



Trench Lines



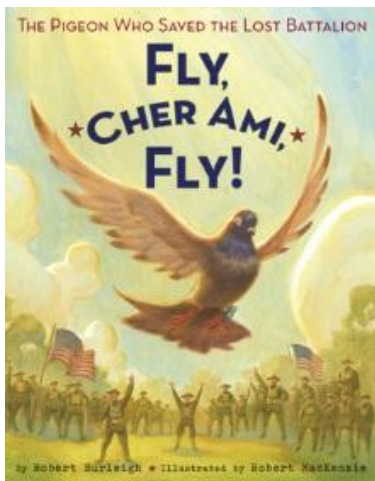
A Newsletter of the WFA East Coast Branch (USA)

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Fall 2011

Cher Ami Project Inaugurated



Published in 2008, the children's book *Fly, Cher Ami, Fly!* introduces the topic of World War I to young readers with a story based on "The Lost Battalion" and the famous carrier pigeon, Cher Ami. At the Fall 2011 WFA East Coast seminar, the Branch kicked off "The Cher Ami Project" in

which copies of the book were made available to seminar attendees for voluntary distribution to schools and libraries in their respective local areas. Ten copies of the book were taken by seminar attendees for local donation. These included:

Gail Beers (donating to Tall Oaks Classical School – PA)

Steve Gehrlich (donating to Fruitland Intermediate School – MD)

Paul Petersen (donating to Lancaster Country Day school - PA)

Barbara Taylor (donating to Ft. Meade post library)

With the assistance of history teacher **Butch Maisel**, Branch Chairman Paul Cora was able to present a copy of the book to The Boys Latin School of Maryland during a special 11 November Veterans Day assembly. Following the assembly, BL Lower School students were treated to a

reading of *Fly, Cher Ami, Fly!* by an Upper School senior dressed as a WWI Doughboy.



*Boys' Latin School History Teacher Butch Maisel (standing, right) accompanies a BL senior during a reading of *Fly, Cher Ami, Fly!* on November 11*

Fly, Cher Ami, Fly! is currently out of print and WFA East Coast will continue to make copies available to the extent possible. If you would like to contribute on your own, copies can still be bought through the second-hand market. If you make a donation to a local school or library, please get in touch with Branch Chairman Paul Cora (pbcora@earthlink.net) so that your contribution can be entered in the Branch records for the project.

313th Infantry Drum Project Completed

With the help of WFA East Coast, a significant World War I artifact has been stabilized in its display environment at the Maryland War Memorial Building. In October 2011 the regimental band bass drum of 313th Infantry (79th Division) was

enclosed in a custom-made exhibit case funded by the Branch.

The drum has been on display in the lobby of the War Memorial for many years and over time has suffered deterioration from environmental fluctuations and accumulated dust and dirt. After soliciting bids from several museum case fabricators, WFA East Coast contracted with the Baltimore-based company Xibitz for the design and fabrication of a custom display case for the drum. As per specifications, the case was constructed from Medex (a museum-grade, non-reactive fiberboard material) and UV- filtering plexiglass.

The drum itself received a gentle cleaning via soft bristle brush to remove accumulated dust and dirt before being placed in the case. Special thanks goes to the Baltimore-based Dorfman Museum Figures for the donation of materials used to construct an inert polyethylene foam cradle for the drum within its case.



313th Infantry band bass drum now displayed in its custom-fabricated case at the Maryland War Memorial Building. Thanks to the building staff for furnishing the appropriate 313th regimental color adjacent to the case.

Branch Seminar: Success Despite Rain And Snow on 29 October

Although the weather accompanying WFA East Coast fall seminars has been typically mild and clear over the years, Saturday 29 October was anything but “picture perfect” offering instead an unseasonably early winter mix of driving rain, sleet and wet snow throughout the day. Despite what was described by several attendees as the worst seminar weather they could recall, some 54 persons turned out for the day-long program of WWI history presentations and displays at the Maryland War Memorial Building in Baltimore. The event had been on track for a near-record attendance of 75 to 80 persons before poor weather altered travel plans for many.



*Opening of the Fall 2011 Seminar on 29
October*

One of the unique features of the seminar was a day-long offering of film clips furnished by **Jerry Shoaf** – the product of many years research into the portrayal of WWI on the silver screen. Jerry led off the program with a brief discussion of his film research and invited everyone to comment and to visit the adjacent viewing room in the course of the day. Parisian **Claire Luisi** was next up with a fascinating presentation on collecting and identifying trench art in all its various forms.



Trench art collector Claire Luisi.

Student, researcher and reenactor **Alexander Falbo** gave the second major presentation of the morning in which he used research on the 1917 Battle of Arras to examine the historiography of British generalship on the Western Front.



Alexander Falbo on British Generalship

After lunch the well-known author and editor **Jon Guttman** took the floor to give an insightful overview of the Naval Aces of WWI (based on his two recent titles from Osprey). Professional museum curator and reenactor **Greg Goodell** was up next, donning khaki, web equipment, pack and rifle to present the evolution of WWI British infantry equipment.



Greg Goodell as “Tommy Atkins”

The final presentation of the day was given by authors **Janet and Joe Robinson** who gave an eye-opening portrait of society in Kaiser Wilhelm’s Germany, drawn from their *Handbook of Imperial Germany*.



Janet and Joe Robinson , authors of The Handbook of Imperial Germany

Seminar attendees were also treated to several terrific displays of artifacts and memorabilia including those of **Keith Landies** who traveled from Cleveland (OH) to share some of his family’s amazing Scottish WWI regimental collection, and Baltimore-native **Butch Maisel** who exhibited a selection of WWI artifacts and uniforms gathered during his 40-plus years of collecting.



Keith Landies with his display of WWI Scottish regimental artifacts.

Spring 2012 Seminar Date and Venue Confirmed

The Branch’s spring 2012 seminar will be held on **Saturday 12 May** in York (PA) at the invitation of the York County Heritage Trust. WFA East Coast will be joining forces with the Heritage Trust to promote the seminar as public program in conjunction with an exhibit “York County: Front Porch to Front Line.” We are delighted that WFA East Coast’s reputation for quality events has caught the attention of yet another organization devoted to public history. We look forward to planning for this seminar – more details to follow in the coming weeks.

2011 COL Paul Braim Award

On Wednesday 30 November WFA East Coast presented the 2011 COL Paul Braim Award to Fort Meade Museum Exhibits Specialist **Barbara Taylor**. The award was made before a full Post Theater audience as part of the monthly Commander’s Call at Fort Meade.

The COL Paul Braim Award was created by WFA East Coast as a way of recognizing significant volunteer efforts in helping the Branch achieve its mission of furthering the memory of The First World War. COL Braim was a founding member of WFA East Coast and the author of *Test of Battle: The AEF in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign* . Barbara Taylor was instrumental in the

recently completed 313th Infantry Drum Project. Readily serving as a volunteer consultant, she drew up the specifications for the case, reviewed contractor bids, and provided advice for cleaning and mounting the object. Additionally, Barbara has been a steady supporter of the Branch and has hosted two seminars at the museum in recent years.



Barbara Taylor receives the COL Braim Award from Branch Secretary Marc Romanych

A Message From The WFA Branch Coordinator

“Hi, I'm David Easton, Branch Co-ordinator of the Western Front Association, and I'm pleased and honoured to be allowed to contribute to 'Trench Lines', the voice of the East Coast Branch. I know I speak for all my colleagues on the Executive Committee when I say a very big 'Welcome' to the Branch. This re-birth is in a great part due to the efforts and steadfastness (although he will be horribly embarrassed by such praise) of Paul Cora, Chairman of the Branch. But, as he would be the first to point out, nothing could have been done without the loyalty of the WFA members in the USA who gave him their support. To you all, a big 'thank you'.

The East Coast Branch is also significant and important in that it is another step towards having a world-wide network of Branches for WFA members to attend, providing a familiar 'home from home' for the traveller to a far land. Cork, Ireland, has recently joined the Association, and soon there will be a Branch near Albert on

the Somme, France. A warm welcome awaits any of you who cross 'The Pond'- just refer to your 'Bulletin' for venues and dates, or log on to the website, or send me an email for details.

As 'co-ordinator', I like to be able to put people in touch with others who have similar interests, and my colleague David Tattersfield is compiling a 'Credited experts list' to complement this endeavour. So we'd love to hear from you about your interests and expertise, and, of course, what we can do to make your membership even more rewarding. Email me on dauidallaneaston@tiscali.co.uk and/or David T on development@westernfrontassociation.com David Henderson, our web editor (yes, most of us are called David!) is always on the lookout for news stories for the website and the e-mag, and he'd love to hear from you about what is going on: webmanager@westernfrontassociation.com

By now your autumn seminar is over and, despite the dreadful weather (there's been a lot of it about lately I hear!), I believe it was a great success. My great-niece would have loved to attend, since Cher Ami is her hero: just another example of how shared interests know no geographical boundaries. Although 3,000 miles separate her from you all, who knows, one day she may get to visit The Smithsonian to see the gallant little bird... So 'onwards and upwards' East Coast Branch- I'm sure we are all looking forward to a long and satisfying 'hands across the ocean'.

Best wishes
David”

Over 250 On Facebook

At the time of writing the WFA East Coast Branch (USA) Facebook group has over 250 members. This extremely popular social networking site is providing a great way for seminar attendees to stay in touch, get to know people with similar interests, share photos and documents, and engage in discussions of WWI topics. If you are not part of this group yet – consider looking us up on Facebook and getting involved with WFA East Coast in between seminars!

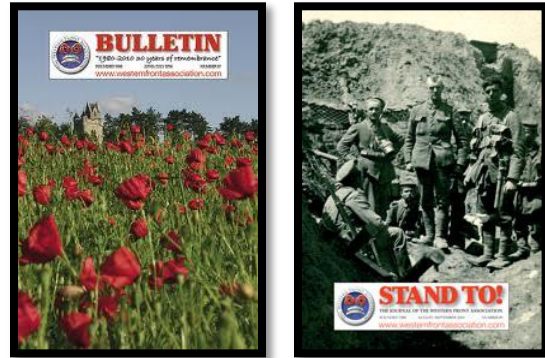
WFA Membership Has Its Privileges

If you have not considered joining The Western Front Association – now is a great time to do so. Joining WFA has never been easier than in today’s digital world.

Full WFA membership (£37 – approximately \$57 US) gets you four issues of **Stand To!** - the terrific WFA journal, and two issues of **The WFA Bulletin** – both of which are loaded with articles on WWI history, information on WWI commemorations and tours, and updates on WFA Branch activities around the world. WFA also has a new **Overseas Supporter** membership category which gets you the issues of **Stand To!** for your membership year - a

great way to try out the publications and to get to know the organization. At £26 (approximately \$40) it’s a great value. For more information visit the WFA Website: www.westernfrontassociation.com

You can order online with a credit card or with PayPal and within weeks, you’ll receive your first publications and membership materials.



A detail image from the display furnished by collector Butch Maisel at the 29 October Seminar: a disarmed German “potato masher” grenade brought back to Baltimore as a souvenir by Thomas C. Price of the 117th Trench Mortar Battery, 42nd (“Rainbow”) Division. The 117th had the distinction of serving longer in the front line than any other Maryland unit in WWI.