

In loving memory –Vestre Cemetery, Copenhagen

By Dorothy 01.11.13 edited M.A. Jones

Revised 01.03.19

The names of 19 British soldiers appear on an imposing memorial in the Vestre Cemetery. All had died between 22 December 1918 and 13 January 1919. Amongst their number were a Canadian, an Indian and an Australian from Tasmania. They were all making their way home after having been held as prisoners of war in Germany. After surviving their imprisonment it is very sad that their journey home ended in Copenhagen; they did not get back to their loved ones. The circumstances with regard to why they were in Denmark, what caused their deaths and the funeral ceremonies that honoured them are detailed below.

The Danish Scheme, devised by Captain Charles Cabry Dix, the British Naval Attaché in Copenhagen, was in full swing. It was transporting British prisoners of war who had been held in German camps to the East of the River Elbe to Denmark for transfer to ships that would take them back to the UK. The British Red Cross commission in Copenhagen had set up an Ambulance section under the leadership of Professor Holger Mygind which hired Danish doctors and nurses to attend to the sick and wounded on the ships. This journey often involved a stay of about a week in Denmark. On arrival in Copenhagen or Århus the men would be taken to army camps whilst the majority of officers were accommodated in hotels.



Some of the men still needed treatment for their wounds and some were weak after years of imprisonment. Given professional treatment, tender care, and good food and with the joy of being free and on their way home most of the men would make the journey successfully. Some were too weak to be taken from the lazarets in Germany where the Red Cross sent them comforts. A number of hospital ships were sent to the Baltic to deal with the sick and transport them home. Some didn't make it and died on route. The main killer of most of the 19 ex-prisoners of war was the Spanish flu and its complications. The flu was spreading across the world and its victims also included the young, strong and well fed. Many Danes were affected and the hospitals and staff were stretched to their limit. A good number of pows succumbed and the hospitals in Copenhagen had to deal with a sudden influx of several hundred foreign patients who also needed their care and attention.

The first of the British pows who died in Denmark during the journey home was 27 year old William Thomas Bate of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. He was in the first group who had sailed to Århus and was staying at the camp at Hald near Viborg. It was reported in the local newspaper that he was admitted to the hospital in Viborg with gallstones. The young man died on 15 December, the same day as his comrades left Denmark for the last leg of their sea journey home. He was buried 4 days later at Viborg Cemetery following a moving ceremony during which the vicar spoke of how sad it was that he should die on his way home. William Bates was the only one of the British former prisoners who died during their stay at Hald.



William Thomas Bate's comrades, Hald

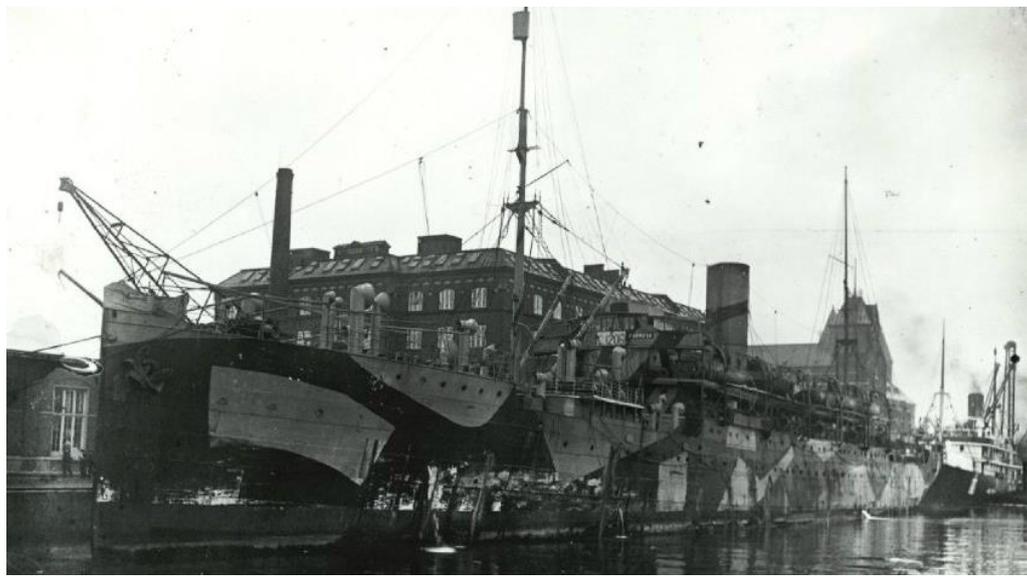
Gibson, Church, Scott, Moffat and Holgate

31 year old Joseph Gibson, 1/7 bn West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) died on 22 December of tuberculosis. He was a patient at the Oresunds hospital together with another 47 British. Four days later, on 26 December, William Church died, 1 bn Queens (Royal West Surrey Regiment). Before the war he had worked at a gas works. He had travelled from Warnemünde on the Cimbria, a DFDS ship taking part in the repatriation scheme, some few days before. Church's group had been staying at Skov camp, on Amager. He was the first who died of the Spanish flu and pneumonia. The flu epidemic which in an odd way may have saved his brother's life. Tom was in the Royal Garrison Artillery, serving as a Signal linesman. 19 in April 1918 he was due to leave for France. He later told his grandson that he didn't expect to survive, as his job involved repairing broken signal wires under fire, and his trade was known to take high casualties. Contracting the flu he was hospitalised and was still in hospital when the Armistice was signed.



Bill and Tom Church

26 year old Alexander Cole Scott, Royal Army Service Corps a sculptor from Belfast, had been in the reserve and was called up when war broke out on 4 August 1914. The young married man was one of the first sent abroad, on 17th August 1914, and he was, according to a Red Cross camp transfer list, taken prisoner just a few days later on 26 August 1914. Scott's last camp of internment was Chemnitz, in Denmark he was billeted at the camp at Greve. From here he was taken to the Garnisons hospital where he died on 27th December of pneumonia.



HMHS Formosa at Frihavn – dazzle painted blue, green and yellow

Another died the next day, this time on HMHS Formosa which was docked in Frihavn. HMHS Formosa, a British hospital ship, arrived at Copenhagen for the first time on 23 November, before the former prisoners of war had started their journey home. It was the first British ship in Copenhagen since war had broken out and they had an open day for interested visitors. The hospital ship had then sailed twice with patients directly from Stettin to Leith, but after 27 December it stayed put in Frihavn. 25 year old James Sewell Moffat from the Canadian Infantry must have been one of the first to be taken on board on its return, for he died in their care of Spanish flu on 28 December. He was a young, single farmer, son of a clergyman, who had joined the army in Winnipeg on 2 December 1915. James Moffat's brother Robert, two years older, had joined up in May 1916. He was killed on the Western Front in April 1917 and was buried in France. What a tragedy for their father, who must have been so glad that one son had survived the war only to then lose him to influenza during his homeward journey.

28 year old William Arthur Holgate a farmer from Dockber, Sawley, died on 29 December. He was in 16 bn West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own). This was the first battalion of Bradford Pals, formed in the autumn of 1914. "Pals" battalions were made up of men from the same district or workplace. It could be devastating to an area when one of these pals' battalions was involved in heavy fighting as many families in a small area lost family members and friends. William had been fortunate in the support he had received from his local community. Early in 1918 the people of Rimington, a rural village, had decided to adopt a prisoner of war and there had been an excellent response to the appeal for the £2 13s which would be required each month. Private Holgate was chosen and the people of Rimington received letters from

him thanking them for adopting him and reassuring that the parcels had arrived safely. In his last letter written about a week before his death William wrote most hopefully of his expected return. He been interned at Gstrow and travelled to Copenhagen on the Cimbria from Warnemnde. He was transferred straight from the ship to Oresunds hospital where also he died of Spanish flu and pneumonia.

Five had now died in Copenhagen; Gibson had already been dead over a week. Captain Andrews, an ex pow himself who was now working with the repatriation commission, in a letter sent on 30 December to the Danish Committee (Justitsministeriets kontor for hjemsendelse af fremmede krigsfanger) asked if the men could be buried in Copenhagen. A decision was needed and given the number of men ill with influenza it was probable that more would die in the coming days. On Saturday 4 January a ceremony was held for the first five in the Vestre cemetery chapel and they were subsequently buried in its precincts.



Lord Kilmarnock



Major Hazard

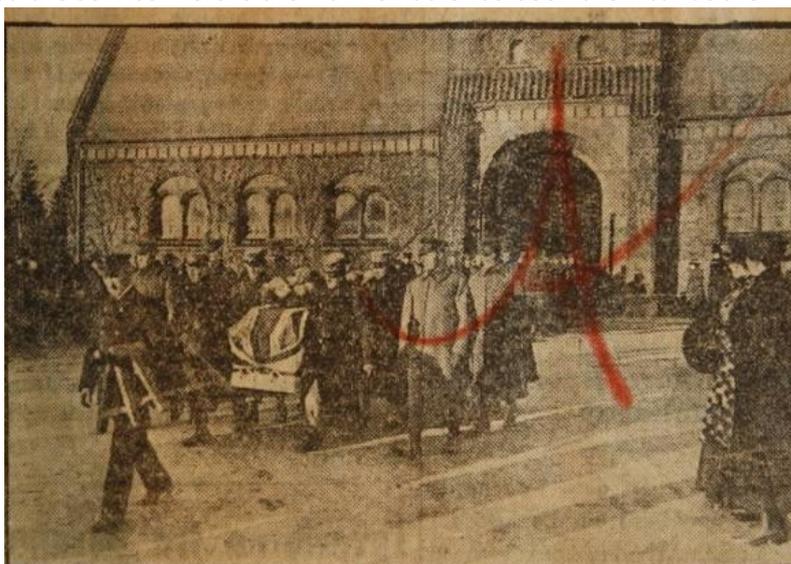


Captain Davidsen



Mrs. Annie Mygind

Five white coffins covered with British flags stood in the chapel each with a guard of four British soldiers. Wreaths lay on each coffin. Lord Kilmarnock the British Charg d' Affairs, Major Hazard, an ex pow now acting as senior British officer for the British soldiers in Denmark, Colonel Willemoes from Sandholm camp, Captain Khl, Captain Davidsen liaison officer for the Danish and British authorities, Dr. Wrtzen and Mrs Mygind from the British Red Cross commission in Copenhagen were present. One hundred and fifty British soldiers who were billeted at Sandholm camp also attended the ceremony. Pastor Andreas Vangberg Storm minister from the Kastel church performed the service. Before the war he had once been the vicar at the Danish Seamen's Church at Newcastle. His wife was English. He followed the English burial service and spoke in English. The first psalm was "Lead, kindly light!" and then pastor Storm spoke. He based his sermon on Moses' story that he from mount Nebo was allowed to see into the Promised Land which he would never enter. Another psalm followed then the English soldiers carried their comrades out of the chapel to Handel's death march "Saul" played on the organ.



The 1st regiment's band was waiting outside the chapel and with a Danish guard of honour led the procession to the graves while Chopin's funeral march was played. The Danish soldiers took turns with the British to carry the coffins. The weather was terrible, with rain and wind, the tall leafless trees whistling in the storm over the soggy paths. The five coffins were lowered into the graves by the English soldiers while the band played "Nearer my God to thee". Then "earth to earth, ashes to ashes" was recited, first in English and then in Danish. The band played "The last post" and the Danish soldiers fired an honorary salute at the graveside.

The British soldiers then had to travel back to Sandholm camp, occasioning one of the few complaints made regarding British soldiers whilst they were in Denmark. A couple of days later Major Hazard's headquarters received a complaint from a train passenger, annoyed by the delay and overcrowding of a train that afternoon caused by a number of British soldiers travelling on it. Arrangements had been made for the British soldiers to travel from Copenhagen on the 16.45 service which was to have had three extra carriages attached for their use. However the cold and wet British soldiers who had marched there from the cemetery arrived at the station at 15.10. Their accompanying officer, Lt MacAlfine, asked the station officials if the extra carriages could be attached to the 15.21 service. The stationmaster agreed to this which thereby delayed it causing some inconvenience to a Danish civilian passenger.



Banks, Pooley, Murphy, Rayner and Thompson

Several deaths occurred on New Year's Eve amongst the homeward bound British. Two died onboard the ship J.C. La Cour whilst it was sailing from Danzig to Leith. The ships on this route when passing Copenhagen generally lay out in the Outer dock and received provisions on board. Passengers were not allowed land leave in Copenhagen as it was feared they may be contagious, and anyway they were only there for a few hours. It was 37 year old Thomas Banks of the 2 bn King's Royal Rifle Corps from Manchester and 24 year old Arthur Pooley from the 12 bn East Yorkshire Regiment who didn't make it. Both had Spanish flu and Pooley suffered pneumonia too. They must have died while the ship was close to

Copenhagen as the dead onboard ships were usually buried at sea. J.C. La Cour was at the Outer dock on 1 January 1919 and the bodies were brought onto land. Here they lay next to 30 year old H. Murphy 2 bn Highland Light Infantry and 32 year old Frederick William Rayner 1 bn Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment). Both had died on 1 January 1919 of the Spanish flu, Murphy also with pneumonia and Rayner with bronchitis. Rayner born in Croydon, had emigrated to Canada and worked as a moulder in a brass foundry in Ontario. The day after, on 2 January, 28 year old married corporal Isaac Thompson of 6 bn Machine Gun Corps died of pneumonia. He was being cared for on HMHS Formosa.



Arthur Pooley

Hard as it was for all the families to lose a loved one, Arthur Pooley's death left his next of kin in a desperate situation. The soldier's mother looked after his two year old daughter Cecilia Agnes. Arthur's young wife, also Cecilia Agnes, had died in 1916 shortly after the birth of their daughter and around the time Arthur had gone to war. Arthur's mother Jane received information already the 6th January that her son had died on "J.C. la Cour" and was to be buried at Copenhagen. Life can't have been easy for Jane. She had never married and all contact with the authorities was complicated by the fact that she was Miss and not Mrs. Pooley. In a letter to her son's regiment sent with an application for a pension, she had to explain thus "I am not Mrs. but Miss Pooley, not being married but that he was my son and that I have his child, as had it from birth, which is only a delicate one, and that I was a dependent on him".



Major Cunliffe and Lieutenant Colonel With



British soldiers in Barfredshoj camp

The funeral for these five men took place on 7 January and in much better weather than the last funerals three days earlier. Otherwise things were done more or less in the same way. Around 1 o'clock 100 British soldiers who were billeted at Barfredshoj camp and a half company from 23rd. Battalion with the band from 1st. regiment arrived for the service. They stood to attention on each side of the gravel square outside the chapel. Lord Kilmarnock, Major Hazard, Captain Kühn, and Lieutenant Colonel With and Major Cunliffe, Danish and British senior officers from Barfredshoj, attended. Pastor Storm from Kastel Church led the

ceremony with the organist and boys choir from the English church St. Albans. Six British soldiers stood to attention by each of the coffins throughout the ceremony. Each coffin was covered by a British flag and was topped with two wreaths. The organ played and the boys' choir sang with voices pure and hauntingly beautiful. Pastor Storm spoke about how these five had finally been released from imprisonment only to fall to the last foe: death, whilst still in a foreign country, albeit a friendly one. He told the soldiers that they should take home with them a greeting to those who grieved over the five, and tell them that their graves would be cared for. The ceremony finished at the graveside with the band playing "Dejlig er Jorden" followed by a threefold volley salute and a trumpeter played "The last post". In sunshine the English and Danish soldiers marched out of the cemetery in silence. Out on the road the band played "Tipperary" and the soldiers sang along to the tune. Descriptions of the funerals appeared in newspapers and magazines, but it is only in the report of the funeral on 7 January that photos are included. We can see from these photo's that others, young as well as old, attended the ceremony to honour these men who after fighting for their country weren't to see their homeland again.



Dimpsey, Papworth and Warren

The next funeral took place on the following day, 8 January: this time for three men. It was almost a copy of the day before with Kilmarnock, Hazard, Kühl and Davidsen as representatives for the authorities and senior military and with Pastor Storm officiating. British soldiers from Sandholm camp and Danish soldiers from 21st. Battalion with band attended.

Two of these men had died on HMHS Formosa, both were "old contemptibles" who had been prisoners of war for more than four years. William George Dimpsey, 30 years old, 1 bn Kings Royal Rifle Corps, died on 4 January 1919 of Spanish flu. He had been in the war from the beginning, having been sent to France on 22 August 1914 and being taken prisoner on 2 November 1914. The day after Fred Papworth died, 28 years old, from 1 bn Bedfordshire Regiment. He had arrived in France on 16 August 1914. Fred died of Spanish flu and pneumonia. The third death was in the Epidemic hospital. Alfred Warren, 28 years old, had been a boat builder before the war and served with 1bn East Surrey Regiment. He had been billeted at Greve camp before being admitted to hospital, where he died of pneumonia on 6 January.

Khan, Patience and Moody

Several other deaths occurred on 6 January, but these men weren't buried until 11 January. One of these caused extra concern. He was a Muslim and everyone wanted to ensure he was given an appropriate funeral ceremony that was performed according to his religion. Badahar Khan was about 50 years old, an Indian sepoy with 59th Scinde Rifles (Frontier Force). He died as a result of a heart condition on the hospital ship HMHS Formosa. The British tried to get hold of a Muslim who could take care of the necessary rituals such as washing the body, but were not successful. Advice was sought from those who knew about Muslim traditions and Captain Davidsen, who had lived for several years in Muslim countries in order to study their culture, was close at hand. It was found that according to the Koran it is not necessary to follow the normal rituals for a Muslim who has died while travelling. Albert Edward Patience also died on 6 January. He was a 28 year old serving in the 2 bn Wiltshire Regiment. He had been billeted at Barfredshoj camp, but died at the Garrison hospital of pneumonia.

Ernest Charles Moody died on 7 January. He was 24 years old, serving with the 12 bn Australian Infantry. Half of this battalion was from Tasmania. Ernest and his brother William who was four years older came from Sisters Creek, Tasmania and were in the same battalion. Both were unmarried farm labourers who had joined the army on 2 May 1916. They left Hobart on 8 August, and Sydney on 4 September 1916. They were together throughout the war and were both taken prisoner on 15 April 1917 at Langicourt. The first official news that they had been captured by the Germans came from a German list of prisoners dated 2 June. A week later William sent a letter saying they were not in Germany, but behind the front line, "are kept on very short rations and uncomfortable living conditions". They were moved to a camp at Limburg and then, before 14 November 1917 they were moved to the stamlager at Friedrichsfeld. The last camp they were interned in was Parchim from which they could send better news "I am doing very well in every way". They were still together in Denmark, but things were not going well for them, both lay ill with Spanish flu in HMHS Formosa. William survived.

The funeral followed much the same pattern as the others. With Lord Kilmarnock absent the British Legation was represented by another. Also present were Major Hazard, Captain Davidsen, pastor Storm, and the organist and boys' choir from St. Albans, British soldiers from Sandholm camp and a Danish army band. Badahar Khan's coffin covered by a British flag and with two wreaths remained outside the chapel with an honorary guard of Danish soldiers whilst the service took place in the chapel. The three coffins were then carried in procession by the English and Danish soldiers while the 1st. regiment's band played Chopin's funeral march. The English soldiers, Patience and Moody, were buried in a double grave while Khan was buried with his head facing Mecca. The choir boys sang "On the Resurrection morning". Pastor Storm recited the 23rd psalm "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...." in English and then read the first chapter of the Koran, which is done at Muslim funerals. By doing so they assumed no-one would be offended, as Jesus' is not named and there is nothing in the first chapter of the Koran which cannot be said by a Christian pastor. The Danish guard of honour fired a salute and "The last post" was played. William Moody was probably not present at his brother Ernest's funeral. The next day he visited the grave and was told photos of the grave would be sent to his family. William sailed with the hospital ship HMHS Formosa which left Copenhagen on 16 January arriving in Leith on the 18th. He was still not well and spent time at a hospital in England before finally reaching Australia on 1 April.



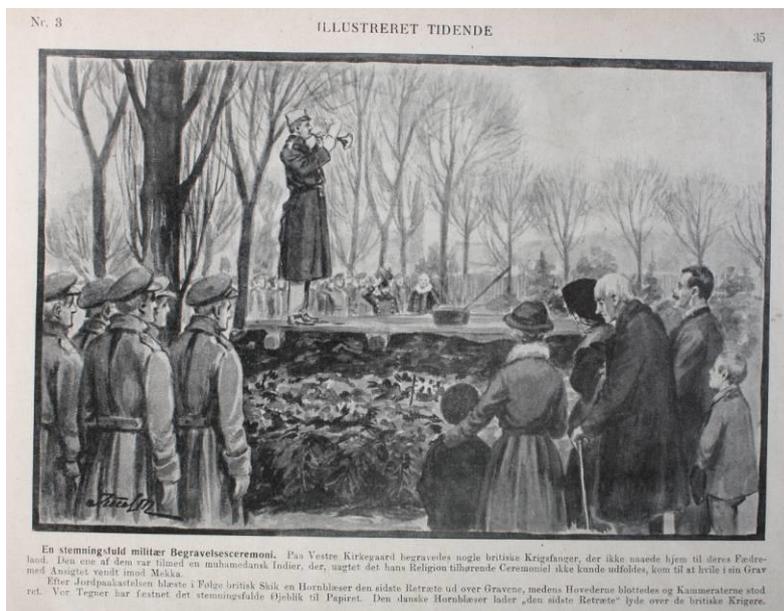
The national newspaper Politiken ran an article on the funeral of Badahar Khan suggesting that the authorities had managed to give a dignified funeral when the rites for a muslim funeral were not known. However, one angry letter was sent to a Christian paper, the Kristelig Dagblad, in which the writer suggested offence was taken over the ceremony used. They didn't think it right that the coffin wasn't taken into the chapel and objected to a Danish pastor having to read from the Koran feeling it to have been "not only ominous and distressing, but offensive and scandalous".



Ern and Bill Moody

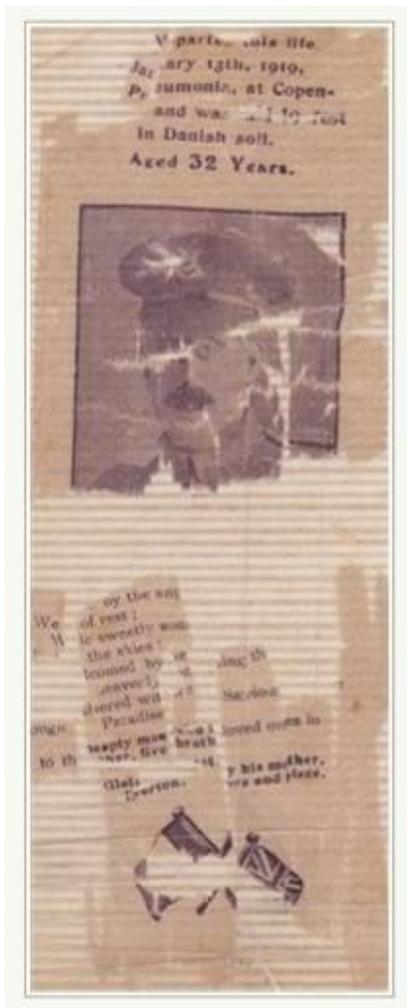
Back in Tasmania the Moody family, parents and 14 brothers and sisters, waited for news of Ern and Bill. The war was over, when would they be home? At the end of January the bad news that Ernest had died at Copenhagen reached Tasmania. A month later a letter arrived for Ernest's sister in Sister's Creek with details of her brother's death. The letter was written by Sister A.H. Harris a nurse on HMHS Formosa who had looked after him. She was clearly moved, offering her heartfelt sympathy and explained that they had done everything possible to save the life of this "fine boy". He had been given all the medical treatment and care that one could wish for. Ern had been their patient for ten days together with his brother Bill who lay in the next bed. Ern had been seriously ill with influenza, put up a good fight and had been conscious until within an hour of his death of bronchial pneumonia. The brothers had often spoken and that last afternoon Bill had been able to be out of bed and sit beside his brother. Bill had been "very brave" and one feels sure that Sister Harris comforted the "poor boy" as well as she could. Sister Harris had herself lost a brother in the Somme and both her father and sister to Spanish flu. Other pows had died of influenza and in her opinion it was the lack of good food for so long that lessened their chances of pulling through. Ern,

she wrote, was to be buried in Copenhagen with full military honors. The letter was later printed in the family's local newspaper in Tasmania.



Kelland, Sayce and Scott

The last three were buried on 17 January. Pastor Storm led the ceremony as usual, but perhaps this funeral may have touched him more than the others. He had visited one of the men several times while he was ill and comforted him in his hopeless struggle against death. Lord Kilmarnock, Major Hazard, Captain Kühl and Captain Davidsen, Danish soldiers from 3rd and 4th Machine Gun Corps and some English soldiers attended. A few were still in Copenhagen even though the repatriation for the British was more or less finished. George H. Kelland a 25 year old from 1 bn East Surrey Regiment died on 10 January. He had been billeted at Barfredshoj camp and died of pneumonia in the Garnisons hospital. The following day, at the same hospital another died. It was John Sayce a 23 year old factory worker serving with the 12 bn King's (Liverpool Regiment). He had been billeted at Greve camp.



William Scott a 32 year old from the same battalion, had also been billeted at Greve camp and died at the Garnisons hospital. He died of Spanish flu and pneumonia on 13 January. Although there were still a few British patients left in the hospital Scott was the last Briton to die during the repatriation journey home through Denmark following imprisonment in Germany.

This bookmark made in silk in remembrance of William Scott was found recently in a shoebox in Australia by his sister's descendants. Despite its severe state of disintegration it is possible to see a photo of William

and feel some of his family's distress that this son, brother, husband and father had been laid to rest in Danish soil.

Lord Kilmarnock thanked, through the newspapers, the Danes for all the sympathy they had shown at the funerals, not least for the anonymous wreaths and flowers. Even before the last Briton was buried a collection had been started for a monument. Contributions could be sent to Mrs. Nanni Jarl, married to Carl Jarl, Professor Holger Mygind and Pastor Andreas Vangberg Storm. All three had been involved in British Red Cross work in Copenhagen during the war years. Other committees also collected for monuments for the five Belgian, forty French and thirteen Italian former prisoners of war who also died in Denmark on their way home.



The English soldiers gravesite was bought as a family plot and most of the soldiers were buried two to a grave, double depth. Each of the prisoners of war have their own headstones. A committee of ladies with Mrs. Mygind as chairman collected funds for the maintenance of the graves. Money streamed in for the monument which was to be a stylish memorial for the poor Tommies who died on Danish soil. A preparatory sketch was made - the little trumpeter, playing "the last post". The memorial monument was unveiled by H.N. Andersen at a ceremony that took place on the 21 August 1920. The sketch hadn't been used. The memorial consists of a standing obelisk with pointed top in Nexø sandstone on a three part pedestal. The obelisk is decorated with a wreath in relief and a tablet in marble. Inscribed on the tablet is "To the glory of God and in loving memory of the nineteen British soldiers who died in Denmark 1918-1919 on their journey home from captivity." The Commonwealth War Grave Commission wanted to remove the monument in 1970's as it was badly in need of restoration. Fortunately the head of funeral services Erik Rafn's interest was aroused and he arranged for the restoration of the monument.



All of the deceased former prisoners of war have their own headstones. Five other British serving in the First World War are also buried here. First Engineer Wilfrid Milburn Atkinson was in the Mercantile Marine while Leading Seaman William Henry Lang, Stoker 1st class Francis David Mansfield, Petty Officer Stoker Henry Buggs and Chief shipwright 2nd class Warren Perrett all served in the Royal Navy. The last death occurred in November 1920. Any serving member of a Commonwealth armed force that died between 04.08.14 and 31.08.21 was eligible to be honoured with a "Commonwealth War Grave Commission" headstone, wherever their location happened to be and whatever their cause of death. That included killed in action and died following accident, illness, homicide, suicide or execution after a court martial. Others eligible were for example civilians serving in the Red Cross, the Mercantile Marine and in the YMCA who died whilst on duty and of a war cause during the same time period. All British and Commonwealth military gravestones are the same the world over. Whether for the highest ranking officer or for the fresh faced recruit, their sacrifice the same and all are equal in death.



The Commonwealth War Grave Commission had set out guiding principles for the headstones in 1920. Each headstone, preferably of Portland stone, was to be 76 cm tall, 38 cm wide and 7.6 cm thick. With, if known, a national or regimental crest positioned at the top followed by name, rank and unit, date of death and age. Most of the headstones are also inscribed with a religious symbol, for many a cross. The families had to

confirm the information for the headstones on a Final Verification Form (FVF). Personal details could be added to the register and if desired a personal inscription be made on the headstone. There was a limit of 66 letters, including spaces. A charge of 3½ pence per letter was made. Many chose a biblical verse. Next of kin of the dead sometimes could not be found, maybe because the families had moved. Some didn't want any inscription and some families couldn't afford one. Only 65 % of the FVF were filled in and returned. After some debate the charge for a personal inscription was to be on a voluntary basis. The original headstones of limestone at Vestre Cemetery were replaced in 1970 by new granite ones.

All the headstones have crosses except Muslim Bhadhar/Bhader Khan's. Two of the families chose the alternative big cross with the appropriate regimental crest placed in the center. It was presumably Arthur Pooley's mother Jane and a member of Fred Papworth's large family (he had 10 siblings) who personalized the headstones in this way even though they have no personal inscription.



Six of the former pows and two of the other deceased's families chose personal texts to be inscribed on to the headstones. These final messages from the families to their loved ones are as follows.

William George Dimpsey: Still together – we are dwelling – naught can come – twixt thee and me.

William had married Elizabeth, six years his senior, in the autumn of 1913. William left the following August, the couple still childless. Elizabeth must have looked forward to her husband's return after his 4 years imprisonment. She remained a widow and survived William by only 7 years.

Ernest Charles Moody: Tasmania's son – May the Lord be with him

The Australian government paid for personal inscriptions on Australians' headstones.

Frederick William Rayner: Sleep on beloved – we love thee – but Jesus loves thee best.

Frederick was single and had emigrated to Canada. It was his parents in England who inherited from him £184 7s.

John Sayce: At rest

John's mother knew what it was to lose a child. 4 of her children had died in infancy while John's younger brother had been killed at Ypres in 1916. Of her 8 boys, only 2 lived. Grace lived to be 88.

Elizabeth Thomsen



Isaac Thomsen: Beyond the storm

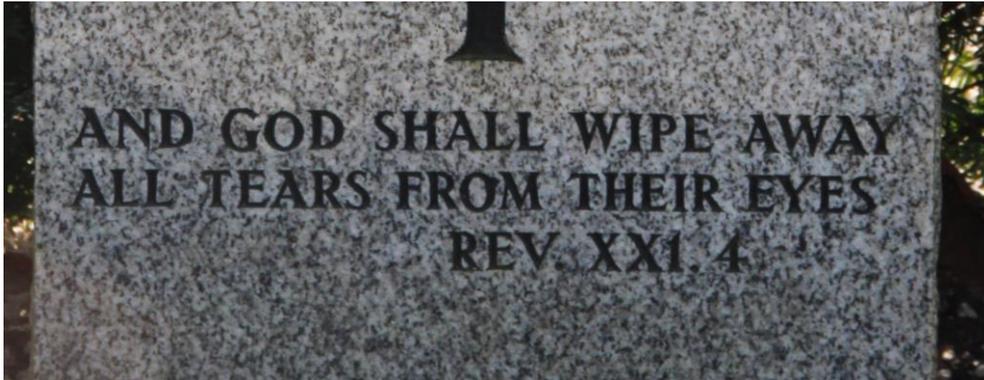
Isaac and Elizabeth were married on May 30th 1914. A son, Alfred, was born 9 months later. Elizabeth remarried in 1926 a widower. He had also lost his wife in 1919 a couple of months after she had born their 9th child.

William Arthur Holgate: Greater love – hath no man than this

It came as a great shock for the people of Rimington who had adopted him that William had died of influenza in a Danish hospital on his way home from Germany. They had been looking forward to giving him a very warm welcome home. Their sincere condolences were sent to his relatives. His parents didn't get William back from the war but happily two sons survived it.

Warren Perrett: Thy will be done

Warren had been awarded a Meritorious Service Medal on June 10th 1919. He died 38 years old, leaving his wife Mabel and three children aged 20, 17 and 11.



Henry J. Buggs: And God shall wipe away – All tears from their eyes – Rev. XX1.4

Harry was 30 and single. His parents had already lost a son in 1917. Alfred Buggs doesn't have a grave; his name is among the 54,000 on the Menin Gate Monument.

William Church's story and memorabilia have been handed on to his grandnephew via his brother Tom. Bill's medals are mounted together with his death plaque, portrait and a photo of an epitaph. The epitaph, which is to be restored this spring, is placed at the back of St. Alban's Church at Copenhagen. The fine marble memorial was designed by professor Dahlerup and donated by local British resident and member of the church, William Mau. Following the text inscribed at the centre of the tablet "Sacred to the memory of the following British sailors and soldiers who served in the Great War 1914-1918 and are buried in this city" are the 24 names. The epitaph was dedicated at the morning service on Sunday March 4th 1923. Andreas Vangberg Storm, the pastor who had performed the military funerals 4 years earlier, took part.

An attempt was probably made to reach all the families of all these men to inform them of the epitaph, and perhaps a photo was sent too. The British Consul in Copenhagen sent a message to the secretary of the Prime Minister's Department in Melbourne. It advised that a mural tablet had been presented to the church in memory of those in the forces who had died in Copenhagen after having served in the war 1914-18. In this way, they hoped that the information would be forwarded to Moody's family on Tasmania. It may be just such a photo which Bill Church's family put together with his medals and portrait into their own memorial to a loved son and brother buried a long way from home.



Riseberga Cemetery

Taylor, Radbourn, Higham and Brook

The deaths of four more British soldiers occurred in Scandinavia. In the most hectic weeks of the repatriation process it wasn't possible to find sufficient suitable billets for the returning British soldiers in Denmark. A couple of groups of British had to stay some days in a camp in Ljungbyhed in Sweden. It was

here that 31 year old Lance Corporal James Riddell Taylor, 14 bn Royal Irish Rifles, died on 22 December. 26 year old Private H. Radbourn, 8 bn Royal Berkshire Regiment (Princess Charlotte of Wales's) died on Christmas Eve, and 34 year old married Private Frank Higham, 10 bn Royal Welsh Fusiliers died on Christmas Day.

The last Lance Corporal W. H. Brook, 8 bn Kings Royal Rifle Corps died on 6 January. All the soldiers mentioned above had a personal story to tell but Willie Brook's story is a little different. He didn't exist. That is, his name wasn't Brook, but Harry Beaumont and he was at the time only 20 years old. Why the teenager who had been a member of Huddersfield Troop of Boy Scouts, and planned to be a teacher, lived with a false identity is a mystery. Maybe he was too young to join the army when he did, and to lie about his name and age his only way to be accepted. Brook / Beaumont and the three others were buried at Riseberga Cemetery in Sweden.



I do not know why these 4 British soldiers, former prisoners of war, do not have "Commonwealth War Grave Commission" headstones.

DIED IN SWEDEN.



Pte. Frank Higham.

removed to Whittensburg. From the 19th April, 1917, up to the 9th December, 1918, he was employed in a sugar mill, brewery on a farm, and in a saw-mill. When working in the sugar factory two of his pals went into the town, and bought two kettledrums, which they managed to fill full of sugar at this factory, and Higham packed a box full with a layer of cigarettes on top, sugar being scarcer than it was with us.

Private Higham declared in letters to his wife that he was being well treated, and he had nothing to complain of. At the saw mill he was as happy as he could expect to be in a foreign land. There were only three prisoners working at the saw-mill, Higham and two pals, and the three were closely attached to each other. The working hours were from 7 a.m. till 4-50 p.m., which corresponds about to our working times. They received parcels regularly, and though the Germans were very short of food, they gave them as much as they could spare. They had no guard, and were at liberty to go about when work was over. On the 16th of December he and his comrades embarked for Sweden, homeward bound. They were to stay there a week and two days, setting sail for home on Christmas Day. But fate had willed that poor Frank should never set foot on the "ship that sails for home." On the Sunday preceding Christmas Day he was taken into hospital with influenza, and, strange to say, passed away on the very day he should have set sail, Christmas Day, and was buried on the 27th. The chaplain said in a letter to his wife: "He spent as peaceful a Christmas as any man could wish to spend, and lay calm and still. 'Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes' was sung to him, and seemed to comfort him, and on the eve of embarkment he was taken home to God."

Private Higham was employed by the Hyde Gas Co., and was a regular attender at St. Mary's, Newton. He was of a jolly temperament, and popular with one and all, and will be sadly missed by his many friends and relatives.

It is with great sympathy we record the sad death of Private Frank Higham, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, a well-known Hydonian, whose wife resides at 71, Muslin-st., Newton. Pte. Higham's photo and experiences have been in our paper twice before, when he was reported missing and again when he was a prisoner in Germany. He had been in the army 2 years 6 months, and was captured in 1916.

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In
loving Memory

of
my dear Husband

Private Frank Higham,

Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

Who died at Ljungbyhed
Hospital, Sweden,

December 25th, 1918.

Aged 34 Years;

And was interred at
Riseberga Kyrka, Sweden,
December 27th.

"We shall meet when toil is o'er,
Loved and loving evermore."

From his Wife,

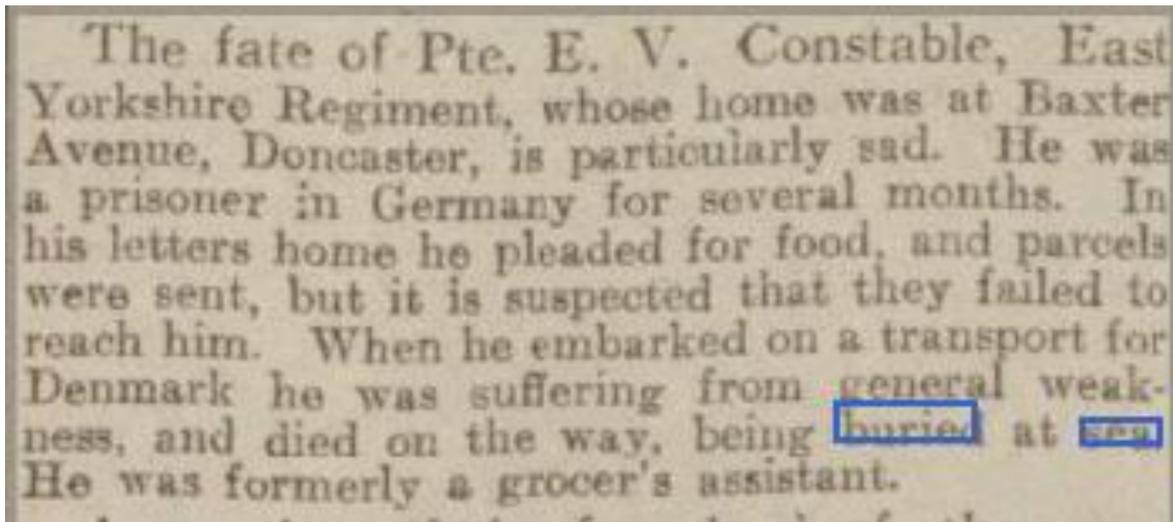
71, Muslin Street,
Newton.

Buried at sea

Several of the released prisoners of war died while they were on ships on their way to the UK and were buried at sea. "Burial at sea" isn't a search possibility on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's website, and so far I haven't been able to identify all of these men.

Constable

A short piece in the Sheffield Daily Telegraph on 20th December briefly describes the sad fate of Pte. Edward Victor Constable, 11th East Yorks.



18-year-old Edward had been taken prisoner on 18th April 1918. He is registered as being a POW in the camp at Gardelegen from September to 26th October. He died on board a ship while being repatriated via the Danish Scheme and was buried at sea. Edward is registered as dying on 3rd December 1918.

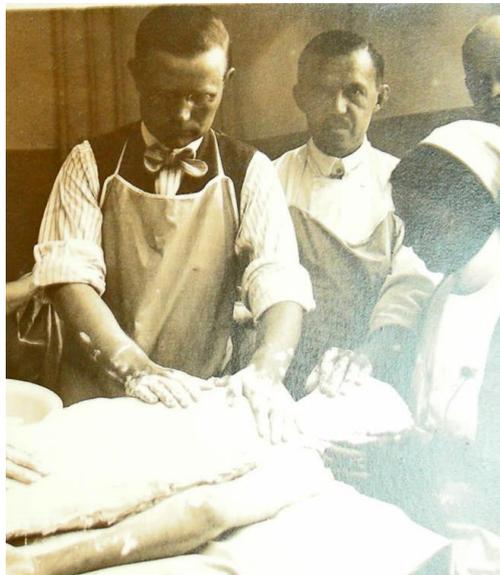
There were only 3 ships sailing on this date. The "Kong Haakon" and the "Dronning Maud" both sailed from Stettin to Copenhagen on 3rd December. There is no mention in Danish newspapers of any deaths on board or burials at sea on these ships on this short journey. One newspaper wrote that on their arrival at Copenhagen a couple of poorly men were taken from the "Dronning Maud" on stretchers over to the hospital ship "Formosa", while there were no sick on the "King Haakon". The other possibility is that Edward was on the "Mitau" which had sailed from Danzig and passed Copenhagen on 4th December. Senior medical officer on the "Mitau" Dr. Fog sent a telegram to his colleague Dr. Abrahamsen the senior medical officer on the "Russ" on the 4th December informing him that they had had a death on board and had buried the body at sea "in the Kattegat".

Pte. E.V. Constable was buried at sea and has no gravestone. It appears that he wasn't mentioned on any First World War memorial in Doncaster where he had lived. However his name has been added at some point in time on to the 1914-1918 Memorial at Brookwood Military Cemetery.

Died at sea on the 10th December

Dr. Harald Abrahamsen

Dr. Abrahamsen on the "Russ" noted in his diary on the 10th December that they had left Danzig the day before. On the 11th he wrote *"we had a death on board yesterday. At 9.30 two officers came with a soldier. He complained a lot and his face was blueish but I couldn't find anything abnormal. He was given a small doze of morphine and calmed down. Two hours later he was dead without my being able to give him a diagnosis. I think it must have been Embolia pneumonia."*



A nasty storm blew from the south east on the 12th December with enormous waves hitting the ship side on, it was snowing and everything creaked and moaned. The weather improved somewhat in the afternoon *"A funeral was held at 3 o'clock, Chopin was played, the vicar held a short speech which the wind completely blew away and then one puff by 2 Danish sailors and the coffin covered by the British flag slipped over into the waves down to a depth of 40 fathoms. A moving and sad moment, and then the ship speeded up so we could reach Leith as quickly as possible."*

His diary entry for the 14th December when they were docked at Leith includes the text he had written on the death certificate for the dead soldier, unfortunately without the man's name.

"Private who came to the ship's hospital the 10. december 1918 at 9.15 pm.¹ His friend who accompanied him stated that the patient had been quite well up to 8 o'clock the same evening, when he began to vomit and complain of pain, that this sickness was due to overeating at the 5 o'clock meal, which the patient himself admitted. Immediately before his admittance he had vomiting and severe pains in the uppermost part of his abdomen. During his ...laying he complained of pains continually and strongly, but beyond some tenderness and diffuce in the uppermost parts of the abdomen (Epigastrien) there was no evidence of objective symptoms.

At 9.45 he was given a morphine injection, after which he fell somewhat to rest, but had some vomiting, which however did not contain blood.

At 11.15 he was inspected by the On duty, who found his condition as half an hour after the injection. He complained of sickness. At 11.30 the English medical orderly on duty spoke to the patient, whose condition remained unchanged. At 11.40 he was found by the medical on duty to be dead. I conclude, that the cause of the death was Emboli (and Diletatis ventriculi)."

Unfortunately I am still unable to identify this soldier.

¹ He has written a.m. but means p.m.

yesterday, and landed 580 prisoners of war, most of whom were sick and wounded cases. All were British but one, a Frenchman. Eight patients died on the passage. Among those who witnessed the arrival of the vessel were Provost Lindsay and Captain Wedgwood Benn, M.P. for the burgh.

The men had been in Ohrdruf and Langensalza camps, 500 coming from the former, which was really a hospital camp. Many were in an emaciated condition. They had suffered greatly from want of proper nourishment, and also from neglect, until three doctors—two British and one French—arrived. There were many cases of septic poisoning, and several of the men had their broken legs badly set by the German doctors.

About 400 men had been captured at the Chemin

5 deaths and burials at sea

The hospital ship "Garth Castle" left Stettin on 27th December with approx. 580 passengers from the lazaret camp Ohrdrup and from the Langensalsa camp. Several newspapers wrote on 30th December that 5 had died on this ship and were buried at sea. The "Garth Castle" arrived at Leith on 31st December. One newspaper mentions 8 deaths on the passage.

COX, Pte. William Walter, 41777. 8th Bn. Leicestershire Regt. Repatriated Prisoner of War, died at sea, en route Germany to U.K., on S.S. "Garth Castle," 28th Dec., 1918.

20 year old Pte. William Walter Cox 8th Bn. Leicestershire Regt. died on 28th Dec. and was buried at sea. He is named on the Hollybrook War Memorial at Southampton where those lost at sea are remembered.

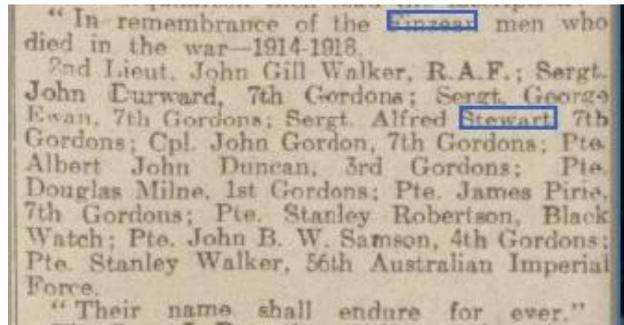
According to a note in the Aberdeen Press and Journal on 3rd January 1919 Pte. Robert Stewart M.M., Gordon Highlanders, died on board a hospital ship on 29th December. He was probably on the "Garth Castle" and was one of the 5 men buried at sea. 22-year-old Robert is not mentioned on the CWGC website, or any other War Memorial.

ROLL OF HONOUR.

STEWART. —Died on board hospital ship December 29, on his way from Germany (a prisoner of war since March 21), Pte. Robert Stewart, M.M., Gordon Highlanders, son of the late Archibald Stewart, Perrie Finzean, and Mrs Stewart, 74 Leslie Terrace, Aberdeen, and brother of Mr David Stewart, Balnacraig, Kincardine O'Neil. Deeply mourned.

Deeply mourned

A Pte. Robert Stewart 3rd Gordon Highlanders is mentioned on the First World War memorial tablet in Finzean Kirk, however this may not be the same man as he was in the 4th Battalion. Strangely in a newspaper article about the unveiling of the plaque October 1921 Robert Stewart isn't mentioned at all.



34 year old Rifleman Frederick George Handley, KRRC, died from pneumonia and cardiac failure on the "Garth Castle" on 1st January when the hospital ship was docked at Leith. Frederick had been mobilized on 5th August 1914 and was reported missing in action on 3rd November 1914. He spent some of his time as a POW in the camp at Tingleff/Tinglev. Frederick's death is noted in the Enderby Church records on 6th January 1919. What a sad day for his wife and son, Erik born in March 1913, to receive husband and father home in a coffin. Frederick was buried in his home town Enderby Church graveyard and is registered on the CWGC website. It appears that he is also commemorated on The Hollybrook Memorial!



Sources

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Australian War Memorial <http://www.awm.gov.au/>

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Photo of British Soldiers in Barfredshøjlejren KB DH009443

Photo of HMHS Formosa KB DH009449

Photo of British Soldiers in Haldlejren, Doug Johnson

Photos of Moody brothers, Weekly Courier, Pete Pickering

Photos of Church brothers, Mark Williams

Photos from Scott, Higham and Thomson families

Photo Riseberga Church

http://www.ww1cemeteries.com/other_cemeteries_ext/riseberga_churchyard.htm

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