



FONTAINEBLEAU VETERANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 59

NOVEMBER 2015

EDITORIAL

Our membership remains static. Three members passed away during the last year to be replaced by new members. I fear that others may have died because there is no reply to letters and e-mails I send. Many enquiries were received from veterans who served at Fontainebleau but we get no further than the initial stage of signing them – they do not answer reminders and they just fade away.

WELCOME ABOARD



SAC Dennis Luke arrived at Camp Guynemer in January 1960 and was assigned to the Supply Equipment Section. He left Fontainebleau in July 1962 to spend another 7 years in the RAF before working as a Manager in the Motor Spares Trade. Dennis lists football, table tennis, gardening and crosswords among his interests. He lives in Cowes, Isle of Wight with his wife Ann.

OBITUARIES

BARBARA HIGGS 1936 - 2015

It is with much sadness to advise that Barbara Higgs passed away on 19 September following a stroke a few days before. Barbara was very fit and it all took her family by surprise, it was so unexpected. She is now re-united with John. Barbara until recently regularly attended our Reunions and trips to Fontainebleau. She was popular with all those who she came into contact with - a true lady. Barbara leaves 3 children Colin, Jennifer and Andrew and seven grandchildren plus 3 great grandchildren.



PAUL ROYLE



Paul Royle, pictured was one of 76 Allied Airmen who broke out of the Stalag Luft III prison, 100 miles south of Berlin in 1944 died in August aged 101. The daring bid for freedom through Nazi-occupied Europe was immortalised In 1963 movie The Great Escape, starring Steve McQueen.

Mr. Royle, a former RAF pilot who died in his hometown of Perth, Australia after surgery for a fractured hip, was one of the PoWs who cunningly disposed of earth down his trouser legs in the prison yard. After escaping Mr. Royle was recaptured but survived and returned to Australia where he worked in mining and married twice. His death leaves Briton Dick Churchill, 95, as the last surviving participant of the mass breakout.

FROM THE POSTBOX



G'day David. ~ Finally I have found the chance to reply to your April 28 message. As I have mentioned before, life is pretty frantic down in this part of the world, particularly in Springvale. However browsing on the website. I was reminded that I intended to purchase a new blazer badge, tie and lapel pin. My family is beginning to take an interest in my past and I decided that these items would build up the picture for them. There are two problems though, the first is that I will have to purchase a new blazer as my current one has shrunk, the second problem is that I seldom wear a blazer these days (because of the foregoing mentioned problem) so I'll probably have to change my life style. I was pleased with the photo of Ted Caton with accompanying signed photo of Sir Basil. However I do have Sir Basil's signature on my Certificate of Service, and I am rather proud of that even though I probably did nothing to earn it except doing as I was told. Before I move on, the film of the two Lancasters featured in the latest Newsletter was very moving. Autumn is with us now and starting to remind us that winter is on the way - but thankfully, we are unlikely to see snow here in 'sunny' Melbourne, believe it or not, we would have to go to Bright for the dubious pleasure of a snow scene. We have just been reminded that Melbourne saw frost this morning.

Eric Billingham, Springvale, Australia

Many thanks for Newsletter No.58 - most interesting. You may be interested to hear that I visited Fontainebleau for 3 days at the beginning of June to show one of my sons where "Daddy won the war"....!!! We stayed at nearby Moret sur Loing and had a great trip. I was billeted at Quartier Chateau, Rue Saint Merry - the establishment is now a private residence and inaccessible to visitors. However, I stopped an old lady passing by when taking photos to enquire whether she knew the present owner. No, she did not but in subsequent conversation she said that she used to serve in the NAAFI at Camp Guynemer back in 1957/8 where my twin brother Ian was stationed as part of the RAF transport section! I also blagged my way into the courtyard where my former office was located at the back of the Palace. The area is currently being re-paved at the moment but hey the memories of the building certainly came back fast and furious! As did the memories of the Moulin Rouge, Paris later in the visit!! Keep up the good work.

Brian Davis (S/233548811 Cpl. RASC), Radlett, Herts

I am pleased that you will be going back to Yevres this year; it is an extraordinary event and refreshing to know it continues to garner such respect.

With regard to your request for promotional items I will put something in the post for you but, here at least, we do not produce any pictures/posters of flags. I suspect you can easily find one if you do a Google search under images.

Magazine articles are always welcome. I thought I had put you on our mailing list but will check. For info, we now have a short break before producing our next magazine in September. You can always find a digital version, however, on our website at: <http://www.jfcbs.nato.int/default.aspx>

Barry Mellor ~ Allied Joint Force Headquarters, Brunssu



This Medal was issued to all veterans of the Armed Forces who served during the Cold War. The Cold War was perhaps the defining era of the Twentieth Century, during which two generations of men (e.g. Larry and Duane) served their Nation in defense of freedom; this medal commemorates that service and reminds future generations of their sacrifice. Larry retired from USAF on 1 June 1972 at Lindsey Air Station Wiesbaden, Germany.

Duane Conques, Schertz, Texas

David - One of the joys at Quartier Chateau was the annual 2 week "military training" camp on the banks of the Loire, at Gien, near to Orleans. Most of the staff in Fontainebleau was clerks or drivers employed throughout the Headquarters, and military training was low on the list of activities for almost everyone. I was the unit Armourer and coincidentally I was Airborne qualified. I was actually the only man there who wore the "wings". So, according to my boss, the Quartermaster an NCO and having these qualifications I was the best man to refresh our soldiers in skill at arms work during this camp period. That entailed me spending the entire two weeks at the campsite by the Loire, in mid-summer, no other duties and every evening off in the town, was not exactly onerous. Obviously in true British Army style, latrines had to be dug, fortunately not by me but by the Chateau Regimental Duties staff, a motley collection of various infantrymen from many regiments. One toilet was marked Officers Only. God knows why. Officers attending the site were as rare as hen's teeth. So, in the course of things it was used just the same as the other three or four units. They came the day our RSM visited for a couple of days.

Now usually he was a super bloke, but this time he was a bit OTT. He saw one of the Catering Corps lads exiting the Officers' dunny and he went ballistic. Bawled out the poor cook no end. Oh well, so be it. Then the following morning the cook came to me and moaned like a drain that he had since seen the RSM use the Officer facility not once but twice. I said, basically "Rank has its privileges" and told him to swallow the rollicking. Unbeknown to me, he went off to talk to Royal Engineer L/Cpl, who had access to some pyrotechnics, i.e. thunderflashes and some extra detonators that we used to liven up the odd military exercise or two. I of course wasn't aware of what was being planned, but at 2 a.m. we all awoke to a big explosion, in the Officers' toilet. The RSM was seen running down to the river covered all over in brown smelly stuff, where he commenced to wash himself clean.

Obviously to me, the RE and the ACC lads had booby-trapped the bog, and the thunderflash buried deep in the crap at the bottom of the latrine pit blasted it all skywards and covered the RSM. Oddly enough not a word was ever said about it by anyone, ever. I suppose Officers Only means just that. Gien Camp will always have a place in my memory, for easy days and pleasant evenings polishing my French with locals in the town's bars and cafes.

On another tack, I note another Font Vet lives quite near me in Barnstaple. He is Dave Hughman. Perhaps you could let him have my address, see if he would like to meet up sometime.

Mike Evans, Langtree

You asked for stories of the 50s and 60s at Camp Guynemer (bullying Holiday Camp) where we had a good time. Like SAC Ted Caton my first employment was as Book-Keeper/Shorthand Typist in a shipping company in Newcastle for which I was paid £1 7s 6d per week but signing up at 17 years of age till 20 years gave me that extra lolly A big plus for airmen/women who found themselves at Camp Guynemer and asked if they smoked and if not paid them a little for their ration card.

With the help of the International Motor Pool, I had access to a Standard Vanguard Saloon - which took me down town to the Army Camp with a bag full of ciggies, which I sold to a R.A. corporal, He sold them on for 100% mark up. Twice a week I would get driven up to Orly airport and other places in Paris dropping off cartons of cigs. Usually American. Le Bourget airport was also a good place to dispose of stuff. Across the road where there was a good cafe, then down to the Transit camp. Yes good times in Paris especially My Buddies Bar in Pigalle, spending many weekends in Montmartre, and St Denis. France is a lovely country for holidays for me and my wife is all over France.

Tom Weatherly Darlington

I trust that all is well and that the Reunion at Leamington Spa went well. I thought of you all and remembered previous ones that had been most enjoyable. Arthur phoned me to inform me of Anne's passing. It came as quite a shock. Anne was such a lively person full of fun. We spent some enjoyable meals in her company. Anne and Arthur were very much a happy couple. It has been a very demanding year for me and I have almost come to the end of my treatment. Now it is just a case of regular check-ups. Take care and have fun.

Fay Durant, Portsmouth

18th ANNUAL REUNION AND DINNER 9 and 10 OCTOBER

29 members met at the Angel Hotel in Leamington Spa to celebrate our 18th Reunion. The AGM was held on 10 October with 29 members present with David Rogerson in the chair. The minutes are

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Jennifer Parry

The Income and Expenditure Accounts (see page) were approved

It was unanimously agreed that we return to the Angel on 8 & 9 October 2016

The Angel gave us a great weekend. See page 12 for a selection of pictures.

19th REUNION 2016

The Angel Hotel in Leamington Spa have reserved accommodation for our 2016 Reunion on 7 and 8 October. The rates are : £65 per person per night Bed Breakfast and Dinner sharing a twin or double room - £75 for single occupancy.

Individual deposits not required. Dress is informal – smart casual is fine.

Booking form on application from the editor

COMMON SENSE ~ An Obituary printed in the London Times

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

Knowing when to come in out of the rain.

Why the early bird gets the worm.

Life isn't always fair.

And maybe it was my fault. . .

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live, as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife, Discretion, by his daughter, Responsibility and by his son, Reason.

His 5 stepbrothers survive him.

I Know My Rights

I Want It Now

Someone Else Is To Blame

I'm A Victim

Pay me for Doing Nothing

Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone.

MY PARIS CAPER by John Maddox Kings Royal Rifle Corps ~ Part 2

With kind permission of Arborfield Old Boys' Association

One of those moments.

At the beginning of this tale, I said that I had 'had my moments' - let me therefore describe just one of them.

We had been in the market for about ten minutes, when I needed a visit to the pissoir, one of those ornate but

Half-sized gents' urinals found all over Paris. There one nonchalantly stands, doing what comes naturally, while surveying the surroundings over the chest-high wall. On this occasion, while I was engaged in relieving myself, a large, rotund French lady (and I use the term loosely!) approached, clutching this enormous cabbage in her meaty hand. Flourishing this under my nose, she demanded to know where else, other than at her stall, could I buy such a beauty for only ten francs? I had by then gotten info of the French habit of talking with my hands but, due to the business in hand, felt that I was unable to reply with a suitable gesture at this precise moment!

Another thing about the market, the eggs were never more than half the size we are used to in England. So our allowance, which was numerical rather than by weight, didn't go very far. Our cook told me he needed twelve eggs to make a decent omelette. After filling in reams of paperwork, I managed to get this allowance doubled, but often wondered if it was worth the effort. I also found that our duty-free cigarettes were a useful form of currency. If you have ever smoked or even smelt original French Gauloise cigarettes you will know just how evil they are. The French National Servicemen, who were paid the princely sum of seven francs a day (one old shilling a week), were issued with forty cigarettes every two weeks, when they were paid. These were the Gauloise Troupe brand, made especially for the Forces. They consisted of nothing but tobacco dust and, if you lit one and inhaled, the flame would run the length of the cigarette and burn your nose. The art of smoking one was to angle it upward in the mouth, light it and withdraw the light before inhaling. The 'upward' tilt was to prevent the tobacco simply falling out of the end! National Servicemen in France were paid so poorly to encourage them to sign on, when their pay went up to about 500 francs a day. Of course, the snag was that, as soon as they signed on, they were shunted off on the next draft to Indo-China, where losses of men were astronomical.

Another of my many duties was to prepare the drinks and supervise the waiters at Monty's monthly cocktail party. This was held at his residence, the Chateau de Courances, some distance from the Headquarters. I would be given three French waiters and three of our British squaddies to serve the drinks while I, being bilingual, acted as supervisor. The other part of my duties was to mix the drinks. As about 100 to 120 officers and ladies would be in attendance, I chose to mix the drinks in a sunken marble bath, situated in that part of the Chateau not in normal use. What went into the 'potion' depended entirely on what I had been given by Monty's cook on the particular occasion. There could be cognac, red and white wines, gin, Pernod, Martini and, sometimes, a bottle of best malt whisky. Whatever it was, I mixed it all in with a large wooden paddle. The resulting mixture was then ladled into large enamel jugs from where it was served into the glasses. Monty himself always attended, precisely at 6 p.m., circulating among his guests and departing precisely at 7 p.m. He did not imbibe my 'magic potion', but a waiter followed him around, bearing a glass of pure orange juice, freshly squeezed, on a silver salver - 'just in case'. On the only occasion he ever turned to take it, a portly Belgian officer beat him to it. Give him his due, he just smiled at the terrified waiter and carried on talking.

The tales to be told would fill a large tome, but one last incident I thought funny needs to be related. At a conference, while supervising the doling out of tea and biscuits, the bar was approached by a very tall, athletic looking American officer, a Captain I believe. Although America was not a partner of the Benelux Agreement, it was American money that funded it and so 'observers' were often present. Anyway, behind this giant figure, pushing through the crowd, came a tiny man, but wearing the uniform of an American Air Force

General and the biggest peaked cap imaginable. On his reaching the table, the Captain picked up a plate of biscuits and said, "Hey General, would you like a cookie?" I almost poured hot coffee over myself, as this big, big man owned the highest pitched falsetto voice I have ever heard! The General replied, in a really deep, out-of-your-boots voice, "Not now son, maybe later".

Ooh la lah! We're English!

During my first Christmas in France, a party of Other Ranks, about thirty in number, arranged to visit the Follies Bergere in Paris. This cabaret show was reputed to be the 'only show in town', with scantily clad dancers and - hold it - the odd naked lady! Needless to say, our contingent included six sailors, all signalers, who formed the entire naval contingent at the HQ. They were not stationed at the Chateau, but at a French Army barracks in Fontainebleau. On arrival at the Follies, we all trooped in to the gallery, where we occupied the front row. The show was good, the comedy turns totally unintelligible -but the dancers! Now, that was what the boys had come to see!

During the interval, as is the French custom, everybody tripped off outside as, even in those days, 'No Smoking' was the strict rule in cinemas and theatres across France. We all met in the foyer of the theatre, where the dancers, now offering trays of expensive mementos for sale, paraded around. Upon their seeing Dutch or British uniforms, we were suddenly surrounded by these nubile young ladies who, to my great surprise and without exception, turned out to be English! Most of them were 'Brummies' and they explained that the reserved French girls would not strip or wear the flimsy outfits on stage. Needless to say, we really enjoyed the experience (and the show as well).

There are many tales told about Monty, how he was a 'martinet' who hated smokers and drinkers etc. But Jackson (his driver) told me that, when on a long journey by road, Monty would order him to stop about every hour, then dismount from the car and take a walk. Jackson enjoyed a cigarette and Monty knew it, so the breaks were to give Jackson the chance of a quick 'spit and a drag'. Monty didn't drink alcohol, so when the Humber Company presented him with a custom-built Number Super Snipe, he was more than a bit put out to see that the rear of the front seat opened out into a little bar, complete with glasses etc. Needless to say, the vehicle was returned and altered before he used it. One day, an order was issued that all we odds and sods would parade for a cross-country run as the big white chief thought that we didn't get enough exercise. This we duly did and, as we returned to the Chateau, all out of condition and out of breath, several French and Belgian officers cat called us out of their office windows. Apparently, they were unaware that the big chief was in his office - and overheard them. The following day, a memo was circulated to all officers under the age of 40 years, telling them to parade for an 'exercise run' the next day. We were not supposed to know about this, but the grapevine worked as well as ever. About thirty officers attended and took part, with Monty in attendance at the start. Military Policemen were stationed around the route, to ensure that all went well and the Field Marshal was at the finish to see them all return. It was satisfying to note that, if we were deemed out of condition', then some of the officers had obviously never been in condition!

I'm all right Jacques!

CSM Hughes, our Coldstream boss, also decided that we Riflemen needed smartening up and so it was decreed that as he knew nothing about Rifle drill. I should be the one to take a one-hour drill parade once a week. This meant forming up my little band of warriors and marching them at a respectable 'Rifles' pace - out through the main gates, round the corner into a quiet cul-de-sac, where we could all fall out and enjoy a quiet smoke! A little way up the road from our quarters stood the Caf6 de Paris, a quite large establishment run by a retired Sergeant Major of the Foreign Legion, Jacques by name. It was popular with our boys, as Jacques spoke quite good English and was popular with French National Service men because he often gave them a free bottle of wine.

Arborfield Old Boys' Association' website is <http://www.arborfieldoldboys.co.uk/johnmaddox.html> is well worth a visit. Did you train there?

THE BOMBING OF PEARL HARBOUR

What God Did That Day. Really interesting. I never knew this little bit of history. Tour boats ferry people to the USS Arizona Memorial in Hawaii every thirty minutes. We just missed a ferry and had to wait thirty minutes to kill time I went into a small gift shop. In the gift shop, I purchased a small book entitled, "Reflections on Pearl Harbor" by Admiral Chester Nimitz..

Sunday, December 7 1941 Admiral Chester Nimitz was attending a concert in Washington D.C. He was paged and told there was a phone call for him. When he answered the phone, it was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the phone. He told Admiral Nimitz that he (Nimitz) would now be the Commander of the Pacific Fleet. Admiral Nimitz flew to Hawaii to assume command of the Pacific Fleet. He landed at Pearl Harbor on Christmas Eve, 1941. There was such a spirit of despair, dejection and defeat--you would have thought the Japanese had already won the war.

On Christmas Day, 1941, Admiral. Nimitz was given a boat tour of the destruction wrought on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. Big sunken battleships and navy vessels cluttered the waters everywhere you looked. As the tour boat returned to dock, the young helmsman asked, "Well Admiral, what do you think after seeing all this destruction? Admiral Nimitz's reply shocked everyone within earshot. Admiral Nimitz said, "The Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could ever make, or God was taking care of America. Which do you think it was?" Shocked and surprised, the young helmsman asked, "What do mean by saying the Japanese made the three biggest mistakes an attack force ever made?" Nimitz explained:

Mistake number one: the Japanese attacked on Sunday morning. Nine out of every ten crewmen of those ships were ashore on leave. If those same ships had been lured to sea and been sunk we would have lost 38,000 men instead of 3,800.

Mistake number two: when the Japanese saw all those battleships lined in a row, they got so carried away sinking those battleships, they never once bombed our dry docks opposite those ships. If they had destroyed our dry docks, we would have had to tow every one of those ships to America to be repaired. As it is now, the ships are in shallow water and can be raised. One tug can pull them over to the dry docks, and we can have them repaired and at sea by the time we could have towed them to America. And I already have crews ashore anxious to man those ships.

Mistake number three: Every drop of fuel in the Pacific theater of war is in top of the ground storage tanks five miles away over that hill. One attack plane could have strafed those tanks and destroyed our fuel supply. That's why I say the Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could make or God was taking care of America.

I've never forgotten what I read in that little book. It is still an inspiration as I reflect upon it. In jest, I might suggest that because Admiral Nimitz was a Texan, born and raised in Fredericksburg, Texas -- he was a born optimist. But anyway you look at it--Admiral Nimitz was able to see a silver lining in a situation and circumstance where everyone else saw only despair and defeatism.

President Roosevelt had chosen the right man for the right job. We desperately needed a leader that could see silver linings in the midst of the clouds of dejection, despair and defeat.

There is a reason that our national motto is, IN GOD WE TRUST. Why have we forgotten? PRAY FOR OUR COUNTRY!

RAF MEDICAL RECORDS

Michael Capon reminds us that our RAF medical records at RAF High Wycombe can be obtained by completing a form that is available on the MOD Veteran's website

INCOME and EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT – 12 Months to 31 August 2015

	£	£
Cash Balance at 31 Aug. 2014		358.86

Income

Subscriptions	50.00
Reunion 2014 Raffle	127.00
Merchandise sales	104.00
Total Income	281.00

Expenditure

Postage & Stationery	78.69
2014 Reunion Gratuity	40.00
Web Fee	99.82
Donations	50.00
Wreath for Yevres	25.00
Merchandise	100.00
Total Expenditure	393.51
Cash Balance at 31 Aug 2015	256.35
Stock at cost	130.00
Total cash and stock	386.35

18th ANNUAL REUNION at LEAMINGTON SPA – OCTOBER 2015
Pictures through the camera of Ted Caton



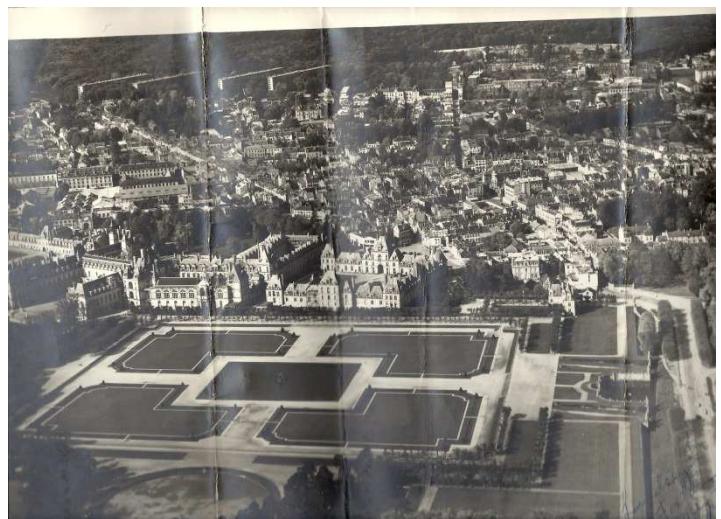
PICTURE PARADE



Field Marshall Montgomery's (far right) Retirement
Allied Forces Central Europe, Fontainebleau
Gen. Speidel, Gen.l Valuy, Sir George Mills (RAF)



Fontainebleau from the air



Col. Lindsey's Staff Meeting



Col. Lindsey's Inspection

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER by Ted Caton



Visiting the Ruxley Garden Centre in Kent earlier this year (2015) Peter and Elaine Argent were hailed by Sid Beaver, who was there with other veterans to sign appropriate prints for members of the public. Sid had been at AAFCE where, as a pilot, he had flown with the RAF Communications Flight based at Melun Villaroche airfield. He had recognised Peter and Elaine either from our coach trips to Fontainebleau or from his attendance at one of our reunions at Honiley.



Sid had flown Avro Lancasters during WWII and had been awarded the DFM. He is pictured signing the print of a Lancaster which is now in Peter's possession.

VISIT TO YEVRES by Brian Gibbons

We returned this morning from another successful and enjoyable visit to Yevres. Fewer of us each year, I know, but our very presence is very much appreciated by the local inhabitants as well as the French civil, military and ex-service Associations. The Wing Commander attending the main Ceremony as British Military Attaché was very impressed by the warmth and sincerity accorded the FVA .Mike and Ann Capon, Mary Mearns, my wife Andrea and I thoroughly enjoyed the trip.

DECORATED FIRST WORLD WAR SOLDIER BURIED almost 100 years after he was killed

Sergeant David Harkness Blakey of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (R Innis Fus) was today laid to rest with full military honours at a ceremony in France almost 100 years after he was killed in World War I.

AND FINALLY.....

Below are the names of a few members that I have had no contact with the following for some time. Does anyone have news of any of them? Jean Allen, Bob James, Elaine Swift, Bill Garland, Mike Hymers, Harry Horn, Laurie Page, Desmond Gwilliam, Ron Gray

Have a great Christmas everyone

STOP PRESS

James Howes has expressed an interest in joining the Association. He served at Fontainebleau from 1960 to 1963 His application is a work in progress

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