

St Catherine's Chronicle

Sound Architect Creative Media and St Catherine's College Eastbourne

CRIME & PUNISHMENT in the First World War

Susanne Crosby Project Manager, Sound Architect Creative Media

During the First World War, maintaining discipline within the various armies was a subject of debate, concern and controversy. How best to deal with those men who broke, or were perceived to have broken, military laws and expectations would see some soldiers being sentenced to death.

Students from St Catherineís College in Eastbourne and volunteers researched into this emotive and still controversial time thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

To understand life in the Armed Forces during the First World War it was important to also understand the time: culture, class; life. They explored an era with different attitudes towards discipline and punishment. Awareness of mental ill health was very poor at the start of the War years, but soldiers suffering from 'shell shock' eventually led to the discovery of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: PTSD, as we know it today. They undertook specific research of those men who were sentenced for cowardice and desertion, with new consideration of some of the causes.

This project is about the importance of honouring the memories of the brave men who were fighting in a terrible war in horrible conditions: all of them.

Examples of Crimes and Punishments taken from the Army Act 1881

Crimes	Punishments
Desertion, including persuading others to des	sert Death
Surrender to the enemy	Death
Assisting the enemy, even as a prisoner of W	ar Death
Cowardice	Death
Leaves post to go in search of plunder	Death
Leave his post without orders	Death
Striking a superior officer	Death
Leave ranks without orders	Penal servitude
Destroys property without orders	Penal servitude
Taken prisoner due to disobeying orders	Penal servitude
Drunkeness	Officers: fine, Soldiers: imprisonment
Absence without leave	Officers: fine, Soldiers: imprisonment
Neglects to obey orders	Officers: fine, Soldiers: imprisonment
Soldiers behaviour "disgraceful conduct"	Imprisonment

To Whom it May Concern,

I do not support the decision not to grant pardons to the soldiers of the First World

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THE DEATH PENALTY

April 2019

The British Commonwealth Military Command executed 346 of their own men. Those shot brought shame to their Country.

The 346 were executed for a variety of different things the vast majority: 266, over three quarters, were executed for desertion, with a further 18 executed for cowardice. "If they ran away from German guns, they would be shot by British ones."

Men were pardoned in 2006 due to significant pressure from the "Shot At Dawn Campaign". The remaining 40 were those executed for mutiny or murder, who would have been executed even under civilian law. However, in 2016, the 3 executed for mutiny, which amounted to little more than a misdemeanour, were pardoned as well.

Men have been pardoned in total

left: At "In Flanders Fields" Museum in Ypres, Belgium; this is a replica of the statue designed by Andy DeComyn in the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, completed in 2001 to commemorate those executed in the First World War. It is said to be based on Private Herbert Burden, 17, who lied about his age to enlist.



The maintenance of discipline in the Army has always been considered a very serious affair. Behaviour and treatment of the British Army during the First World War is from the

Crimes included everything from matters of individual presentation such as being unshaven, untidy, losing kit, not saluting, addressing a superior officer incorrectly, dirty or incorrect equipment or being late on parade or after curfew: to serious matters such as

War who were shot at dawn. These men signed up for war, went to war and had to suffer the sights of people dying. Soldiers went through shell shock because of the way they had to live, with killing people, learning not to care, they had to be manly and not have the mental and physical support they need. Some of the men weren't even old enough to fight or be in the war. The soldiers should not have been executed because they can't handle war, they needed to get away because of their health. It's a natural human instinct to run away and get away from what scares you. Running away from horrors is not weak. Even though they fled, they provided great service to Britain as a soldier and fought courageously. Not all men are strong. But that shouldn't matter as they still tried their hardest. They were willing to give their lives in order to save ours, therefore, they greatly deserve to remembered and honoured, just as any other soldier is. I'm sure you can strongly agree that war is awful. They shouldn't suffer. Most were inexperienced and some were under age. They should have been allowed to get medical help without being executed. They should get their pardon, for seeing war, fighting and suffering. By Sophie and Charlotte - imagining being part of the "Shot at Dawn" Campaign

DESERTION AND THE DEATH PENALTY

Shot at Dawn Campaign

The campaign believed that the men who were executed should be pardoned, as they were suffering shell shock and should not be branded cowards, and have no grave stone or remembrance of their call to duty. The families were distraught at the stigma left behind, as these were brave men who fought for their country.

In 2006, they all received pardons, and are now able to be part of memorials. The families of those who were shot at dawn were disappointed that it took so long, but they are happy that everyone can now remember them as the brave men they were. By Ella and Orla

Firing Squad

They were lined up, All about to die, One holding a buttercup, None with an alibi All for cowardice, The first round is fired, Everyone powerless, The officers got what they desired. By Luke R

How were they "Shot at Dawn'

1. Soldiers were put into a cell with a chaplain the night before, so that they couldn't commit suicide or run away

2. At dawn they next day, the soldier was taken from the cell and their arms and legs were tied to a stake and they were blindfolded. 3. They were given alcohol beforehand.

4. Six men fired but some were blanks, some live ammunition: none of the firing squad knew which of them killed the him

5. Medical Officer examined the body 6. He was shot again if he wasn't dead.

By Sophie

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How have we improved?

• UK soldier suicide rates are now the equivalent of 1 every 2 weeks

- Most at risk are male soldiers aged 20-24
- In the UK, PTSD affects 3.2% of all soldiers
- US soldier suicide rates are the equivalent
- of 1 every 65 minutes, that is 22 per day • Most at risk are male soldiers in their 50's

• In the US, PTSD affects 20% of all soldiers Bv Eller

PRIVATE

THOMAS HIGHGATE

17 years old

"military justice"

He fled and hid in a barn

Undefended at his trial because

all of his comrades from the Royal

or captured

He was at the Battle of Mons

(7,800 died)

35 days into the War, Private

Thomas Highgate was executed

West Kents were killed, injured

First person to suffer from

Shell Shock - also known as "war neurosis", "combat stress" and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Shell shock is a term coined in the First World War to describe what we know now as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. At first shell shock was thought to be caused by soldiers being exposed to exploding shells. During the early stages of the War, soldiers began to report symptoms after combat including: tinnitus, amnesia, headaches and dizziness. The term shell shock came into use to reflect a link between the symptoms and the effects of explosions from artillery shells.

The number of shell shock cases grew during 1915 and 1916 but it remained poorly understood. The term was first published in 1917 in an article in the Lancet, by a medical officer called Charles Samuel Myers. He was an English physician, born on 13th March 1873, and worked as a psychologist. He wrote the first paper on "shell shock" in

'By the end of the war they had dealt with over 80,000 cases of shell shock.

1917, although he did not invent the term.

Effects include "dreams" which might occur in the middle of an ordinary conversation. One infantry officer said "the face of the boche that I have bayonetted, with its horrible gurgle and grimace, comes sharply into view".

Once wounds were excluded, emotional disorders were responsible for one third of all discharges. By the end of the war they had dealt with over 80,000 cases of shell shock. The ratio of officers to men on the Western Front was 1:30. The ratio of officers to men in the neuroses hospital was 1:6.

For many soldiers the trauma of war didn't end with a gun shot but was a haunting feeling for the rest of their lives. By the end of the War, 20,000 men were still suffering from shell shock. Thousands more had experienced its symptoms during their military service.

By Mya, Brandon and Oliver

Effects, Causes & Treatments

- Effects
- Unable to walk or move
- Twitching body and face Unusual behaviour
- Nightmares
- Paralysis
- Confusion
- Dazed stare
- Fatigue
- Tremors
- Impaired vision or hearing
- Inability to reason

Causes

Both the trauma of war and the return to civilian life had psychological consequences as soldiers, which created long term effects

Treatments at the time

- Massage
- Rest
- Hypnosis
- Electric shock treatment
- Talking cure
- Dietary regime
- Occupational training such as weaving baskets

Reputation as a hero and a "man" suffered. There was a focus on restoring masculinity. There was not a lot of sympathy. It was seen as cowardice.

Contributors: Matthew, Joseph, Ella, Amy





Field Punishments

These were used for moderately serious offences, such as drunkenness, refusing orders, or discharging your firearm. They could be given this punishment for 2 hours a day for 24 days, but for no more than 3 days in a row.

Both were carried out by the office of the provost marshal. If the unit was mobile, the unit was responsible for carrying out the punishment.

Field Punishment Number 1:

Person was shackled in irons and secured to an object, often a gun wheel. This was also known as "crucifixion". The objective was to stress the body as the person could not move at all.

Field Punishment Number 2

The same as number 1 but the person was not

anecdotal accounts, but no figures, for men who were shot on the spot by officers and NCOs for

Army Daily Life

By Joseph

SUB LIEUTENANT EDWIN LEONARD DYETT

21 years old from Cardiff Fought at the battle of the Somme Wrote to his mother: "Dearest Mother Mine, my sorrow now is for the trouble I have caused you and dad. Give dear Dad my love and wish him good luck. I feel for you so much and am sorry for bringing dishonour upon you all... So now dearest mother I must close. May God protect you now for everymore. Amen."

Hi last words to his friends were: 'Well boys, goodbye. And for God's sake, shoot straight."

PRIVATE HERBERT BURDEN

17 years old Lied about his age (said he was years older) so he could fight ined the Northumberland Fusiliers 10 months later he was court martialled for fleeing He ran away from the battlefield of Bellwarde Ridge after seeing his friends die

Received the death penalty by firing squad, even though he was officially too young to have been in his regiment

PRIVATE

16 years old From the east end of London He was in the Middlesex Regiment 11th Battalion Deserted and was shot at dawn

PRIVATE IIMMY SMITH

Fought bravely for 3 years in some of the fiercest battles, including Gallipoli. Badly wounded in 1916 at the Somme and recovered in hospital at Bolton

Returned to the front just in time for the Battle of Ypres in 1917 Despite receiving two good conduct medals he was branded a coward His friend Richard Blandell was ordered to form part of the firing squad, and after the riflemen failed he

was ordered to give the death blow. Blandell carried the torment of killing his friend for the rest of his life.

PRIVATE

Worcester Regiment, 3rd Battalion In the trenches near Hooge Abandoned the battlefield Shot at dawn

ALFRED THOMPSON 25 years old



fixed to anything. By Sophie and Skye

"On the Spot" Punishments

It has been pointed out that we have only "cowardice in the face of the enemy". (source: Wikipedia)

1. Uniform Check 2. Breakfast 3. Roll call 4. Daily jobs 5. Night meal 6. Night patrols

ABRAHAM BEVISTEIN



Interview with George Skipper

On a very hot day in June 2018 I met George. A 94-year-old man who travelled all the way from London to Brighton on his own in his big heavy red coat. He'd joined a group of people including Veterans from other conflicts to celebrate national Armed Forces Day. He brightened every time someone spoke to him.

'At 10 am on the 6th of June 1944 he found himself on a landing craft approaching gold Beach.'

Underneath that wrinkled face and the Chelsea Pensioner jacket there was a man who had been drafted into the Army at 18 and on becoming a skilled gunner was posted to the seventh armoured division the Desert Rats in the Middle East. After 14 months he travelled back to London as driver to the likes of Montgomery and Eisenhower and while in this role he worked alongside many people preparing for the invasion of Normandy. At 10 am on the 6th of June 1944 he found himself on a landing craft approaching gold Beach.

Conscientious Objectors

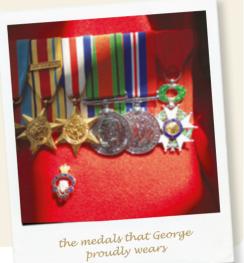
When conscription to the British Army came into force on 2 March 1916, there was a conscience clause: men could object to being conscripted into the Army on the basis of religion for example, and undertake noncombatant duties. But "Absolutists" did not believe in fighting, or undertaking work which would ultimately support the fighting, and refused; thereby breaking the law. Many of them were forced into the Army, where they were then subject to Military Law. Refusing to put on the uniform or refusing to fight was seen as cowardice, and many conscientious objectors were given Field Punishment 1 on a continual basis, to try to change their minds.

In May 1916, 34 conscientious objectors who had been forced into enlisting were transported to France. After enduring Field Punishment

THE TRIBUNAL

With the landing craft sinking and bullets flying overhead George managed to pull several of his comrades who were unable to swim onto the shore. Together they made their way across the beach and were part of the advances into occupied France. For that, and many other acts of bravery he was awarded one of the many medals that he now wore proudly on his jacket breast pocket.

When I eventually plucked up the courage to go and speak to him I was greeted with a beaming smile and a glint in his eye full of life and laughter. He told me how he'd sneak out of the Chelsea hospital to put a bet on every now and again, and of growing up in the East End and learning to box to keep himself out of trouble (although he learned alongside the Kray twins). Despite all the history he had lived through and all the challenges in war and peace time here sitting next to me was still that young boy from the East End of London with a wicked sense of humour, humble and yet so proud and for that one afternoon I was filled with those same emotions just to have met this man. Thank you George. Andy - volunteer



number one tied to a barbed wire fence, they endured quite horrific punishments, then were tried by Court Martial and sentenced to the ultimate: death by firing squad. The men said that they were asked again and again whether they would change their minds but they would not; one man remarked that he thought the Military didn't know what to do with them as this had never happened before. They were lead out and the sentence was read out and confirmed, then there was a long pause, and then they were told the sentence was commuted to ten years in prison.

Their stoicism earned them the respect of some of the soldiers; but ultimately the Army had to learn that their discipline methods did not work on those whose principles forbade them to take up arms.



Interview with Donal Buggins

Donald Buggins remembers what it was like growing up in post First World War England. An Eastbourne resident for 70 years, he originally came from Wootton: tiny village in Oxfordshire, where life was a world apart from how we live today. All their water came from the village well: "people would drop a bucket down, and two buckets would probably last a day" he says. This was a time where everyone in the village knew everyone else, where there was no mains electricity, and no indoor toilet. If you needed the toilet in the evening you had to take a candle out with you to the outhouse. He fondly remembers milk being delivered in a bucket, measured out with a ladle, the baker and the smell of real hot cross buns, the fish and chip van that came once a week. We know that this is very close to how life during the First World War for rural people would have been.

When the Second World War broke out Donald had just left school. He remembers hearing the news from the vicar at church while in the choir: he and his friends didn't really understand what that meant. Being so close to Coventry, he heard the bombers overhead and the sky was red with flames from bombs being dropped. He remembers counting the bombers from the local airfield at Upper Hayford going over "we counted probably about 20 going out, and then early morning... there's only 15 come back".

He was 18 on the 8th September 1944, and on the 28th he received his call up papers and joined the Wiltshire Regiment. He found himself serving on the North West Frontier bordering Afghanistan even 12 months after the end of the War, then was sent to Calcutta until 1947. On discharge he remembers being given a pin stripe suit and a trilby hat, "kitting you out for Civvy Street". A man with remarkable stories and a fascinating life, at 92 years of age we are so grateful to him for sharing some of his life with us. "The village boy has seen life" he says.



Interview with Richard Slyman

Army Veteran Richard Slyman came into school and talked to the whole class about what it was like for him in the Army during the 1970s. Richard left school not quite 15 years old, planning to become an engineer. One day he passed an Army Recruiting Office; he says "there was a picture there, of a feller, stood by a tank, and it said 'Could you repair this?' and I thought, 'well yes I could.' So I went in and I signed up."

Richard told us all about what life was life in the Army, the sense of belonging and pride in family and the trust that is built up between those that you work alongside. He also told us all about the various discipline methods and punishments that were around during his time in the Army, including the Bea-sting. One of the disciplines that he explained was in a combat situation, having to be prepared to be shot at, in order to draw out the location of an enemy sniper: this brought home to the whole class how important discipline is, that it's not optional, and why the punishments in modern thinking may seem extreme, yet obeying discipline could ultimately save lives.

The Bea-sting was a punishment, as with others of this time in the 1970's, designed to stress the body. It may not look terrible but a few of the class tried it and had difficulty maintaining it even for five minutes. Another addition is to hold your arm out straight and books would be placed on them adding extra stress. If your arms dropped, the punishment would start again. Richard remembers this happening to him once for an hour and a half.

Richard was stationed in Northern Ireland and also in Berlin, during the Cold War. We are so grateful to Richard for sharing his Army experiences with us, and showing us his service record, service medal and photos. He is very proud of his ten years in the Army talking with warmth and fondness about the camaraderie, the bravery and the humour of the men he served alongside.

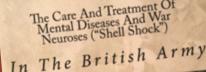
'As every nation and race engaged is t is apparent that new conditions of warfare are chiefly responsible'

War Neuroses ("Shell Shock") in the British Army y Thomas W Salmon, MD, below.

ORT OF THE WAR OFFICE CO

OF ENQUIRY INTO "SHELL-SHOCK"

This was the beginning of starting to understand "Shell Shock" which took decades to understand, and even now we still discover more about it.





34 DEATH SENTENCES IN FRANCE COMMUTED TO TEN YEARS' PENAL SERVITUDE

IR. TENNANT SITUE HAS "NO INFORMATION." The of the respeated assurances of Mr. Tennant as to the store of the death sentence being inflicted on conscientions in France, we received on Thursday, June 22, news in France, we received on Thursday, June 22, news the previous Thursday, at Bouldone, four conscientions who had been court-martialled for refusing to obey who had been court-martialled for refusing to obey orders, vere sentenced to be shot. The mean were Messre, Marten, Scullard, Foister, and Ring, are mentioned above, the regiment was drawn up and har mentioned above, the regiment was drawn up and hard been days previously. It is said to have Ine four mentioned above, the regiment wave of the out-the men paraded for their sentence to be pronounced, the court-martial having been held some days previously. It is said to have been an impressive and solemn function. The court-martial sentence of death was pronounced by an officer; after which there was a pause, and then came the officer; after which there was a pause.

MR. TENNANT STILL HELPLESS

TEN YEARS' PENAL SERVITUDE These men were members of the first party of conse-ectors sent on May 8 to France, where the Non-Com-h is stationed, and employed on such during the con-

ted that they will be returned

SENSATION IN THE HOUSE



the well used to be

FLANDERS

80 students and 10 adults went to Flanders in March 2018 for the Battlefield Tour. Father James held a service at Poelcapelle Cemetery which was very moving, and really helped us understand the human cost of war. We visited the Menin Gate and the "In Flanders Fields" Museum in Ypres where we researched more into life in the Armed Forces, including the men 'shot at dawn'. The visit to Caterpillar Crater and the Trenches brought everything home to us all.







'I felt quite surprised that children as young as 14 were shot for running away, when they were too young to be in the War in the first place' Student





On Haig: 'He didn't understand how much people were getting mentally unstable because of what they saw' Student

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

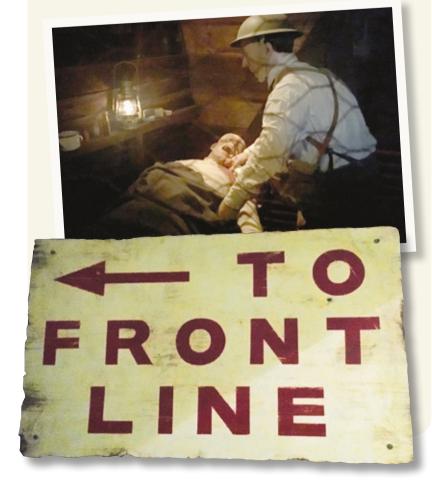
We visited the Imperial War Museum in January 2018, concentrating particularly on the First World War exhibition including the replica trench with sights and sounds of War. Various different aspects of it appealed to and enthralled different students and volunteers. The letter from the 9 year old boy to the King asking to volunteer to fight is always a draw and so poignant. The posters, the photos, models and film clips all start to make something that was so long ago very real. The students also had a go at making their own journalist type film, set up by the Imperial War museum with special equipment.





NEWHAVEN FORT

Newhaven Fort have a special exhibition on the First World War, including a model trench system; uniforms and equipment; and an extensive array of weaponry used in the War. This was open to all students and volunteers in the project.



COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENARY AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY

A small group of volunteers went to London on 11th November 2018 for the Commemoration of the Centenary. Two volunteers had the huge privilege of attending the Service of Commemoration at Westminster Abbey, in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen. They afterwards visited the fires at the Tower of London.

'War has got quite a distorted image because of games and films and things like that.' Student

Acknowledgements

Sound Architect Creative Media wishes to thank: St Catherine's College year 8, their teachers and supporters, and all their parents and family members who helped or volunteered

Newhaven Fort Gateways to the First World War The Imperial War Museum Royal Sussex Regiment The Religious Society of Friends The Royal British Legion The Peace Pledge Union



Veterans Donald Buggins, George Skipper, Richard Slyman All the Volunteer Researchers and Contributors including: Harry Armstrong, Jenny Clifton, Andy Crosby, lean Wilson

Sound Architect Creative Media Team Graphic Design – Annabel Clements Research Lead, Editor and Film Script – Susanne Crosby Project Development – Rachel Lewis & Susanne Crosby

Extra Special Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund and National Lottery Players





