

THREE HEROES TOUR 2014

"By Foot, Horse & Air, Three exceptional men and their
bravery in face of the enemy"

ITINERARY

Monday 7 April;

10.00 Meet at the Imperial War Museum.
View Gordon Flowerdew & William Hewitt's Victoria Crosses.

11.00 Depart by coach for Folkestone and crossing to Calais via the Euro Tunnel.

18.00 Arrive at Amiens Hotel

Tuesday 8 April;



Group Captain Charles P. C 'Pick' Pickard DSO & 2 bars, DFC, CzMC (1915 – 1944)

Charles was born in Sheffield and after an undistinguished career at Framlingham College, in 1932 left for Kenya where he farmed. Returning in 1936 he was rejected by the Army but joined the RAF being commissioned the following year and was posted to Bomber Command. His long operational career covering many aspects of aerial conflict included some of the most daring episodes in the RAF's history. In early 1944 intelligence reported that the Gestapo in Amiens Prison were preparing to execute a large number of French Resistance members. It was decided to try and breach the walls of the prison allowing them to escape. Pickard leading 15 twin –engine Mosquito bombers (in 3 waves) attacked the prison, the walls were damaged and some prisoners did escape. 'Operation Jericho' was deemed a success, so Pickard called off the final wave. Soon afterwards near Montigny, Pickard & his navigator Flt Lt Bill Broadley's aircraft were attacked by a German fighter (FW 190), which shot them down killing both crew members.

Visit to Amiens Prison followed by visit to St Pierre Cemetery (wreath laying ceremony at Pickard's grave)

Wednesday 9 April;



Lt. Acting Captain Gordon Muriel Flowerdew, Victoria Cross. 1885 – 1918

Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians)

Born in Norfolk, Flowerdew (one of 9 brothers) attended Framlingham College. In 1903 he emigrated to Western Canada and eventually ended up in the small town of Walhachin, British Columbia where he operated two small businesses. In 1911 he joined the Canadian Army, 31st Regiment, British Columbia Horse, a unit within the Non-Permanent Active Militia .

At the outbreak of World War I, Flowerdew joined the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians). By 1916, he had quickly risen through the enlisted ranks and was commissioned. In early 1918 he was an acting Captain commanding "C" Squadron. On March 30 the regiment was involved at the Battle of Moreuil Wood, he led his cavalymen in what has since been referred to as “The Last Great Cavalry Charge”. The charge broke the lines of the defending Germans; the victory, though, cost nearly 70% of "C" Squadron strength and also resulted in Flowerdew being mortally wounded. For his actions in leading his Squadron’s charge, he was recommended for, and posthumously awarded, the Victoria Cross.

"I shall never be brave enough to win it. Valour has reached such a standard that you have to be dead before you win the V.C."

— Gordon Flowerdew, in a conversation with a fellow officer

Citation

"For most conspicuous bravery and dash when in command of a squadron detailed for special service of a very important nature. On reaching the first objective, Lt. Flowerdew saw two lines of the enemy, each about sixty strong, with machine guns in the centre and flanks, one line being about two hundred yards behind the other. Realising the critical nature of the operation and how much depended upon it, Lt.

Flowerdew ordered a troop under Lt. Harvey, V.C. to dismount and carry out a special movement while he led the remaining three troops to the charge. The squadron (less one troop) passed over lines, killing many of the enemy with the sword; and wheeling about galloped at them again. Although the squadron had then lost about 70 per cent of its numbers, killed and wounded, from rifle and machine gun fire directed on it from the front and both flanks, the enemy broke and retired. The survivors of the squadron then established themselves in a position where they were joined, after much hand-to-hand fighting, by Lt. Harvey's party. Lt. Flowerdew was dangerously wounded through both thighs during the operation, but continued to cheer on his men. There can be no doubt that this officer's great valour was the prime factor in the capture of the position."

Visit to Moreuil Wood

Visit to Namps au Val Cemetery (wreath laying ceremony) at Flowerdew's grave.

Wednesday 9 April (continued)

Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, has the names of 72,191 British & South African men who have no known grave and who died between 1915 & 1918



18.00 Arrive at our hotel in Ypres.

Thursday 10 April;



Lance Corporal William Henry Hewitt, Victoria Cross 1884 – 1966

2nd South African Light Infantry

William Hewitt was born in Copdock, near Ipswich, Suffolk and was educated at Framlingham College. In 1905 he decided to emigrate to South Africa joining the South Africa Constabulary for one year and then transferring to the Natal Police in which he served for three years.

After the outbreak of the First World War Hewitt, although a good horseman, he enlisted into the 2nd South Africa Light Infantry on 24th December 1915. His regiment arrived in France for active service in July 1916.

On 20 September 1917, the South African Brigade's task was far from easy. Their troops had to advance 1.5km from Frezenberg and reach a line beyond Bremen Redoubt. At the end of August and early September, this terrain had already been captured a number of times by British battalions, but had to be conceded each time after counter-attacks.

At 05.40 on 20 September, the attack was launched. After a preliminary artillery barrage, the 4rd and 3rd SAI advanced behind a smoke curtain and a creeping barrage. They successfully reached their objective, the Red Line, capturing Beck House, Borry Farm, Mitchell Farm and Vampir Farm. The troops displayed great courage by not just running behind the creeping barrage, but actually risking jinking through it, surprising the Germans who did not have the time to get out of their pillboxes to put their machine-guns on the rooves.

An hour later, the second stage of the attack began. On the right, the 1st SAI had to 'leapfrog' the 3rd SAI to reach the Green Line. The 2nd SAI had to 'leapfrog' the 4th SAI and advanced towards Bremen Redoubt. The 2nd SAI came under enfilading fire from Hill 37 and Tulip Cottages. In the meantime, the terrain became a quagmire, with men struggling waist deep in the mud. It was during this second stage in the battle that **L/Cpl William Henry Hewitt** captured a pillbox single-handedly. He threw a grenade into a doorway, but the Germans threw a stick-bomb that blew off Hewitt's gas-mask and knocked out four of his teeth.

Furious because he was engaged to be married and now feared that his fiancée might no longer find him attractive, Hewitt reached the rear of the pillbox. He tried to lob a bomb through a loophole, but missed and had to dive for cover. With only one bomb remaining, Hewitt crept right up to the loophole and, from beneath it, pushed the grenade through, receiving a shot in the hand.

The South African Brigade reached all its objectives, but at a considerable cost. On most of the headstones of the South African graves, there is only one date, 20 September 1917.

Citation

On 20 September 1917 east of Ypres, Belgium, Lance-Corporal Hewitt attacked a pill-box with his section and tried to rush the doorway. The garrison, however, proved very stubborn and in the attempt the lance-corporal received a severe wound. Nevertheless he proceeded to the loophole of the pill-box where, in his attempts to put a bomb in it, he was again wounded in the arm. Undeterred, he finally managed to get the bomb inside where it dislodged the occupants and they were successfully dealt with by the rest of the section.

We will drive to Frezenberg and follow the actions of Hewitt's Battalion (where possible) to their goal at the Bremen Redoubt.

Tyne Cot Cemetery

Visit to In Flanders Fields Museum

20.00 Menin Gate ceremony.

Friday 11 April.

Departing Ypres this morning on our return to Calais we will visit La Coupole built by the Todt Organisation in 1943/44 and was to be the launch base for V2 rockets aimed at London. After massive bombing the site was abandoned after the Normandy landings.



To Calais & Euro tunnel train to Folkestone arrival time in Waterloo circa **18.00/1830.**

COSTINGS

Price per person **based on 20** people attending will be £475 with a single supplement of £108.

If we had say only 6 it could still be done with Peter Gasgoyne Lockwood driving a suitable vehicle.

Price Includes :-

4 nights bed & breakfast accomodation

Coach travel from London & return via the Euro tunnel

Entrance to the Flanders Fields Museum

Entrance to La Coupole

2 Poppy wreaths (Pickard & Flowerdew)

Not included.

Travel insurance

Porterage

Gratuities

All other meals

A deposit of £50 is required by 31 August 2013 to secure a place on this trip, with the balance being required by 31 January 2014. Please return deposit with reservation form.