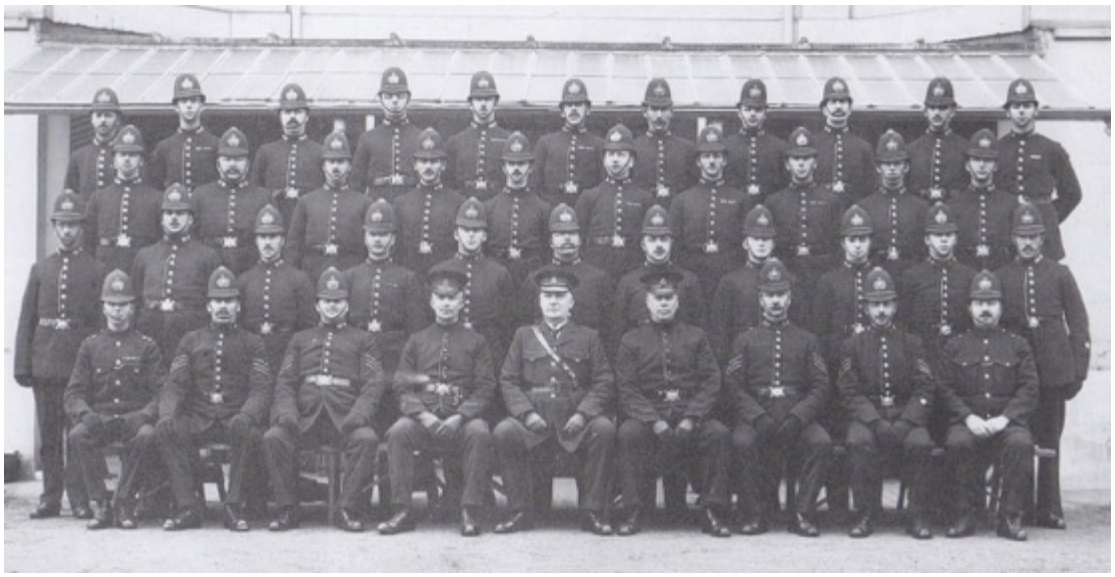
Surrey Constabulary History
'An in depth history of policing in Surrey'

May 2019
www.surrey-constabulary.com

Editor Robert Bartlett
938at938@gmail.com

Surrey Constabulary History
Journal 50



Superintendent Lucas Farnham 1924

Contents

PC 321 Ronald Morrish

Additional information was provided on the 14 April 2019 from Rob Davies, Bomber Command Database

Flying Officer (Nav.) RAFVR
Died Aged 23, 6 November 1943

PC Morrish was killed on operations with the RAF whilst serving as a Flying Officer (Nav.) Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve with No. 138 (Special Duties) Squadron. Aged 24 when he died, PC Morrish was the son of Alfred John and Daisy Morrish. He is buried in the Liesse Communal Cemetery, France.

He was reported missing on air operations during the night of the 6/7 November 1943 and the RAF presumed his death on the 16 May 1945.

PC Morrish joined the Surrey Constabulary on the 5th February 1939 and was sworn on the 10th February at Guildford when he was 19 having been born in East Plumstead. His height was 5 Feet 11 ½ inches, with a fresh complexion light brown hair and dark grey eyes. PC Morrish had been a clerk before he joined living at Palcham, Brighton.

Service:

11 February 1939 Oxted
11 November 1940 Oxted to Weybridge
11 August 1941 Joined the RAF

From: Rob Davis Bomber Command Losses Database.

DATE: 06-Nov-1943 / 07-Nov-1943
UNIT: 138 Squadron
AIRCRAFT: Halifax II
RAF BASE: Tempsford
CODES: NF: B
TARGET: SOE/SIS / Special Duties
PILOT: Copas, Kenneth Richard, Flight Sergeant, (1334120) (killed)
CREW: Sergeant Reginald Thomas Brown (flight engineer) (746335) (killed), **Flying Officer Ronald Morrish (navigator) (133734) (killed)**, Sergeant Charles William Charrott (navigator) (1601866) (killed), Sergeant William Aitkenhead (bomb aimer) (1051227) (killed), Sergeant Frederick Lawrenson (wireless operator) (1439516) (killed), Sergeant Joseph Robert George Day (mid-upper gunner) (1872295) (killed), Sergeant Albert Reginald Flatters (rear gunner) (631814) (killed)

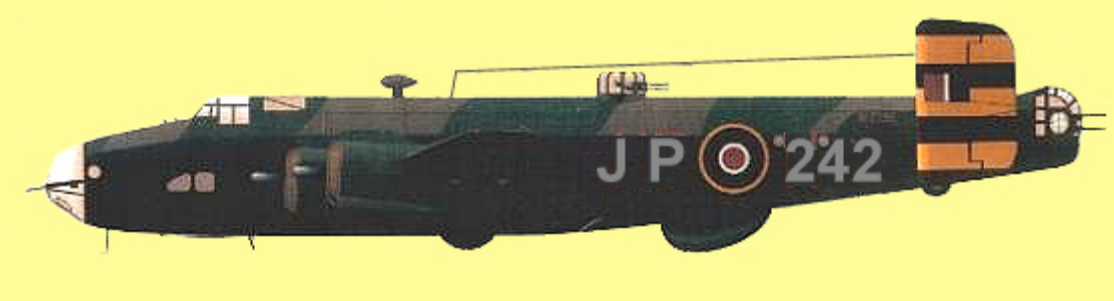
DETAILS: Special Operations Executive Operation Tom 6 and set course for France. Crashed near Liesse, 9½ miles north-east of Laon. All members of the crew are buried in the 9 Nov 43 in Liesse Communal Cemetery. The aircraft carried two navigators.

The squadron's Second World War activities began in 1941 after the formation of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) – an organisation whose function was to promote sabotage against the enemy by stimulating subversive activities, spreading political discontent, disorganising and dislocating communications. The agents, ammunition and equipment to achieve this were dropped inside enemy territory, the first being flown by Lysanders of No. 419 Flight (later No. 1419 Flight), which formed at North Weald in August 1940.

Very quickly the task grew too big for a solitary flight and although Bomber Command was hard pressed at that time for aircraft and crews, it was decided that the strategic importance of sabotage operations warranted the formation of a full

squadron. Thus it was that in August 1941, No. 138 Squadron was re-formed at Newmarket from the nucleus of No. 1419 Flight to do the job; it was now designated No. 138 (Special Duties) Squadron.

For more than three and a half years the squadron ranged Europe from Norway in the north to Yugoslavia in the south and at times far into Poland. First with Whitleys and Lysanders, then with Halifaxes and later with Stirlings it flew out from Newmarket, Stradishall and Tempsford with, agents, arms, explosives, radio sets and all the other equipment of the saboteur, parachuting them down at rendezvous points where reception committees of local underground members waited. Another, but far less frequent, type of "cloak and dagger" operation undertaken by No. 138 – beginning in September 1941 – was the "pick up" in which the aircraft (always a Lysander) landed to collect some prominent public man, or an agent, or special plans and articles. During 1942 the squadron operated with the bomber force when not required for special duties.



Halifax Mark 11

From Bomber Command Database
Rob Davies [1]

All are burued in Liesse Communal Cemetery, France Military Plot

Pilot: F/S Kenneth Richard Copas RAFVR 1334120 [Killed] Saturday November 06, 1943. Son of Herbert Stanley and Hilda Copas of St Albans Hertfordshire.

Flight Engineer: Sgt Reginald Thomas Brown RAFVR 746335 [Killed] Saturday November 06, 1943. The son of Charles M. Brown and Elizabeth Brown and husband of Dorothy Brown of Twickenham Middlesex.

Navigator: Sgt Charles William Charrott RAFVR 1601866 [Killed] Saturday November 06, 1943.

Navigator: F/O Ronald Morrish RAFVR 133734 (NCO: 1388641) [Killed] Saturday November 06, 1943. Son of Alfred John and Daisy Morrish
https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2689478

[1] Rob Davies Bomber Command data bas reference JN92 April 142019

Bomb Aimer: Sgt William Aitkenhead RAFVR 1051227 [Killed] Saturday November 06, 1943.

Wireless Operator / Air Gunner: Sgt Frederick Lawrenson RAFVR 1439516 [Killed] Saturday November 06, 1943. Son of William Arthur and May Lawrenson of St. Helens Lancashire

Mid-Upper Gunner : Sgt Joseph Robert George Day RAFVR 1872295 [Killed] Saturday November 06, 1943. Son of Joseph William and Gladys M. Day; husband of D. I. S. Day of Rainworth Nottinghamshire.

Rear Gunner : Sgt Albert Reginald Flatters RAF 631814 [Killed] Saturday November 06, 1943. Son of William Robert and Annie Elizabeth Flatters of Beeston Leeds Yorkshire

(If 2 service numbers are shown, the 1st is that held at the time of the incident; the 2nd is for a previously or subsequently held rank. For example, an NCO granted a Commission or an Officer who had previously been an NCO.)

Liesse Communal Cemetery, France's GPS Location is 49.606165 / 3.805020, which has 52 casualties.

LIESSE Communal Cemetery (Aisne France)

MORRISH RONALD

United Kingdom Flying Officer (Nav.) Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve 138 Sqdn. Age: 24 Date of Death: 06/11/1943 Service No: 133734[2]

Boy Scout losses 1939-1945

Ronald Morrish RAF. Killed in action over Germany. 3rd Brighton East Group[3]

Special Forces Role of Honour[4]

Surname	Morrish
Forename	Ronald
Rank	Flying Officer, No138 Squadron, (R.A.F.V.R.)
Number	133734
Date of death	6th November 1943
Age	24
Gravesite	Liesse Communal Cemetery, France Military Plot Row C

Coll. grave 1-6
Navigator SOE Op. Tom 6, France
Halifax JN921 crashed near Liesse, Aisne, France

The Department of the Aisne was on one of the routes flown by Allied aircraft on bombing missions to various places, which were important to the German war effort. Although some of the aircraft were brought down in this area by anti-aircraft fire, or in aerial combat, not all the airmen perished. The French underground movement was active and contrived numbers of escapes. In one-instance two airmen who had parachuted from a damaged plane about 20 kilometres east of Liesse were ingeniously hidden in a herd of cows guarded by "cowherds" who were members of the Resistance, and so were passed from the danger zone directly under the eyes of the German guards to escape channels. Of the less fortunate members of the same crew, some were killed and are buried in Liesse Communal Cemetery, while another was taken prisoner. Two other airmen, who escaped wounded from a plane which fell in flames in the commune of Lesquelles St. Germain, were secreted in the village and despite a vigorous search by the Germans, who threatened death to anyone succouring the enemy, remained successfully hidden until they could safely be sent through the underground escape channels. Members of their crew, too, are buried in Liesse Communal Cemetery. The enemy used this cemetery not only for the burial of airmen who fell in the commune, but also for the re-burial of others from Pierrepont, Leuze

---

[2] Page 95 Flights of the Forgotten Page 310 Agents by Moonlight Page 376 Bomber Command Losses 1943

[3] http://scoutsrecords.org/scoutsuploads/Second%20World%20War%20Roll%20of%20Honour%20A-M.pdf

[4] http://www.specialforcesroh.com/roll-13552.html

and Lesquelles St. Germain in the Aisne and from Menil Annelles and St. Quentin-le-Petit in the adjoining Department of the Ardennes. After the war, the Army Graves Service transferred to the cemetery casualties found at Leuze and at Mons-en-Chaussee (Somme).

Leatherhead in the 1970s

Leatherhead: Guy Darby Tony Begbie BEM and Carl Wonfor believed transferred to the Metropolitan Police

Michael Lowe 1975-1995 Leatherhead

PC Glenn Killigrew-White found this propped against a young tree outside Reigate police station. Can anyone shed any light on what this was originally attached to? I have it at home and will make attempts to try and repair it and

return it to its rightful location. The plaque looks like it's fallen off something and been run over by a car.

John Tyreman died 8 April 2019

Service in Hong Kong and Northern Ireland

ON 28 MARCH Sgt John Tyerman retired from the Force after 28 years as a police officer, writes Sergeant Ray Adams.

John initially joined the Berwick, Roxburgh and Selkirk Constabulary in June 1965, serving with this Constabulary until October 1973 when he joined the Royal Hong Kong Police as an Inspector.

Whilst in Hong Kong John was seconded to the Independent Commission against Corruption for 18 months after which he returned to the UK, joining the Surrey Constabulary in January 1977 as a Constable and being posted to Dorking.

In September 1978 John was promoted to Sergeant and posted to Reigate.

March 1979 saw the family on an aeroplane again, this time to Northern Ireland where John was seconded to the RUC as a Detective Sergeant on anti-terrorist duties.

Having completed that posting he returned to Reigate, as a uniform Sergeant.

In 1988 he transferred across to Dorking where he remained until his retirement.

John took part in many investigations during his career but one he will no doubt remember was his involvement in the successful extradition from the UK back to Hong Kong of Peter Godber who had fled Hong Kong (whilst he was serving in the Royal Hong Kong Police as an Acting ACC) once he realised the ICAC were about to arrest him.

We hope John's knee injury doesn't cause him too many problems and that he enjoys many happy years in retirement with his family.

Much-travelled: Sgt John Tyerman.

Off Beat May 1993

Police Sergeant John Tyreman second from left getting "stuck in" – how many will remember him

Demonstration Beecham's Research Laboratory, Brockham Believed Spring 1985

An animal rights demonstration in Brockham on the then Dorking Division, which was one of the three sub-divisions of Eastern Division, based at Reigate.

The divisional commander was the late Chief Superintendent Eric Hughes MBE, with Dorking subdivision superintendent Michael O'Byrne and the late Chief Inspector Arthur Crawford. All three appear in the photographs.

Local resident Tony Hines who kindly provided them to Surrey Constabulary History took the photographs.

The photographs in the document have been numbered and it is hoped that some of the police officers on duty can be named with details sent to 938at938@gmail.com

Divisional management team that allows the demonstration to be dated to 1985 also the time of the Ethiopian famine, seen on a billboard outside Strood Green post office in one of the photos.

1. Front right is the late Keith Evans on Brockham Green. Insp. Adrian Horn (at the front on the left, wearing a flat cap). The PC behind him is PC 1039 Paul Wheatley.

2. The PC at the front on the left, is PC 700 Ian Moram

4. **The first WPC at the front on the right is WPC 1198 Bonny Jones (nee Legge). Followed by a WPC from Reigate only in the Job for a short while. She worked on the M25 crash investigation at Oxted with Supt Nick Brent.**

5.

6.

8. Strood Green

9. The entrance to Beecham's south of Brockham off Coles Hill

10. Insp. Insp. Adrian Horn at the front wearing a flat cap. The first PC on the left is PC 1039 Paul Wheatley. Directly behind Paul Wheatley is PC 713 Gerry Phillips. To the left of Gerry Phillips is PS 1057 Tony Grant (who retired as an Inspector). Also the late PC Andy Desmond and late PC Steve Lane

11. Entrance to Brockham Park PC "Max"? Boyce and Kevin Haines from Reigate

13.

14.

15. Insp. Adrian Horn with PC 1039 Paul Wheatley behind him

16. The PC to the right of the lad with the sign, is PC 700 Ian Moram

18. The third PC back on the right wearing a Gannex coat is PC 290 Steve Lane (who recently died) and Andy Desmond

20. Inspector Ray Lee rear right on pavement

21.

22. **Inspector Ray Lee in the centre with the late PS973 John Wright on the right**

23. **PC 1360 Murrae Hume on the far left**

25.

26.Chief Superintendent Eric Hughes on left, officer 2nd right looks like PC 1460 Nick Shrapel

27. Supt Mick O'Byrne later Chief Constable Bedfordshire Police

28.

29.

31. Hillman Imp driver/passengers thought to have offered a deal of abuse and were dealt with!

32.

34. Police Sergeant John Tyreman second left

Photos from Jenny Tuffs former PC and Abnormal Loads Officer

1983/1984 manufactured in Crawley and taken to Reading

17ft diameter-brewing vessels manufactured Rochester Kent – then taken by barge to Walton on Thames then by Road on Sundays to Reading

Heathrow to Fire HQ Reigate 28 June 1987

Movement of train 29 May 1988 in Woking

Course 257 C2 June 70- September 1970 Sandgate

M Tuffs, J Dobson, PS Sampson, AH Smith, T Hibell,
Surrey officers

Chief Constable Peter Matthews talking with PC Tuffs

Addlestone PSU on NUM Duties 1984

The coach broke down on route!

Addlestone PSU NUM John Cable back row Peter Dean, ? Mick Tuffs,? Keith Bowles, Peter Godfrey, Dick Chase, ? Front left Cliff Cox, Gary Fisher, Tim Morris, Gary Sumner at Proteus Camp Ollerton Notts

The reality of NUM duties – long hours, little sleep

John Crabb

Addlestone Cricket Team

Trevor Stanbridge, Derek Radley, Mick French, Neville Cast, Henry McIvor, Geoff Drabble, front Ivor Powell, Mick Tuffs, Dick Medhurst, Phil Brown, Andy Richardson

Back Mick French Dave Canvin Mike Read (The DJ) Trevor Stanbridge, Henry McIvor, Ivor Powell Derek Radley Front Phil Brown Neville Cast Dick Medhurst Andy Richardson Mick Tuffs charity match at Byfleet cricket club

Andy Mansbridge, Simon? Mick Tuffs, Russ Greenhouse, John Donnelly, Neville Cast, front Geoff Craggs, Keith Sawyer, Tony Buddle, ? Dick Medhurst, Sant Cup final Guildford

Northern Division Cricket Sant Cup
Derek? , Melvyn Mann, John Donnelly, Ian Waite, Mick Tuffs, Andy Mansbridge, front Keith Thompson, Dick Medhurst, Geoff Craggs, Colin ? Ian Wright

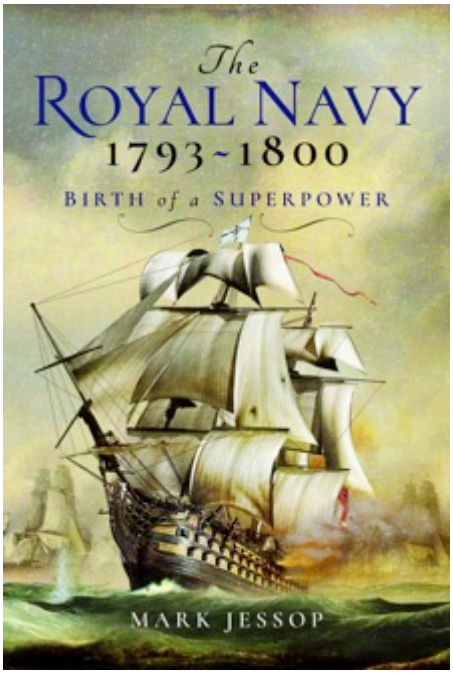
Football 1972

Addlestone: Jim Mundell, Fred Hind, Mick Tuffs, Neville Cast, Brian Silver Tim Blake, Kevin Steer, Wilf Hodder, Barry Adams, David Dalyrimple, Bob Wooton George Williamson, Keith Evans, Keith Collary, Dave Canvin

Reigate: Waite Williams, Edwards, Judd, Williams, White, Hownsome, Marshall, Gibb,s Bean, Stone, Hawkins, Treasurer, Riddle, Ref Lionel Atwood left John Doward right with ball

Book Reviews

The Royal Navy 1793-1800
Birth of a Superpower



By Mark Jessop
Imprint: Pen & Sword History
Pages: 190
ISBN: 9781526720337
Published: 28th November 2018

Synopsis

France declared war upon the British in 1793. The burden to conduct a long conflict proved heavy for that island nation. Poverty increased. Liberties and freedoms were sometimes taken away. Thousands of men had to leave their families, and disease, desertion and death meant that many never returned.

At first the Royal Navy barely had enough warships to cope, but eight years later she had more than enough. By that time a threat of invasion towards Ireland prompted Parliament to enact a new nation, christened The United Kingdom of Great Britain. As such, 1800 became the final year of the old Kingdom of Great Britain.

As she passed away, many of her men and women might have wondered as to what had made her navy a true Neptune. What had assisted the slow birth of a naval 'superpower'? This book seeks to answer that very question.

Review

Steady Boys Steady

This is an extremely readable book. The publisher is to be applauded for placing references at the bottom of each page and the author for the clarity of his maps, which are always essential in such broad based work. Both these issues can prove a frustration. It is notable that the book is 159 pages long, with a further 31 pages of bibliography and index, and is not of the modern fashion for 500 plus page behemoths.

Unusually the author intertwines fiction and fact into the tale, inventing characters who are used to coalesce the narrative around the facts. This is a creative approach that works well especially for the general reader.

This excellent book that may not offer too much that is new to the specialist but that is not the point. This book is best focussed on bringing this period of the history of the Royal Navy to a new or less informed audience though it will be enjoyable for the more knowledgeable.

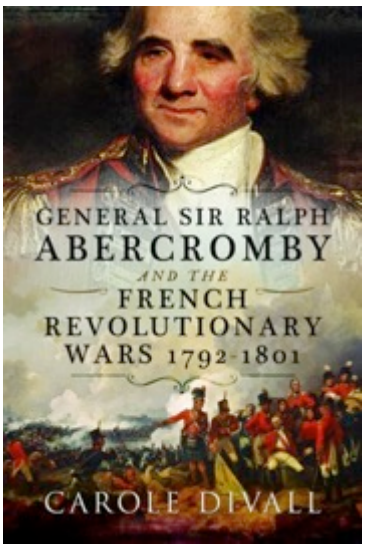
The French government dreaded a naval war with Britain as her manpower had been neglected during the revolution. Britain's immense traded and stable politics would help her sustain a long struggle, fitting out more ships, support and supply coalition armies throughout Europe. Louis XV1's execution and perceived slights and aggression by the British led to a break down in government relations and France declared war. Within a few weeks, commissioned ships of the line numbered 54, cruisers increased steadily from 136 to almost 200.

Amongst a number of areas surveyed in his wide-ranging work, Mark Jessop addresses the mobilisation of the fleet, the acquisition of crews with the detailed working of the press gang exploring the impact of expansion across the country. Those who read O'Brian's Jack Albury or C S Forrester's Hornblower will recognise the atmosphere and understand the pressures upon those charged to man the wooden walls of England. The author works towards the conclusion that this period was the birth of Britain as a superpower. Some could argue this was long the case. By 1776 Britain had become a reality, if sometimes unstable, having risen to be arguably the most powerful nation in Europe able to overwhelm and dominate European neighbours. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 made the British the pre-eminent naval power in Europe - no country came close to rivalling the scale of the Royal Navy until the Second World War. Couple pre-eminence with a far more

meritocratic society than any other in Europe, individualistic, tolerant and ultimately secular with the shear scale of the industrial revolution ensuring a dependence on trade.

General Sir Ralph Abercromby and the French Revolutionary Wars 1792-1801

Author Carole Divall



Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Pen & Sword Military (14 Jan. 2019)

ISBN-10: 1526741466

ISBN-13: 978-1526741462

About the Author

Carole Divall specializes in military history, focusing in particular on the British army during the Napoleonic Wars. She has published articles on regimental history, the workings of the army of Wellington's time and aspects of the key campaigns. Her publications include Redcoats Against Napoleon and Inside the Regiment, two studies of the officers and men of the 30th Regiment during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, Napoleonic Lives and Wellington's Worst Scrape: The Burgos Campaign 1812.

Synopsis

There are continuing great wars pitting France against Britain and her allies between 1792 and 1815. A short peace treaty or more a ceasefire, of Amiens in March 1802 that lasted about a year the only period of general peace in Europe between 1792 and 1815. As early as 1791, the monarchies of Europe looked with horror at the French revolution and its upheavals. Anticipating an attack France declared war on Prussia and Austria in the spring of 1792 and they responded with a coordinated invasion that was eventually turned back at the Battle of Valmy in September. (Valmy in the north-east of France 179 kilometres from Paris) This victory emboldened the revolutionary National Convention in Paris to abolish the monarchy. A series of victories by the new French armies abruptly ended with defeat at Neerwinden in the spring of 1793. The French suffered additional defeats in the remainder of the year and these difficult times allowed the Jacobins to rise to power and impose the Reign of Terror to unify the nation.

Review

The French Revolutionary Wars that followed are divided by historians into a number of periods known as the Wars of the Coalition followed by a number One to Seven. The War of the First Coalition (1792–97) and the War of the Second Coalition (1798–1802) are covered in depth within the book. Napoleon became First Consul of France in 1799 and the Napoleonic wars were fought between then and Waterloo in 1815.

On the 1 February 1793 France already at war with Austria and Prussia declared war on Great Britain. War on the Continent was a regular occurrence for most of the 18th century with sixteen conflicts between 1700 and 1790, six involving Britain one of which was the Seven Years War that became a world war when is spread to European colonies in North America and India. (Generally, France, Austria, Saxony, Sweden, and Russia were aligned on one side against Prussia, Hanover, and Great Britain on the other.)

As the war progressed General Abercromby was deployed in Europe, Flanders, the Caribbean, Egypt and whilst in 1800 commanding an expedition to the Mediterranean, after notable battles defeated the French in the Battle of Alexandria, 21 March 1801. During the action he was struck by a musket-ball in the thigh. However it was not until the battle was won and the enemy retreating did the General show any sign of pain. He was carried from the field in a hammock, cheered by the soldiers as he passed. The ball could not be extracted and seven days later on 28 March 1801, he died and was buried in Malta.

A contemporary of Abercromby wrote in his journal: "A man who has served his country in every quarter of the globe; who as a commander, devotes to his troops an attention almost parental; as a soldier, shares all their hardships, and all their dangers; who at an age when he might retire from the field crowned with glory, comes forth, at

the call of his country, a veteran in experience, youthful in ardour; whose life is a public blessing, his death a universal misfortune."

General John Moore wrote: " Sir Ralph was truly upright, honourable, judicious man, his great sagacity, which had been pointed all his life to military matters, made him an excellent officer."

Contemporaries saw Abercromby as a humane man who never uselessly had recourse to violence that valued the blood of his enemies and fought if there was no choice. He brought the sick to safety; the comfort of his men being his first priority, a humanity that earned him the love of those who served under him. He led from the front and his men willingly followed. He was a trainer, a logistician having learnt from the defects of earlier campaigns, a gentleman. All this led to victory in three successive actions against quality French troops

James, Lord Dunfermline in 1861 wrote a memoir of his father, as he believed there was an omission in that "no authoritative account of the character and services of Sir Ralph Abercromby had ever been given to the public." Since then there has been no further study of his life and military career. This is possibly because the Napoleonic Wars eclipsed the French Revolutionary Wars and the early death of Abercrombie significantly reduced opportunities for him to become a nationally known hero figure.

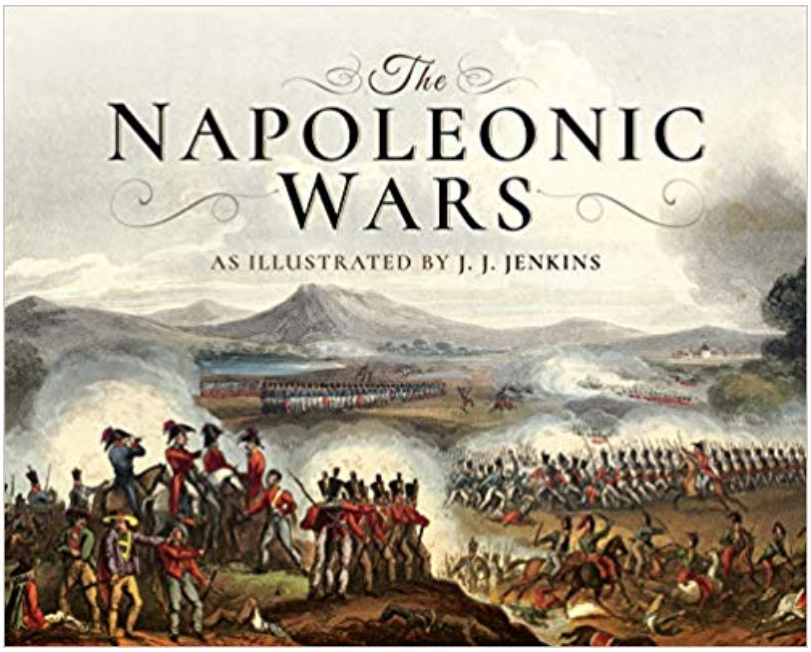
The purpose of the book is to examine the last eight years of Abercromby's military career most of it spent on active soldiering. The book does not seek to be a biography of this overlooked Scottish general but his involvement in the wars acts as a focal point for British involvement during these early years referred to by contemporises as The Great War.

The work sets out chronologically the various campaigns with Abercromby's contribution and will add to the knowledge of even those with a detailed understanding of this period. Abercromby is the leitmotif upon which the war from 1792 until his death is mounted.

All military campaign books require clear maps, which this book has. It is a quality product printed and bound in Cornwall and an excellent addition to the works of military history of the Revolutionary Wars. The level and quality of the author's research is evident as is her knowledge of the period though in the past her books have concentrated on Napoleon's wars.

The Napoleonic Wars:

As Illustrated by J. J. Jenkins



Hardcover: 168 pages

Publisher: Pen & Sword Military; Illustrated edition

ISBN-10: 1526717891

ISBN-13: 978-1526717894

Dimensions: 28.2 x 2.3 x 21.8 cm

Synopsis

Originally published as Martial Achievements of Great Britain and Her Allies From 1799 to 1815 this is one of the most magnificent of all period art books to have been produced. The text is pure British propaganda but is overshadowed by the rarity of the artwork. Includes 54 stunning colour plates including a great Wellington portrait. This is one of the finest books of its type ever produced and an absolute must for the collector of British or Napoleonic military art and literature.

Review

This 2018 book will cost £25 as opposed to £15,000 for a first edition original from Abe Books! An on line reviewer criticises the naïve style of the illustrations and lack of detail of the uniforms. Maybe so but that is not what is intended. These are mainly panoramic views of battlefield action and are representation, schematic, and not detailed line drawings of individual soldiers. The colour illustrations do evoke the battlefield and of course are from another just post Waterloo. Each illustration is accompanied by an explanation that to the modern reader may be hyperbolic but when it is considered what the men did and the numbers that died or suffered severe injury the descriptions are founded on a considerable truth. This was all there was for the non-soldiering public to get some understanding of battlefield truth and how and where their sons and husbands died.

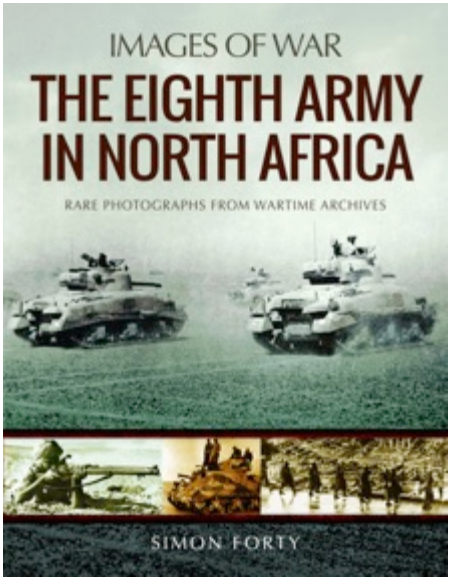
The original book is a national tribute containing the names of British officers killed, wounded and missing on the 16th and 18th June 1815 at Waterloo. And a long list it is. There is also a list of subscribers to the original edition that included The Prince Regent, Duke of York, Duke of Wellington, Duke of Marlborough and many more establishment figures of the age.

If you are interested in the Napoleonic Wars this book is a must. If it is not your subject it is still worth having and would make a fine present for people of all ages.

JJ Jenkins in the 1860s

Two of the 54 prints, much reduced in size from those in the book

The Eighth Army in North Africa



By Simon Forty
Imprint: Pen & Sword Military
Series: Images of War
Pages: 144
ISBN: 9781526723796
Published: 3rd April 2019

Author

Simon Forty has been working in publishing as editor and author for 35 years and edited Leo's first book, on Royal Naval Frigates in time for the Falklands War—and a subsequent sell out. He has cycled and toured the Normandy battlefields on many occasions.

Synopsis

The British Eighth Army, which played a decisive role in defeating the Axis in North Africa, was one of the most celebrated Allied armies of the Second World War, and this photographic history is the ideal introduction to it. The carefully chosen photographs show the men, weapons and equipment of the army during campaigns in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. The battles the army fought in the Western Desert in 1941 and 1942 are the stuff of legend, as is the second Battle of El Alamein when, under Montgomery, it defeated the German and Italian forces commanded by Rommel. The book gives a vivid insight into the fighting and the desert conditions, and it shows what a varied, multinational force the army was, for it brought together men from Britain, the British Empire and Commonwealth as well as Free French, Greeks and Poles.

Review

Part of a series of books with photographs of the Second World War taken it appears by both official professional photographs and some "snaps". No attribution is given for individual photographs but there is a paragraph on sources. Many of the photographs are not normally in the public domain and were a part of the author's father George's collection, a man who authored a number of books on the desert war. The diversity of the origins of the photographs has ensured a variety of clarity and sharpness of the image, all of which are not surprisingly black and white. Some of the charts are small and require more space given the content i.e. British gun versus German tank or Rommel's forces break out of Operation Supercharge. On page 87 the text wrongly names the individuals in photographs. Left and right muddled.

That has got the "issues" out of the way! If tanks and armoured vehicles are your "thing" this is the book for you. There are a number of marvellous photographs for the non-specialist including a mobile telephone exchange with trails of spaghetti wires and the "bulled boots" of a piper on parade in the desert during a visit by Montgomery having obviously been dusted down in situ. Another brilliant piper photograph is at the end of the book where British with their German prisoners are treated to the playing of a lone piper as the wounded are treated amongst the debris of war. Intriguingly there is a photograph of Christmas 1940 with a troop of South African armoured car personnel in the field, sipping wine from wine glasses with one what appears to be a roasted chicken between 11 troopers. You can't help but feel they would have preferred a beer!

An enjoyable inexpensive book with many rare or previously unseen photographs