



# **The War Beyond the Western Front: Hidden Histories of the First World War**



**The Glass Tank  
Oxford Brookes University  
18 Nov — 16 Dec 2016**

**OXFORD  
BROOKES  
UNIVERSITY**

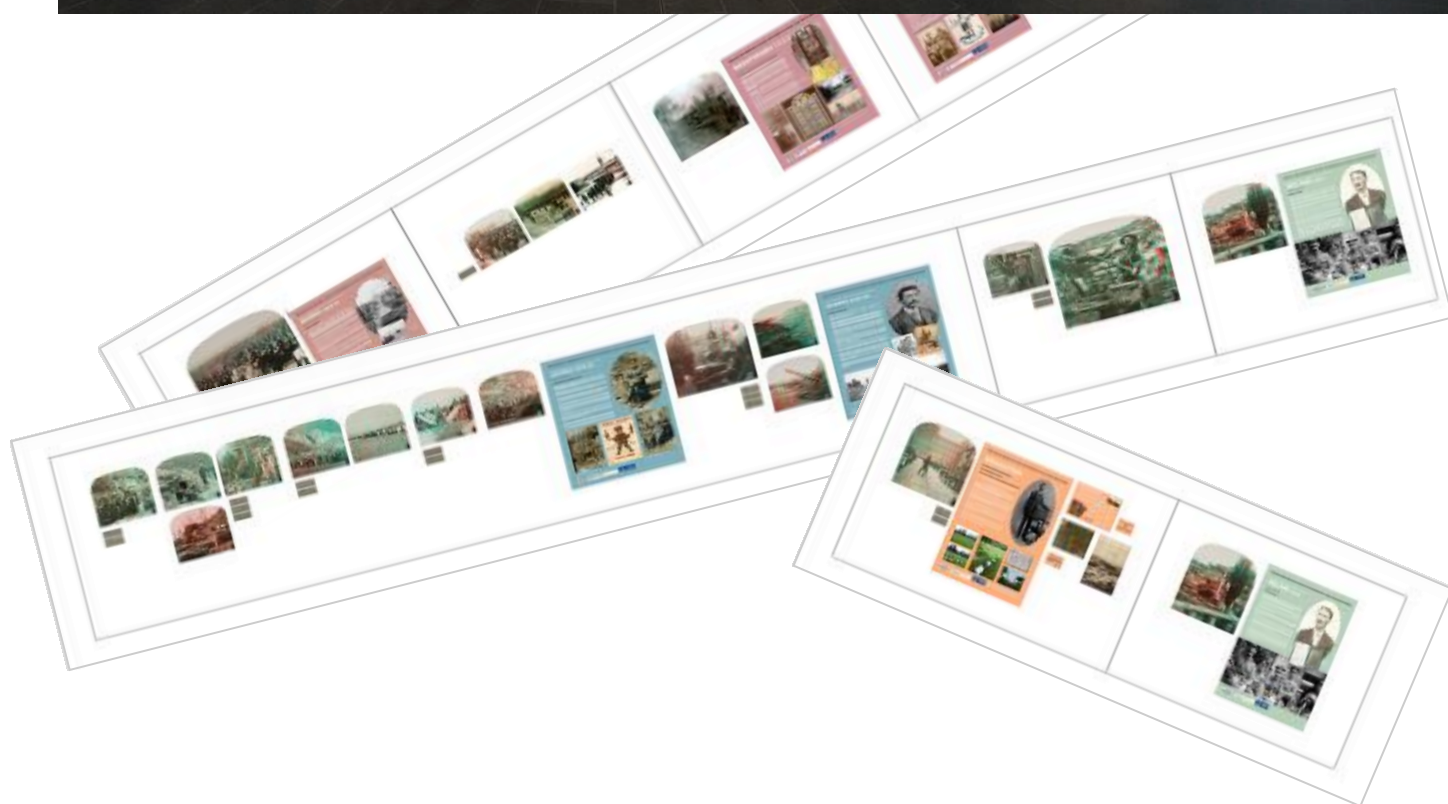


The University of  
Nottingham

**Centre for  
Hidden Histories**







**EXHIBITION ORGANISERS:**  
**TUDOR GEORGESCU, OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY**  
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**AHRC CENTRE FOR HIDDEN HISTORIES, UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM**

# INTRODUCTION

## OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SOLDIERS OF OXFORDSHIRE MUSEUM

Uncovering Oxfordshire's hidden histories of the First World War

'Beyond the Western Front' is a collaborative project between Oxford Brookes University and the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum (SOFO) focused on Oxfordshire in the First World War and is funded by the AHRC Centre for Hidden Histories at the University of Nottingham.

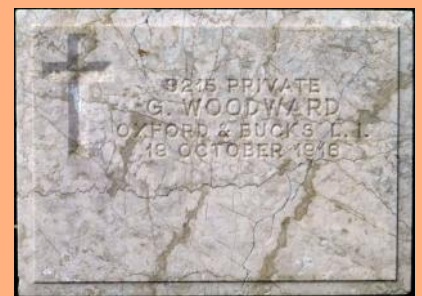
With this project we aim to promote research into the history and heritage of the First World War beyond the trenches of Western Europe. The focus lies upon the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry battalions and the Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars, as documented in the SOFO archive and beyond. We are interested in the campaigns in Russia, Italy, the Middle East, the Balkans and Ireland.

The project is supported by fourteen individual research projects carried out by Museum volunteers, local people and students from Oxford Brookes University. The research panels first went on display at SOFO in September 2016, and came to the Glass Tank at Oxford Brookes University in November where the exhibit was expanded to include two cabinets with artefacts on loan from the Museum and the series of stereographic pictures converted into 3D anaglyphs

### Acknowledgements

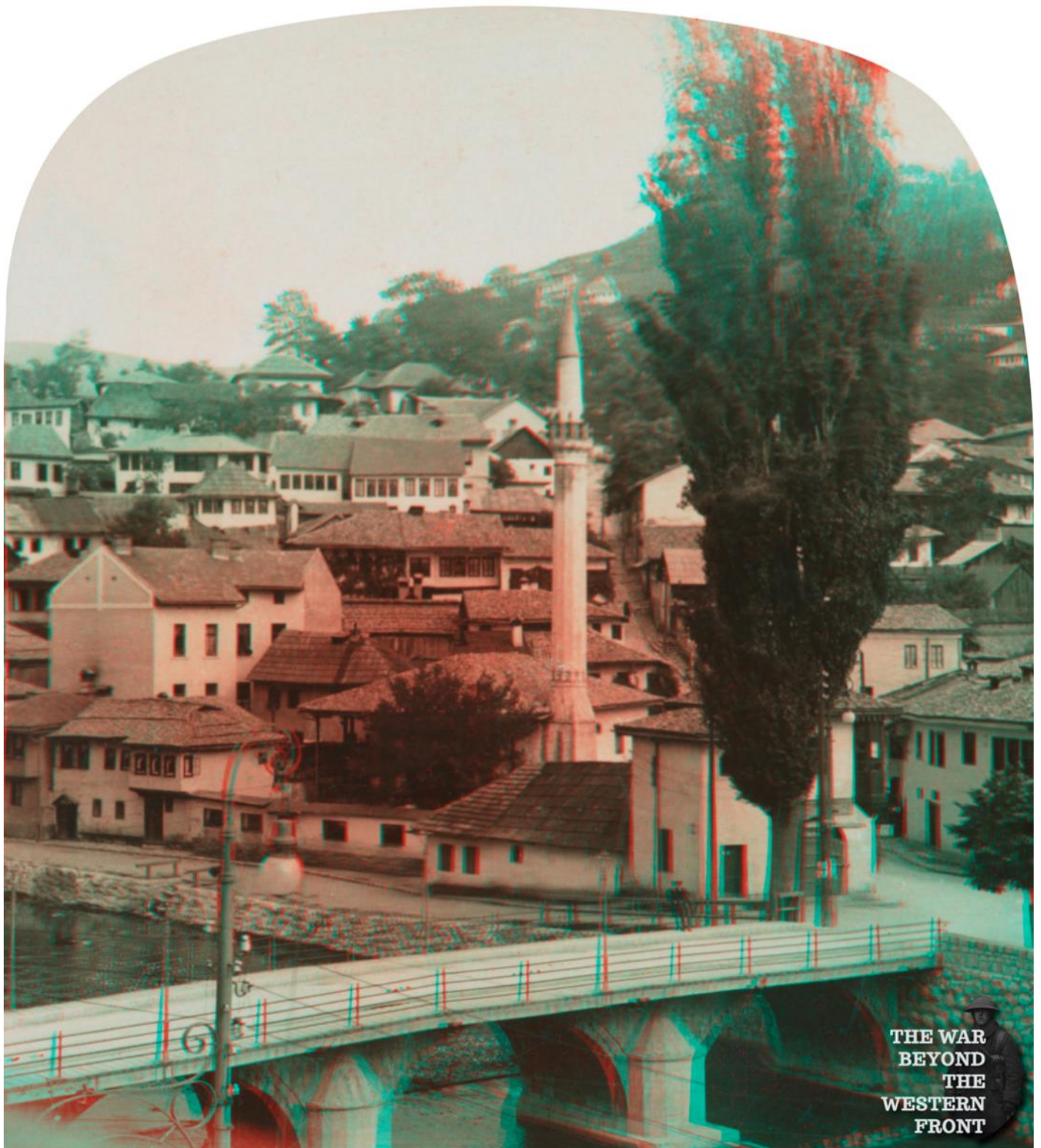
Jeff Clements, Jane Cotter, Louisa Fagan, Jim Grundy, Peter Johnston, Sheila King, Mark McKay, Jean Mills, Kevin Northover, Paul Otter, John Sheldon, Kathleen Tunnicliffe, Steve Warner and Janet Witcomb.

Private Henry Marsh of the 7th Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, who served in Salonika. From the collection of Sue Brett



Images above: the grave marker of Private George Payne Woodward, 1st Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, who died of wounds as a prisoner of war on 19th October 1916 following the surrender of the Kut garrison, Mesopotamia. Private Woodward was born and enlisted in Church Hanborough, Oxfordshire. He is buried in Haidar Pasha Cemetery, Istanbul in Turkey. Haidar Pasha is a suburb of Istanbul between Scutari (Uskudar) and Kadikoy on the Asiatic side of the Bosphoros. From the collection, and with the kind permission of Jim Grundy



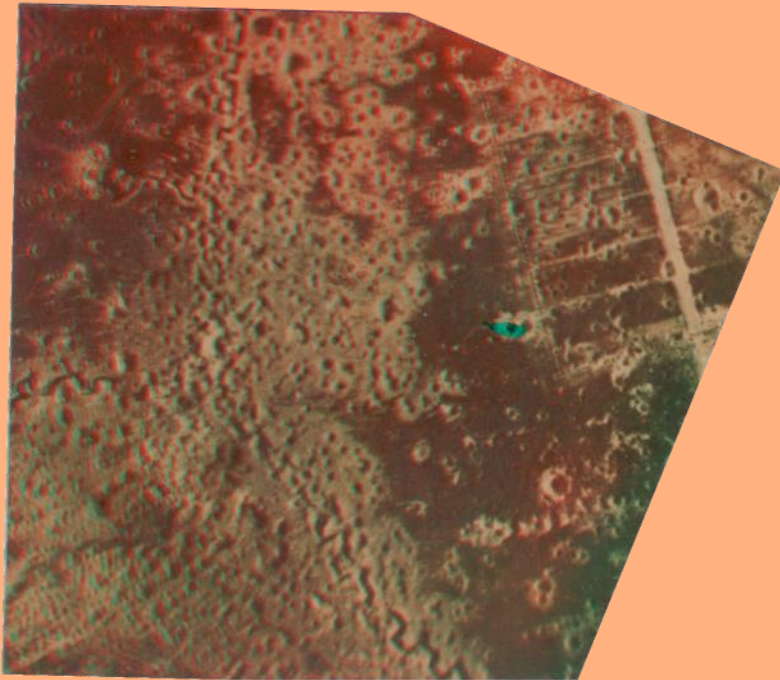


'Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. Scene of murder of crown prince which started flame that engulfed all Europe'



# THE FIRST WORLD WAR REVISUALISED: FROM STEREOSCOPIC TO ANAGLYPHIC 3D

Stereoscopic pictures, amazing as they may be, are rather difficult to appreciate fully without a stereoview. Which may go some way to explaining why they have largely escaped the public and academic appreciation of the First World War's visual legacy, but one that left its mark on so many aspects of war photography and reporting:

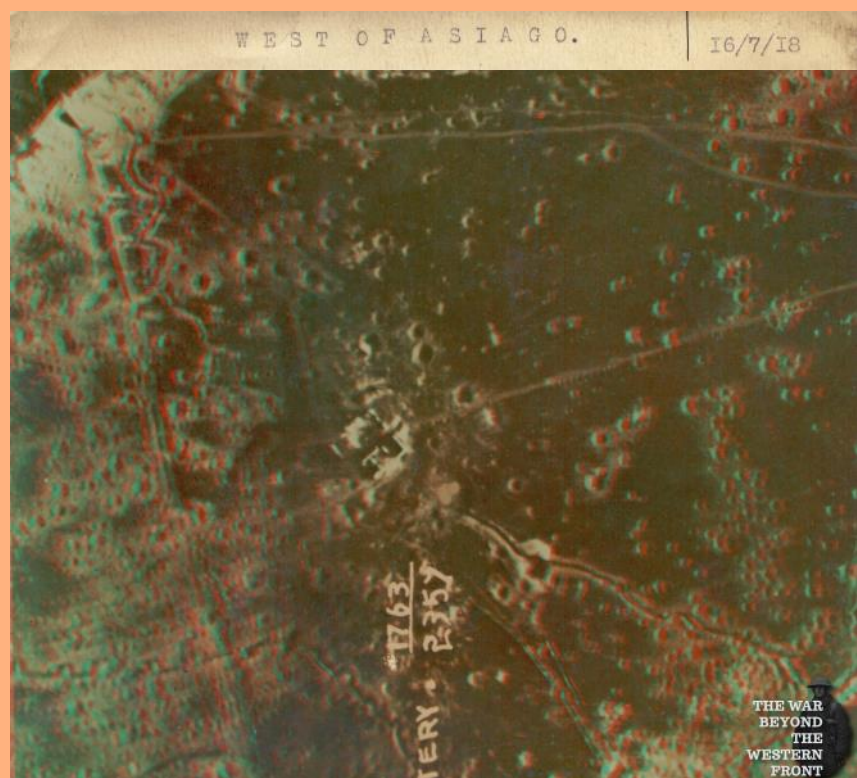


**Aerial reconnaissance and battle field surveillance** in particular were quick to capitalise on the advantages offered by stereoscopic images, as can be seen with the examples from the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum depicting the “Asiago Cemetery (Parts of), the shell craters “West of Asiago” in 1918. **Private sets taken by soldiers** reflected the growing popularity of stereoscopy and opened up a wholly new way for soldiers to document and share their experiences of the war, and similarly led to the growth of **official government collections** such as the images sold by the Ministry of Information. The popular demand for images achieved its greatest expression though in the various **commercial sets** published by a range of producers worldwide, such as Realistic Travels in the UK, and Underwood and Underwood and The Keystone View Company in the USA. Keystone was to become the most prolific of these with its purchase of Underwood in 1921, whose catalogue it incorporated into an extended set of 300 images.

The pictures on display here were mostly released in this 1923 Keystone set, but have a look at the reference numbers for some clues on its background: A ‘v’ means it was purchased from Underwood; an \* that it was also included in the 1919 ‘200’ and 1917 ‘100’ card editions; and two \*\* in the ‘200’ set. Keystone also released a guide book companion to its 1923 set edited by Major Joseph Mills Hanson that immediately insisted that “these stereoscopic sets stand out supreme among War Records. They are not ‘just pictures’, to be casually looked at and laid aside.” But be warned, if the “Psychologists’ Statement” is to be believed, stereoscopy is not merely engaging, “it is possible for a person to lose all consciousness of his immediate bodily surroundings and to gain, for a short time at least, a distinct state of consciousness or experience of location in the place represented.”

In short, the arrival of stereoscopic photography on the front line in many ways changed how the wider population perceived the war. A new, immersive perspective that this exhibit's series of 3D anaglyphs hopes to unlock for a wider audience once again.

TUDOR GEORGESCU





# ON PRODUCING THE ANAGLYPHIC IMAGES

The pictures collected in *The War Beyond the Western Front* originally served a dual purpose: to reproduce a sanitised memory of the Great War, and to solidify this memory in a form that could be easily consumed. The ability to take and reproduce high resolution scans of the original stereoscope pairs allows these photographs to be experienced in important new ways. The original stereoscope pairs could only be consumed individually – one pair by one person at one time. As enlarged anaglyphs in the context of the wider exhibition, the images invite investigation, comparison and discussion.

Preparing the images for exhibition posed several technical and historical questions. The exhibition was fortunate to have access to the United States Library of Congress's digital photographs of the stereoscope pairs which have survived in remarkably fine condition. However, many of the photographs had deteriorated due to exposure to light, or their surface had been made pitted or scratched. Was it best to present the photos in their authentic, damaged state? Or should they be digitally restored?

Certain photographs retained production errors: in 'Sarajevo' the photographer's finger fingers blurrily across the bottom left corner. If it could be digitally removed, should it be? In 'Looking East' we can see the remains of contemporary photo editing; the sky has been carefully cut away, leaving a clear jagged outline around the left hand trees. Should the editor's work be finished?

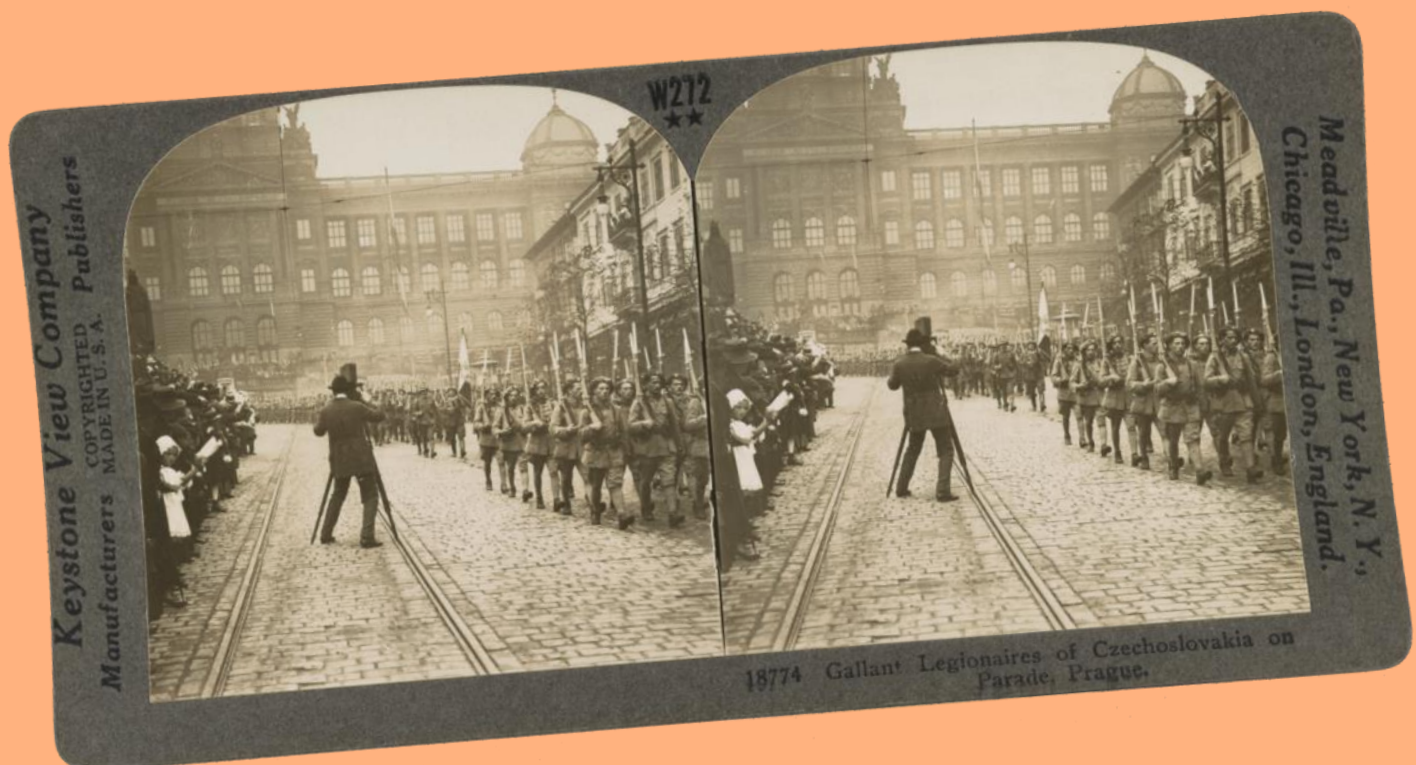
Moreover, it is difficult to find photographs unmarked by the white spots indicative of the dust that the photographers had to contend with in far-flung lands.

The anaglyph format itself imposed an answer to these questions. While large artefacts visible in only one half of an image tend to disrupt the appearance of depth, large defects could almost always be patched up with matching details from the image's stereoscopic partner.

I have tried to produce anaglyphs that retain a sense of the images' age and that give an effective impression of the stereoscopic 3D effect. I hope the exhibition encourages you to look further into the rich and varied visual history of the Great War.

## SIMON WILSON

Technical Editor







THE WAR  
BEYOND  
THE  
WESTERN  
FRONT

'Gallant legionnaires of Czechoslovakia on parade, Prague'



# IRELAND 1918

## Researched by SHEILA KING

Joseph Charles (Charlie) Morgan was born in 1892 at Hethe, a village north of Bicester, to the postmaster and his wife. Members of the Morgan family have lived continuously in Hethe since the mid 1700s.

Five weeks after the First World War broke out, Charlie Morgan, then a 22 year old tailor, was among the first from Hethe to enlist at Christ Church College in Oxford as a Private in 'D' Squadron, 1/1 Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars. Just over two months after enlisting, Private Morgan sailed for France with three officers and forty men to join the depleted 'D' Squadron on the Western Front.

He remained on active service in and around Ypres until 24 March 1915, when he was invalided home to join the 2/1 Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars on coastal duty in King's Lynn with his older brother, William Harris Morgan.

In 1918, in an attempt to provide further reserves of manpower for the war effort, the coalition government voted to extend conscription to Ireland and also to older men and further groups of workers in Britain. The introduction of conscription and its backlash galvanised support for political parties which advocated Irish separatism and influenced events in the lead-up to the Irish War of Independence.

In January 1918, the now promoted Sergeant Charlie Morgan was sent to Dublin with the 4<sup>th</sup> Cyclist Brigade to help contain the impending conscription crisis, and spent the rest of his war there. Three months after he landed in Dublin, his right hand was badly shattered as the result of a hand grenade explosion, whilst giving instruction on bomb throwing. After three months in hospital, he returned to Phoenix Park, Dublin and was honorably discharged from the Army, in his words 'completing four years & four days with the colours.'

Less than 3 years later he died at home in Hethe from croupous pneumonia after a four day illness. He was twenty-nine years old.

Private Charlie Morgan of the Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars. From the collection of Sheila King



A page of an album belonging to Private Charlie Morgan. From the collection of Sheila King





# MESOPOTAMIA 1914-18

Researched by  
**KEVIN NORTHOVER**

## Private Thomas Glibbard from Banbury

Private Glibbard was born in 1890, the son of Edward and Clara Glibbard of Foundry Square, Neithrop in Banbury. Thomas joined the army at the turn of 1910 and the following year was serving with 'G' Company, 1st Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry in India.

The Battalion was sent to Mesopotamia (Iraq) at the outbreak of war, part of the 6th (Poona) Division of the British Indian Army, to fight the troops of the Ottoman Empire. The 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry were involved in the Battle of Ctesiphon between 22 and 25 November 1915 and it was in this battle that Private Glibbard was killed in action on the 22nd. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Basra Memorial, Iraq.

The Banbury Guardian reported his death on January 6th 1916:

*'Private T. Glibbard, no 9008 of the Oxford and Bucks LI and a son of Mr E. Glibbard of 20, Foundry Street, Banbury, is officially reported to have been killed in action on 22nd November whilst serving with the Indian Expeditionary Force at the Persian Gulf. The deceased was 25 years of age and unmarried.'*

Lieutenant Birch-Reynardson of the 1st Battalion describes what happened that day:

*'We marched across the enemy's front at a distance of not more than 1000 yards. It was an opportunity for the Turks and they took it. Every available gun, machine gun and rifle was turned onto the ground over which we marched. It was absolutely open and devoid of cover, and, consequently the losses were very heavy indeed. But the steadiness of the advance was wonderful.'*



Private Thomas Glibbard of the 1st Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. From the collection of Kevin Northover



Ctesiphon ASICH and a Tipis close back view



Three quarters of the infantry brigade, of which the 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry was a part, were Indian volunteers. They included Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. From the Soldiers of Ox-



Typical Christmas greeting card available to the soldiers in theatre. From the collection of Kevin Northover



Thomas Glibbard's mother and sister (both Clara) visiting the grave of his brother George who was killed on the Somme in France in 1916. The trip was made in the 1920s. From the collection of Kevin Northover.



# MESOPOTAMIA 1914-18

Researched by  
**LOUISA FAGAN**

**This brass Turkish drum was captured by the 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry at the Battle of Ctesiphon in November 1915 as the campaign developed along the River Tigris.**

One of the primary reasons for initiating the campaign in Mesopotamia was to defend the oil refinery at Abadan at the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab waterway. The action at Ctesiphon took place between 22-25 November, with the objective of capturing Baghdad as the campaign developed beyond its original objectives. Although the battle ended as a tactical stalemate, it was a strategic victory for the Ottoman Empire.

The drum was presented to the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in memory of Captain Frank Maturin Davenport who was killed in the battle. Captain Davenport, who had been soldier with the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry since 1909, was commanding 'Q' Company. Davenport and the 1st Battalion were part of General Townshend's task force reconnoitring the best route by which to attack the Turkish position at Ruta. Townshend's 6th (Poona) Indian Army Division was noted for its fighting qualities during the campaign.

This Division was responsible for capturing Turkish trenches and several Krupp guns at Ctesiphon, only to be robbed of complete victory by insufficient numbers to meet the enemy's heavily reinforced counter-attack. The logistical lessons learned from this setback contributed to greater efficiency in later campaigns however.

The 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry suffered severely during this campaign with over 450 soldiers being killed and 1,300 prisoners being taken. The British force of 11,000 lost upwards of 4,000 casualties in the battle.

The drum captured during the battle of Ctesiphon in November 1915 from Turkish forces. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*



A German postcard commemorating the surrender of the Kut garrison in April 1916. *From the collection of Kevin Northover.*



The three images above were taken during the advance of the 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry up the River Tigris in the autumn of 1915. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*





'On the long march through torrid heat to Bagdad'



# MESOPOTAMIA 1914-18

Researched by  
**STEVE WARNER and PETER JOHNSTON**

**Lieutenant Charles Ingleton Widcombe (1895-1916)**

Having spent much of his youth in the cadet force of the Imperial Services College, the army was a large part of 'Brownie' Widcombe's short life. He served for four years in the cadets up to 1912 and joined the Public School's Battalion as soon as war broke out. He was a keen sportsman, playing both rugby and football whilst at school in Windsor, as well as coaching local cricket and football teams in his home town of Datchet, Buckinghamshire. He lived at home with his parents and two sisters, Dorothy and Sarah.

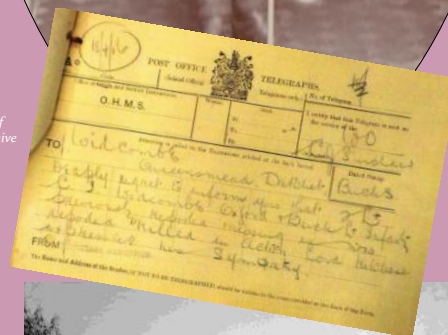
In England, he was posted to the 3rd Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry at Portsmouth, before being allocated to the 'Provisional' Battalion of the same regiment in Mesopotamia (Iraq). This unit was mainly made up of reinforcements for the 1st Battalion under siege at that time in Kut, 100 miles south of Baghdad. Widcombe was now 2nd Lieutenant.

Echoing the poet Rudyard Kipling, 'What matters who dies, while England lives' were allegedly Widcombe's last words before he died, spoken to his friend Lieutenant Radford at Sannaiyat, on 6th April 1916 during an attempt to relieve Kut's beleaguered garrison. Radford was the only officer that day not killed or wounded with the battalion. Widcombe had been shot through the head and was buried where he fell by Radford. The grave was later washed away by the River Tigris. Widcombe was twenty-one years old and is remembered today on the Basra Memorial, Iraq.

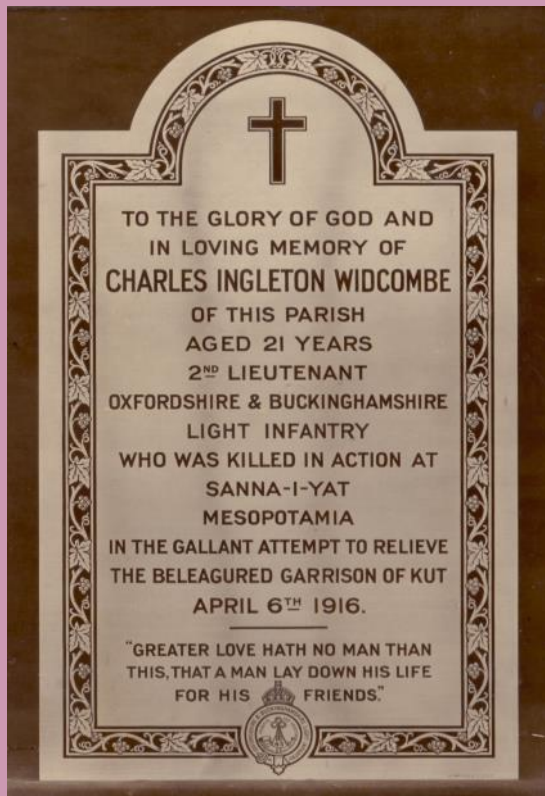


2nd Lieutenant Widcombe of the 1st Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive

Telegram informing Widcombe's family of his death. From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive



Early photographs of Widcombe and his family. From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive



Charles Widcombe's memorial in Datchet Church. From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive



Top: The Basra Memorial, Iraq. Maintained today by the CWGC when possible. From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive  
Bottom: Men of 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry in action along the River Tigris, 20 January 1916. These men were part of a force trying to relieve the siege at Kut. From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive





THE WAR  
BEYOND  
THE  
WESTERN  
FRONT

'Early morning camp fires and breakfast in the Persian Gulf'





'Turks eager for war. Germany's most distant ally mobilizing her army'





'Splendid Turkish infantry marching to fight the allies'



'Under the Star and Crescent - Infantry of the Sultan's Army so dramatically defeated by Allenby'



# MESOPOTAMIA 1914-18

Researched by  
**STEVE WARNER and PETER JOHNSTON**

**Preserving memories: The Mesopotamian Campaign**  
Scrapbooking is a means of preserving memories. Drawn from the Archives of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, three very different scrapbooks offer insight into the Mesopotamian Campaign.

Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Reynardson's scrapbooks include his wartime diaries and photographs and provide an authentic snapshot of his service. Far from the scene of battle, the sister of Lieutenant Charles Widcombe of 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, compiled an album including photographs and contemporary newspaper accounts. Much later in 1961, Captain Stanley Beresford-Munday created a scrapbook of his photographs with later recollections of the campaign.

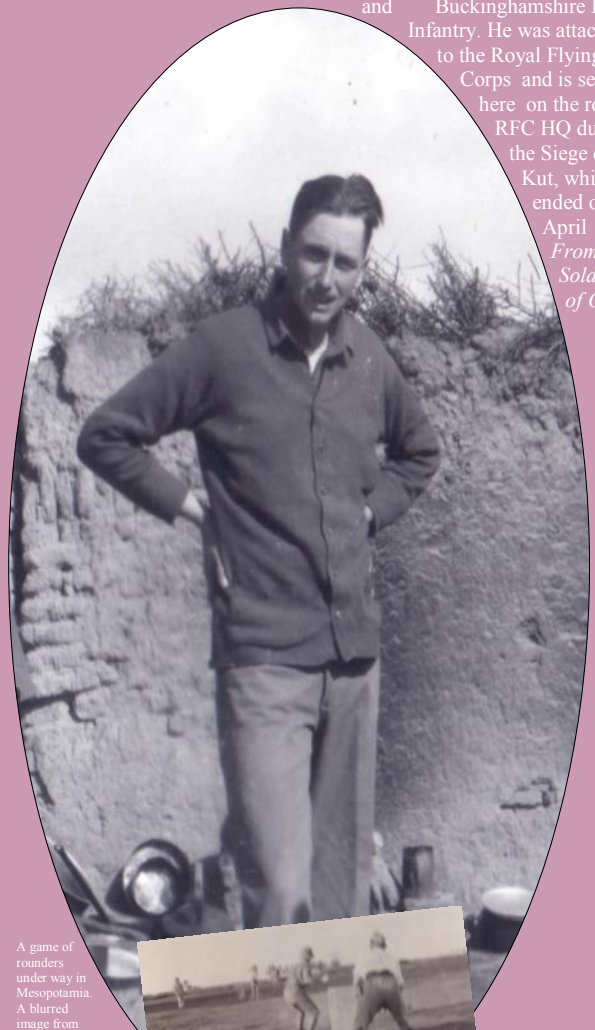
'Too awful for words' is how Reynardson described war time conditions. Poor diet and lack of clean water helped the spread of diseases such as dysentery. Infections and wartime injuries were exacerbated by lack of medical provisions. Extreme temperatures, sandstorms and floods added to the misery of constant sniping. Away from the frontline boredom was alleviated by hunting, fishing and rounders.

Sadie Widcombe's scrapbook is a eulogy for her brother and includes photographs of his earlier life and officer training. Newspaper clippings illustrate the campaign and some of the issues raised at home about strategy and lack of support. The only time we hear Charles Widcombe's voice is in a poem he wrote satirising Rudyard Kipling's poem *If*.

Beresford-Munday's scrapbook is dedicated to the officers of the 1st Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. He uses his own photographs, adding the captions from memory much later. This scrapbook strongly defends Major General Townshend the maligned leader of the campaign to take Baghdad.

The three scrapbooks were compiled over time and space. Though badly injured in combat Reynardson went on to become Secretary to the Governor of South Africa. Beresford-Munday became an archaeologist and maintained contact with his fellow servicemen. For Widcombe the war ended almost as soon as it began. He was killed within 10 minutes of his first action, one of over 31,000 British and Indian casualties of the campaign.

A 'selfie' of twenty-eight year old Captain Cyril Beresford-Munday, of 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. He was attached to the Royal Flying Corps and is seen here on the roof of RFC HQ during the Siege of Kut, which ended on 29 April 1916. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*



A game of rounders under way in Mesopotamia. A blurred image from Reynardson's album. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*



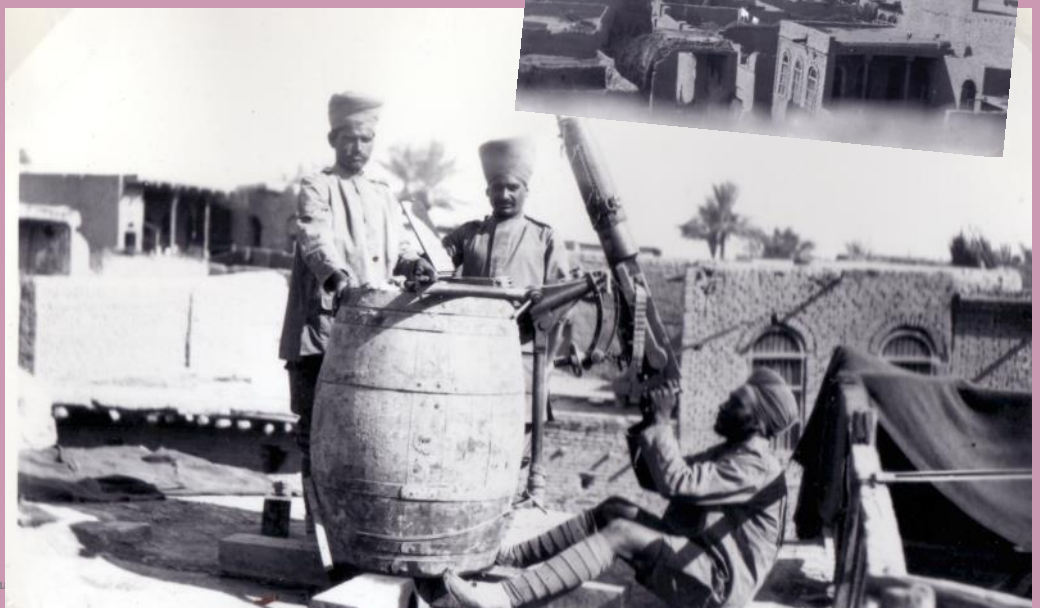
A view over Kut during the Siege in 1916, from Reynardson's album. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*



Photographs of Lieutenant Widcombe in an album compiled by his sister Sadie, after his death in Mesopotamia on 6 April 1916. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*



Photograph of Lieutenant-Colonel Reynardson. (third from the left). *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*



Indian anti-aircraft gunners of the Royal Flying Corps pose to be photographed by Beresford-Munday during the Siege of Kut in 1916. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*

# RUSSIA 1918-19

Researched by  
JANE COTTER

In February 1919, having left Mesopotamia the previous December, the 1st Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry reformed for service in North Russia. In May, this composite Battalion embarked from Southampton in support of the allied garrison already in theatre, protecting a large store of war material given to the Russians at the beginning of the war.

The allies were supporting the White Russians against Bolshevik forces, however, the campaign was beset by poor supply lines, inhospitable forest terrain and a growing Russian disregard for allied support. This resulted in Britain bringing its soldiers home in the autumn of 1919.

Among those arriving in Archangel with the 1st Battalion, was the Hon. Lieutenant and Quartermaster George Dancey, M.C., D.C.M. Born in Gloucestershire in 1881 and married in India in 1905, Dancey had risen through the ranks of the regiment and was present throughout the Mesopotamia Campaign 1914-18. He would not live to see the end of the Russia campaign however.

On 2 June 1919, he took his own life: "... the Regiment suffered a great loss. Dancey, after completing all preparations for the impending move up the Dwina, shot himself... There is no doubt that he had completely overworked himself; he had been ill before leaving England, and the strain was too much for him. Those who knew his work will appreciate the loss the Regiment suffered."

Writing home to his father Lieutenant J.E.H Neville explained: "...poor Dancey who has done nothing except arrange moves ever since he re-joined us at Crowborough... just went off his head... He was such a cheerful good-hearted fellow and an ideal man at his job."



Archangel from the Sabornaya Quay, North Russia. From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive

Dancey was buried at Archangel Allied Cemetery. He was survived by his wife Emily and 8-year-old daughter Norah.

From the collection of the Imperial War Museum



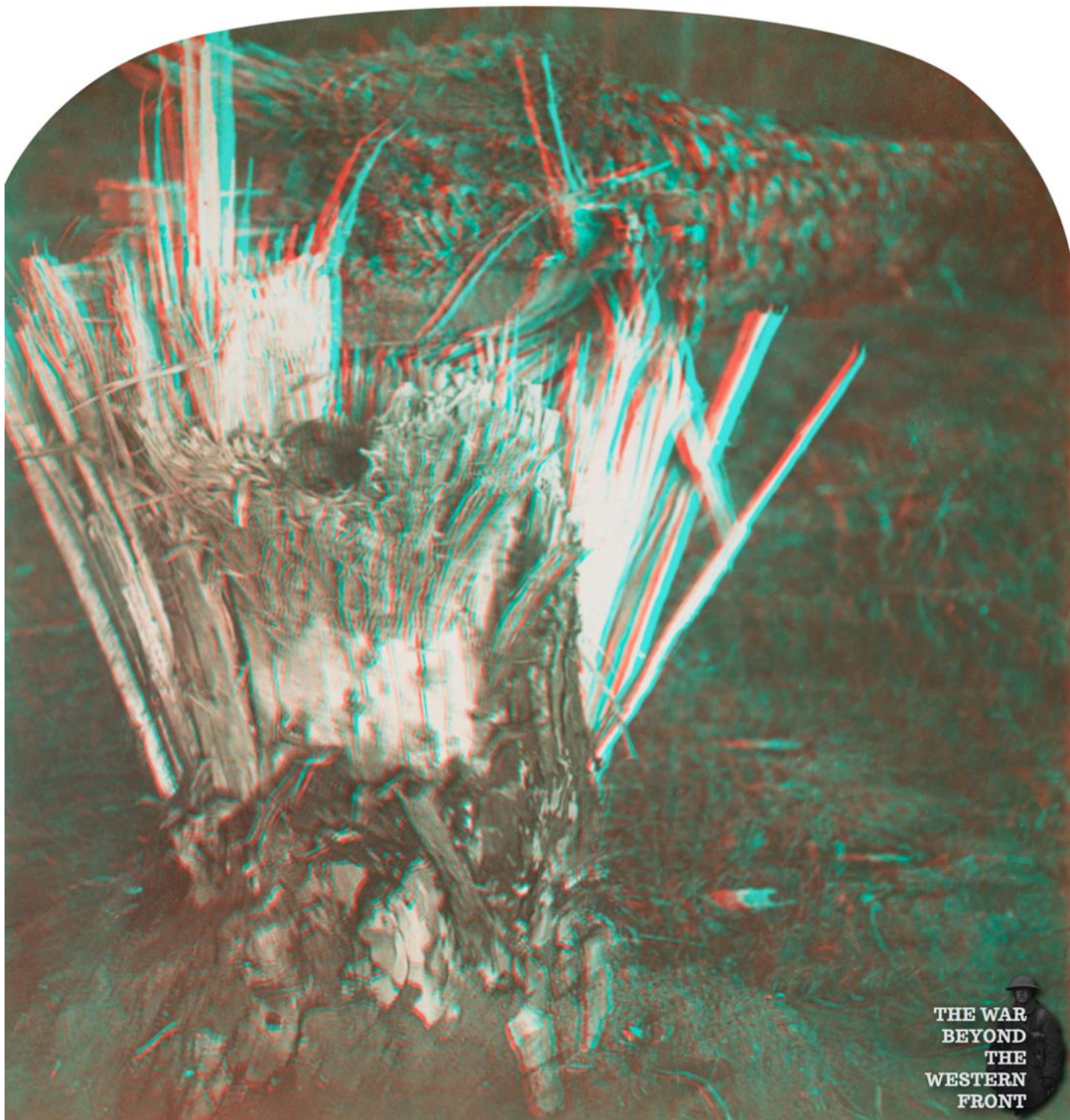
Breaking through the ice on the way to Archangel. From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum





'A bristling forest of bayonets, Russian troops on review'





'A pioneer of the Kaiser's forests shattered into toothpicks by a shell from the Russian lines'



# SALONIKA 1915-18

Researched by  
**JOHN SHELDON**

Private 26540 Henry John Marsh, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion sailed from Marseilles to Salonika in November 1915, having briefly fought on the Somme in trenches near Albert. They were part of a Franco-British force sent to the Balkans to defend Serbia which was about to be invaded by Germany, Austria and Bulgaria, and they became entrenched in a campaign to resist enemy aggression in Northern Greece.

The campaign was mired by a climate of great extremes, poor supply lines and little in the way of good roads or transport. Severe winter weather and the threat of frostbite gave way in summer to swarms of flies and mosquitoes and disease soon became the constant enemy, with dysentery and malaria almost endemic.

In July 1916, the 7th Battalion's battleground became the foothills opposite the *Grand Couronne* along the Greek border with Serbia and Bulgaria near to Lake Doiran. On 17 August 1916, they successfully attacked the Bulgarians at Horseshoe Hill, becoming the first British troops to gain a foothold in Serbia.

Private Henry Marsh arrived from England on 21 August 1916 in a draft of twenty-two men. For the next eight months the Battalion held the western end of the Balkan line, constantly bombarded by enemy artillery, and taking casualties from shellfire and the extremes of climate and disease.

By the time of the failed offensive on the *Petit Couronne* on 24 April 1917, Private Marsh had been admitted to No.31 Casualty Clearing Station with fever. The summer heat began to take its toll once more, and Private Marsh was again hospitalised to No.21 Stationary Hospital with a recurrence of malaria, from whence he was repatriated home from Salonika by hospital ship.

On discharge, he was awarded the Silver War Badge as being no longer physically fit for war service, to deter those who presented apparently physically fit looking men with "white feathers" to indicate their supposed cowardice.

Private Henry Marsh of the 7th Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. From the collection of Sue Brett

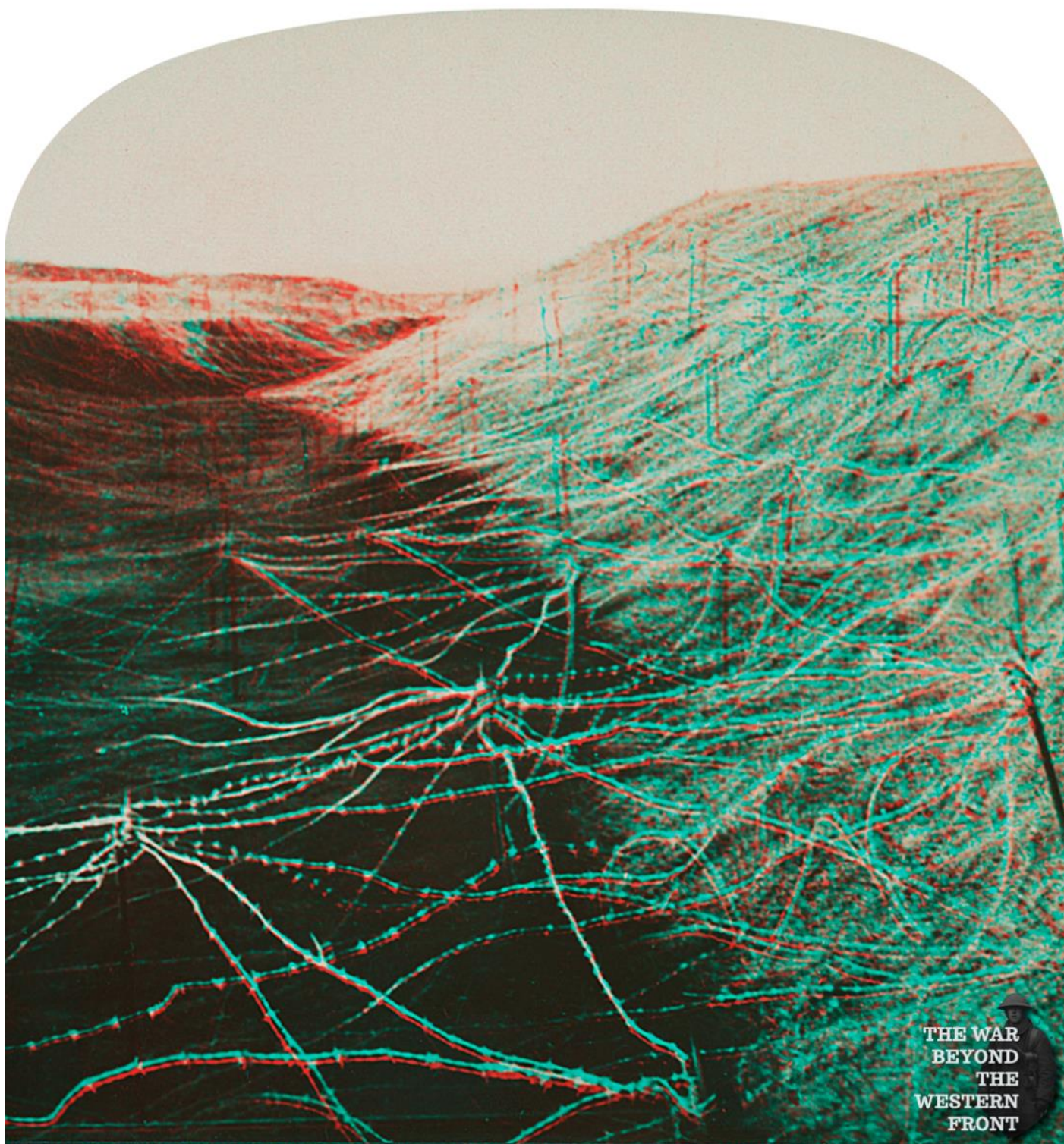


Men of the 7th Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry re-enact their capture of Horseshoe Hill for the press, October 1916. From the collection of The Imperial War Museum



No. 37 Hospital, Salonika. From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive





THE WAR  
BEYOND  
THE  
WESTERN  
FRONT

'No man's land, sea of barbed wire in front of Bulgarian lines, Saloniki front'



# SALONIKA 1915-18

Researched by  
**KATHLEEN TUNNICLIFFE**

**2014 was the year I retired. On my 'to-do list' was to write an account of my grandfather's life. Harold Mitchell died in 1984 leaving only memories of his war service with his family.**

Harold Joseph Mitchell, who was born in 1893, was a farm labourer from Ewelme, Oxfordshire. Soon after the war's outbreak, he joined the 8th Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

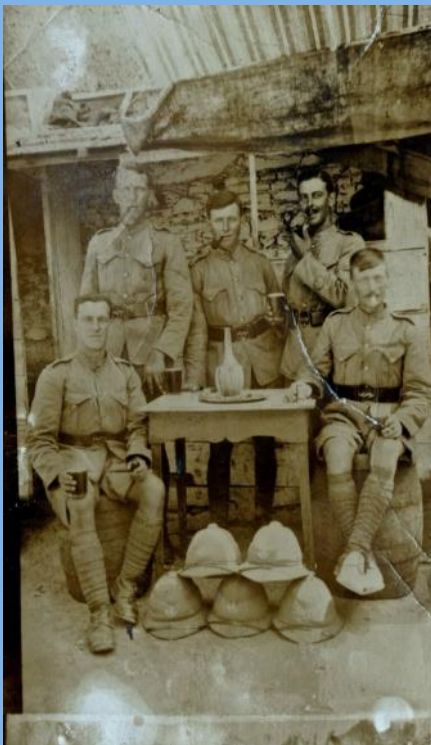
A year later, following intensive training, his unit were deployed near Loos. This engagement with the Western Front was brief and a prelude to their journey south through France across the Mediterranean to Salonika.

The 8th Battalion spent the next three and a half years in the Balkans, many of the soldiers unable to take home leave. They began a mission to secure defences around the gateway city of Salonika. Once arrived, they marched northwards to the Greek border where Germany's ally, Bulgaria, had built a stronghold in the hills. The 7th and 8th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Battalions were in action at Horseshoe Hill and Lake Doiran.

In September 1918, the British Balkan Force pursued retreating enemy troops into Bulgaria, Turkey and Rumania. Hostilities were halted on 11 November 1918 when the armistice was signed. The 7th and 8th Battalions were used as peacekeepers, often in areas of racial tension and in rebuilding destroyed bridges and roads.

It was to be another five months before Harold Mitchell was finally able to return home to Ewelme. British Balkan troops were largely ignored by the press during the war and their contribution undervalued when they returned home. Whilst many lost their lives through battle, many more died or were weakened through disease and life in the harsh conditions they encountered.

Private Harold Mitchell of the 8th Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. From the collection of Kathleen Tunnicliffe



Harold Mitchell (back row, left) and comrades in Salonika. From the collection of Kathleen Tunnicliffe



Harold Mitchell (back row, right) and comrades in Salonika. From the collection of Kathleen Tunnicliffe





'Great naval gun and its protecting fort of sand bags on the Saloniki front'



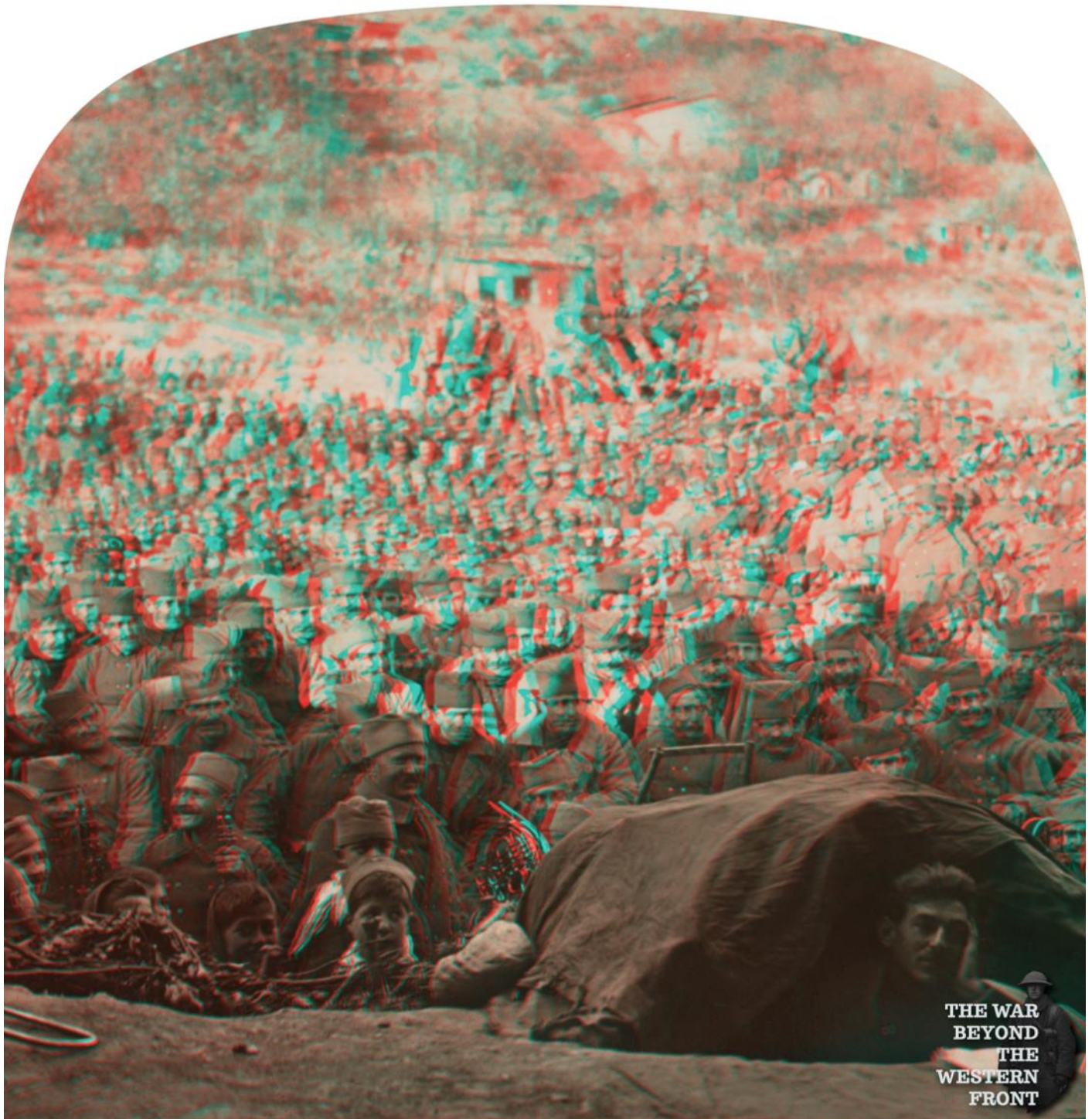


THE WAR  
BEYOND  
THE  
WESTERN  
FRONT

'View in a trench kitchen underground on the Saloniki front'



# THE BALKANS



'View from stage of a Serbian army audience in an outdoor theater at the front. Prompter in foreground'





THE WAR  
BEYOND  
THE  
WESTERN  
FRONT

'Serbian reserves in the Balkan mountains awaiting orders to advance'





'A Serbian rest camp back of front line trenches in the Balkans'

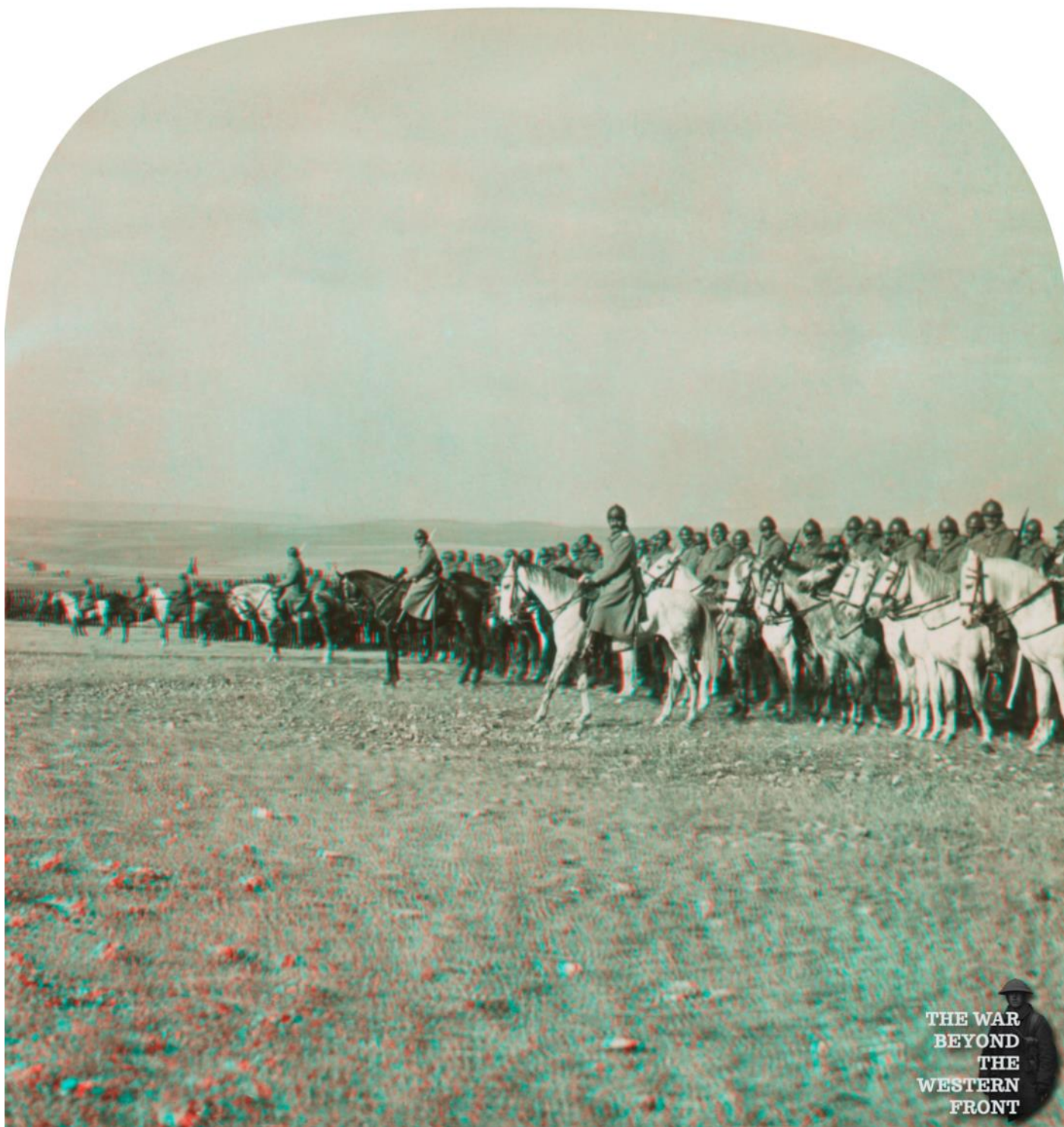




THE WAR  
BEYOND  
THE  
WESTERN  
FRONT

'Serbian trench. Awaiting phone call from listening post to fire rocket for illuminating "No man's land"'





'Serbian cavalry ready for battle on the Balkan plains'





'British anti-aircraft gun in action on Balkan front, camouflaged and mounted on auto'





'Modern cliff dwellers. A regimental headquarters back of Serbian front'





'Loading a trench mortar in a hillside dugout on the Serbian front'





THE WAR  
BEYOND  
THE  
WESTERN  
FRONT

'Rifle grenade in a British line trench in the Balkans'





THE WAR  
BEYOND  
THE  
WESTERN  
FRONT

'In a British first line trench in the Balkans'



# ITALY 1917-19

Researched by  
**JANET WITCOMB**

**The 48<sup>th</sup> (South Midland) Division In Italy**  
**November 1917 – February 1919**

Following the disastrous defeat of the Italian Army at Caporetto in November 1917, the Allies were fearful that the Italians would withdraw from the war, thus freeing thousands of Austro-Hungarian men for fighting on the Western Front.

Five British Divisions were sent to support the Italians, including the 48<sup>th</sup> (South Midland) Division which contained the 145<sup>th</sup> Brigade. The battalions in this Brigade were the 1/4 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, the 1/4 Royal Berkshire, the 1/1 Buckinghamshire and the 1/5 Gloucestershire.

By March 1918, the Division moved to the Asiago plateau, where they experienced severe cold, snowstorms and thunderstorms at an altitude of five thousand feet and snow lay around until May. On 10 June, the Austro-Hungarians launched an attack on the Italian front. This was named the Battle of the Piave River. Initially, the Austro-Hungarians made gains, but were eventually driven back with great loss. The 1/4 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry employed their cooks, clerks and orderlies to enable them to hold out against overwhelming odds!

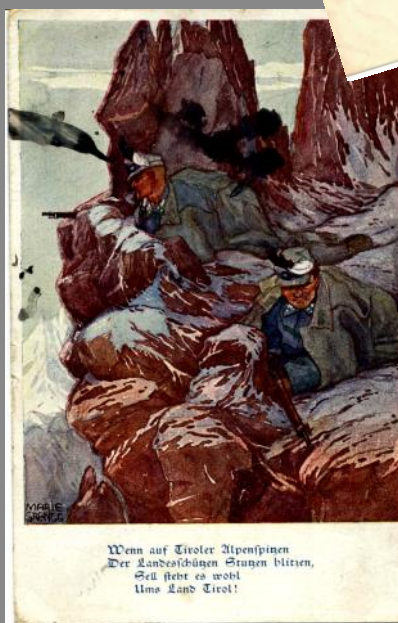
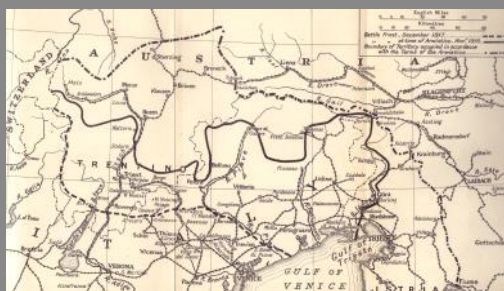
On 23 October 1918, the Allied Commander in Italy, Armando Diaz launched his final offensive on the River Piave. This was known as the Battle of Vittorio Veneto. Both the 1/4 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, and 1/1 Buckinghamshire took part in the battle, which ultimately succeeded in driving back the Austro-Hungarians.

The Armistice with Austria-Hungary was signed on 3 November 1918 and came into force at 1500 hours on 4 November. The men of the 48<sup>th</sup> (South Midland) Division spent Christmas in the villages of Novale and Maglio looking forward to demobilisation, which began slowly at first, but was completed by February 1919.

Company Quartermaster Sergeant  
Major Bill Liebermann of the  
1/4 Oxfordshire and  
Buckinghamshire Light  
Infantry. As

Bandmaster, he composed the 'Italian  
Marching Song'  
which is still  
used to this day.

*From the  
Soldiers of  
Oxfordshire  
Museum.  
Archive*



Top left: Map of the Campaign in Italy 1917-18; bottom left: Colonel Howard of 48<sup>th</sup> Division taking the surrender of Austro-Hungarian forces at Trento, Italy, late 1918. *From the collection of Richard Jeffs*

Centre image: Postcard taken from an Austro-Hungarian prisoner; top right: Austro-Hungarian soldiers with an accordion player; bottom right: the Band of the 1/4 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry in Italy. *From the collection of Richard Jeffs*



# ITALY 1917-19

Researched by  
**JEAN MILLS**

**Whatever thoughts Signalman Eli Smith had about army life, it would be safe to say that what followed was not one of them.**

In 1916, 18 year old Eli Smith from Old Hill, Staffordshire enlisted in the Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars (QOOH) and made his way with others to Ireland where he was to learn his military skills.

In December that year, he was part of a group of 200 soldiers that were sent to France to join the 1/4 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, arriving two days before Christmas 1916. The Battalion fought in France until November 1917 when it was posted to Italy for the start of the Austro-Hungarian offensive.

Fighting continued until 15 June 1918 on the Asiago front when Eli was reported missing in action. His family found out that he was a Prisoner of War in Austria, having been wounded. He had sustained a shrapnel wound to his chest which would have been fatal but for his cigarette case in a breast pocket. He was found by the Austro-Hungarians two days later.

Eli was sent to a hospital in Vienna and once fully recovered found he was the only Englishman there. Although a POW, he was treated well and offered work within the hospital helping the surgeons and on the wards with dressings.

One week before the Armistice, he managed to obtain an Austrian coat and cap and set off toward the Italian lines, where he revealed his identity. He was eventually released to the authorities who arranged his passage home. He returned to the bosom of his family and friends where he was given a hero's welcome home party. Eli was by now twenty one years old. He'd had his adventure.

Private Eli Smith of 1/4 Battalion  
Oxfordshire and Bucking-  
hamshire Light  
Infantry. From  
*the Soldiers of  
Oxfordshire  
Museum  
Archive*



Sign made by  
Eli Smith's  
family to  
welcome him  
back from  
Italy. From  
*the Soldiers of  
Oxfordshire  
Museum  
Archive*



Private Eli Smith as a member of the Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Archive*



Private Eli Smith working as a hospital orderly in an Austrian hospital. His head is just visible second from the right. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*





THE WAR  
BEYOND  
THE  
WESTERN  
FRONT

'Along the Battle lines in the High Alps - field piece dominating a mountain pass'



# ITALY 1917-19

Researched by  
**KEVIN NORTHOVER**

Charles Henry Marrison was born in Banbury in 1891, the son of Henry and Clara Marrison of 35, East Street, Grimsbury. He had three elder sisters – Clara, Mary and Margaret and an older brother John. By 1911, John was working for the Lucas factory which made ladles underwear. He was employed as a cutter, his three sisters also working there.

Charles Marrison joined the army in August 1914 and went with the 1/4 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry to France in 1915 where he served for two and a half years. He then went with the Battalion to Italy in November 1917.

Corporal Marrison was killed in action with the Battalion on 15 June 1918 during the Austro-Hungarian offensive. He was twenty-six years old. He is buried in the Boscon Military Cemetery, on the Asiago Plateau in Italy.

Corporal Marrison's mother received a card from Second Lieutenant Howell, her son's officer. The card was dated the 20 June and offered heartfelt sympathy:

*'...Corporal Marrison, who was in charge of a section of my Platoon, was a very capable man and showed splendid abilities. The Austrians attacked us on the morning of 15 June and were beaten very badly indeed. Corporal Marrison was in the front line with his section and throughout the whole affair behaved splendidly. He and his section wrought great havoc in the enemy's ranks. He was a hero from start to finish and nothing the writer could say in praise of him is half good enough to show how gallantly he acted throughout.*

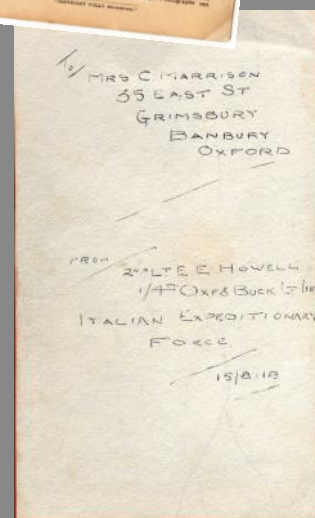
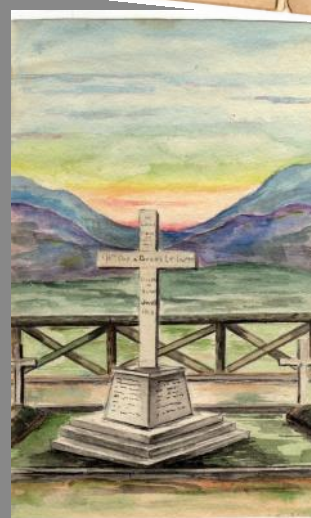
*Unfortunately, the enemy, coming through a gap on the right, called my attention there and during my absence Corporal Marrison was shot through the head, death being instantaneous. His body was recovered and was buried in the little British cemetery in the rear of the lines.'*



Mount Katz photographed recently from the centre of Asiago. Inset: Asiago being bombed in May 1916, photographed from Mount Katz. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*



Corporal Charles Henry Marrison of the 1/4 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. *From the collection of Kevin Northover*



Letter with beautiful hand painted image, sent by Corporal Marrison's officer to the former's mother upon his death. *From the collection of Kevin Northover*





'Fire spray captured from the Austrians in the district of Capitello in Italy'



# ITALY 1917-19

Researched by  
**JEFF CLEMENTS**

On 23 May 1915, in the wake of British and French promises of substantial territorial gains, the formerly neutral state of Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary. Between June 1915 and March 1916 the Italians launched five separate offensives against their Austrian neighbours in the Isonzo region. Although outnumbered, the Austro-Hungarians occupied strong defensive positions and managed to inflict huge losses on the attackers. By the end of 1915, almost one quarter of the Italian army had been lost and the front had become bogged down in trench warfare.

In November 1917, the British and French dispatched forces to the region to bolster the efforts of their Italian ally.

One of those British soldiers who went was Private Alfred Launchbury. Born in Witney in the spring of 1898, he was the eldest son of John, an assurance agent, and his wife, Selina. Alfred joined the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry in the summer of 1917 and served with the regiment's 1/4 Battalion, part of the 48th (South Midland) Division. In late November 1917, following service on the Western Front, the Division arrived in Italy.

In March 1918, the Division held the front line sector at Montello before moving west to the relatively quiet Asiago sector. It was there, in the early hours of 15 June 1918, that the Austro-Hungarians launched a surprise offensive. In what became known as the *Battle of Asiago*, the allied front line was breached to a depth of one thousand yards – ground that was recovered twenty four hours later when the allies counter-attacked.

However, casualties were taken and Alfred Launchbury was amongst those who were killed in the initial fighting – reportedly by a bullet from an Austro-Hungarian machine gun.

He was buried, alongside a number of his comrades, in the Boscon British Cemetery on the Asiago Plateau, Northern Italy.

Private Alfred Launchbury No. 203217, 'B'  
Coy. 1/4 Battalion Oxfordshire and  
Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. Killed in  
action at the Battle of Asi-  
ago, Italy, 15 June  
1918. From the  
collection of  
Andreas  
Launchbury



Images above: Boscon British Cemetery, Italy, photographed recently and just after the war. The final resting place of Pte. Alfred Launchbury.



Alfred Launchbury, seated front left, with several comrades who had recently enlisted in 1917. From the collection of Andreas Launchbury



Images above: Boscon British Cemetery and the Asiago Plain, Italy, photographed recently. Private Alfred Launchbury's grave is on the extreme right. From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive





THE WAR  
BEYOND  
THE  
WESTERN  
FRONT

'Mount Grappa and ruins of Quero, on the Italian battle front'





'Watching an airplane combat over the Italian lines'



'Camp of Italian outpost on steep Alpine slope'



# ITALY 1917-19

Researched by  
**MARK MCKAY**

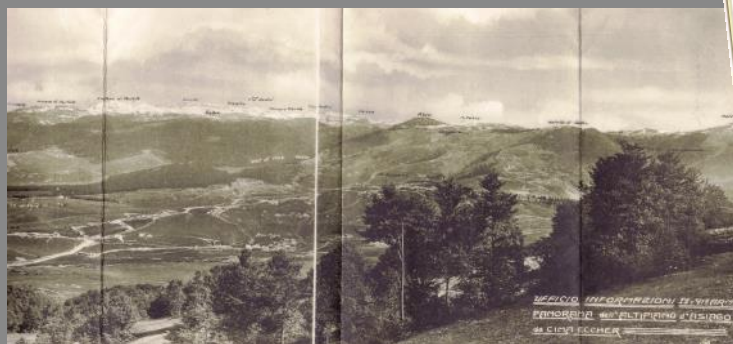
On 22 November 1917, the 1/4th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry received orders to leave the Western Front for northern Italy. Their re-deployment came after German and Austro-Hungarian forces routed the Italian army at the Battle of Caporetto, leading to Allied fears that the Italians may pull out of the war. Since May 1915, Italy had been fighting Austria-Hungary in a mountain war in the Alps. But they suffered heavy casualties, including 600,000 at Caporetto, while food shortages gripped the home front.

Captain Graham Greenwell was one of the troops taking the 700-mile rail journey to Italy with the 1/4 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

*'We knew there was the Italian front up in the mountains. We knew they were up there in the snow. The Austrians had a shot at the Italians...and in five minutes they disrupted the whole front. The Italians started running and there was nothing to stop them as far as anybody could see until they got to Rome.'* Captain Graham Greenwell

The six-day route to Italy took Capt Greenwell and the 1/4 Battalion through France to northern Italy. Although the front had stabilised on the River Piave, British units were kept to the rear in case of another collapse.

In villages behind the line, the men were well-received by the Italians. For Captain Greenwell, life in Italy was, for some of the time, a world away from the horrors of the Western Front.

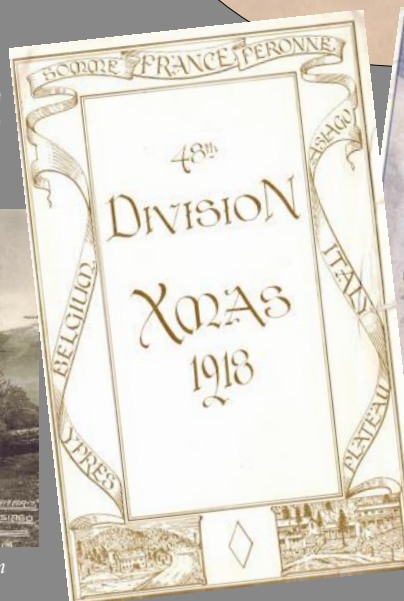


Panorama of the Asiago Plateau, Italy. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*



Captain Graham Greenwell of the 1/4 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, who served with the battalion throughout 1914-18. He wrote a memoir of his time with the unit called 'An Infant in Arms. *From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive*

*'Short of English drink like beer we had plenty of wine with disastrous effects on the troops. We were delighted to be in Italy, like bursting into a new world. There we spent an extremely happy winter compared to France.'*



*'We were lectured and told that nobody knew quite what action we might find ourselves in, but we might find ourselves in a Mons situation at once and immediately involved in a retreat.'*





THE WAR  
BEYOND  
THE  
WESTERN  
FRONT

'Looking E. on Italian front. Foreground, Italian trenches of resistance built after territory was won from enemy'



# ITALY 1917-19

Researched by  
**PAUL OTTER**

Mr Edwin Wellstood from Clifton Hampden, in what was then Berkshire, attested with the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry on 7 December 1915 at nearby Abingdon. He was originally posted with the 2nd Battalion from the Depot at Cowley Barracks in Oxford.

Eventually, Private Wellstood was posted to the 6th Battalion in September 1916, fighting on the Somme until the end of the campaign in November. In January 1917, he returned to England probably owing to being wounded or becoming sick.

He returned to the Western Front, but was this time posted to the 1/4 Battalion in August 1917. He fought with the Battalion at Ypres, on Vimy Ridge and then travelled to Italy with them in time for the battles on the Piave River and the Asiago Plateau in 1918. Private Wellstood was part of the Battalion's Headquarters Company and became involved with processing Austro-Hungarian prisoners who had surrendered between July and December 1918. He recorded the numbers of prisoners each day being taken by 48th Division, of which the 1/4 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry was a part.

Private Wellstood seems to have played an active part in the surrender of the Austro-Hungarian soldiers, able to gather their personal photographs, postcards and other souvenirs. The images of the soldiers who have surrendered or were killed in action are being seen here for the first time in almost one hundred years.

Pocket book kept by Private Edwin Wellstood during his war service. He kept a record of the number of Austro-Hungarian soldiers taken prisoner. From the collection of Paul Otter

One of the postcards in the possession of Private Edwin Wellstood, of an Austro-Hungarian soldier, obtained in Italy in 1918. From the collection of Paul Otter



Surrender of Austro-Hungarian units to the 48th Division in late 1918. From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Archive



Two of the postcards in the possession of Private Edwin Wellstood, of Austro-Hungarian soldiers, obtained in Italy in 1918. From the collection of Paul Otter

After the First World War, Edwin Wellstood was a carrier, picking up and delivering to Oxford and Abingdon. He may have delivered fish picked up from Culham railway station and water cress from Ewelme. From the collection of Paul Otter



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# TITLE LIST

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- Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. Scene of murder of crown prince which started flame that engulfed all Europe (Keystone View Company, W1\* 15625)
- Gallant legionnaires of Czechoslovakia on parade, Prague (Keystone View Company, W272\*\* 18774)

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- Rifle grenade in a British line trench in the Balkans (Keystone View Company, W56 18881)
- In a British first line trench in the Balkans (Keystone View Company, W54 V18882)
- British anti-aircraft gun in action on Balkan front, camouflaged and mounted on auto (Keystone View Company, W53\* V18093)
- Loading a trench mortar in a hillside dugout on the Serbian front (Keystone View Company, W58\*\* V18890)
- Modern cliff dwellers. A regimental headquarters back of Serbian front (Keystone View Company, W62\*\* V18882)
- Serbian cavalry ready for battle on the Balkan plains (Keystone View Company, W51 V18814)
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- Serbian trench. Awaiting phone call from listening post to fire rocket for illuminating 'No man's land' (Keystone View Company, W57\*\* V18889)
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- Under the Star and Crescent. Infantry of the Sultan's Army so dramatically defeated by Allenby (Realistic Travels, 123) (Collection of Tudor Georgescu)

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- A bristling forest of bayonets, Russian troops on review (Keystone View Company, W4\* 18689)
- A pioneer of the Kaiser's forests shattered into toothpicks by a shell from the Russian lines (Keystone View Company, W140\*\* 18065)



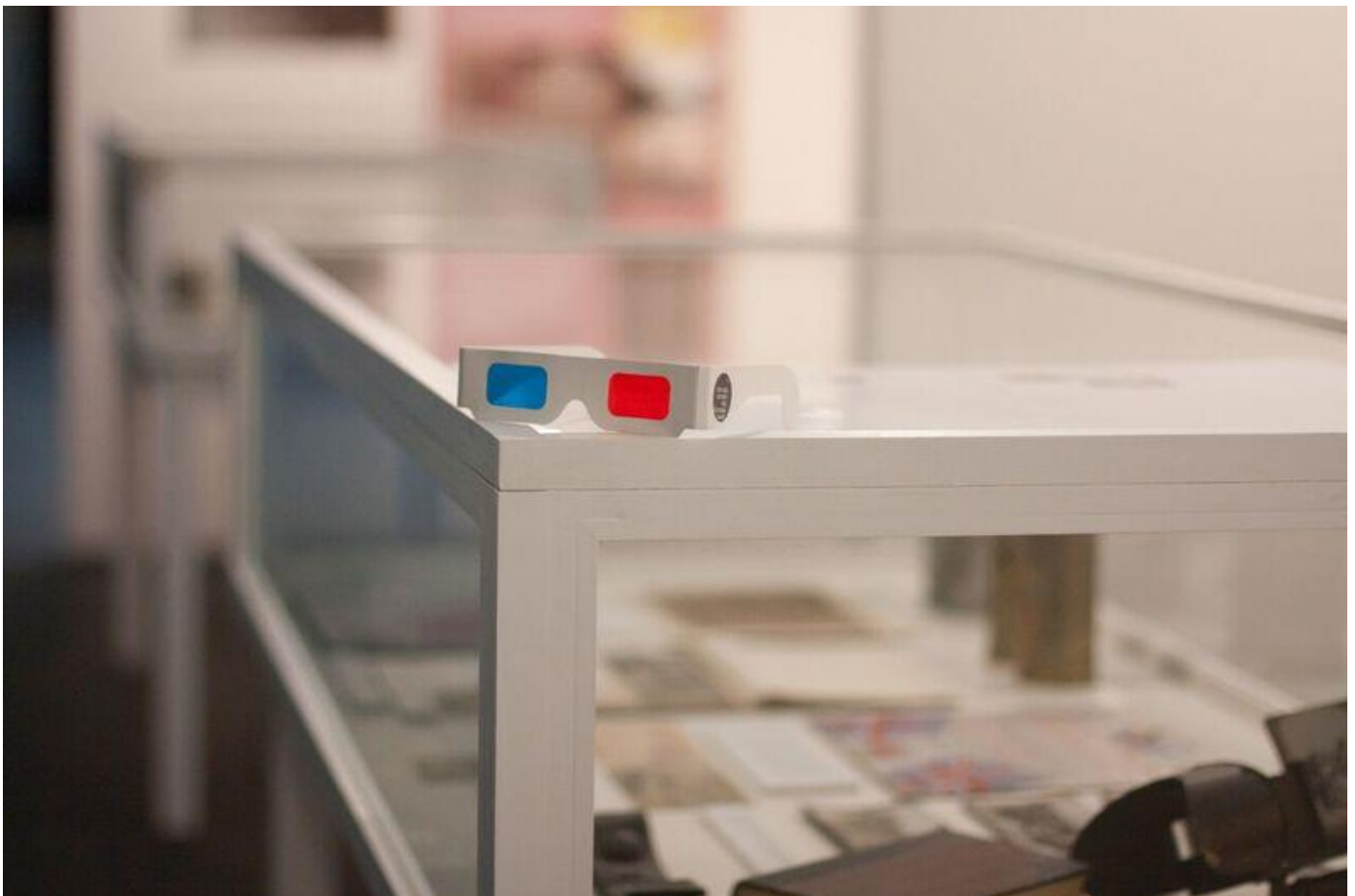
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- Great naval gun and its protecting fort of sand bags on the Saloniki front (Keystone View Company, W52\*\* V18904)
- No man's land, sea of barbed wire in front of Bulgarian lines, Saloniki front (Keystone View Company, W55\* V18880)
- View in a trench kitchen underground on the Saloniki front (Keystone View Company, W59\*\* V18883)

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- Along the Battle lines in the High Alps - field piece dominating a mountain pass (Underwood and Underwood, 13050) (Collection of Tudor Georgescu)
- Camp of Italian outpost on steep Alpine slope (Keystone View Company, W67 18843)
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- Looking East on Italian front. Foreground, Italian trenches of resistance built after territory was won from enemy (Keystone View Company, W69\* 18711)
- Mount Grappa and ruins of Quero, on the Italian battle front (Keystone View Company, W64\*\* 19253)
- Watching an airplane combat over the Italian lines (Keystone View Company, W66 v19278)

*Note: Unless stated otherwise, the digital copy of the original stereograph is courtesy of the United States Library of Congress*







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