



Out of the war – voices for peace

European memories from the First World War

A joint project by the
European Contact Group of
War Graves Associations

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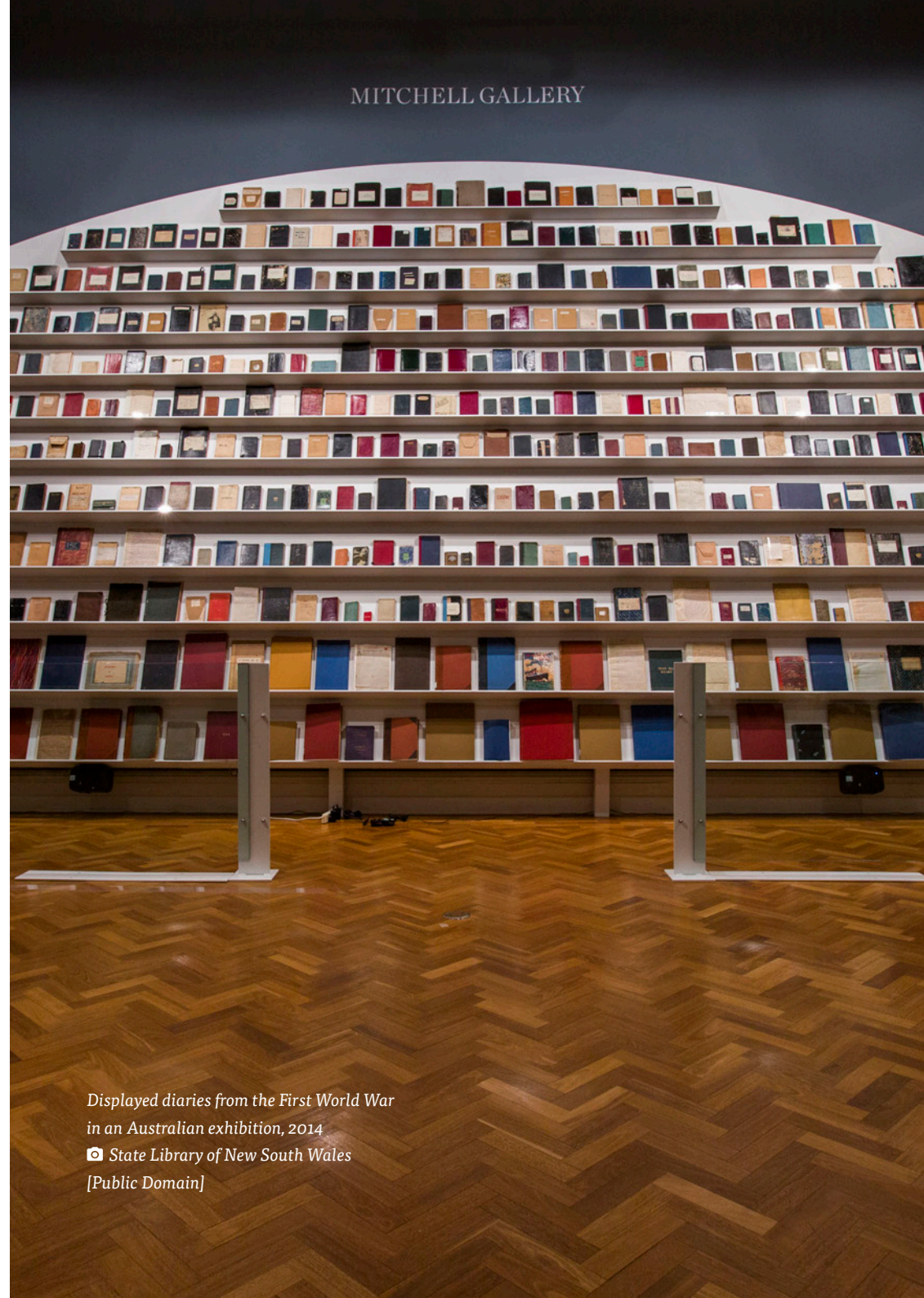
The European Contact Group of War Graves Associations

- 43 Imprint

Title:

German soldier reading. Tent camp in a public park at Happlicourt, southeast of Amiens/ France, 1917

📷 Volksbund



Displayed diaries from the First World War in an Australian exhibition, 2014

📷 State Library of New South Wales
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Introduction

The First World War meant a profound turning point for Europe and far beyond: militarily, politically and socially. Both for the individual states as well as for the different social groups, the outcome of the war had very diverse consequences: victory or defeat, revolutions and civil wars, new state foundations and borders, hopes for democratic and social reforms either fulfilled or disappointed.

This event is remembered in many ways in Europe today. In some countries it is the “Great War”, in others, it is rather connected with loss or it is overlaid by the even more serious history of violence of the Second World War and its consequences. At the same time, both world wars as well as the interwar period are to be seen in a historical context that is also enlightening for our present day: global networking, rapid and ambivalent technological progress, susceptibility to crises and conflicts but also a common search for orientation and attempts at international understanding.

In their personal histories, tragic fates resemble one another irrespective of nationality: the loss of close family members or the uncertainty about their whereabouts for years and decades, severely wounded and traumatised returnees, harsh deprivation during and after the war.

Against this background, the Contact Group of the European War Graves Associations is publishing selected diary entries and field letters at the end of the “Centenary”. Written during the First World War, they open up a polyphonic spectrum of experiences for our own times: soldiers and civil-

ians, old and young, very different perspectives on this war. As “Voices of Peace”, however, they all point to the terrible consequences of this outbreak of violence and at the same time illustrate the hope for a more peaceful and freer future.

Our organisations preserve and look after the places of remembrance of this war: cemeteries, memorials and monuments. We research the fates of the war dead for relatives and interested parties and communicate them to the next generation in our historical educational and encounter work. Thus, the former battlefields become places of international meetings and shared memory. In our daily work, we hope to do justice to these “Voices of Peace” in a practical way and, at the same time, we would like to share this historical treasure trove with as many people as possible in this small brochure. /

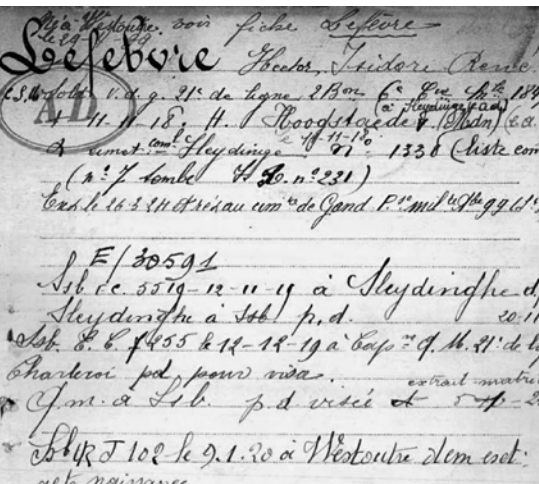
*A joint project by the
European Contact Group of War Graves Associations*

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Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Great Britain
L'Office national des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre
(ONACVG), France
Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge, Germany
Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum, Hungary
Oorlogsgravenstichting, Netherlands*

Onze helden... mensen die bang waren

Gesneuveld op de laatste dag van
de oorlog: Hector Lefebvre (1889–1918)

UIT HET DAGBOEK VAN MARIE BECK



Detail from the original file of the Belgian War Graves Commission regarding the soldier Hector Lefebvre

War Heritage Institute

Hector Lefebvre werd geboren te Westouter, België op 29 juli 1889 als zoon van Petrus Lefebvre en Emerence Purcelle. Voor de oorlog werkte hij als vrachtwagenchauffeur.

Toen de oorlog uitbrak vluchtte hij, zoals vele Belgen, naar Frankrijk. Volgens de een bron melde hij zich vrijwillig voor het leger maar volgens een andere bron werd hij opgeroepen met het speciaal contingent van de lichte van 1916.

In ieder geval begon zijn militaire loopbaan op 28 oktober 1916 bij het Opleidingscentrum Nr 5 te Carteret, aan de westkust van Normandië. Op 6 februari 1917 werd hij naar zijn eenheid, het 21ste Linierregiment gestuurd. Dit is een lichte infanterieregiment

waar hij 121.1847 kreeg. Op 11 november 1918 betrok het Belgische leger loopgraven die vlug aangelegd waren op de westelijke oever van het kanaal van het zuid naar noord, van Gent naar Terneuzen in Nederland liep. Het Duitse leger was geposteerd op de oostelijke oever van dat zelfde kanaal.



Old section of the canal between Gent and Terneuzen in Sas van Gent near the Dutch-Belgian border

Wikimedia Commons. [CC BY-SA 3.0]

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Ghent%E2%80%93Terneuzen_Canal?uselang=de#/media/File:Sas_van_Gent_-_Old_canal_lock_1.jpg

Hector werd gekwetst door een kogel die werd afgevuurd door een Duitse sluipschutter toen hij zo roekeloos was om zijn loopgraaf te vroeg te verlaten. Hij dacht dat het reeds 11 uur was. Hij werd haastig nog naar een nabij gelegen veldhospitaal in het dorp Sleidinge gebracht maar overleed er kort na zijn aankomst. Nog dezelfde dag werd hij op de gemeentelijke begraafplaats van Sleidinge ter aarde besteld.

Marie Beck, een Belgische vluchteling in Normandië en familielid van Hector schreef in haar dagboek op 11 november 1918: “Vier jaar miserie...en nu...is alles voorbij. Zo veel volk op straat. Fransen en Belgische vluchtelingen. Al de cafés zitten vol. Er werd vandaag veel geld verdiend. En zingen ! Er klom iemand op een bak. Hij had zijn accordeon meegebracht. ‘La guerre est finie’, zong hij. Zo mooi. De kleine man wist niet waarover hij zong. ‘Nos héros...’ Ja, er waren helden. Mensen die deden wat ze moesten doen en die honger en kou hadden. Maar geen helden zoals in zijn lied. Niemand riskeert zijn leven voor glorie. Onze helden...mensen die bang waren zoals de andere mensen bang waren van al die erge dingen. Voor al degenen die de oorlog van dichtbij hebben meegemaakt, die voor zo veel jaar aan het front hebben geleefd? was dit feest te pijnlijk. Maar toch was iedereen

binnen de korste keren aan hetv zingen. En heel wat dronkaards liepen er die dag rond.

We hadden ook een feestje onder ons. Familie en vluchtelingen. We hadden goed eten. Maar toen, in de avond kwam er een telegram. Het feestje was rap over. Hector was geschoten. Hij was te vroeg uit zijn loopgracht geklommen. Vijf minuten voor elf uur. Bedenk dat eens: de broer van Daniël die getrouwd is met mijn zuster, onze Germaine...”

Na de oorlog werd aan de familie gevraagd of zijn stoffelijk overschot moest overgebracht worden naar zijn woonplaats maar ze weigerden en verkozen het om hem bij zijn wapenmakers te laten. Na de oorlog werd zijn lichaam ontgraven en op 26 maart 1924 werd hij herbegraven op het ereperk van de stedelijke begraafplaats te Gent waar hij vandaag nog steeds rust. Zijn graf vermeldt dat hij overleed op de 17de maar dit is verkeerd Hij stierf op 11 november 1918. /

Our heroes... people who were afraid

Killed in action on the last day of the war: Hector Lefebvre (1889–1918)

FROM THE DIARY OF MARIE BECK

Hector Lefebvre was born in Westouter, Belgium on the 29th of July 1889 as the son of Petrus Lefebvre and Emerence Purcelle. Before the war, he had been working as a lorry driver. When war broke out he, like many Belgians, fled to France. One source tells us that he volunteered for the army, but another source records that he was drafted for the special contingent of the levy of 1916. In any case, he began his military life on the 28th of October 1916 at Training Centre number 5 at Carteret, on the western coast of Normandy, France. On the 6th of February 1917, he was sent to his unit: the 21st Regiment of the Line, an infantry regiment where he was incorporated with the serial number 121.1847.

On the 11th of November 1918 the Belgian army was posted in trenches that had been

dug very quickly on the west bank of the canal that runs from south to north from the city of Gent to Terneuzen in the Netherlands. The German troops were posted on the east bank of the same canal. Hector was wounded by a bullet fired by a German sniper when he mistakenly left his trench too early, believing it was already past the 11th hour. He was rushed to a nearby field hospital in the village of Sleidinge, where he died soon after his arrival. He was buried that same day in the communal cemetery of Sleidinge.

Marie Beck, a Belgian refugee in Normandy, France and a relative of Hector, wrote in her diary on the 11th of November 1918: "Four years of misery... and now... it is over. So many people in the streets. French and a lot of Belgian refugees. The cafés were more

than full. A lot of money was made today. And the singing! Someone got up on a box. He brought his accordion with him. 'La guerre est finie', he sang. So beautiful. The little fellow didn't know what he was singing about. 'Nos héros...' Yes, there were heroes. People who did what they had to do and who had courage and who were hungry and cold. But no heroes like in his song. Nobody risks his life for glory. Our heroes... people who were afraid like all other people of all these horrible things. For those who had experienced war from so close by, who had lived on the front for so many years, this party was too painful. But in no time everybody was singing.

And a lot of drunks walked around that day. We also had a party amongst ourselves. Family and refugees. We had a good meal. But then, in the evening, there came a telegram. The party was over soon. Hector had

been shot. He had come out of his trench too soon. Five minutes before eleven o'clock. Just think of it: the brother of Daniel who was married to my sister, our Germaine..."

After the war, his family was asked if they wanted his body to be repatriated to his home village, but they refused and made the choice of leaving him with his fellow soldiers. After the war, his body was exhumed and reburied on the 26th of March 1924 in the military plot in the communal cemetery of Gent, where he still rests today. The inscription on his grave tells us that he died on the 17th, but this is untrue. He died on the 11th day of November 1918. /

WAR HERITAGE INSTITUTE

The mission of the War Heritage Institute (WHI) is to promote Belgian military heritage and the memory of armed conflicts on Belgian soil or involving Belgians abroad. This mission consists in managing, acquiring, conserving and restoring collections of objects, documents and intangible testimonies for a period that extends from the Middle Ages to the present day.

www.warheritage14-18.be



Nos héros ... des gens qui avaient peur

Tombé au dernier jour de la guerre:
Hector Lefebvre (1889–1918)

DU JOURNAL DE MARIE BECK

Hector Lefebvre est né à Westouter, en Belgique, le 29 juillet 1889, fils de Petrus Lefebvre et d'Emerence Purcelle. Avant la guerre, il travaillait comme chauffeur de camion. Lorsque la guerre a éclaté, il s'est enfui, comme beaucoup de Belges vers la France. Une source nous apprend qu'il s'est porté volontaire pour l'armée, mais une autre source apprend qu'il a été recruté pour le contingent spécial de la levée de 1916. Quoi qu'il en soit, il a commencé sa vie militaire le 28 octobre 1916 au centre de formation n° 5 à Carteret, sur la côte ouest de la Normandie, en France. Le 6 février 1917, il fut envoyé dans son unité : le 21^e régiment de ligne, un régiment d'infanterie où il fut incorporé avec le numéro de série 121.1847.

Le 11 novembre 1918, l'armée belge est postée dans des tranchées très rapidement creu-

sées sur les rives ouest du canal qui va du sud au nord de la ville de Gand à Terneuzen, aux Pays-Bas. Les troupes allemandes étaient postées sur la rive est du même canal.

Hector a été blessé par une balle tirée par un sniper allemand alors qu'il a imprudemment quitté sa tranchée trop tôt, estimant que la 11^e heure était déjà passée. Il a été conduit d'urgence dans un hôpital de campagne voisin du village de Sleidinge, où il est décédé peu de temps après son arrivée, le même jour. Il a été enterré le même jour au cimetière communal de Sleidinge.

Marie Beck, une réfugiée belge résidant en Normandie en France et parente d'Hector a écrit dans son journal le 11 novembre 1918 : «Quatre ans de misère ... et maintenant ... c'est fini. Tant de gens dans les rues. Français

et beaucoup de réfugiés belges. Les cafés étaient plus que pleins. Beaucoup d'argent a été gagné aujourd'hui. Et les chants ! Quelqu'un est monté sur une boîte. Il avait son accordéon avec lui. «La guerre est finie», a-t-il chanté. Si beau. Le petit garçon ne savait pas ce qu'il chantait. «Nos héros ...»

Oui, il y avait des héros. Des gens qui ont fait ce qu'ils devaient faire et qui avaient du courage et qui avaient faim et froid. Mais pas de héros comme dans sa chanson. Personne ne risque sa vie pour la gloire. Nos héros ... des gens qui avaient peur, comme tous les autres gens, de toutes ces choses horribles. Pour ceux qui avaient connu la guerre de si près, qui ont vécu sur le front pendant tant d'années, cette fête était trop pénible. Mais en un rien de temps tout le monde chantait.

Et beaucoup d'ivrognes déambulaient dans la journée. Nous avons également fait une fête entre nous. Famille et réfugiés. Nous avons bien mangé. Mais alors, dans la soirée est arrivé un télégramme. La fête s'est terminée. Hector avait été abattu. Il est sorti de sa tranchée trop tôt. Cinq minutes avant onze heures. Pensez-y : le frère de Daniel qui était marié à ma sœur, notre Germaine ... »

Après la guerre, on a demandé à sa famille si elle souhaitait que son corps soit rapatrié dans son village d'origine, mais ils ont refusé et ont choisi de le laisser avec ses camarades soldats. Après la guerre, son corps a été exhumé et réenterré le 26 mars 1924 dans la section militaire du cimetière communal de Gent où il repose toujours aujourd'hui. L'indication sur sa tombe nous dit qu'il est décédé le 17 mais c'est faux. Il est décédé le 11 novembre 1918. /



*Soldiers resting in the fights at
Flanders Fields, 1917*

📷 Bundesarchiv

Unsere Helden ... das waren Menschen, die Angst hatten

Am letzten Kriegstag gefallen:
Hector Lefebvre (1889–1918)

AUS DEM TAGEBUCH VON MARIE BECK

Hector Lefebvre wurde am 29. Juli 1889 in Westouter, Belgien, als Sohn von Petrus Lefebvre und Emerence Purcelle geboren. Vor dem Krieg arbeitete er als Lastwagenfahrer.

Als der Krieg ausbrach, flüchtete er, wie viele Belgier, nach Frankreich. Aus den überlieferten Quellen geht nicht eindeutig hervor, ob er sich freiwillig zur Armee gemeldet hat oder ob er im Jahre 1916 eingezogen wurde. Seine militärische Laufbahn begann jedenfalls am 28. Oktober 1916 im Schulungszentrum Nummer 5 in Carteret, an der Westküste der Normandie.

Am 6. Februar 1917 wurde er in seine Einheit, das 21. Linienregiment, entsendet, ein Regiment der leichten Infanterie, wo er unter der Nummer 121.1847 geführt wurde.

Am 11. November 1918 begab sich die belgische Armee in Laufgräben, die schnell angelegt wurden und am westlichen Ufer des Kanals vom Süden in den Norden, von der Stadt Gent bis ins niederländische Terneuzen verliefen. Das deutsche Heer hatte am östlichen Ufer desselben Kanals Stellung bezogen.

Hector wurde von einer Kugel verletzt, die von einem deutschen Heckenschützen in dem Moment abgefeuert wurde, als Hector unbedacht zu früh den Laufgraben verließ. Er dachte, dass es bereits elf Uhr sei.

Er wurde schnellstmöglich ins nahegelegene Feldhospital im Dorf Sleidinge gebracht, verstarb dort aber kurz nach seinem Eintreffen. Noch am selben Tag wurde er auf dem Gemeindefriedhof von Sleidinge beigesetzt.

Marie Beck, die von Belgien in die Normandie geflüchtet und eine Verwandte von Hector war, schrieb am 11. November 1918 in ihr Tagebuch:

„Vier Jahre Elend ... und jetzt ... ist alles vorbei. So viele Menschen in den Straßen. Französische und belgische Flüchtlinge. Die Cafés sind überfüllt. Jeden Tag wird richtig Geld verdient. Und gesungen haben sie! Jemand kletterte auf einen Kübel. Er hatte sein Akkordeon dabei. ‚La guerre est finie‘, sang er. Wunderschön. Der junge Mann wusste nicht, wovon sein Lied handelte. ‚Nos héros ...‘

Ja, es gab Helden. Menschen, die taten, was sie tun mussten und die Mut hatten und unter Hunger und Kälte litten. Aber es waren nicht die Helden, wie sie in diesem Lied besungen wurden. Niemand setzte sein Leben nur für ein bisschen Ruhm aufs Spiel. Unsere Helden ... das waren Menschen, die Angst hatten – ebenso wie die anderen Menschen vor diesen ganzen schrecklichen Dingen Angst hatten. Für alle, die den Krieg hautnah erlebt und viele Jahre an der Front verbracht hatten, war dies ein schmerzliches Fest. Aber trotzdem sangen alle innerhalb kürzester Zeit mit. Und an diesem Tag waren ziemlich viele Betrunkene unterwegs.

Auch wir haben im kleinen Kreise gefeiert, Familie und Flüchtlinge. Wir haben schön gegessen, aber dann, am Abend, erreichte uns ein Telegramm. Das Fest war schnell vorüber. Hector war erschossen worden. Er war zu früh aus seinem Laufgraben geklettert. Um fünf vor elf. Stell Dir vor: der Bruder von Daniël, der mit meiner Schwester, unserer Germaine, verheiratet ist ...“

Nach dem Krieg wurde die Familie gefragt, ob die sterblichen Überreste an seinen Wohnort überführt werden sollten. Die Familie lehnte dies ab und entschied sich dafür, ihn bei seinen Kameraden zu lassen.

Später wurde seine Leiche exhumiert und am 26. März 1924 im Bereich der Ehrengräber des städtischen Friedhofs von Gent beigesetzt, wo er bis zum heutigen Tage seine letzte Ruhestätte gefunden hat. Auf seinem Grabstein steht, dass er am 17. November verstorben sei. Das ist jedoch nicht richtig. Sein Todesdatum ist der 11. November 1918. /



LIEUTENANT PETER LAYARD is buried in CWGC Douchy-Les-Ayette British Cemetery, France. Upon his headstone are inscribed the words: **'SON OF GEORGE SOMES LAYARD, ENAMOURED OF LIFE HE WENT LAUGHING INTO THE ARMS OF DEATH'**

 CWGC

Finding the Words

Four life stories behind the grave stones from the First World War

After the end of the First World War, the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission began the task of marking the graves of the British Empire's dead. A form was sent to the family or next-of-kin of each of those known to be buried across the world, requesting the confirmation of the personal details of their loved one, and offering the opportunity to include a short epitaph on the headstone.

Today, these words of remembrance form a moving record of grief. From biblical quotations to poetry, defiant statements of meaning and purpose, and poignant messages of loss and love, these words are an illuminating insight into the aftermath and legacy of the war.



Lieutenant Peter Layard of the 4th Battalion, the Suffolk Regiment, was killed in action on 23 August 1918 on the Western Front while attempting to help a wounded German soldier. He was 22 years old. He is buried in CWGC Douchy-Les-Ayette British Cemetery, France.

Born in Malvern, Worcester, Peter was the son of George and Eleanor Layard. /

Lieutenant Peter Layard

 IWM HU 93437, CWGC



PRIVATE GEORGE FOWLER

Upon his headstone are inscribed the words:
**'RESPONSIVE TO HIS COUNTRY'S CALL,
 HE GAVE HIS LIFE, HIS BEST, HIS ALL'**

 IWM HU 122330, CWGC

Private George Fowler of the 59th Battalion, Australian Infantry, died on 29 September 1918 during the Battle of the St Quentin Canal on the Western Front. He was 22 years old. He is buried in CWGC Bellicourt British Cemetery.

Born 1896 in Coburg, Victoria, George was the son of Lucretia and George Fowler. He worked as a carpenter in Drouin, south-east of Melbourne before the War. He volunteered for active service in 1916 and just before leaving he married his sweetheart, Gladys Clare, who gave birth to a little girl in early 1917. /



MAJOR GENERAL LOUIS LIPSETT

Upon his headstone are inscribed the words:
**'OUT OF THE STRESS OF THE DOING
 INTO THE PEACE OF THE DONE'**

 IWM HU 124182, CWGC

Major General Louis Lipsett, General Staff, Commander of the 4th Division, was killed in action on 14 October 1918 on the Western Front. He was 44 years old. Louis is buried in CWGC Queant Communal Cemetery British Extension, France.

Born 1874 in Ballyshannon, County Donegal, Ireland, Louis was the son of Richard and Etty Lipsett. He grew up in Merthyr Tydfil in Wales before leaving to attend Bedford Grammar School. In June 1916, Louis was given command of the 3rd Canadian Division. He became widely regarded as one of the best officers of the Great War. He was adored and respected by his men, and his division became one of the finest formations in the British Army. In September 1918 he was given command of the 4th British Division. A month later he was crawling along a bank overlooking the River Selle to observe enemy positions when he was shot and killed. He was the last General officer to die during the War.

His funeral was attended by the Prince of Wales and many fellow officers. /



CAPTAIN GEOFFREY BOWEN

Upon his headstone are inscribed the words:
**'THEIR BODIES ARE BURIED IN
 PEACE BUT THEIR NAME LIVETH
 FOR EVERMORE'**

 IWM HU 114153, CWGC

Captain Geoffrey Bowen of the 2nd Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers was killed in action during the Battle for the Drocourt-Queant

line in France on 2 September 1918. He was 23 years old. He is buried in CWGC Windmill British Cemetery, France.

Born in 1895 in Brentford, London, Geoffrey was the son of Winifred Mary Bowen. The family lived in Burley, near Brockenhurst, in the New Forest. He volunteered for active service in 1915 and fought in almost every major British battle on the Western Front, including the Battle of the Somme in 1916 where he was wounded. /

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION



CWGC
 Commonwealth War Graves Commission

...honours the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the First and Second World Wars, and ensures they will never be forgotten. Our work commemorates the war dead, from building and maintaining our cemeteries and memorials at 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries and territories to preservation of our extensive records and archives. Our values and aims, laid out in 1917, are as relevant now as they were 100 years ago. To mark the centenary of the Armistice the CWGC has launched a new online exhibition:

shapingoursorrow.cwgc.org

Celui qui sème le vent récolte la tempête

Extrait des carnets d'un soldat blessé,
juin 1918 - Pierre Petit
(1891–1996)

Je m'assois sur la table. Le Dr me pique à la cocaïne pour m'insensibiliser ma plaie. Je regarde et je trouve cela très drôle, puis il incise, et fait sortir du sang noir et du sérum. Comme ça mon abcès est vidé. Je n'ai plus qu'à retourner à ma salle de repos. Diner charmant!

Infirmière très gentille ... Je tousse un peu, et j'ai pas mal de température. 19h. Ça ne va pas très très bien

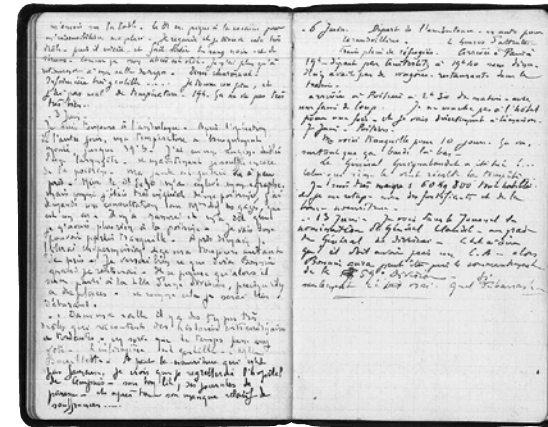
3 juin.

Je suis toujours à l'ambulance. Après l'opération de l'autre jour, ma température a brusquement monté, jusqu'à 39°3. J'ai eu une angine doublée d'une laryngite. Et maintenant je souffre encore de la poitrine. Ma jambe est guérie ou à peu près. Hier le Dr Echo m'a enlevé mon agraphe (NdT agrafe). Mais comme j'étais très inquiet de ma poitrine, j'ai demandé une consultation au Mcn (NdT

médecin) chef des gazés, qui est un as. Il m'a rassuré et m'a dit que je n'avais plus rien à la poitrine. Je vais donc pouvoir partir tranquille. Après demain, je serai en permission donc ça sera toujours autant de pris. Je verrai bien ce que dira Bonnin quand je rentrerai. Il se pourra qu'alors il sera parti à la tête d'une division, puisqu'il y a des places, et comme ça je serai bien débarrassé.

Dans ma salle il y a des types très drôles qui racontent des histoires extraordinaires et tordantes – en sorte que le temps passe assez vite. L'infirmière est gentille. Mlle Bouillette. A part la nourriture qui n'est pas fameuse, je crois que je regretterai l'hôpital de Lempuis – son bon lit, ses journées de paresse – et après tout son manque relatif de souffrances ...

6 juin. Départ de l'ambulance – en auto pour Morandvilliers. 2 heures d'attente.



War diary of French officer Pierre Petit, 1914–1918

📖 Pierre Petit private archives, donation from Daniel Heck (kept in Service Historique de la Défense Vincennes, ref. 1 KT 1151)

Train plein de réfugiés. Arrivée à Paris à 19h – départ par Austerlitz à 19h40 sans diner.

Il n'y avait pas de wagons restaurants dans le train. Arrivée à Poitiers à 2h30 du matin – avec une faim de loup. Je ne couche pas à l'hôtel pour une fois – et je vais directement à la maison.

7 juin. Poitiers

Me voici tranquille pour 10 jours. Ça va, surtout que ça barde là-bas.

Le Général Guignabaudet a été tué ! ...

Celui qui sème le vent récolte la tempête.

Je suis très maigre, 60kg 800 tout habillé, donc je me re-tape avec des fortifiants et de la bonne nourriture.

13 juin. Je vois dans le journal la nomination du Général Claudel au grade de Général de division. C'est-à-dire qu'il doit avoir pris un C.A (NdT corps d'armée) – alors Bonnin aura peut être pris le commandement de la 59^e division. Si seulement c'était vrai. Quel débarras ! /



**PIERRE PETIT
(1891–1996),**

was a second lieutenant in 1914 and participated mainly in the battles in Flanders and Verdun. He became a staff officer and served as a liaison officer, in particular with the Americans and then the Russians.

📖 Pierre Petit private archives, donation from Daniel Heck (kept in Service Historique de la Défense Vincennes, ref. 1 KT 1151)

He who sows the wind, reaps the whirlwind

From the diary of a wounded soldier,
June 1918 - Pierre Petit
(1891–1996)

I sit on the table. The Dr gives me a cocaine shot to desensitise my wound. I look and find this very funny – then he makes an incision, and draws out black blood and serum. That way my abscess is drained. The only thing I have to do is return to my resting ward. Charming dinner!

Very kind nurse.... I'm coughing a bit and I've got quite a temperature. 7 pm. I'm not very, very well.

June 3.

I'm still at the ambulance. After the operation the other day, my temperature suddenly increased, up to 39.3 degrees. I had a strep throat and laryngitis. And now I'm still having problems with my chest. My leg is healed, or mostly so. Yesterday, Dr Echo took my staple out but as I was very worried about my chest, I asked for a consultation

with the Head Doctor for the Gassed, who is a real ace.

He reassured me and told me that there was nothing wrong with my chest anymore. So I'm going to be able to leave reassured. The day after tomorrow, I'm going to be on leave and at least I'll have that. I'll see what Bonnin says when I get back. It could be that he's already left at the head of a division, because there are positions, and that way I'll be well rid of him.

In my ward, there are very funny fellows who tell extraordinary or hilarious tales, so the time passes quite quickly. The nurse is kind. Miss Bouillette. Apart from the food, which isn't great, I think that I'll regret leaving the hospital at Lempuis – its fine bed, its lazy days – and finally, its relative lack of suffering.

June 6. Leaving the ambulance by car to Morandvilliers. Two hours' wait.

Train full of refugees. Arrival at Paris at 7 pm. Departure via Austerlitz at 7:10 pm. without dinner. There were no restaurant cars on the train.

Arrival at Poitiers at 2:30 in the morning – ravenously hungry. For once I'm not sleeping in a hotel and I go directly home.

June 7, Poitiers.

I'm high and dry here for 10 days. That's fine, especially seeing as things are bad over there.

General Guignabaudet has been killed!

He who sows the wind, reaps the whirlwind.

I'm very thin, 60.8 kilos fully dressed, so I'm building myself up with tonics and good food.

June 13. In the paper, I saw the appointment of General Claudel to the rank of Major General. That means that he must have got a C.A. (corps d'armée – army corps) – so maybe Bonnin will maybe have taken over the command of the 59th division. If only that were true. Good riddance! /

L'OFFICE NATIONAL DES ANCIENS COMBATTANTS
ET VICTIMES DE GUERRE (ONACVG)
NATIONAL OFFICE FOR VETERANS AND
VICTIMS OF WAR



mémoire et solidarité

Since 1916, the National Office for Veterans and Victims of War (ONACVG), a national public institution under the aegis of the Ministry for the Armed Forces, has been providing assistance to all veterans and victims of conflicts, in addition to victims of acts of terrorism since 1990. Its three main tasks, i.e. recognition and reparation, solidarity and remembrance, are carried out as closely as possible to its three million constituents by its 105 local services, which are located in metropolitan France, overseas France, as well as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Since 2010, ONACVG has also been responsible for the maintenance, management and enhancement of 273 national cemeteries and 9 significant places of national remembrance.

www.onac-vg.fr

... ob nicht der langersehnte Frieden kommt

Tagebuch der Diakonisse Marie Stier

12. Januar. Heute meinen Dienst als Nachtschwester angetreten. Ich wache 14 Tage lang und habe tagsüber frei / tagsüber kann ich schlafen oder spazieren gehen. (Ich sollte erst 14 Tage wachen, dann wurden 3 Wochen daraus). Es ist schön. Ich wache gern. Die Ruhe und Stille, die einen umgibt, finde ich wohltuend, und dann das Schöne, wenn einer so schlaflos auf seinem Lager liegt und man ihm wenigstens etwas helfen kann, seine Schmerzen lindern. Das macht glücklich und fröhlich. Befreit geht man morgens in sein Quartier.

Heute fragten mich meine Kranken: „Ja Schwester, wachen Sie immer noch? Werden Sie denn nicht müde?“ Nein, ich wache immer gern.

27. Januar. Diese Nacht 11 Uhr, gerade an Kaisers Geburtstag, wurde unser Pierrepont (d. h. eigentlich nur unser Lazarett, denn im Städtchen merkten sie kaum etwas davon) von feindlichen Fliegern heimgesucht. Ich saß außerhalb der Krankenzimmer in einem Raum, in dem man sich aufhielt und dann von Zeit zu Zeit seine Runde machte. Da

ertönte auf einmal ein solch fürchterlicher Knall, daß ich entsetzt aufsprang und am ganzen Körper zitterte. Nachdem ich mich etwas erholt hatte, eilte ich ins Freie und da brannte schon unsere Küche; es wurde eine Brandbombe geworfen. Ein fürchterlicher Knall, dann Feuerschein – es war eine Brandbombe, die in unsere Lazarettküche eingeschlagen hatte. Daneben schlief das Küchenpersonal, 2 wurden verwundet. Der Koch saß noch in der Küche und schrieb, und von dem Lichtschein angezogen, machten sie die Küche zu ihrer Zielscheibe, der Koch wurde verkohlt herausgetragen, während seine 2 Gehilfen, die in einem Raum neben der Küche schon im Bett waren, schwer verwundet wurden und in der Nacht noch operiert wurden. Das war eine Aufregung bei den Kranken; ich durfte nicht mehr mit dem Licht meine Runde machen. „Licht aus!“ riefen sie. Ich pilgerte nun mit meiner Taschenlampe unter dem Schurz dahin. Ich mußte doch immer wieder nachsehen, ob nicht bei den Schwerverwundeten eine der gefährlichen Blutungen eingetreten ist. In der Nähe der Küche waren durch den Luft-

druck sämtliche Fensterscheiben zertrümmert. Das Feuer wurde gelöscht; am nächsten Tag konnte man wieder in der Küche kochen. Von da ab zog ich mit Grauen in die Wache.

9. März. Heute nach ½ 12 Uhr kamen feindliche Flieger für eine Stunde. Man hörte deutlich das Surren der Propeller. Nach einer unheimlichen Stille. Krach! sausten 3 Bomben nieder. Die Mauern bebten, Fenster klirrten, als wir in den unteren Saal eilten. Im unteren Saal hatten die Kranken alle Betten voll Glasscherben, da von dem Luftdruck die Fensterscheiben zersprungen waren, einige waren am Kopf verwundet. Wir verbanden sie, schüttelten ihre Betttücher aus und konnten dann nur danken, daß es so glimpflich abgelaufen war und suchten unser verlassenes Lager wieder auf. In der Nähe schlug eine Bombe in die Straße und traf ein Zivilhaus.

Heute bekamen wir ein Französlein mit Ruhr in unser Lazarett. Wie blaß und mager war er; er erholte sich aber wieder ganz gut. Nach seiner Entlassung kam er einmal mit seinem Vater und brachte mir ein Päckchen guten Bohnenkaffee, gespannt betrachtete er mich dabei, was ich für Gesicht machte. Dann fragte er so drollig: „Nu, genug?“ Lachend bejahte ich, ich hätte ihn auch ohnedies gepflegt. /



MARIE STIER
(1893–1960)

Evangelisches Diakoniewerk
Schwäbisch Hall e. V., Archiv

Heike Krause: „...ob nicht der langersehnte Frieden kommt“.

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...for that the long-awaited peace may come

The Diaries of the Nurse Marie Stier

January 12th. Today, I started my work as a night nurse. I am on duty for 14 days and am free during the day / during the day I can sleep or go for a walk. (I was supposed to be on duty for 14 days, then it turned into 3 weeks). It's great. I like to be on duty. I find the peace and silence that surrounds me so pleasant. And then the good things, when someone tosses sleeplessly on his bed, I can help him at least a little, alleviate his pain. It makes you happy and cheerful. You feel liberated when returning to your quarters in the morning.

Today my patients asked me: "Well, sister, are you still awake? Aren't you getting tired?" No, I always love to be on duty.

January 27th. This night at 11 o'clock, just on the Kaiser's birthday, our Pierrepont (i.e. actually only our hospital, because in the small town they hardly noticed anything of it) was attacked by enemy planes. I was sitting outside the sickrooms in a room where staff stay and then make their rounds from time to time. All of a sudden there was such a terrible bang that I jumped up in horror

and trembled all over my body. After I had recovered a bit, I hurried outside, and our kitchen was already burning; a fire bomb had been dropped. A terrible bang, then a blaze of fire – it was a fire bomb that had struck our hospital kitchen.

The kitchen staff slept nearby, two were wounded. The cook was still sitting in the kitchen writing, and they must have been attracted by the light when they had made the kitchen their target; the cook was carried out charred, his two assistants, who were already in bed in a room next to the kitchen, were seriously wounded and were operated on that very night. There was agitation among the sick; I was no longer allowed to make my rounds with the light. "Lights out!" they yelled. I was now wandering with my flashlight under my apron. I had to check time and again to see if one of the men who had been seriously wounded had not suffered a dangerous bleeding. Near the kitchen, all the windows were shattered by the air pressure blast. The fire was extinguished, the next day you could cook again in the kitchen. From then on, I went on duty with horror.

March 9th. Tonight, at half past eleven, enemy planes came for one hour. You could hear the humming of the propellers clearly. After an eerie silence. A sudden blast! Three bombs dropped down. The walls trembled, windows were breaking as we hurried into the lower hall. In the lower hall, the patients had all their beds full of glass shards, because the air pressure had shattered the window panes, some were wounded in the head. We bandaged them, shook out their sheets and then could only be grateful that things had gone so smoothly and went back to our abandoned beds. Nearby, a bomb struck a street and hit a civilian home.

Today, we got a little Frenchman with dysentery in our hospital. How pale and skinny he was, but he recovered quite well again. After his release, he came by once with his father and brought me a packet of good bean coffee, he looked at me anxiously, what a face I would make. Then he asked, funny as he was, "Well, enough?" Laughing, I said that I would have nursed him anyway. /

Heike Krause, "...ob nicht der langersehnte Frieden kommt".

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MARIE STIER (1893–1960),

born on August 7, 1883, grew up in modest circumstances in Künzelsau. Despite performing well at school, she had to help with the rearing of her siblings, and it was not until the age of 23 that she was able to fulfil her longstanding wish and take up the nursing profession as a deaconess. In 1914, shortly after the outbreak of the war, she was drafted to work in a military hospital. She received numerous honours. After the war she worked in various hospitals and nursing homes in northern Württemberg well into retirement. Marie Stier died 1960 at the deaconry in Halle.

VOLKSBUND DEUTSCHE KRIEGSGRÄBERFÜRSORGE GERMAN WAR GRAVES COMMISSION



... was founded in 1919 to bury and commemorate the dead after the First World War. Today, it works on behalf of the government together with international partners for the war graves abroad. It accompanies relatives and promotes the encounter of young people at the resting places of the dead – thus turning them into places of learning about European history and the present. In memory of the end of the First World War, the Volksbund is offering numerous youth encounters and commemoration events that are taking place throughout Europe.

www.volksbund.de

Békés végső tisztelgés egy bátor és emberséges pilótának

Kiss József története (1896–1918)

Kiss József (1896-1918) 18 évesen önként jelentkezett katonai szolgálatra az első világháború kitörésekor. Alakulatával már október 26-án a frontra került. Az oroszok elleni felőrlő harcok során 1915 január 20-án megsebesült. Kórházi kezelése során áthelyezését kérte a repülőkhöz, a repülőkre való átképzése, kiképzése után felderítőként került az olasz frontra 1916 májusában.

Bátor pilóta volt. Első győzelmét 1916 júniusában aratta tíz Caproni típusú repülőgéppel szemben, egy harmincperces csatában. Az ütközetben Kiss József gépét hetven találat érte.

Hetedik győzelme után az 55. vadászszázadhoz helyezték át, így 1917 novemberétől az ellenőrzés alatt tartott területeken az olasz bombák elhárításában játszott jelentős szerepet.

1917. november 15. és 18. között három bevetésen, öt alkalommal győzött le ellenséges repülőgépeket. Tettéért arany vitézségi érmet kapott. November 28-án, egy nap alatt

két győzelmet ért el, melyhez a király és a vezérkari főnök személyesen gratulált.

1918. május 24-én Campolongo községnél azonban utolérték, lelőtték a repülőgépét, amely lezuhant és Kiss József hősi halált halt.

Légi harcmodorának teljesen egyedi és legendássá vált eleme volt az, hogy bátor és emberséges repülőként légi csatáiban az ellenfél életét kímélni akarta: Ezért az ellenséges repülőgépet lehetőség szerint géppuska sorozatokkal maga előtt terelte és a frontvonal mögött, saját területükön leszállásra kényszerítette. A 19 igazolt légi győzelmet aratott Kiss József nevét az ellenséges katonák is jól ismerték. Nem egy közülük Kiss József lovagias harcmodorának köszönhette életét.

A háború utolsó évére kialakult nyomasztó Antant fölény azonban egyre nehezebb kihívás elé állította Ausztria-Magyarország pilótáit is. 1918. május 24-én, utolsó és végzetes bevetésén három osztrák-magyar repülőgép

keveredett harcba tíz angollal. A túlerő elleni harcban Kiss József életét vesztette.

Korabeli elbeszélések szerint, a három nappal későbbi gyászszerződés kezdetére a nagy számban érkezett katonák, repülőtisztok és repülőgépek, rendezett alakzatba helyezkedtek a meredek oldalú völgyben található, viszonylag keskeny, perginei reptéren. Az ellenség esetleges támadása a szerződés idején, óriási ember- és gépvesztést okozott volna a hadsereg számára. Emiatt a távolban felhangzó ellenséges repülőgépek hangja nagy riadalmat és zűrzavart okozott. Néhányan a közeli szőlőskertekben, mások a repülőtér épületeiben kerestek menedéket, sokan magukat a földre vetve remélték túlélni a közelgő támadást. A repülőtér felett nagyon alacsonyan szállva közeledtek az angol, francia és olasz gépek, majd géppuskatűz és bombák helyett egy csomagot ledobva tovább szálltak. Kis idő múlva, miután a csomag nem robbant fel, kinyitották és nagy megdöbbenésükre egy nehéz koszorút találtak benne. A koszorúra kötött gyászszalagon angol, francia és olasz nyelven az alábbi felirat volt olvasható: A végső tisztelgésünk bátor ellenfelünknek.

Fényes pályája során három arany, négy nagyezüst, öt kizezüst és három bronz vitézségi érmet érdemelt ki. Zuhánása másnapján, sürgősségi eljárás keretében terjesztették az uralkodó elé tisztii előléptetését, amelyet IV. Károly jóváhagyott. A köznyelv, mint az „egek lovagját” ismerte és csodálta a 22 évesen a háború vége előtt öt hónappal meghalt fiatalembert. /



KISS JÓZSEF
(1896–1918)

📍 *Hadtörténeli Intézet és Múzeum*

A peaceful final salute to a brave and humane pilot

The story of József Kiss (1896–1918)

József Kiss (1896-1918) volunteered for infantry duty at age 18 at the start of World War I. He was already sent to the front lines with his corps on the 26th of October. During the gruelling and trying combat against the Russians, he was injured on the 20th of January 1915. During his care in the hospital, he asked to be transferred to the air force, and, after completing flight training, he ended up on the Italian front in May 1916.

He was a brave pilot. He achieved his first victory in June 1916 against ten Caproni-type aircraft, in a battle lasting about 30 minutes. In this clash, József Kiss's aeroplane was struck by 70 bullets.

After his seventh victory, he was relocated to the 55th Fighter squadron, and thus played an essential role in counterintelligence and in preventing Italian bombing attacks on the territories under his control.

Between the 15th and 18th of November 1917, he defeated five enemy aircraft during the course of three missions. For his achievements, he received a gold medal of honour. On the 28th of November, he achieved two

victories in one day, upon which he was personally congratulated by the monarch and the Chief of Staff.

However, on the 24th of May 1918, near the town of Campolongo, the enemy caught up with him and fired at his plane, causing it to crash. József Kiss died a heroic death.

A completely unique element of his aerial battle tactics – which later became legendary – was that, as a brave and humane pilot, he sought to spare his opponent's life during aerial combat. Thus, as far as possible, he directed the enemy aircraft in front of him with volleys from his machine gun, and forced it to land behind the front lines, on the enemy's own territory. The name of József Kiss, who achieved 19 confirmed aerial victories, was well known to enemy soldiers as well. Several of them owed their lives to the chivalrous battle tactics of József Kiss.

However, the pressing advantage of the Entente that developed by the last year of the war represented an increasingly difficult challenge to the pilots of Austria-Hungary as well. On the 24th of May 1918, on his last

and fatal mission, three Austro-Hungarian aircraft entered into battle with 10 British planes. In this fight against superior numbers, József Kiss lost his life.

According to contemporary accounts, when the funeral service began three days later, the soldiers, flight officers and aircraft that arrived for the ceremony took their places in an orderly formation at the airport of Pergine, located in a valley with steep sides, thus making it relatively narrow. A possible attack by the enemy during the service would have caused a gigantic loss of men and aircraft for the army. Thus, the sound of enemy aeroplanes arising from far away caused great fear and mayhem. Some sought refuge in the nearby vineyards, some in the buildings of the airport, some hoped to survive the oncoming attack by throwing themselves onto the ground. British, French

and Italian aircraft approached, flying very low above the airport. Then they flew on, dropping a package instead of machine gunfire and bombs. After some time, when the package did not explode, it was opened, and a heavy wreath was found within it. The mourning ribbon tied to it said the following in English, French and Italian: "Our last salute to our courageous foe."

During his illustrious career, Kiss was awarded three gold, four large silver, five small silver and three bronze medals of honour. On the day after his crash, his promotion to officer was put forward to the monarch in an emergency procedure, which Charles IV accepted and granted. The general public knew and admired the young man of 22, who died five months before the end of the war. /

HADTÖRTÉNETI INTÉZET ÉS MÚZEUM
THE MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE
AND MUSEUM



The Military History Institute and Museum belongs to the Hungarian Ministry of Defence.

It was founded 100 years ago (16th November 1918). It is a museum and institute of the Hungarian Armed Forces' history. It has five directorates (archives, an institute of military history, a museum) and one of these is the Directorate of War Tribute and War Graves Care (Katonai Emlékezet és Hadisírgondozó Igazgatóság). This directorate is responsible for all Hungarian war graves abroad and for all nations' war graves in Hungary.

There are Hungarian war graves in over 50 countries in the world.

www.militaria.hu

Vluchtelingen in Nederland

Mobilisatie-herinneringen van luitenant-generaal W.H. van Terwisga (1861–1948)

[...]. Het gebeurde in den nacht van 9 October 1914. Naar mijn Stafkwartier Oudenbosch terugkerende uit Putten, waar wij op den Huzarenberg de gebeurtenissen bij Antwerpen (het bombardement) hadden waargenomen, vond ik op het stationsplein te Roosendaal volle verlichting en veel drukte. In het station gaande om naar de oorzaak van de agitatie te informeerden, was zulks spoedig zeer duidelijk: de perrons, wachtkamers, alle ruimten waren gevuld met Belgen; duizenden mannen, vrouwen, kinderen, met huisraad en allerlei – blijkbaar inderhaast bij elkaar gegrepen – voorwerpen. Juist stoomde weder een trein met vluchtelingen het station binnen. Die trein werd weer door andere gevolgd! Antwerpen loopt leeg, zeide men mij.

Te Roosendaal had zich, met lofwaardigen spoed, een Comité gevormd om die mensen te helpen, te voeden, etc. Een bagage-loods was inderhaast ingericht voor verblijf

van vrouwen met kinderen. Alle bakkers waren aan het werk gezet, want het voorhanden brood was tot de laatste kruimel verbruikt. Melk was niet meer voorhanden. In één woord, men had het gevoel vast te lopen.

Toen ik op het perron verscheen werd ik door dat Comité dadelijk belegerd met verzoek te willen helpen. De eerste hulp mijnerzijds was een telegram aan den Directeur van het Etappen- en Verkeerswezen te Rotterdam met verzoek spoedig te zenden 10.000 rations brood, een paar honderd kilo's boter en zooveel melk als gemist kon worden. Het zal ongeveer 2 uur in den nacht geweest zijn.

En toen ik den volgenden ochtend, naar de grens gaande, weer Roosendaal passeerde en aan het station ging zien hoe daar de toestand was geworden, kwam het nog altijd actieve Comité mij bedanken: reeds om half zes had men wagons uit Rotterdam

gekregen met ruim de hoeveelheid die ik gevraagd had, zoodat men met man en macht had kunnen broodsnijden, boterham-smeren en beleggen (kaas), en de hongerige Belgen kon spijzigen.

De Kolonel, Directeur van het Etappen- en Verkeerswezen, dien men met dat telegram had gewekt, had dadelijk het noodige verricht, met het zooveel vermelde resultaat. Voor den troep voor welken de wagons waren bestemd werd dadelijk een andere voorraad geladen, zoodat ook in den verplegingsdienst daarbij geen stagnatie ontstond. [...].

[...]. Nu kom ik nog eens op de vluchtelingen terug. Zooals ik heb gezegd, begaf ik mij in den ochtend van den dag na het bombardement van Antwerpen weder van mijn Stafkwartier, via Roosendaal naar de grens (Putten). Zulks naar aanleiding van ingekomen berichten, vermeldende, dat Belgische vluchtelingen in zeer grooten getale bij Putten en Ossendrecht over onze grens kwamen.

Ik zal daarvan geen al te uitvoerige beschrijving geven. Alleen vermeld ik, dat hetgeen men te zien kreeg elke vooraf gemaakte voorstelling verre overtrof in omvang en in tragiek. Man kan zich een klein denkbeeld ervan maken als ik zeg, dat ik, hoewel ik gaarne zoo spoedig doenlijk aan de grens wilde wezen, over het traject Hoogerheide-Putten (ongeveer 10 km) met den auto ruim 2½ uur heb moeten doen.

De weg was eenvoudig over de volle breedte gevuld met mensen, vee, wagens, etc. Die



Belgian refugees, 1914

© J. Dąbrowski: *The Great War. Warsaw 1937* [Public Domain]. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Belgian_refugees_1914.jpg?uselang=nl#/media/File:Belgian_refugees_1914.jpg

wirwar strekte zich uit zoover als – op rechte weggedeelten – het oog reikte. De auto moest zich letterlijk door dat kluwen heenwringen!

En naast den weg, in de bosschen, hadden zich massa's neergeworpen; velen, die niet verder konden, maar ook velen, die tevreden waren op Neerlands bodem veilig te zijn beland en die wilden afwachten hoe het nu verder zou gaan. Er waren er, die zoozeer in de situatie berustten, dat zij de kaarten voor den dag hadden gehaald en kalm een partijtje zaten (of lagen) te jassen!

Een schrille tegenstelling met de ellende, het bitter lijden en de wanhoop die bij de meesten op het gelaat lag. Een tegenstelling ook met het leed dat sprak uit zoovele partijtjes, die aan de

→ boomen waren geprikt en waarin kinderen hun ouders zochten of ouders hun kinderen, waarin werd medegedeeld waarheen men verder was gegaan, in de hoop elkander weer te vinden.

In dat kluwen mensen was het dien lieden niet doenlijk elkander weer te vinden; van achter opgestuwd door steeds nieuwe, opdringende scharen wanhopige mensen, moest de stroom verder gaan. De Informatiedienst van het Roode Kruis weet hoeveel jaren het voor sommigen heeft geduurd voor en aler men elkaar weer had gevonden!

Zoo was het op den weg van Antwerpen over Cappellen en Putten, zoo was het ook op den weg, die van Antwerpen over Zandvliet en Ossendrecht noordwaarts voert. Die beide wegen vloeiden samen in Hoogerheide in een betrekkelijk nauwe straat, om daarna zich weer te splitsen: een weg noordwaarts over de Stalen brug naar Bergen op Zoom; een andere weg over Huybergen, meer oostwaarts naar Wouw.

In Hoogerheide moest het noodzakelijk tot een fatale stremming komen. Het was noodig daar in te grijpen. Een hulpweg, getraceerd door een buiten ten Oosten van Hoogerheide, gaf gelegenheid om den van Putten komenden stroom, buiten Hoogerheide om, naar den weg over Huybergen te leiden; waardoor het defilé Hoogerheide aan den uit Ossendrecht komenden stroom kon worden overgelaten.

Voor wie deze instrooming niet in den aanvang heeft gadeslagen, is 't eenvoudig on-

mogelijk zich een voorstelling te maken van den daar doorleefden toestand en van den angst en de ellende die daar door die mensen werd geleden.

Ik spreek niet over de velen, die daar zijn bezweken op of naast den weg; niet over de (niet minder dan 5) bevallingen op den openbaren weg bij Putten; niet over den nacht, misschien wel door honderduizend grijsaards, mannen, vrouwen, kinderen doorgebracht in de bosschen met geen andere beschutting soms dan een oude parapluie en als voeding niet meer dan datgene wat men inderhaast had samengepakt bij de onverwachte vlucht. Het was eenvoudig onbeschrijfelijk.

Alle langs den weg wonende Nederlanders gaven wat zij missen konden; gaven brood, koffie, melk. Maar die hulp liep vrij spoedig ten einde, gezien het overgroot aantal vluchtelingen. Ja, spoedig kwamen ook uit onze binnenprovinciën hulpvaardige lieden met brood en versnaperingen. Het werd haast een wedstrijd in het weldoen. Doch het zeer vele dat meegebracht werd, was als een druppel op een gloeiende plaat. Er was organisatie noodig.

Het is mij meermalen gebleken, dat men zich geen voorstelling heeft gemaakt van het aantal Belgen, dat in die enkele dagen is komen binnenstromen. Ik schatte het op ruim een millioen. Zij zijn niet geteld. Maar wel heb ik doen tellen (turfschrijven!) toen een deel is teruggegaan: na een week waren er ongeveer 250.000 over de grens gegaan om hun woonplaatsen weer te gaan opzoeken.



Refugees from Belgium in Paris, 1914
 © George Grantham Bain collection
 at the Library of Congress

Een andere aanwijzing voor 't aantal ervoer ik, toen ik den 12den Oktober in opdracht onzer Regeering) ter bespreking met het Duitsche Commando te Antwerpen was. Bij den tocht daarheen reed ik door Brassaet: alle luiken gesloten, op de straat geen kind of kraai. En in Antwerpen zelf, waar op verscheiden plaatsen nog rook uit getroffen huizen opsteeg, was geen burger, geen vrouw, geen kind te zien; slechts hier

en daar een groepje soldaten en ergens een muziekkorps, dat speelde voor de boomen en de musschen!

Heel de bevolking van de groote havenstad en van al de kleine plaatsen in de omgeving, heel de 'agglomération d' Anvers et ses environs' was over onze grens verdwenen. Men kan zich den toestand misschien nog beter voorstellen, →



Bathing machines used as housing for Belgian refugees at Ostend, August 1914

📷 Imperial War Museum/Q 53226

[Public Domain]

Zoals hiervoren gezegd: er was organisatie nodig. Door de Intendance en den Geneeskundigen Dienst moest helpend worden ingegrepen. Terwijl het noodzakelijk was - ter versterking van de voor die overweldigende taak niet berekende Marechaussée, Rijk- en Gemeentepolitie - een speciale verkeers- en veiligheidspolitie (zoowel te voet als te paard) in te stellen. Deze moest door den troep worden geleverd; waarbij (het is wel overbodig zulks te vermelden) de eisch van voortdurende strijdvaardigheid geen moment uit het oog mocht worden verloren. [...].

[...]. Een andere bijzonderheid zal den lezer wel interesseeren. Ik bedoel die betreffende het Belgische spoorwegpersoneel, hetwelk, ten getale van (naar ik meen) 1500 hoofden (vrouwen en kinderen inbegrepen) zich op het stationemplacement Roosendaal had genesteld. Het was met al de treinen vol vluchtelingen over Esschen Roosendaal komen binnenrollen en was daar gebleven.

Zij hadden zich heel origineel, maar goed, onder dak gebracht. Voor elke een of twee gezinnen hadden zij een goederenwagen in beslag genomen en, door het in gebruik nemen van de kussens uit de 1e en 2e klasse rijtuig der personenwagens, hadden zij daarin behoorlijke legersteden ingericht. Een potkachel, voor warmte en etenbereiding, in iederen goederenwagen maakte, dat het er, ondanks het jaargetijde, naar behooren was uit te houden.

Voor de voeding zorgden zij zelf; dat de 'omtrek' die wel in hoofdzaak leverde en dat de klachten van niet-verrekening niet altijd on-

→ indien men bedenkt, dat in het stadje Bergen op Zoom, waar alle scholen, theaters, verenigingslokalen, zelfs kerken, volgepropt waren om zooveel doenlijk onderdak te verschaffen, naar schatting nog 40.000 menschen den nacht op straat doorbrachten! Terwijl, zooals reeds gezegd, de bosschen nog vol bivakkeerende lieden waren en de stroom reeds een paar dagen landinwaarts was gegaan.

Wij allen waren vol zorg over wat zou kunnen geschieden. Gelukkig, er is geen brand uitgebroken. Dat de velden en kippenhokken het wel hebben moeten ontgelden en dat menige melker 's morgens weer met leege emmers huiswaarts kon gaan omdat hij achter het net vischte, was minstens genomen heel verdrietig, maar toch begrijpelijk, vermits een massa met leege magen er nu eenmaal geen principes op nahoudt, er althans niet stijf aan vasthoudt!



Belgian Refugees in Flanders, October 1914

📷 Volksbund

gegrond waren, dat ook de kolenvoorraad op het stationemplacement weldra bewaking noodig had, zal ik laten rusten. Het was een interessant geval; maar voor den stationschef en den burgemeester was deze kolonie (die zich weldra 'georganiseerd' had onder een 'bestuur') heel lastig.

Aan het verzoek van de Deutsche autoriteiten om terug te keeren hadden zij geen lust te voldoen. Toch moest aan dien toestand een einde komen. Dat einde kwam dan ook; voor hen heel verrassend!

In een nacht werd - in alle stilte - door een compagnie het geheele terrein afgezet, terwijl bij elken goederenwagen een post werd geplaatst. De goederenwagens waren al (onder een of ander voorwendsel) aan elkaar gekoppeld. In alle stilte werd aan den aldus gevormden trein een locomotief gehaakt en - toen alle wissels goed waren gesteld -

begon opeens die trein van logeerwagens te rollen en zagen de plots ontwaakte spoorwegmannen en hun gezinnen hoe zij, in den duisteren nacht, naar een onbekende bestemming werden vervoerd. Ik meen dat zij te Oldenbroek zijn beland.

De stationschef slaakte een zucht van verlichting. En niet hij niet alleen! [...]. /

Dit artikel komt uit het boek *De Eerste Wereldoorlog door Nederlandse ogen Getuigenissen - Verhalen - Betogen*, samengesteld en toegelicht door Rob Kammelar, Jacques Sicking en Menno Wielinga, en is eerder gepubliceerd op www.wereldoorlog1418.nl

Refugees in the Netherlands

Memories of mobilisation
by Lieutenant-General
W.H. van Terwisga (1861–1948)

[...]. It happened in the night of 9 October 1914. While returning from Putten to my Oudenbosch staff quarters, where we had witnessed the events around Antwerp (the bombing) on the Huzarenberg, I found the Roosendaal station square fully lit and very busy.


Entering the station in order to make enquiries about the cause for the agitation, this rapidly became very clear: the platforms, waiting rooms, all rooms were filled with Belgians; thousands of men, women, children, with household goods and all sorts of objects – obviously hurriedly collected. A train carrying refugees was about to enter the station. This train was followed by yet another! Antwerp is running empty, I was told.

In Roosendaal a Committee had formed with commendable speed in order to help, feed, etc. these people. A baggage hall was

swiftly turned into accommodation for women with children. All bakers were put to work as the available bread had been used up until the last crumb. Milk was no longer available. In one word, people felt as if they were stuck.

When I appeared on the platform, the Committee immediately implored me to help. The first thing I did to help was to send a telegram to the Director of Transport and Supplies in Rotterdam requesting him to urgently send 10,000 rations of bread, a few hundred kilos of butter and as much milk as could be spared. It must have been 2 o'clock in the morning.

And when the following morning, while travelling to the border and passing Roosendaal once more, I went to the station to see how the situation had changed, the Committee, which was still very active, came to thank me: at six thirty a number of



Station Roosendaal, Perron 1, 2014 in the north of Antwerp near the Belgian border
Wikimedia Commons. Johan Bakker
[CC-SA 4.0 International]

carriages had arrived from Rotterdam with largely the quantities I had requested so that everyone had to pitch in cutting bread, spreading and filling sandwiches (cheese) and feeding the hungry Belgians.

The Colonel, Director of Transport and Supplies, who was awoken by that telegram, had acted immediately leading to the said result. The crowd, for whom the carriages were meant, instantly loaded another load of supplies so there was no halt in provisions. [...].

[...]. Allow me to come back to the refugees. As I mentioned, on the morning of the day after the Antwerp bombing I went back to my Staff quarters, via Roosendaal to the border (Putten). This followed reports detailing that large numbers of Belgian refugees were crossing the border near Putten and Ossendrecht.

I will not enter into too much detail, but I will mention that what I witnessed at that point far exceeded any prior notion I had in terms of proportion and

→ tragedy. One can try and imagine this when I mention that, although I was keen to get to the border as soon as possible, the stretch from Hoogerheide to Putten (approximately 10 km) took me over 2.5 hours by car.

Across its entire width, the road was filled with people, cattle, cars, etc. This chaos stretched for as far as the eye could see on straight sections of road. The car literally had to wring itself through these crowds!

And to the side of the road, in the woods, the crowds lay down; many who could not get on, but also many who were happy to have arrived safely on Dutch soil and who wanted to wait and see how things would develop. There were some who had resigned to the situation to such an extent that they had

gotten out playing cards and quietly sat (or lay down) playing a game of cards!

A sharp contrast with the misery, the bitter suffering and desperation visible on most people's faces. A contrast, too, with the misery that spoke from so many pieces of papers attached to trees, in which children were looking for their parents or parents for their children, which specified the direction in which one continued one's journey, in the hope of finding one another.

Amid that tangle of people it was sheer impossible that they would find each other; propelled forward from behind by new and anxious crowds of desperate people, the stream had to continue. The Red Cross Information Service knows how many years it has taken some before they had found each other again!

And so it was on the road from Antwerp through Cappellen and Putten, and so it was on the road north from Antwerp through

Zandvliet and Ossendrecht. Both those roads converged in a relatively narrow street in Hoogerheide in order to then split up again: one road north across the Steel Bridge to Bergen op Zoom; another road through Huybergen, more easterly to Wouw.

In Hoogerheide it was inevitable there would be a fatal obstruction. There, it was necessary to take action. An auxiliary road, tracked through the country east of Hoogerheide, allowed to deviate the stream coming from Putten outside of Hoogerheide to the road through Huybergen; allowing the Hoogerheide parade to be left to the stream of people coming from Ossendrecht.

For those who did not observe this influx from the beginning, it is simply impossible to imagine the situation people had to live through and the fear and misery they suffered.

I do not mention the many who died on or along the road; the (no fewer than 5) childbirths on the public road near Putten; the night that some hundred thousand of elderly, men, women and children spent in the woods, sometimes with no other protection than an old umbrella and for food what was hastily packed during the unexpected escape. It was simply indescribable.

All Dutchmen living along the road gave what they could spare; bread, coffee, milk. But this assistance rapidly came to an end given the large amounts of refugees. Indeed, soon, people from our inner provinces came to the rescue with bread and snacks. It almost became a charity competition. However, the substantial amount of items that were brought along was merely a drop in the ocean. Some organisation was required.

It appeared to me several times that one did not imagine the number of Belgians who crossed our borders during those few days. I estimated the number at over one million. They were not counted. But when part of them went back, I did have them counted (turf writing!);

WILLEM HENDRIK VAN TERWISGA (1861–1948)

Lieutenant-General W.H. van Terwisga was commander of the IIIrd Division during the 1914 mobilisation. In 1915 he was appointed Commander of the Field Army, a role he observed for the rest of the mobilisation period. In the National Union's 1914-1918 Book of Memories, 'The Mobilisation Cross' (1939), he looks back at this mobilisation period in great detail. The passage displayed here originally had no title.



Anonymous children's graves of Belgian refugees on the cemetery of Nunspeet in the east of Amsterdam

 [Wikimedia Commons](#). R. Lamper [CC BY-SA 3.0 NL]

→ after a week, some 250,000 had gone back across the border to go and rejoin their homes.

Another indication for the number came when, on 12 October, I was in Antwerp on behalf of our Government for discussions with the German Command. During my journey I drove through Brasschaet: all shutters closed, no one to be seen in the streets. And in Antwerp itself, where smoke was still rising from different places that were hit, there wasn't a single citizen, woman or child to be seen; only here and there was there a small group of soldiers and a fanfare playing for the trees and sparrows!

The large port city's entire population and that of all the small places in the surrounding area, the entire 'agglomération d'Anvers et ses environs' had disappeared across the border. It may be easier to imagine the situation when one thinks that in the city of Bergen op Zoom, where all schools, theatres, clubhouses, even churches, had been filled to the brim in order to provide as many people as possible with suitable accommodation, there were still 40,000 people spending the night on the street! And this, while, as mentioned before, the woods were still full of people camping and the stream had gone inland for a number of days.

We were all very concerned about what might happen. Fortunately, there were no fires. That the fields and chicken coops had to endure the worst and that several milkers were forced to return home with empty buckets as they were unsuccessful, it was at least very sad, but also understandable, con-

sidering such a mass with empty stomachs, do not hold principles, or at least not very highly!

As mentioned above: there was need for organisation. The Intendance and Medical Service had to provide assistance. While it was essential – for the reinforcement of the Marechausée, Federal and Municipal police who were unprepared for this monumental task – to establish a special traffic and security police (on foot as well as on horseback). They had to be provided by the troops; whereby (although it is superfluous to mention this) the demands of continuous readiness to fight could not be lost out of sight for one moment. [...].

[...]. Another particularity will interest the reader. I refer to the matter of the Belgian railway staff who, numbering (in my opinion) some 1,500 people (women and children included), had settled into Roosendaal station. They had come into Roosendaal on the refugee trains via Esschen and had stayed there.

They had accommodated for themselves in a very original, but efficient manner. They had seized a goods carriage for every single family or two families and by using the cushions from 1st and 2nd class carriages, had created decent army cities. A little pot stove in every goods carriage, for heat and in order to prepare food, made that it was quite doable to stay there, in spite of the season.

They arranged for their own food; I will not stir on the fact that it was mostly the 'wider surroundings' supplying these and that

the complaints for non-payment were not always groundless, and on the fact that the coal stock in the station square soon needed to be guarded. It was an interesting case: but for the station chief and the mayor, this colony (who had soon 'organised' themselves under an 'authority') was very difficult.

They did not feel like heeding to the request by the German authorities to go back. Still, this situation had to come to an end. That end soon came; very surprisingly for them!

One night – without making a stir – a company staked the entire field, while a post was positioned at every goods carriage. The goods carriages had already been coupled (resulting from some pretence or other) to one another. Without making a sound, a locomotive was attached to the train and – when all junctions had been set right – that

train with sleep carriages suddenly started rolling and the suddenly awoken railway men and their families saw how they, in the dark night, were taken to an undisclosed location. I think they ended up in Odenbroeck.

The station chief sighed with relief. And he was not the only one! [...]. /

This article originates from the book *The First World War through Dutch eyes. Testimonies – Stories – Manifestations*, composed and annotated by Rob Kammelar, Jacques Sicking and Menno Wielinga, and was published earlier on www.wereldoorlog1418.nl

OORLOGS GRAVEN STICHTING WAR GRAVES FOUNDATION



We believe that the combination of a personal story and a grave of a Dutch war victim contributes to the awareness that peace, freedom and safety cannot be taken for granted and that many gave their lives protecting this. We play a central proactive role in bringing the historical heritage of the stories and graves of Dutch victims of war into the public domain. We both maintain the Dutch war graves all over the world and are looking for new ways of telling their stories.

www.oorlogsgravenstichting.nl

The European Contact Group of War Graves Associations

War graves are places of mourning and a warning reminder for peace, which are maintained and designed as eternal resting places by the nations involved. The work with it demands – besides the debate of the topic war – also the discussion of cross-border memory and understanding.

Under the name “European Contact Group”, several organisations looking after war graves have started to exchange expertise, develop joint projects and communicate effective public relations measures on a transnational basis. Networking creates added value for local member associations and a contact point at the European level, ranging from the care of graves to educational work to looking after relatives and also in the discussion of remembrance culture issues.

Once a year, the organisations meet for an international conference in the respective member states. There, they take the opportunity to inform one another about the practical and pedagogical work in one of the partner countries. In 2015, the meeting took place in Niederbronn, France. In 2016, the event was held in Brussels. In 2017, the European Contact Group convened at the youth meeting place of the Volksbund in Ysselsteyn, Netherlands, and in 2018, in Budapest. /



Soldiers receiving letters from home, Haplincourt, southeast of Amiens/France, 1917

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