hair meant virility and courage.

In Memory of
Private
David John Jones

18909, 2nd Bn., Auckland Regiment, N.Z.E.F. who died on 21 February 1917 Age 37
Son of David and Margaret Jones, of Sugar Loaf Cottage, Llanwrtyd Wells, Breconshire, Wales.

Remembered with Honour
Pont-Du-Hem Military Cemetery, La Gorgue



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Pont-du-Hem (La Gorgue)

The cemetery was started in an apple orchard in 1915. It contains 1583 burials of the United Kingdom, also the graves of soldiers of the armies of the British Empire including those of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Fiji, Tonga etc)



Hindu soldiers

Burials of Portuguese soldiers also engaged in the conflict are in the neighbouring cemetery of Richebourg l'Avoué.

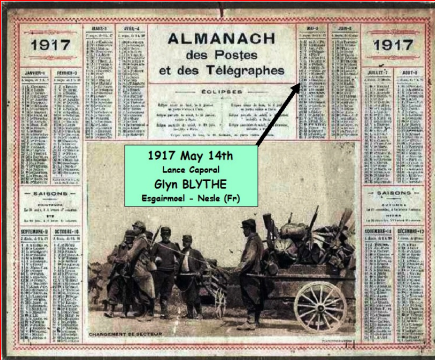


The Allied offensive in the northern mining country was also marked by the destruction of coal mines to prevent the Germans using coal to strengthen their production.

The town hall of La Gorgue



German prisoner



14 May / Mai 1917

Pte. Glyn BLYTHE

- Blyth, Glyn, Private (Lance Corporal in war graves records) 3/8096. Died 14/05/1917. Dorsetshire Regiment. Buried Nesle Communal Cemetery. Son of gamekeeper G Blyth of Esgairmoel. Previously wounded at Verdun in 1916.



Dorsetshire Regiment

At Esgairmoel Ganol, at the exit of Llanwrtyd going towards Cefn Gorwydd, George the father and Eliza his second wife have three sons engaged at the front. The arrival of the sergeant of the town puts an icy chill of terror of their hearts. It was to be expected. Which son? Glyn, Harold or Lonsdale? The death of Glyn will reinforce the fear for the two other brothers, an anxiety that will only fade at their return from war.

Glyn was born in 1896 in Llanwrtyd Wells to Sarah (from Llangammarch Wells) and George BLYTHE (from Llanedy, Montgomeryshire). According to the 1901 census, his father was Chief Ranger in a private property. The family lived in Esgairmoel Ganol, Llanwrtyd Wells.

In 1901, Glyn had six siblings named Georges, Maud, Harold, James and the twins, Lonsdale and Irfon.

At the 1911 census, George Senior was declared widowed for 7 years, after another son Arthur was born. He married again to Eliza GUILLARD from Geneva, Switzerland, in 1910.

She and her son Harry GUILLARD moved in with the family, George, Maud, Harold and James having left the family home.

Nesle - the Place - March 18, 1917
German retreat on the Hindenburg line
Entry of the British Franco Cavalry

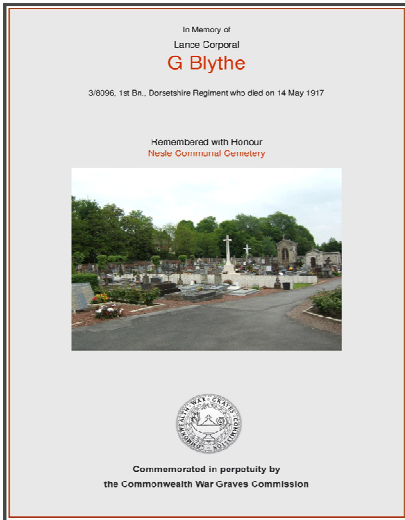


Esgair Moel Ganol

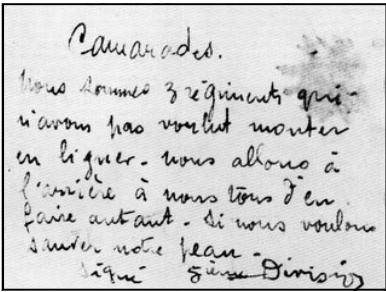
Glyn was in the 1st battalion of the Dorsetshire regiment, number 3/8096, holding the rank of corporal.

He died in combat in Flanders on May 14th 1917, having been wounded in Verdun in 1916. His grave is in the Nesle Cemetery in the Somme Department, France. Two of his brothers, Harold and Lonsdale also served during the war and survived.





May 1917 - THE MUTINIES In each of the armies mutinies broke out. Two-thirds of the French units were affected to varying degrees by such acts of rebellion against this "butchery" whose soldiers on the front, far from all propaganda, no longer understood the meaning. The paroxysm of these movements took place in April 1917.



Many mutineers or protesters were seasoned soldiers who had proven their worth in combat. They require less a cessation of the war, which would make little sense insofar as the Germans have no intention of withdrawing, than a command more concerned with the lives of the soldiers and more attentive to the real conditions of the war and modern combat.

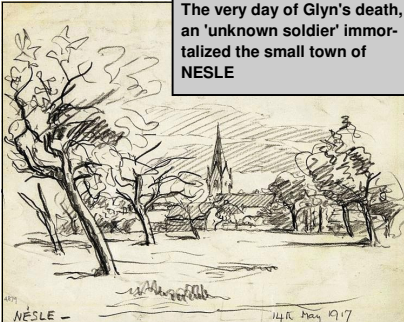
There were approximately 3,500 convictions. Of these, 1381 convictions were to forced labour or long prison sentences and 554 were death sentences: 49 were executed and of these, 26 were for acts of collective rebellion committed in June or July 1917.

In 1917 the number often put forward when talking about those shot for the example remains relatively low compared to the number of shot in the last months of 1914 (nearly 200) or the year 1915 (about 260). This can be explained by the stay of execution granted by President Pointcaré, who remits 90% to 95% of the cases submitted to him.

As an aggravating factor, the combatants of the front discover during their time away from front line combat, the "cushy", the people provided with jobs putting them safe from the service on the front. The increase in contacts and transits via Paris shows a Parisian population caring little about their fate. They broaden this impression of disdain to the entire political class as well as to the High Command.

Finally, the fact that the units are massed in a small space in order to execute the Nivelle offensive favours the rapid spread of this feeling of exasperation between different regiments.

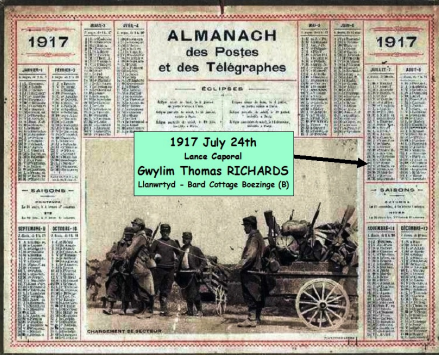
The very day of Glyn's death, an 'unknown soldier' immortalized the small town of NESLE



After the massacres of Craonne and the hard fights of the Chemin des Dames, General Nivelle, nicknamed "the butcher" had to withdraw and was replaced by Petain. The day after Glyn's death, Nivelle was "sacked."

More than 200,000 dead!
Then ... in 1924, he died in his bed decorated with the Military Medal and raised as Grand Croix of the Legion of Honor.

NESLE - 1917, two thirds of the city is destroyed. Reconstruction began in late 1917 with the help of the United States Red Cross. The city was decorated with the 1914-1918 War Cross, October 27th 1920.



24 July / Juillet 1917



Pte. Gwylim Thomas RICHARDS

- Richards, Gwylim Thomas. Probably: Richards, William Thomas, Corporal 22259. Died 24/07/1917. Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried Bard Cottage Cemetery. Born in Llanwrtyd Wells.



Photo by H. Mack Llanwrtyd.

CORPORAL GWILYM RICHARDS,

Royal Welsh Fusiliers, killed in action by a shell on the night of the 24th July, was aged 31 and the youngest son of Mr and Mrs Edward Richards, Wellington House, Llanwrtyd Wells, with whom great sympathy is expressed. He spent a year and nine months at the front, during which time he had been home once on leave, having been twice wounded. His platoon officer, in a letter to his father regarding the sad event, spoke in glowing terms of the devotion to duty of this son of Llanwrtyd.



24

Royal Welsh Fusiliers

While the Royal Welsh Fusiliers regiment was moving towards Ypres, Belgium, for what was supposed to be the 'Battle of Passchendaele', one of the deadliest of the war, Gwylim's battalion was captured by shelling.

On the 24th of July, on Llanwrtyd's grisly death list, a ninth name was inscribed. Telegram - the Sergeant of the town - the sad ceremonial was repeated.

In Station Road, just 300 meters from the post office, the couple Edward and Kate Richards and their five children know that they will not see the youngest (even at 31 years old we are the 'little one') who, having been away for 21 months, had only once returned on leave and had been wounded twice.



Wellington House

Gwylim was born in 1887 according to the 1891 census at Clawddmadog, Llanwrtyd.

His parents were Edward and Keate (or Kate) RICHARDS.

Gwylim was the youngest of six children having one older brother and four older sisters. The family lived at Wellington House, Station Road, Llanwrtyd Wells.

He joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and was killed in action on the night of July 24th 1918 by a shell. He was 31 years old.



In the newspapers, it was written: "He spent a year and nine months on the front, returned home after being wounded twice." In sending a letter to his father to report the sad event, his platoon leader praised the glorious devotion to the duty of a non-commissioned officer.



In 1917, in front of the advance of the Germans and the allied counter-offensives, the village of Passchendaele was evacuated by its inhabitants who found refuge in the South of France.

It was completely razed to the ground during the Battle of Passchendaele (the name used by the British), the Battle of Ypres (Yperenschlacht for the Dutch-speaking Belgians), the Battle of Flanders (Flanderschlacht for the Germans), from July to November 1917.

It was one of the most lethal battles of the First World War.

The conditions were atrocious. The intensive bombardment destroyed the drainage systems and the huge battlefield was transformed into a quagmire, augmented by continual rains. British, New Zealand, Australian and especially Canadian troops paid a heavy price.

The soldiers sliding in the mud were drowning in the shell holes, under the weight of their bags weighing over 100 pounds, without any hope of being saved.



ATTAQUES PAR GAZ

Un danger menaçant par son caractère d'être très vite absorbé, le gaz toxique se transformant par le contact avec l'air en un danger permanent et qui s'aggrave au fur et à mesure.

Il est appelé aux conditions que l'absorption des personnes exposées est **immédiate** et fait le danger.

A. PRÉCAUTIONS ESSENTIELLES :

B. — CONDUITE PRATIQUE EN CAS D'ATTAQUE TOXIQUE
L. VAGUE
CE QU'IL FAUT FAIRE :

CE QU'IL NE FAUT PAS FAIRE :

PRÉCAUTIONS GÉNÉRALES :

III. — MANIÈRE D'APPLIQUER le MASQUE

TH

Mustard gas is a cytotoxic and vesicant chemical compound that has the ability to form large blisters on exposed skin. In its pure form and at room temperature, it is a colourless and odourless viscous liquid that causes, after a certain time (from a few minutes to a few hours), blisters on the skin. It also attacks the eyes and lungs.

It was particularly used as a chemical weapon during World War I to inflict severe chemical burns to eyes, skin and mucous membranes, including through clothing and through the natural rubber of boots and masks, and again during several colonial conflicts, then, more recently, during the Iran-Iraq war.

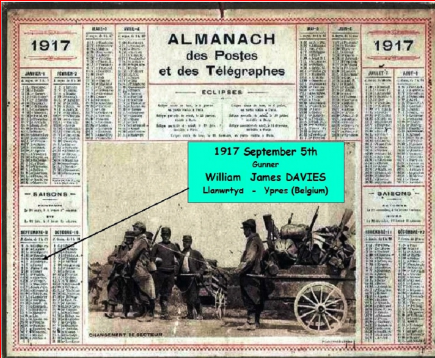
Its name comes from the fact that an impure form of this gas had an odour that resembled that of mustard, garlic or horseradish. It is also sometimes called Yperite (derived from the name of the city of Ypres (leper) in Belgium where it was used for the first time in combat in September 1917.

It can be deadly but its primary function is to be very strongly incapacitating. It is estimated that about 4% of deaths were caused by gas.

Testimony of a nurse



"I hope that people who talk about continuing this war at any price can see the soldiers suffering from mustard gas. Large yellowish blisters, eyes closed with sticky eyelids and glued together, fighting for every breath, whispering that their throat was closing and they knew they were going to suffocate."



5 September/Septembre 1917



Gnr. William James DAVIES

Belgium: West-Vlaanderen YPRES TOWN CEMETERY EXTENSION (1)

141181 Gunner JAMES DAVIES 230th Siege Bty. Royal Garrison Artillery

RGA

Royal Garrison Artillery

The war had exhausted the "stock" of young combatants. Everyone was called upon to go up to the front. William James Davies was 32 years old.

It was the Battle of Ypres that took his life. Ypres, where the "mustard gas" called Yperite disfigured, burned, blinded so many (page 34).

The Battle of Ypres will take the lives of three people in Llanwrtyd. Only a month and a half after Gwilym Richards, it is William Davies who loses his life in the horror of this fight.

Because yperite primarily attacks the moist mucous membranes (lungs, lips), moist skin and eyes, making the victims blind, this further complicates their care and care.



26

William died 10 days before David John DAVIES (page 28). They probably fought together, suffered the same horrors, cold, mud, gas ...

The (3rd) battle of Ypres

July 31st - November 10th 1917: the battles of Ypres.

Often known as the Third Battle of Ypres or Passchendaele, the offensive began with encouraging gains, but the bad weather of the summer limited progress.

In August, the offensive was clearly failing in its objectives and getting bogged down. New techniques on both sides led to a cumbersome slow-down in the British movement, which caused many deaths on both sides.

October's bad weather made the battlefield an impossible quagmire.



Dog wearing a gas mask

During WW1 1914-18, more than 50,000 dogs served in the military. They were used as watch dogs, guard dogs, mercy dogs who performed one of the most dangerous tasks on the battlefield - finding and assisting the wounded in the no-man's land between the trenches, mascots, as draft animals to carry files, or by the health services to carry messages about the wounded.

Like horses, the military tried to protect them with masks, they were not used as guinea pigs (see testimony below)

Extract from a letter dated June 11, 1917 from Private Raymond Lefebvre to his wife:

"At 4 o'clock. chores of dogs. This is what is called the chore of leading dogs to the firing range for asphixier shells asphixiants.

So at 4am. we 17 guys go to the kennel look for 34 dogs (2 dogs each). There were 3 very chic especially a spaniel. We drive them by car to the firing range. There we attach them in two trenches 20 m apart. after marking and adjustment by a few strokes. Dogs ready, a dozen motor trucks and cars arrive loaded with officers from the generals to the second lieutenant. When everyone went to 50 and 20 m. in height, the shots begin. Then the 75 begin tweaks. We draw from it about 100.

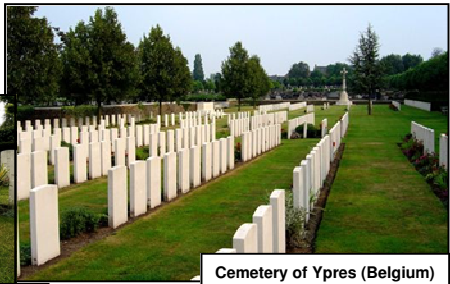
Not all dogs died in part. Another twenty barks. That's when the 155 start firing. A long hissing sound and a loud burst. After 55 shells fired, the shots are finished and not being very far I arrive one of the first. There were five survivors and two who had managed to escape during the shot ... [...] What was amazing was that the generals up to the second lieutenant spoke to us as I speak to you. The gases have a strong smell of Kirsch.



The monument in tribute to the Welsh, with the red dragon, at Langemark near Ypres (Belgium)

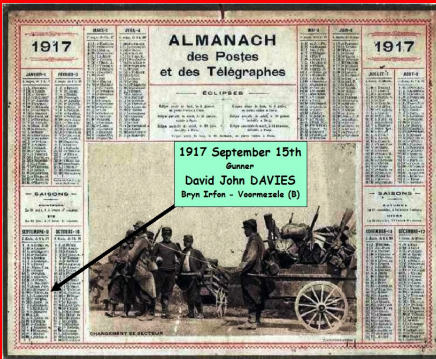


James' grave



Cemetery of Ypres (Belgium)

France produced 7,000 shells per month in 1917 and 88,000 shells per month in 1918



15 September/Septembre 1917



Gnr. David John DAVIES

- Davies, David John, Gunner 166472. Died 15/09/1917 aged 27. Royal Garrison Artillery. Buried Voormezele Enclosures No.1 And No.2. Son of Mr and Mrs JA Davies of Bryn Irfon. Three brothers also served.

RG

Royal Garrison
Artillery

10 days of hell and despair and David joins his comrade William on the macabre list of victims of Llanwrtyd. Again the telegraph clicked in the Llanwrtyd Post Office. Again, the Sergeant went to Station Road to face Margaret and John's pain this time. Three other brothers are still at the front.

David was born on December 26th 1889 to Margaret Ann and John Alfred DAVIES.



Bryn Irfon - Station Road

According to the census, nine children lived in the house with David and his parents. There were Catherine May, Alfred William, Rees Evan, Margaret Ann, Thomas Rufus Isaac, Henry Idris, Hilda Victoria Jane, Sidney Ben James and Daniel Bryngwyn. The family lived in Bryn Irfon, Llanwrtyd Wells where David was a blacksmith.

David joined the 34th Battalion Royal Garrison Artillery as a gunner, serial number 166472 and was killed in service in Flanders on September 15th 1917. Four of David's brothers also served during the war and survived. There was Danny, Sydney, Henry Idris and Alfred William (Alfie). David received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.



He is commemorated at the cemetery of Voormezele, Belgium

David was the uncle of Roger Davies, Cefn Hafre, a member of LDHAC (Heritage & Arts Centre Llanwrtyd). There is a plaque in his memory at the Heritage and Arts Centre.



In Memory of
Gunner
David John Davies
160472, 34th Siege Bty., Royal Garrison Artillery who died on 15 September 1917

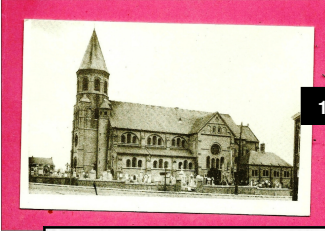
Remembered with Honour
Voormezele Enclosures No. 1 and No. 2

Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Voormezele was a village near the city of Ypres which was held by British forces until the German offensive of April 1918, and then resumed in August of the same year.

The pictures speak for themselves about the violence of the fighting



1914

1917



Voormezele Church - Belgium - 1917

Photo: Lt Lieut. Graham Clarendon-Hyde



Victory Medal



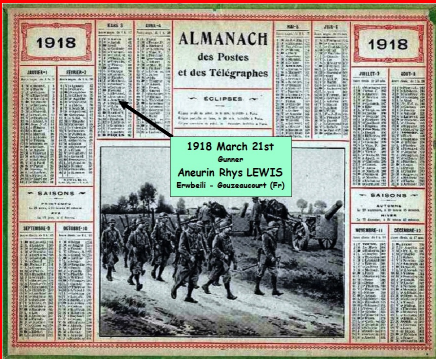
British War Medal



David's grave



Road through the village of Voormezele in ruins to St Eloi in Belgium - End 2017 - Ruins and debris on the road



21 March / Mars 1918



Pte. Aneurin Rhys LEWIS

- Lewis, Aneurin R, Private, Gunner 124040. Died 21/03/1918 aged 20. Royal Garrison Artillery. Buried Gouzeaucourt New British Cemetery. Son of William Rhys Lewis of Fronfelen, Llandovery. Lived at Erwbelli.



RGA

Royal Garrison Artillery

Royal Fusiliers

No one knew it, of course, but death inscribed his last name on the fatal list of the memory of the village, that of Aneurin.

Eight months later, peace would be signed, but at that moment, the conflict continued. The British had called it at the time, the 1914/1915 war. Hopes for peace were dramatically dashed. In March 1918 it was again the terror, the unbearable anguish of the families.



Aneurin was born in 1897 and lived in Erwbelli, Llanwrtyd Wells, with his grandparents, Sarah and John LEWIS. His father was William Rees LEWIS, and nothing is known of his mother. Aneurin joined the Royal Rifles (Royal Garrison Fusiliers) in January 1916 as a private soldier (2nd class). For health reasons, he was demobilised and then assigned again, this time as a 2nd class artilleryman with the Royal Garrison Artillery in October 1916. He joined the 13th Siege Battery. Aneurin was killed in action on the first day of the German offensive of March 21st 1918.

Initially, buried in the battlefield, his body was exhumed and re-interred at the newly created British cemetery Gouzeaucourt, near Cambrai (Nord department in northern France).

Erwbelli is on the road to Llandovery, about 4km south of Llanwrtyd.

In July 1916, the farm was already bereaved by the death of John Caleb who was employed there. (p 14). Aneurin was 20 years old.

THANKFUL VILLAGES

Or 'Blessed Villages' is the name given to the villages that have seen all their children come back alive. Just 53 villages in England and Wales were able to feel 'blessed', or lucky, out of a total of 16,000 communes, including 3 in Wales: Herbradston, Pembrokeshire - 1500 inhabitants, Colwinston near Cardiff (400 inhabitants) and Llanfihangel y Creudyn, about 50 km from Llanwrtyd on the Aberystwyth road.

Some of these villages were doubly lucky because they had no death in the 1914/1918 war or the 1939/1945 war. As a result, they did not have a "memorial" as a whole, but some have erected a commemorative monument or plaque, usually in their church, to celebrate their good fortune.

In France, Thierville in the department of the Eure in Normandy, is small village, unique in France, with a population of about 300; it is also a 'Thankful village', because it is the only settlement in the country which did not lose any citizens during WWI or WWII, neither did it suffer any losses as a result of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 or in the Algerian War 1954-1962. Consequently, there is no monument to the war dead.

30

The village of GOUZEAU COURT (20km east of Bapaume) remembers.

Le 21 mars 1918, le Kaiser et Ludendorff ont décidé de livrer l'ultime bataille "Die Kaiserschlacht" qui devrait voir la défaite des armées française et britannique.

A 9h40, dans un épais brouillard, 76 divisions allemandes vont se lancer à l'assaut des positions tenues par 26 divisions britanniques. Gouzeaucourt est défendu par la 9^e Scottish Division. Les troupes allemandes se ruent sur les portions du front les plus faibles. Le combat fait rage au niveau du bois de Villers Guislain, du pont Caiffa, de la Haute Borne. La brigade Sud Africaine se défend pied à pied et consolide provisoirement sa position à l'Ouest du bois Gaucher.

Le 22 mars 1918, la 47^e London Division, qui tenait le secteur, et la 9^e Scottish Division se replient sur une seconde ligne de résistance. Gouzeaucourt est abandonné, aussitôt traversé par les troupes (Saxe et Hanovre) de la 107^e Division allemande à la poursuite des Britanniques en retraite.

Le 28 septembre 1918. Les I^{er} et III^e armées britanniques reprennent l'attaque en direction de Cambrai. Cette avance au delà de Marcoing permet à la III^e armée d'enlever Villers-Plouich et Gouzeaucourt.

Finalement, les arrière-gardes allemandes, chassées par les 21^e et 33^e Divisions du V^e Corps d'Armée Britannique, abandonnent Gouzeaucourt.



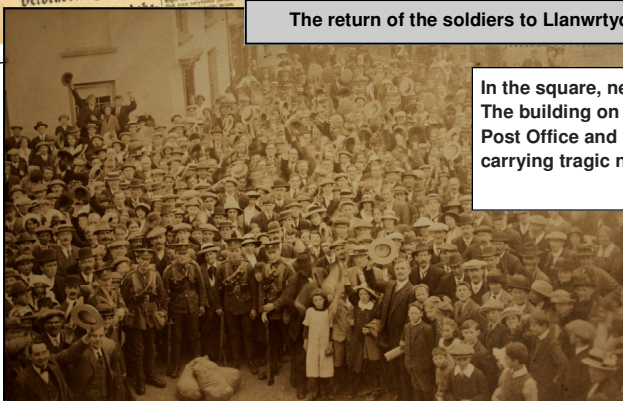
On November 11th of this year, the armistice was signed. Somewhere in a clearing, far from Wales their 'Hen Wlad fy nhadau'. The sergeant was not at the end of his macabre mission. Four soldiers from Llanwrtyd had to join the list of martyrs of the Great War, that one believed, one hoped that was to be the "Der of Ders" ("The War to end all wars").

Four young people who still suffered from their injuries before leaving their lives.

Memorial Plaque
of Llanwrtyd Wells also honors

Lieut Thomas DAVIES
Pte William EVANS
Pte Evan Owen JONES
Pte Stewart JONES

Bu farw o'r ol-effeithiau
Deaths from their wounds



In the square, near the bridge. The building on the right is the Post Office and its telegraph carrying tragic news. (Infos LDHAC)

November 11th.1918 - the ARMISTICE

Rethondes, 5:15, in the heart of the forest of Compiègne, peace is signed.
 After more than four years of fighting and millions of deaths (18,591,701), Germany is defeated.
 France recovers Alsace and the Moselle and seems proud to have washed the affront of 1870.
 But at what cost !



Devastated landscapes, destroyed cities, villages stricken from the map. Families devastated by the loss of a husband, father, brother or son. France has 1,397,800 soldiers who died during the conflict, as well as 300,000 civilians. Added to this are wounded, mutilated and unfortunate broken mouths but also many traumatized psychological.
 On November 11, 1918 at 11am, "La Der des Ders » (the war to end of all wars) ends on the whole front. The sound of the bugles replaces the sound of cannons.

He would have liked to live that too, Private 1st class Augustin TREBUCHON, the last 'poilu' (hairy – WW1 soldier's designation) dead for France, on November 11th at 10h55 ...

Wales has also paid a heavy price.
 35,000 dead of the 700,000 British victims.

In the early 1920's when the French erected our Monuments to the Dead, the Welsh launched memorial operations (Cymru'n cofio): the Welsh National War Memorial in Cardiff and the Welsh Book of Remembrance (Welsh Book of Remembrance).

In the absence of reliable and comprehensive information, a census campaign, supported by women's movements, was launched throughout Wales. However, some families had mixed and hostile feelings about the nature of the memory. Many felt that their relatives had served as "cannon fodder" to governments for a wasteful and costly mess, and refused to have their names used in institutional memorials they perceived as glorifying the war or justifying forced military recruitment.



From these debates emerged the symbols of red and white poppies (see below), favoured respectively by military or pacifist movements for the memory.

The symbolism of the poppy



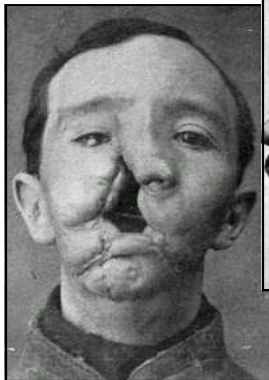
It originates from a poem written by a Canadian military doctor (John McCrae - "In Flanders Fields"). (see last page)

In April 1915, in the midst of the turmoil of the Ypres battles, he lost one of his best friends who was buried in a makeshift grave marked with a simple wooden cross. Wild poppies (red poppies) were beginning to bloom ...

As a counterpoint to this Red Poppy symbol, a 'white poppy' campaign was developed in the 1930's by women's movements and then pacifist movements that wanted to not only commemorate all the victims of the war, including civilian victims, but also to express its rejection of armed conflicts by dissociating itself from commemorations which they see as subtly apologising for military force.

THE GUEULES CASSEES...

The expression "gueules cassees" (broken jaws) designated war survivors wounded in battle, amputees, those with mutilated faces, those blinded, gassed, disfigured in any way.

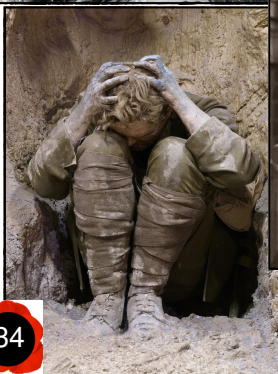


These wounded were men between the ages of 19 and 40. While the reconstruction of the country required a lot of work, their disability limited the available workforce and constituted a financial burden for the payment of pensions by the state in an ageing country that will not regain the total population of 1913 until around 1950



It also refers to men deeply psychologically marked by the conflict, who can not fully regain their place in civilian life or who, for the most serious cases, must be interned for life.

Those suffering incessant tremors called "the shakers", a condition which went as far as rendering the person unable to retain a standing position, nightmare crises of terror at the evocation of a fact or the sight of an object reminiscent of life at the front, also hallucinations and total madness.

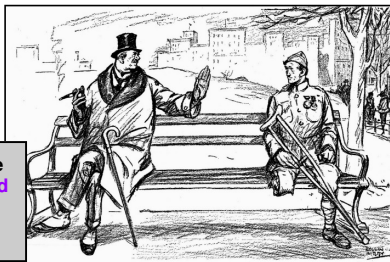


The DEBT



Thanks to a subscription by a raffle, opened at the end of 1925, the first "Maison des Gueules cassées" was inaugurated by the President of the Republic Gaston Doumergue on June 20, 1927.

However, these houses do not only symbolise fraternity uniting the disfigured, but also a kind of exclusion within society, a post-war non-integration.



In the form of an association that never asked for public subsidies, it was launched as a national subscription with a raffle (called "debt") between 1931 and 1933, then was financed from 1935 by the National Lottery (created by the state in light of the success of this association).

... The ROARING TWENTIES

In Paris, during the atrocities on the battlefields (see page 23), the population had not lost the art of having fun. At first the party was celebrated to make fun of the enemy and to give soldiers courage: "he was going to take a good beating which would wash away the affront of 1870 and make us forget the shame of the Dreyfus affair for the French army" said we. The party was then continued, to distract the soldiers on leave. Then, when too many horrors took away from the "Poilus" (hairy, WW1 soldiers' désignation) the desire to laugh, the party continued to console itself.

After the end of the conflict, a new generation dreams of a new world and proclaims "Never again!" We can offer new ideas from a background of music. Coming from America with the Allies, jazz is emerging but also dance, radio and sports, industries making appliances etc., against a background of very strong economic growth.



The positivist Utopia of the nineteenth century and its progressive creed gave way to an unbridled and extravagant individualism forgetful of 'gueules cassées - broken jaws', they became spectators excluded for life from frivolities.

One can then offer the poignant thoughts as to whether the 21.2 million wounded (including 12.8 million among the Allies) did not then suffer a more atrocious fate than the 9.7 million military deaths and the 8.9 million civilian victims.



The Cemeteries - 1
















Glyn BLYTHE
14 Mai 1917



Peter RODERICK WILLIAMS
10 Juillet 1916












The Cemeteries - 2

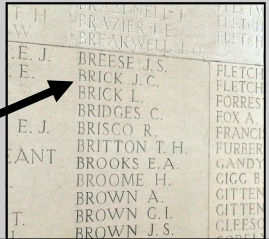
THIEPVAL Memorial (F)

John Caleb BRICK
14 Juillet 1916
RIP

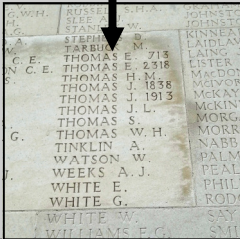
Evan THOMAS
10 Septembre 1916
RIP

John Caleb BRICK

THIEPVAL



Evan THOMAS



124 040 GUNNER
A. R. LEWIS
ROYAL GARRISON ARTILLERY
21ST MARCH 1918 AGE 20

THIEPVAL

GOUZEAUCOURT (Fr)

Aneurin Rhys LEWIS
21 Mars 1918
RIP

PONT du HEM (Fr)

GOUZEAUCOURT (Fr)

David John JONES
21 Février 1917
RIP

18800 PRIVATE
D. JONES
N.Z.A.C. GARRISON
21ST FEBRUARY 1917

The Cemeteries - 3

België

Vlaanderen
Nieuwkerke
Heuvelland

Vlaanderen
50
70
90

Voormezele
Ieper

Voormezele
Enclosure N°s 1 & 2

VOORMEZELE (B)

PONT du HEM (Fr)

David John DAVIES
15 Septembre 1917

YPRES Town Cemetery (B)

VOORMEZELE (B)

Oorlogsgraven van het Gemeinbest
Ypres Town Cemetery
Extension

William James DAVIES

BARD COTTAGE 1915 CEMETERY 1918

YPRES Town Cemetery (B)

BARD COTTAGE (Boezinge - B)

Gwylim Thomas RICHARDS
24 Juillet 1917

THANKS



LLANWRTYD & DISTRICT HERITAGE AND ARTS CENTRE
Pat Dryden

Tony Thorpe

Lynne Brookes

Hywell Evans

Paul Schofield

Ysgol Dolafon of Llanwrtyd Wells - Gill Lloyd - Hywell Evans

Graprevine - O Geg I Geg - Ainsley Jones, Lindsay Ketteringham

LWTA - Bryn Davies, Jim Davies.

Llangammarch History Society - Llandovery College War Memorial

Photos : Chris Prichard, Hywell Evans, LDHAC

Translations : Khady François-Diouf, Alexandrine François, Bryn Davies, Lesley Keates

Sources internet : Wikipedia - WW1wargraves - Commonwealth War Graves Commission - La documentation française

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LDHAC - CDChLIC

*Llanwrtyd & District Heritage and Arts Centre
Canolfan Dreftadaeth a Chelfyddydau Llanwrtyd a'r Cylch*

Llanwrtyd & District Heritage & Arts Centre are proud to have created the small display to commemorate the ending of World War One. This war sent many of our young people, and those of our enemies, to their death. Some were hardly out of school, most were poorly equipped for the horrors they would personally experience and witness, not only the soldiers who fought, but the nurses and other medical staff who must have seen the most dreadful horrors.

The centre opened its doors for the 2018 season on Maundy Thursday March 29th, and between then and the date of 06/07/2018, there have been over 500 visitors to the centre in general and the WW1 exhibition, which will be on display until Remembrance Sunday. Below is a selection of comments about the exhibition written in our Visitors Book:



'Fascinating place, WW1 exhibition amazing, lots of hard work put in' – local resident.

'Very moving display' - visitor from Builth Wells'

Excellent exhibition; - visitor from Farmers in Carmarthenshire.

'Very moving atmospheric WW1 exhibition, diolch' – visitor from Paris who has local connections with the town and is one of our 'friends'.

'Excellent exhibition' – visitor from Northern Ireland.

'Very moving and well-presented display' – visitors from Carmarthenshire.

'Sensitive exhibition' – visitor from Lampeter.

'Excellent exhibition' – visitor from Aberystwyth.

'Lovely displays, WW1 exhibition very moving' – visitor from Birmingham.

I am honoured to have been asked to do this write up for the Brochure being compiled by Jean Michel François from our twin town of Mériel, with whom we have a close association with regular visits between our two towns mostly organised by our Twinning Associations.

I am certain that local people appreciate the support and appreciation given by our nation to our allies in France and Belgium during WW1, and appreciate us commemorating the ending of that bloody war at the 11th hour on November 11th 1918.

God Bless all who fought and either didn't return, or come home damaged physically and mentally, we can only imagine what they went through.

Pat Dryden – 10/07/2018

From private archives



Farming



Young men before going to war

Army Form 101-A
CERTIFICATE of* (Discharge, Transfer to Reserve, Disembodiment, Demobilization) on Demobilization. 19374

Regtl. No. 200883 Rank Bandman
 Names in full WATKINS, Gilbert
 Unit and Regiment or Corps from which South Wales Borders
 Discharged on Oct. 26th 1917
 Attested on the Oct. 26th 1917
 Called up for Service on the Oct. 26th 1914
 For Buckhoo Co. (S.W.B.)
 Also served in _____
 Only Regiments or Corps in which the Soldier served since August 4th, 1914 are to be stated.
 †Medals and Decorations awarded during present engagement: British War Medal, Four Blue Chevrons
 Has served Overseas on Active Service INDIA, 1916-1920
 Place of Rejoining in case of emergency Poweshy Medical Category 1st
 Specialist Military qualifications _____ Year of birth 1895
 He is Transferred to Army Reserve July 27th 1920
 in consequence of Demobilization.
 Signature and Rank Gilbert Watkins (Place)
 *Strike out whichever is inapplicable. *The word "SH" to be inserted when necessary.

July 8th. 1920 - demobilization - British war Medal-Gilbert WATKINS - (Uncle of Bryan)

By courtesy of Margaret Watkins

Army Form E. 104-SOA
 No. S.W.B. 206
 Station 191
 19 OCT 1917
 I regret to have to inform you that a report has this day been received from the War Office to the effect that (No.) 200883 (Rank) 1st (Name) G. Watkins (Regiment) SOUTH WALES BORDERS, Buckhoo Co. BN is ill at Stationary Hospital Mhow India suffering from Malaria
 Any further information received in this office as to his condition or progress will be at once notified to you.
 I am, Sir,
 Your obedient Servant,
Woodes Mt
 Officer-in-charge of Records.

October 19th. 1917- Hospitalization malaria Gilbert WATKINS - (Uncle of Bryan)

From private archives

War correspondence

Jean-Michel François collection

Chaumontel 28/11 1915
10
cher mari
je répond à ta petite lettre
je suis très heureux de te savoir
Correspondant

1915 - Dear husband ...

Chaumontel 22 Février 1915
Cher père
je t'envoie ces deux mots pour te donner
nous sommes en bonne santé et j'espère que tu es de
même je te dirais aussi que...

1915 - Dear father ...

Reposit. Quinzième No. 111 - Etats-Unis
Carte Postale
Cher Jean et Angèle
Correspondant

1916 - Dear wife, dear daughter...
(from hospital)

mandat aujourd'hui
nous venons de rep
deja partis et a
on attend de des
pour passer une
bonjour cher
cousin. Je me souviens
sa fille qui avait
en que mes soeurs
Léonie Marie

1917 - My dear daughter...
N3

le 30 Avril 1917
Cher Père
Je te remercie de la carte que tu
m'as envoyée. Ma mère se souffrait
autant comme elle était fatiguée et le pain
de parain fruit qu'il m'a déjà écrit que
je vous est déjà jadis.
Aujourd'hui en bonne santé et je vous en dirais
de même. Les embarras m'ont
passés. Ambré que le petit Paul
qui t'embrasse

1918
5491

FASCICULE DE MOBILISATION.
(Module 2.)

de PARIS

Nom et prénoms: François
Clair Charles

Né le 2 Janvier 1891 à Logy

Profession: Boulanger

Canton: Chaumontel

Département: Seine-et-Oise

Est placé dans la position « SANS AFFECTATION ».

à la Caserne

Mobilization order
Jean-Michel FRANCOIS
Grand-father

Veteran card...

OFFICE NATIONAL
MUTILÉS, COMBATTANTS
VICTIMES DE LA GUERRE


RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
N° 106993

CARTE DU COMBATTANT

Valable du 10 FEV 1919 au 10 FEV 1936

M. Blavaine
Prénoms: Baptiste Alexandre
Domicile: Chaumontel
Né le 22 Janvier 1874
A Culligny Département: Aisne
Versailles 14 0 FEV 1936

Le Président: Lodu Comité Départemental
Le Titulaire:



Veteran card...


From private archives



FRENCH POSTCARDS



In Flanders Field



*In Flanders Field the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place, and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders field.*

*Take up your quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders field.*

Written by John McCrae, May 1915

*Dans les champs de Flandres, les coquelicots poussent entre les croix,
rangée sur rangée,
C'est là notre trace, et dans le ciel de rares alouettes chantent encore
au-dessus des canons.*

Nous sommes les morts de ces derniers jours.

*Nous avons vécu. Nous avons senti l'aube, vu le rougeoyant coucher
de soleil. Nous avons aimé, nous étions aimés, nous gisons maintenant
dans les champs de Flandres.*

*Prenez votre tour dans votre querelle avec l'ennemi. A vous, de nos
mains défaillantes, nous confions la flamme.*

A vous de la garder haute.

*Si vous rompez le lien avec nous les morts, nous ne dormirons plus
jamais, même si les coquelicots poussent dans les champs de Flandres.*