Gas Attack, Lievin (1918).

Canadian Group-of-Seven artist A.Y. Jackson, a landscape painter who loved the rocks and foliage of Algonquin Park and Georgian Bay, Jackson was now confronted with the scarred earth of the Western Front. Read more, on Page 12

How?

How does this drawing tie in to WW1? It’s not what you think!

See page 4

What?

What was this soldier handing out in Cardiff?

See page 8

Who?

Who won a medal for valour in Passchendaele 1918?

See page 15

Why?

Why did the Imperial Munitions Board give a boost to the economy?

See Page 16
Message from the Chairman

Welcome to issue 67 of the Listening Post (LP), the newsletter/magazine of the Western Front Association – Pacific Coast Branch (PCB). Thanks to editor Robert Forbes for producing another fine issue. It requires a lot of work and his efforts are appreciated.

With the distribution of LP 67, the previous issue will be posted to our website: www.wfapacificcoast.org. Please visit the site and encourage others with an interest in the Great War to do so as well. Comments on existing content and suggestions for new features and content are welcome.

In the spirit of outreach and collaboration, the Pacific Coast Branch has made a contribution to or joined the Canadian War Museum, the US National WW1 Museum and Memorial, and the World War One Historical Association. We have also joined the British Columbia Historical Federation, the umbrella organization for over 100 history and heritage groups in BC. Several members of the PCB participated in the annual BCHF conference in Revelstoke, BC, in late May where I was presented with a merit award for my role in organizing the event commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Bay Street Armoury. I highlighted my connection to the PCB.

Media and public attention to the Great War waxes and wanes depending on the anniversary of significant events. While we had some media attention related to the Battle of the Somme, 2016 is a relatively quiet year for Great War commemoration. That will change in 2017 when the Canadian focus will be on the battles of Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele and the US will commemorate their entry into the war. Work has begun on organizing an open house and commemoration event Vimy 100 at the Bay Street Armoury to be held on Sunday, April 9, 2017. I will be co-chairing the event planning (in the Branch’s name) with the CO of The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary’s). A preview of Vimy100 at the BSA will be provided at our 2017 seminar in March.

The Dispatches from the Chair that was promised in June has been postponed until the fall. Several of the items in the dispatch will require some thoughtful consideration and feedback from members, and I feel this will be easier to obtain in the fall than during the summer.

The pool of potential speakers for the 2017 and subsequent seminars is growing. Please send your suggestions for topics and speakers. And don’t forget to mark your calendars for our next gathering in Victoria on the 3, 4 and 5 March 2017.

John Azar

Western Front Association
Pacific Coast Branch

The Pacific Coast Branch of The Western Front Association was founded in 1999 and has members from the Provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario; and the States of Washington, Oregon, California, Virginia, Georgia, Massachusetts and Michigan. The worldwide membership in the Western Front Association is over 6500 and there are 60 separate Branches and Branch Chapters in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

The WFA is non-political and does not seek to glorify war, nor is it a re-enactment society. Its principal objective is to perpetuate the memory, courage and comradeship of the people on all sides who served their countries during the Great War in and over France and Belgium, on other fronts, at sea and in their own countries.

Another important objective is to inform and educate the public on the continuing relevance the Great War has on the modern world.

Chairman John Azar, Victoria, BC
Vice Chairman Doug Slowski, Nanaimo, BC
Treasurer Gavin Cooper, Lantzville, BC
Editor Robert Forbes, Victoria, BC

The Listening Post

This newsletter is produced by the Western Front Association, Pacific Coast Branch. Membership in the WFA-PBC is $35.00 annually and includes subscription to the Listening Post. Submission of pictures and articles can be sent via email to editor@wfapacificcoast.org.
This letter to the editor was received from a WFA member in the UK. Stan Grosvenor will be in Vancouver for a few days in May 2017 and would he interested in meeting some of our branch members. He is also offering to do research for PCB members.

I shall be visiting Canada next Spring arriving in Vancouver on Friday May 26, staying at the Hampton Inn and Suites and leaving early the following Monday on the Rocky Mountaineer to Calgary. It would be good if I were possible to meet any members who live within easy reach.

It occurred to me that I may be able to help WFA members in Canada with research here in local museums and archives where information is not available on-line. I will say straight away that I am unlikely to be able to get to TNA at Kew. I could also, for example, photograph names on local memorials, gravestones and family homes of soldiers/relatives relating to both world wars [and not necessarily connected to military matters]. I am also willing to consider a joint project with one of your members if subject matter were perhaps home front related.

I now live in Leyland, close to Preston in the North-west of England and also make regular visits to North Yorkshire and Teesside areas. I have recently assisted with research for the names on the new South Ribble Great War memorial at Lostock Hall. Some information of all the South Ribble war memorials can be found at www.southribble-greatwar.com I am also a volunteer, albeit at a distance, for the Green Howards Museum in Richmond, North Yorkshire.

I possess copies of two military CD ROMs, Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-19 and British and Empire Prisoners Of War 1939-1945: Army, Naval and Air Forces Held in Germany and German Occupied Territories and would be happy to look up names for members should they not otherwise have access to these.

Stan Grosvenor, MA FCA
WFA Lancashire North and Cleveland branches.
xsirwt55@gmail.com

From WORLDWAR1.COM: St. Mihiel Trip-Wire

Click on the image above to go to the St. Mihiel Trip-Wire, a terrific report of goings-on pertinent to World War 1, edited by Michael Hanlon and Kimball Worcester. http://www.worldwar1.com/tripwire/smtw.htm
Sketches Discovered in Trunk

Camilla Turner, London Telegraph

He has delighted generations of children with his charming drawings of Winnie the Pooh, Piglet, Eeyore and Tigger.

Now it has emerged that before he found fame as A A Milne’s illustrator, Ernest Shepard used his artistic talent to document his time in the trenches during the First World War through a series of humorous caricatures.

The lost sketches, which were discovered in a trunk that lay untouched for 100 years, depict his experiences in some of the bloodiest battles on the Western Front as a captain in the Royal Garrison Artillery.

Many sketches of life in the trenches show Shepard's upbeat humour, poking fun not only at his enemies, but also at the pompousness of his commanders and the other Tommies.

However, as the war dragged on some drawings take on a more serious tone. One, simply called 'Complete Desolation', captures the stark landscape of the Somme in black and white.

When his only brother Cyril was killed at the Somme near to where he was stationed, Shepard sent drawings of the grave home to Cyril's widow and to their sister, Ethel.

Shepard was 35 when war broke out and he served from 1916 to 1918 at the Somme, Arras, Ypres and Passchendaele.

While acting as Captain, he was awarded the Military Cross for his service at the Battle of Passchendaele. By the end of the war, he had achieved the rank of major.

It was feared that Shepard's original wartime sketches had been lost when archivists at the Shepard Trust, custodians of his work, could not find any from that era.

However, researchers eventually found the trunk which Shepard had filled with all his WWI mementoes including unpublished drawings, watercolours and preparatory sketches.

The box, untouched since Shepard’s return to England in 1919, also contained his personal belongings and included his artist tools and uniform.

It also included a menu from a hotel in Milan from a meal that Shepard is thought to have shared with American writer Ernest Hemingway whom he met at a military hospital.

The collection has now been published for the first time in a new book called Shepard's War,
written by James Campbell who runs the Shepard Trust and whose mother-in-law is Shepard's granddaughter.

Mr Campbell, from Long Wittenham near Abingdon, Oxfordshire, said that he was approached by researchers who wanted use some of Shepard's sketches of the trenches for the centenary of the First World War.

"To our astonishment we found that we didn't seem to have anything from his time in the trenches whatsoever, which was very odd," he said.

"Then we found in our own private archive a large box which appeared not to have been opened in almost 100 years.

"Inside it was the most incredible material from the First World War - not only did it contain all his illustrations, cartoons, paintings and illustrations but also his uniform, his briefcase, his pocketbook and his artist's material.

"One of the striking things about Shepard's drawings was that he was able to find humour in even the most grim of situations.

"He obviously took a pop at the Germans but also sends up everyone else too including the British commanders as well as the standard Tommies, the Irish and the Italians. No-one was safe from his mockery but the humour wasn't malicious."

While Shepard was a soldier, he also worked commercially for Punch magazine and other publications.

In 1926, eight years after First World War had ended, Shepard illustrated his first Winnie the Pooh book after a colleague at Punch recommended him to A.A. Milne.

He went on to illustrate all four volumes of Milne's Winnie the Pooh stories, as well as Kenneth Grahame's Wind in the Willows.

Londoner Shepard was made an OBE in 1972 in recognition of his illustrations and died on March 24, 1976, aged 96.
The Listening Post

Issue 67—Summer 2016

Three Times More Indians Fought at Gallipoli

Manimugdha S Sharma, The Times of India

The Gallipoli campaign of the First World War in 1915 was a disaster for the Allies. Yet it was the defining moment in the history of Australia, New Zealand and Turkey—their national identities were forged on Turkish soil. India, though a major player, was given a short shrift and the number of troops in the Indian Expeditionary Force G at Gallipoli was pegged at only 5,000 for a century. That narrative is about to change.

Australian military historian Professor Peter Stanley has said in his latest book, Die in Battle, Do Not Despair, that there were actually 16,000 Indians at Gallipoli, and 1,600 perished fighting the Mehmets. Stanley found evidence to this effect at the National Archives of India in Delhi last year, but it was difficult to dig out individual stories as Indian troops, the vast number of them being illiterate, left no written accounts of the war. In the absence of memoirs, the Indian soldier of the First World War has remained a nameless, faceless entity and his contribution was reduced to a footnote in the pages of history—a paradox since India sent the largest army of volunteers (1.3 million) to the war.

"I accessed all possible records available in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Turkey, Nepal and India, and managed to piece together the individual stories of 200 Indians at Gallipoli. I can put my hand over my heart and say that the Indian role was all positive," Stanley told Sunday Times.

Indians and the Anzacs (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) first met up in Egypt in 1914 before the Gallipoli campaign started. At dawn on April 25, 1915, the Anzacs landed on the beaches of Gallipoli under the cover of fire provided by troops of the 7th Indian Mountain Artillery Brigade. "The Indian mountain artillery was the only artillery available at that time and the Anzacs remembered this help," Stanley said. Soon after, the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade composed of the 14th King George's Own Ferozepore Sikhs (4 Mech today), 1/6 Gurkha Rifles (now Royal Gurkha Rifles), 69th Punjabis (1 Guards) and 89th Punjabis (1 Baloch, Pakistan Army), joined battle. But, colo-

Men of the 1/6 Gurkhas who famously took the Gurkha Bluff and the Sari Bair ridge in 1915. They had to withdraw when the Royal Navy shelled them thinking they were Turks.

21st Indian Battery Guard. Photograph taken in 1915 by Sergeant Charles Alexander Masters while on active service with the Australian Imperial Force in Gallipoli.
International politics came into play.

"The Punjabi battalions were Muslims. They were withdrawn on the ground that being Muslims, they may have qualms about fighting the troops of the Caliph. The real reason was the theatre commander, General Sir Ian Hamilton, wanted a Gurkha brigade. The hilly terrain of Gallipoli was most suitable for the Gurkhas as they were trained in mountain warfare, he thought. So the Punjabis, despite fighting valiantly and gloriously, were unfairly withdrawn and replaced by the 1/5 and the 2/10 Gurkhas. Yet the 7th Indian Mountain Artillery Brigade was never withdrawn although 75% of its troops were Muslims," Stanley said. Unfortunately, even today, ill-informed commentators on social media use this instance to question the loyalty of Muslims in the Indian Army.

The Gurkhas, true to their reputation, captured a hilly feature in May — called the Gurkha Bluff in their honour — and in August, they crested the Sari Bair ridge and came closest to ending the stalemate at Gallipoli. They had to withdraw when the Royal Navy shelled them thinking they were Turks. "We could speculate that had the Indian troops been used earlier in the campaign, Gallipoli may have had a different outcome," Stanley said.

The fighting qualities and discipline of the Indians had a profound impact on the Anzacs. "The British were apprehensive about clubbing Indians and Anzacs together as they thought the Anzacs would ill-treat them, but Indians and Anzacs developed a unique camaraderie. Indians were admired because they were professional and skilled soldiers unlike the Anzacs who were just volunteers," he said. "Many Australians officers commented in their diaries that Indians were role models."

As a Colonel, Douglas MacArthur led trench raids wearing a non-regulation uniform of jodhpurs and a sweater his mother knit for him, armed only with a riding crop. Here, he poses in a French Chateau.

Little George Batt made one of the more touching contributions to the war effort. Each weekend, the six-year-old (whose uncles were away fighting) dressed as a soldier and sang for donations in Melbourne's CBD - raising hundreds of pounds, worth thousands in today's money, for Red Cross food parcels.
Project Octagon

National Theatre head Rufus Norris and artist Jeremy Deller were behind a Somme commemoration project with men dressed as World War One soldiers. The "modern memorial" involved about 1,500 voluntary participants appearing in public spaces across the UK, recruited through mysterious ads through theatre programs across the country.

The commemoration was staged across the United Kingdom on July 1, the hundredth anniversary of the commencement of the Battle of the Somme. Train and bus stations, shopping centres and other public spaces across the country had groups of actor volunteers stationed and walking about.

Commuters in London were moved to tears as 'ghost soldiers' dressed in First World War uniform broke out into a poignant anthem sung by British soldiers during the Battle of the Somme. The soldiers broke into renditions of We're Here Because We're Here - a rousing tune which troops sung in the trenches to reflect the futility of their situation.

The song, sung to the tune of Auld Lang Syne, was performed in full-throated defiance to the likely fate of the soldiers fighting one of the bloodiest battles in military history, one which claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands on both sides.

When passing commuters approached the men to ask who they were, the soldiers simply handed them a
card featuring the details of one of the 19,240 British heroes who died on the first day of the bloody battle.

Each carried a card with the name of the soldier they represented and his age - if known - when he died.

The powerful scenes of the young men standing en masse during rush hour at UK’s busiest thoroughfares provided a poignant reminder of the scale of human suffering experienced by so many, 100 years ago today.

Members of the public stopped what they were doing to observe the soldiers quietly marching through the stations and streets, staying in line as if they were back in 1916 on their way to war.

Pictures of the incredible tribute were soon sweeping the internet, along with the hashtag #wearehere.

Many who witnessed the scene said those behind the tribute deserved a 'medal' for their efforts.

Nicola Oakley wrote: 'Don't know who came up with #wearehere but you are amazing. What a moving tribute. Puts everything into perspective.'

Lauren Abbott added: 'Whoever came up with the living memorial scenes is a genius. #wearehere ghost soldiers moving amongst commuters is both brilliant & moving.'

The project, entitled We're Here Because We're Here, was commissioned by 14-18 NOW, the UK's arts programme for the World War One centenary.
F/O & Lieutenant Smythe, RFC, MC

Constantine Falkland Smythe was born on February 1, 1895 in Toronto, Ontario, the son of an Irish immigrant bookbinder who arrived in Canada only six years earlier.

Despite his humble beginnings, Smythe showed great promise as an athlete in his early years. He left home to become a homesteader at age 17, but before long, he chose to follow a different path. In the fall of 1912, Smythe enrolled in the engineering program at the University of Toronto. There, he joined the Varsity Blues men’s ice hockey team and soon became its captain.

When the First World War broke out, Smythe enlisted with his teammates a week after winning the Ontario Hockey Association junior championship in 1915. At first, he served in the Canadian Artillery. He saw action in the Ypres salient, where an unfortunate barrage made him Commander of the Battery temporarily. On March 5, 1917, he earned the Military Cross for acts of valour.

Four months later, he was transferred to the Royal Flying Corps as a Flying Officer and acted as an observer for the artillery. During an airborne mission in July 1917, he was shot down and captured by the Germans. Though he attempted to escape on two separate occasions, his efforts were thwarted. Smythe then spent the last 14 months of the war in captivity, transferred around to five different camps.

He built the New York Rangers in 1926, but was forced out and then purchased the Toronto St. Pats, changing the name to the Maple Leafs. He explained why...

“The Maple Leaf to us, was the badge of courage, the badge that meant home. It was the badge that reminded us all of our exploits and the different difficulties we got into and the different accomplishments we made. It was a badge that meant more to us than any other badge that we could think of... so we chose it... hoping that the possession of this badge would mean something to the team that wore it and when they skated out on the ice with this badge on their chest... they would wear it with honour and pride and courage, the way it had been worn by the soldiers of the first Great War in the Canadian Army.”

In September 1941, he was appointed Officer Commanding the 30th Battery, Toronto Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery with the rank of Major. He proceeded overseas and was on active service in England and France. He was severely wounded at Normandy and returned to Canada in 1945.

Constantine F.C. “Conn” Smythe died on November 18, 1980 at age 85 in Caledon, Ontario.
Sweet Caroline

HMS Caroline, anchored in Belfast, is the last ship from the Battle of Jutland still in existence, and only one of two major warships from the Great War (the other is HMS Texas) still afloat. On that fateful day at Jutland, 100 years ago, HMS Caroline fired two torpedoes at a large German dreadnought, SMS Nassau.

The dreadnought responded with a volley of 11-inch shells which would have sent her and the 289 crew to the bottom of the North Sea. If they had hit their target.

Unlike 14 other Royal Navy ships which sank that day, with the loss of 6,000 lives during the battle, the Caroline returned to port unscathed.

One hundred years ago to the day, she was the focus of Irish commemorations for the Battle of Jutland which take place in Belfast. The ship has been in Belfast for 90 years, since the Northern Ireland government requested a Royal Navy presence in the city, but was nearly lost to the scrapyard in 2011.

It has been battered by storms over the decades and almost came loose from its moorings in 2005. The Royal Navy announced it was going to decommission the ship, but the Northern Ireland Executive and the people of Belfast intervened to save it for the city.

It has since received a £15.4 million (€19 million) refit, mostly with UK National Lottery money, and opened as the city’s latest tourism project, a companion attraction to the nearly Titanic Centre.

Everything has been done to authenticate the refit though 80 per cent of the ship remains as she did at the end of the first World War.

Replica four- and six-inch guns were made locally by Acapple Construction and lowered into place with a 60-tonne crane. The wheelhouse has been remade from brass alloys as iron would have sent the magnetic compass awry.

Even the tiling in the crew quarters has been relaid to reflect the hierarchy on the ship: fancy for the fastidious captain Captain Henry Crooke who had a different toothbrush for every day of the week, to the plain for the ship’s ratings.

The magnificent engines which powered the ship to an incredible speed of 29 knots are still as they were 100 years ago. Commemorations for the Battle of Jutland took place in front of HMS Caroline at Alexandra Dock and was an all-Ireland affair reflecting the loss of life experienced in every corner of the island 100 years ago.

Some 350 Irish sailors drowned during the Battle of Jutland, two-thirds of them from the South with 132 coming from County Cork alone.
Lieutenant Alexander Jackson, War Artist

For Alexander Y (A.Y.) Jackson, the tipping point was Germany’s use of poison gas at the Battle of Saint-Julien in April 1915. He enlisted in the 60th Infantry Battalion, lying about his age to make himself younger. At 32, he was much older than the average recruit.

“I knew nothing about soldiering, and decided to start at the bottom, as a private in the infantry,” he recalled, adding that he declined wealthy Toronto artist Lawren Harris’s offer to pull some family strings to secure him an officer’s commission.

The Belgian front was no place for an artist; his talents were occasionally put to use, but painting was out of the question. “Apart from a few diagrams, enlargements from maps and plans of the sectors we were in, I had no chance of doing any sketching,” he later wrote.

The trenches of Sanctuary Wood were crowded, muddy, lice- and vermin-infested passages strewn with sandbags and corpses, where soldiers dreamed of receiving a “blighty” — a wound serious enough to send them back to England. German biplanes circled ominously overhead, scouting targets for the next artillery bombardment. The irony was not lost on Jackson, for these terrible flying machines had been co-invented by his friend Orville Wright, who lived near his favourite Georgian Bay sketching spot.

In June 1916, heavy mortar fire finally gave Jackson his “blighty” — bullet and shrapnel wounds to his shoulder and hip — sending him to a series of bleak military hospitals. By the next summer, he and his fellow convalescents were now about to return to the front.

But one day, while digging a latrine and cursing his luck, he received a visitor — Capt. Ernest Fosbery, who was recruiting fellow artists for Lord Beaverbrook’s Canadian War Memorials Fund. Fosbery had found Jackson through sheer chance: a mutual friend, Montreal artist Lilias Torrance, was working for the Red Cross and knew Jackson was at Shoreham.

Before he knew it, Jackson was sitting nervously in Beaverbrook’s London office.

“So, you’re an artist,” said the man who could take him out of the trenches with the stroke of a pen. “Are you a good artist?”

“That’s not for me to say, sir,” the thin, scruffy private replied.

“Have you any of your work with you?”

“I’ve been in the infantry for over two years and couldn’t carry it with me.”

But Beaverbrook was adamant; he had to see samples of his work before hiring him. Jackson had an idea. He rushed over to the London office of The Studio, an art magazine that had featured him, and returned with some back issues.

That crosstown dash saved Jackson’s life. He was promoted to lieutenant and joined the war memorials fund
staff. Meanwhile, his Shoreham unit would be reassigned to Flanders and eventually wiped out at Passchendaele.

Now Jackson’s job was to help depict Canada’s war effort alongside other top painters. Since photographs would deteriorate but paintings could last for centuries, Beaverbrook enlisted a roster that would include Frederick Varley, Maurice Cullen and James Wilson Morrice.

Jackson never got used to his promotion and new privileges. He’d hated saluting as a private; now he dodged enlisted men to avoid being saluted. He also felt guilty about leaving his comrades. “They were still trudging around in the mud while I was going around in a car — kind of a big shot, making sketches,” he said.

But now he faced new challenges. The white rocks of Georgian Bay and colourful foliage of Algonquin Park were thousands of miles away. The Belgian and French landscapes he sketched consisted mainly of shattered trees and scarred earth criss-crossed by barbed wire and wooden walkways.

Instead of painting dramatic battle scenes, Jackson conveyed war’s horror through its aftermath. In A Copse, Evening, he depicted the region where he’d been wounded as a desolate no man’s land of flooded shell holes and dead trees beneath eerie searchlight beams. And in his haunting Houses of Ypres, he framed a decimated Belgian street through the remaining beams of a bombed-out home.

Travelling with an infantry unit in the Vimy-Lens region of northern France, he encountered an old farmhouse similar to what Vincent van Gogh might have painted 30 years earlier — only this one had been destroyed by artillery. Standing unscathed amidst the debris was a peach tree in full bloom. Jackson later painted Springtime in Picardy in the style of van Gogh, and included the pink peach blossoms to symbolize resilience and hope.

In late 1918 Jackson was back in Canada, preparing to accompany Canadian troops to Siberia. He visited Toronto to help organize a memorial exhibition for Thomson, but was in Montreal on Nov. 11. He’d just bought 20 tubes of white paint, to render the snowy Russian landscape, when church bells pealed to announce the armistice — and the cancellation of his trip.

“I probably became a painter of winter landscapes because I had to find some use for all that white paint,” he often joked.

But just as he’d resisted enlisting, Jackson delayed his return to civilian life. He extended his commission with the war memorials fund and spent the next months in Halifax, where he was reunited with Toronto friend Arthur Lismer. Together they sketched troop ships returning from overseas. One of Jackson’s efforts, Entrance to Halifax Harbour, would be purchased by the Tate Gallery.
Not Enough Steel?

When the United States entered the war, the US Shipping Board commandeered ships but quickly determined that there may not be sufficient shipping available, or on the slipways to meet the needs of the US war effort. Attention was naturally given to the possibility of building wooden ships. Three factors influenced this decision: The availability of labour on the North Atlantic Coast, the relatively unlimited wood resources available and the shipbuilding traditions of Maine.

In considering the types of ships to be built, as well as the yards to which contracts should be allocated, attention was naturally paid to existing plans of old established yards. The first design approved by the Emergency Fleet Corporation was known as the HOUGH type to replace two steel ship requisitions. The plans were somewhat altered by the EFC and following discussions, Theodore Ferris, a well known naval architect, was commissioned to design what ultimately became the main type known as the FERRIS class.

As the programme developed, it became necessary to authorize shipyards to build vessels of a type that they were particularly suited. Thus, some dozen different classes were eventually authorized.

The program ran into many difficulties. The first was that there were a number of yards which could provide adequate timber for hulls, but had no contacts with suppliers of machinery. In fact, this was the ultimate failure. After initial delays, it was found that yards would have (for example) a surplus of timber sizes for beams and keels, but no timber suitable for planking.

By January 1918, the EFC had been able to arrange 65 complete ships, and 298 hulls for which there were no engines. The provisions of engines proved a greater difficulty than anticipated and in the end, many of these engine-less hulls were completed as barges.

A quarter of the ships requisition/contracted by the EFC were wooden, but only 87 of the 521 were delivered by the armistice. The ships when complete, cost just over half as much as a steel vessel ($677K vs $1,288K).

When even the availability of steel was being called into question, concrete vessels were authorized and 24 were authorized, but only 12 were eventually completed, and none before the war ended. Of the 12, only one, SS Peralta, is still afloat, and is used as a breakwater in Powell River, BC.
Private Jackie

Jackie was a Chacma baboon found by Albert Marr on his farm that soon became their beloved pet.

When World War I started many young men enlisted and Albert was no exception. He was attested for service at Potchefstroom in the North West province of South Africa as private number 4927 for the newly formed 3rd (Transvaal) Regiment of the 1st South African Infantry Brigade on the 25th August 1915. At the time he approached his superiors and requested Jackie to go with him and (surprisingly) got their permission.

Once enlisted Jackie was given a special uniform complete with buttons, a cap, regimental badges, a pay book and his own rations. Although at first the other members of the regiment just ignored him, he soon became the official mascot of the 3rd Transvaal Regiment.

And if you think he was there just to eat and fool around you are very wrong! When he would see a superior officer passing by he would stand to attention and even render a proper salute. He would also light cigarettes for his comrades in arms and was the best sentry around due to his great senses of hearing and smelling which allowed him to be able to detect any enemy long before any of his other mates would notice their approach.

He wasn’t just a well taken care of pet, away from the actual battle. Jackie spent three years in the front line amongst the trenches of France and Flanders in Europe.

During the Senussi Campaign on 26 February 1916 in Egypt, Albert Marr got wounded on his shoulder by an enemy bullet and Jackie stayed beside him until the stretcher bearers arrived, licking the wound and doing what he could to comfort his friend. Later on, in April 1918 both privates got injured in the Passchendale area in Belgium during a heavy artillery attack.

As the explosions surrounded them, Jackie was seen trying to get some protection by building a little fortress of stones around himself. Unfortunately he didn’t manage to finish his safe area and was hit by a chunk of shrapnel from a shell explosion nearby which also injured Albert. Jackie’s right leg got seriously wounded and was later amputated by Dr RN Woodsend. Both privates made a full recovery and shortly before the armistice Jackie was promoted to corporal and awarded a medal for valour.

On the end of April Jackie was officially discharged at the Maitland Dispersal Camp, Cape Town, South Africa, while wearing on his arm a gold wound stripe and three blue service chevrons indicating three years of frontline service. He was also given a parchment discharge paper, a military pension and a Civil Employment Form for discharged soldiers.

After this crazy adventure Jackie returned to the Marr’s family farm where he lived until the 22nd May, 1921. Albert Marr lived until the age of 84 and died in Pretoria in August 1973.
IMB Woman Worker

Thousands of Canadian women like Mary Mays worked in factories making high explosive shells during the First World War. This hazardous employment prefigured women’s mass entry into the workforce later in the 20th century. “My job was to use gauges and test the pieces of work for [18] pounders. I tended 14 lathes operated by 14 women … received a medal. I have cherished it for 64 years,” Mays recalled in 1980.

Canada’s debt began before the war but quickly escalated because of it. In 1914, a little before the war, drought caused a loss in wheat crops, causing farmers to lose more money than expected. Between 1914 and 1915, 50 000 railway workers lost their jobs due to Canada’s railway debt. Thankfully in 1916 Canada, along with the British government, introduced the Imperial Munitions Board. The IMB manufactured shells along with other ammunition used during the war to aid in the Shell Crisis of 1915. The Shell Crisis of 1915 was due to the shortage of artillery at the beginning of World War I. The IMB not only opened up jobs for the men staying home from the war, it also gave women the opportunity to work. Since most men were working in the trenches, the women had to step up to work for the economy. This motion put women on the map and earned them more respect. The IMB was terminated shortly the war finished.

New US Travelling Exhibit Coming

The Minnesota Historical Society is getting a $600,000 federal grant to develop a new traveling exhibit about the United States during World War I.

The exhibit — “WW1 America” — will open at the Minnesota History Center in April 2017 and leave on a three-year national tour in September. The timing coincides with the 100th anniversary of America’s entry into the war.

Randal Dietrich, World War I specialist for the society, said it will focus on domestic life at a time in history that was “a crucible” for key societal issues like race relations, women’s suffrage and labor rights.

“The war was always in the background as all these really traumatic and dramatic events unfolded,” he said. And the more he studies the era, “the more I’m thinking that a lot of the world that we live in today is the result of that World War I.”

The 6,000-square-foot exhibit will feature original artifacts — there are chairs from the Lusitania, a British ocean liner whose sinking in 1915 helped nudge the United States toward war — voices, music and multimedia exhibits.

The grant comes from the National Endowment from the Humanities. The organization said it was the largest grant it made to any project during its current round of awards. The National Constitution Center, the National World War I Museum, the Oakland Museum of California and the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum are also collaborating on the exhibit.
SEX and spies... OH, MY!

Planes: Knights of the Sky!

Disasters: Verdun, the Somme, and more!

World War One Historical Association in partnership with The General Douglas MacArthur Foundation

100th Anniversary Symposium
21-22 October 2016
MacArthur Memorial, Norfolk, Virginia

www1ha.org macarthurmемorial.org
The Battle for Mouquet Farm.

Percy Nuttall’s Diary 14th August 1916

The battle for Mouquet Farm, just north of Pozières in France, is shrouded in controversy. Thousands of Australian troops died over a period of several weeks while the farm was taken and abandoned a number of times.

This small village is located on a ridge of high ground in the Somme battle area and thus had great strategic importance to both the Allies, who wanted to take it as part of their advance, and the Germans who clung determinedly onto it.

Although the village and ridge was a 1st July objective for the 8th Division, the village was not taken until the 25th of July, and the crest of the ridge not until the 5th of August.

Percy Nuttall, who had survived Gallipoli, despite being wounded three times, was by this time a sergeant. He recorded the events in his diary, noting many of the unbelievable orders the troops had to carry out.

Rain and mud galore. No sleep, little drink and nothing to eat. Wounded craving for a drink, but not many casualties until 3pm when Fritz turned his artillery on and he did stir us up and wrecked our trenches. My platoon, who I was in charge of, lost heavily and about 5 o’clock 12 Platoon was handed over to me 16 strong. They having only 1 NCO, 1 L/Cpl left. W Riches and Musgrave were sent to hold a shell hole and are dead. [Someone] told me a shell burst either on or over them. After some persuasion the Major let me go over to see what happened and there I found Riches dead & Musgrave a pitiful sight under Riches, shell shocked and smothered with his mates blood.

About 7pm, orders came that we had to make another advance at 9.30 and dig in between a quarry and Mouquet Farm. Major Herbert wrote back to headquarters that we were not strong enough to undertake the job. They replied it had to be done at all costs. So at the given time we moved out with our 300 men. Headquarters got to know Fritz was going to attack us, and soon as we moved
we got full force of their barrage which killed or wounded half our strength. I got one in the ribs, and one half of my body went numb, but I heard the Captain say 'follow on C Company, so I went and took up our position after trying to rally the lads together. When we had dug in about 3 feet, word came that we had to retire as the battalions on our left and right did not join up, which was heart breaking.

I was told to go over to the right flank to take charge. There I went only to find confusion as the lads did not know how far to go, so I called for the bombers and only one responded. So the two of us went down the trench, me with the bayonet and Tom Ryan with the bombs but only ran across a platoon of A Company who were challenged and luckily let in as they came in from 'no man's land'. It proved afterwards they had lost. We stood to the rest of the night and only Fritz's patrols were seen, but we kept them off at daylight. I was told off to count the battalion, which comprised 156 men and 3 officers unwounded. I was then put on rationing them and the sights I saw is indescribable. We tried all day to get the wounded back but Fritz's fire delayed operations.

Burying the dead was impossible as they still kept up a terrible fire from high explosives – howitzers and whizz bangs. During the afternoon word came of our relief as were too weak to hold out any longer. After all arrangements the 4th Battalion came along and we started to work our way out. All went well until 9.30pm when going through the 51 Battalion trench the rotters sighted us and sent up three green lights which I knew the meaning immediately. I found myself buried under 5 feet of earth, with my neck bent on my chest, near my knees in a sitting position, my hand clasping my rifle. Another chap Stevens in the 51st Battalion had my leg bent over him. His head was near my feet. I sang out a few times and then settled to my fate, which was a glimpse of the past. I also swore vengeance on the Huns, saying they had three solid days to get me fair and square and couldn’t - they had to pick this rotten way. On top the relief party was doing its best, the Huns' machine guns playing on them all the time. After an hour I felt my equipment gripped, when I was on my last breath due to my awkward position, up came my head and what a relief. I immediately freed my arms and set to work burrowing for the chap near my feet, knowing where his head was. Up he came 10 minutes later. We shook hands, of course, pleased we were.

During the next few days, Sgt Nuttall and his men had their first hot meal and drink for some time, resting in billets. Sgt Nuttall attended a board of inquiry into the loss of his field glasses which were buried in the explosion which he barely survived, was detailed as Orderly Sergeant for four courts martial, carried out a route march around the villages and was presented with his Distinguished Conduct Medal. He also became acting Company Sergeant Major.
Postcard from the front. Would this be a little startling to receive?