

A Darn Good Yarn

Knitting, the First World War, Bordighera and Bicknell

By Helen Blanc-Francard and Marcus Bicknell

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Clarence arrived at the twilight of his active life, 76 years old in 1914 as the Great War tore up Europe. He was a pacifist who had devoted himself to Esperanto, the universal language, which he thought could bring peace to all peoples. As his deception grew and old age crept on, Clarence continued to help the wounded soldiers convalescing in Bordighera alongside his regular work helping the old and poor of the town. Clarence liked doing things with his hands, and one of the ways he helped others during the crisis of the First World War was to reach for his knitting needles.

Maybe handiwork is the characteristic of a man who enjoyed helping others in practical ways, especially in times of crisis (read Valerie Lester's chapter *Terremoto* on the earthquake of 1887), working with Padre Giacomo Viale for the poor and sick of Bordighera and during the Great War. Valerie Lester devotes a chapter of *MARVELS – The Life of Clarence Bicknell to Good Deeds and the War Years*. She writes



“Clarence busied himself with philanthropy and volunteer aid. He worked for the Red Cross; he rolled bandages and made slippers – and presumably caught up with his knitting; he collected medicinal and aromatic plants to sell in benefit of the Red Cross; he made little bags that he filled with sphagnum, a moss, to apply to wounds – apparently one of the best cures – but complained that no one wanted to collect the moss without payment; and he visited the sick and comforted the weary. He described to Edward, not without a certain macabre humour, one of his visits to the sick: ‘Mrs Bonsignore had [her] finger poisoned by a white-thorn spine (probably other poison getting into wound) till at last the finger was cut off & we talked nearly all the time of this cheerful subject, but washed it down with some good wine, while we gazed at the relic of her finger & bone carefully preserved in her purse.’

“He turned his museum over to convalescing soldiers, and noted to Alberto Pelloux that there were army horses in the public garden, and that the Victoria Hall and the Casino were full of the wounded. ‘What a good thing it is to see useless or mischievous places being turned to good account’, he said censoriously. Ever since his first visit to the casino in Monte Carlo, he had loathed gambling and the harm it did.

“‘We have over 500 refugees! What are we to do to help them to live and be clothed and work, which is the most important, if they are not to follow the example of the Bordighotti and become thieves? I really do not know if our unpatriotic town will do its duty or is worthy to have these people . . . We shall all be glad when this night is over and the day breaks, as it must some day.’ Clarence had no patience with the *dolce far niente* attitude of the locals. In his opinion, everyone, man, woman, and child should pitch in.”

British encampment in Bordighera c. 1916



When Clarence first arrived in Bordighera, in 1878, he was already a confirmed knitter.

"He moved away from church matters in his entry for 18 October: 'I finished a pair of woollen baby's boots & gave them to Imperiale – he is such a dear fellow.' Clarence took his knitting seriously. He then embarked on a kettle-holder for Imperiale with his monogram in the centre. It was not entirely successful: 'A "work of heart": that is all I can say about it, for the design is weak & the execution worse.' Parrett too was working away, making 'carpet fringe at a fine rate' and the Fanshawe ladies 'beat Kidderminster, Brussels &c &c hollow, by their pretty & comfortable mats & carpets.' A few weeks later, Clarence took crochet lessons from a Miss Stubberd."

Troops in the trenches wearing knitted scarves



Knitting pattern for a balaclava cap, c.1916

This 1914 booklet provides patterns for knitting articles of clothing to keep soldiers in the trenches or on the high seas warm. It gives instructions of how to make a 'Balaclava bonnet', a sleeping cap, mittens, ribbed socks as well as a pair of crocheted bed socks. Similar knitting pattern books included patterns for 'rifle gloves', that leave the thumb and trigger finger free, as well as specialised garments for wounded soldiers to protect the injuries they had suffered.

PLAIN HELMET (or BALACLAVA CAP)
MATERIALS REQUIRED.—4 sps. 1 Cast J. & J. BALDWIN'S "White Heather" Wheeling or "Beehive" Double Knitting Wool, Four No. 8 Celluloid Knitting Needles.
 Cast on 100 stitches, 36 on to one needle and 32 on to each of the other two needles.
 Work backwards and forwards; to the rib) for 2 inches.
 Cast on 24 stitches again and join up the round.
 Work 2 more inches in the rib.
 Finish the cap in plain knitting and decrease as follows:
1st round.—Knit each 19th and 20th stitch together.
 Knit 1 round plain.
3rd round.—Knit each 18th and 19th stitch together.
 Knit 1 round plain.
5th round.—Knit each 17th and 18th stitch together.
 Knit 1 round plain.
 Decrease in this manner until only 24 stitches remain. Run a thread through these and fasten off securely. M.T.

SLEEPING CAP
MATERIALS REQUIRED.—4 sps. J. & J. BALDWIN'S "White Heather" Wheeling or "Beehive" Double Knitting Wool, Four No. 8 Celluloid Knitting Needles with double points.
 Cast on 100 stitches, 36 on one needle and 32 on to each of the other two needles.
 Work in rounds of ribbing (knit 2 and purl 2) for 3 inches.
 Knit plain for 4 inches. Then repeat from the first round of decreasing in the Plain Helmet, as described above. M.T.

"WHITE HEATHER" WHEELING—Useful shades, other than the regulation KHAKI, are Nos. 2 (Light Blue Grey); 13 & 13 (Light Greys); 14 & 15 (Darker Greys); 17 & 17 (Shottlands); 19, 18 & 19 (Brown and White mixed); 129 (Brown Heather); 133 (Dark Heather); and 29 (Fast Navy). 147 (Light Natural) and 146 (Mid Natural) are also very useful sanitary mixtures for Socks, Belts, etc. Patterns free on application.



So it is hardly surprising, given Clarence's interest in knitting and handiwork, that two researcher-friends, Helen Blanc-Francard and Gisella Merello, in the circle of the Clarence Bicknell Association have come together at the same place.

Nursing the wounded soldiers in Bordighera – Helen Blanc-Francard

In supporting Valerie Lester's book research in 2016, Helen Blanc-Francard unearthed articles by Ferruccio Poggi drawn from the *Journal de Bordighera* about the efforts made for wounded soldiers convalescing in Bordighera. We reproduce below in full the three articles¹ by Ferruccio Poggi, of which a typical entry is...

"Rilevò l'atto munifico del Signor Bicknell, che lascia gratuitamente all'associazione² ed ai soldati convalescenti l'uso dello splendido locale ad uso museo sulla Strada Romana coll'attiguo incantevole giardino".

"He noted the bountiful activities of Mr. Bicknell, who gives to the association and the convalescing soldiers, free of charge, the use of the splendid museum room on the Via Romana with its charming garden."

Helen also found an article by Dorothea Matilda Taylor on nursing the wounded in 1918 in several parts of Italy and the Riviera, which we reproduce in full in Appendix 4 below.

*Image, right: Piccoli ospedali da campo furono attendati nell'area pianeggiante, ora occupata dai campi da tennis, e dietro la Casa Bianca.
(Small field hospitals were encamped in the plain, now occupied by tennis courts, and behind the White House.)*



As well as donations of items like sheets and bandages, war hospitals needed food supplies for the wounded soldiers. British Red Cross V.A.D. members worked as cooks in British Military Hospitals in places like Genoa, Bordighera, Cremona, Arquata Scrivia and Taranto. On average they prepared and served 40,000 meals per month. Dishes for the recovering soldiers included jellies, broth, custard and chicken soufflé.³



Above, right: Nurses, staff and patients at the Infermeria Britannica (British Hospital) in Florence, Italy, 1916.

Soldiers recuperating in a hotel on the Cote d'Azur, 1915. "Inside one of the luxuriously equipped hotels - now requisitioned for soldiers of all nationalities to recover and recuperate following injury on the battlefield"



Photos of convalescing military personnel in Cannes also confirm that if you didn't actually die, the Cote d'Azur and Bordighera's luxuriously equipped hotels were a great place to be sent to for re-booting after the horrors of battle and much better than some cold, dismal Scottish stately home. The last ambulance train taking soldiers away from Bordighera left on the 27th October 1918, but no images can be found.

¹ www.bordighera.net/bordighera-e-la-guerra-1915-1918-prima-parte-n22188 etc., reproduced in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 below

² Associazione pro assistenza ai feriti", "The Association for assisting the wounded"

³ Source <https://attinghamww1stories.wordpress.com/tag/red-cross/>

Helen also recorded information on the soldiers who did not make it and who are buried in the Bordighera British Cemetery ⁴ (contemporary photo, right), and we reproduce a complete list at www.clarencebicknell.com/downloads.



The Italians entered the war on the Allied side, declaring war on Austria, in May 1915. Commonwealth forces were at the Italian front between November 1917 and November 1918, and rest camps and medical units were established at various locations in northern Italy behind the front, some of them remaining until 1919. From the Summer of 1917 until late 1918, the Mediterranean lines of communication for the British Salonika Force ran the length of Italy from Taranto in the south-east, to Turin in the north-west. The 62nd General Hospital was posted at Bordighera from January 1918 to January 1919, and the 66th from January to March 1918. The British cemetery is opposite the town cemetery and was used from November 1917 to January 1919. It contains 72 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, and 12 Austrian war graves.

The Kitchener Stitch – Gisella Merello

Gisella Merello sent me a copy of the slides she had prepared for a presentation to school children in Bordighera on 4 December 2018. One of the slides (right) caught my eye because of the autocratic moustachioed soldier. What's he doing there?

Gisella's caption reads "He knitted socks for the children of his friends, socks and bandages for the soldiers and the wounded". Gisella sent me the quote which gave her the reason to include this soldier, who turns out to be Lord Kitchener, whose face dominated the British recruitment poster of 1914 "Your Country Needs You".



Picture credit: Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener, by Sir Hubert von Herkomer, and Frederick Goodall, oil on canvas, 1890. NPG 1782. © National Portrait Gallery, London

Gisella writes

"Lord Kitchener era un appassionato di lavoro a maglia, si fece ritirare durante la guerra boera con in mano i ferri e un calzino in lavorazione (il ritratto (attualmente esposto alla National Portrait Gallery di Londra). Gli si attribuisce l'invenzione della chiusura a punto calza (in inglese Kitchener stitch)"

which translates as

"Lord Kitchener was a knitting enthusiast. He retired during the Boer war. Here he is holding irons and a sock being worked on (the portrait is currently on display at the London National Portrait Gallery). He is credited with the invention of the Kitchener stitch, a way of mending socks". The Kitchener Stitch is a way of sewing together two pieces of knitting so that they look like a continuous piece of knitting without any seam at all, also called weaving and grafting.

I found more about Kitchener in articles about knitting:

As many knitters know, British, Canadian and American knitters were exhorted by their governments and officially sanctioned organizations such as the Red Cross to knit for the war effort during both World Wars, and the call was readily answered. Knitting was a way for those at home to feel they were actively and materially helping their loved ones at the front, and also helped to soothe the knitters' anxieties over the dangers faced by their men at the front as well as cope with more generalized worries over the progress of the war.

Not only did knitted socks play a role in World War I, but conversely, World War I has had a lasting impact on the knitted sock. Until World War I socks typically had seamed toes, and these seams caused great discomfort for soldiers on forced marches and in the wet and muddy trenches, where those seams rubbed the men's toes raw, which in turn could result in dangerous infections. The British Secretary of State for War, Horatio Herbert Kitchener, associated himself with the Red Cross drive to urge women to knit "comforts" or items for the men in the military, particularly mittens, socks and scarves. He was concerned about the foot problems the sock seams caused and personally contributed a pattern for socks which included a seamless grafting technique that would come to be known as the "Kitchener stitch".

The Kitchener stitch is still widely used today. Knitty.com has a [tutorial](#) on how to work the Kitchener stitch, and there are a number of YouTube videos that demonstrate it, such as [this one](#). Lord Kitchener is credited with inventing this technique himself, but I'm skeptical as to whether he actually did. Apparently there is no real evidence of it, and I think it much more likely that, at most, he recognized the need for a seamless sock toe, asked a knitter of his acquaintance to figure out a way to create one, and then took the credit in order to use his famous (and, at the time, revered) name to promote it.

<https://blog.loveknitting.com/kitchener-stitch-a-history/>

So it turns out that knitting was a vital part of the war effort, of activities in Bordighera and of Bicknell's contribution.

End

Appendix 1

Bordighera e la Guerra 1915-1918 - prima parte

*Fonte: Le Journal de Bordighera - ricerca e stesura
Ferruccio Poggi. Immagine fotografica collezione
Ferruccio Poggi.*

Durante la Grande Guerra (1915-1918), nacque a Bordighera la "Associazione pro assistenza ai feriti", venne installato un laboratorio per la confezione di bende, medicazioni, indumenti ecc., e si fabbricavano anche stampelle per gli infermi e minorati.



Mentre i locali dello splendido e nuovissimo Hotel Miramare vengono allestiti per accogliere i nostri feriti, il Signor Giovanni Campora, il simpatico ed attivo cancelliere della nostra Pretura, ha preso l'iniziativa di formare una associazione per l'assistenza morale e materiale a questi gloriosi reduci di guerra. La gentile idea, che dimostra ancora una volta lo spirito altamente patriottico del bravo funzionario di cancelleria, incontrò subito la generale simpatia ed approvazione. Una commissione provvisoria formata dallo stesso Signor Campora, dal Commissario Prefettizio avv. Rolleri, dal parroco Rev. Sismondini, dall'ingegnere H. Woodhouse e dal capitano medico dott. Viviani, studiò il modo migliore di tradurre in atto la nobile iniziativa. Per mercoledì scorso (8 giugno 1917), alle ore 1,007, fu indetta nella vasta sala del Victoria Hall una adunanza che riuscì davvero imponente, coll'intervento in gran numero della colonia inglese. Il nostro Pretore avv. Silvio Bottaro, chiamato ad assumere la presidenza, ebbe elevate parole di saluto alle armi italiane e dei popoli alleati contro la prepotenza e la barbarie teutonica ed auspicò fra gli applausi dell'assemblea ad una prossima completa vittoria dell'intesa. Passando quindi allo scopo dell'adunanza, lasciò al cancelliere Campora di spiegare le finalità che la costituenda associazione si propone e che la commissione provvisoria aveva sintetizzato in un breve statuto.

Rilevò l'atto munifico del Signor Bicknell, che lascia gratuitamente all'associazione ed ai soldati convalescenti l'uso dello splendido locale ad uso museo sulla Strada Romana coll'attiguo incantevole giardino.

L'assemblea dando segni manifesti di approvazione dello statuto, dichiarava costituita la nuova associazione e per acclamazione eleggeva Presidente Onorario il Generale Senatore Luigi Pelloux. A membri del Comitato esecutivo vennero quindi nominati: il Sig. Cav. Leopoldo Jung, il Sig. Bicknell, Ing. Woodhouse, Avv. P. Rolleri, Rag. P. Biancheri, Sig. Giovanni Campora, Presidentessa della Pia Unione delle Dame di Carità e Presidentessa delle Dame Cattoliche Signora Biamonti. Prima che l'adunanza fosse sciolta, l'avvocato Rolleri, dicendosi lieto, come rappresentante della Città, della splendida e numerosa adesione all'opera benefica che stava per sorgere, ringraziò gli intervenuti e rilevò con sincero compiacimento come sempre vivo fosse lo spirito patriottico che in questo periodo di guerra ancora una volta univa la nostra popolazione alla colonia inglese. Ed evocando l'unione delle armi delle due nazioni alleate nella attuale grande offensiva sul Carso con una mirabile chiusa, vivamente applaudita, inneggiò alla prossima vittoria che dovrà darci una Italia più forte, più grande, più rispettata.

Il 17 giugno 1917 giunsero, alla stazione di Bordighera, i primi 100 feriti destinati al nuovo ospedale allestito nel sontuoso Hotel Miramare del sig. Felice Corte. Alla stazione era preparato, per cura della nuova associazione "Pro feriti", uno svariato servizio di rinfreschi.

I dottori Boggi e Odello avevano messo a disposizione le loro automobili. Il Comitato direttivo, col Commissario Prefettizio avv. Rolleri e con moltissime signore, erano presenti. Giugno 1917, la Sottocommissione mandamentale per la lavorazione degli indumenti militari, presieduta dal Commissario prefettizio, ha proceduto in questi giorni alla chiusura della gestione 1916-1917 ed il resoconto non potrebbe essere più soddisfacente. Le operaie addette alla lavorazione, quasi tutte appartenenti a famiglie di richiamati, furono quest'anno in numero di novanta. Il lavoro eseguito consiste in numero trecento sacconi per pagliericci, 910 paia di guanti, 15 sciarpe, 1795 ventriere e 606 aia di calze, un totale così di 3826 capi per un importo di lire 3259,40.

Va tributata meritata lode alle componenti il Comitato: Signore Grimoldi Beatrice Tassarotti, Biamonti Caterina in Biancheri e Signorina Eugenia Sosto, che vigilarono con zelo ed attività alla perfetta esecuzione dei lavori, e così pure al cav. Antonio Sandri, Segretario del Comitato, che ne curò in modo inappuntabile la contabilità e il pagamento alle operaie.

Ferruccio Poggi

6 dicembre 2012

Machine translation:

During the Great War (1915-1918), was born in Bordighera the "Associazione pro assistenza ai feriti", ("The Association for assisting the wounded"), was installed a laboratory for the manufacture of bandages, dressings, clothing etc., And also fabricated crutches for the sick and handicapped.

While local to the beautiful, brand-new Hotel Miramare are set up to accommodate our wounded, Mr. Giovanni Campora, the sympathetic and active Chancellor of our Local Court, has taken the initiative to form an association for the moral and material assistance to these glorious war veterans. The nice idea, which once again proves the highly patriotic spirit of the good official stationery, immediately met the general sympathy and approval.

A temporary committee formed by the same Mr. Campora, the Prefectural Commissioner lawyer. Rolleri, the parish priest Rev. Sismondini, engineer H. Woodhouse and the medical officer Dr. Viviani, studied the best way to put into effect the noble initiative.

For last Wednesday (8 June 1917), at 1,007, it was opened in the vast hall of the Victoria Hall a gathering that could really impressive, coll'intervento in large numbers of the British colony. Our magistrate lawyer. Silvio Bottaro, called to assume the presidency, had high words of greeting to the Italian weapons and Allied nations against bullying and Teutonic barbarism and advocated among shareholders applause to a future complete victory of the Understanding. Then passing the purpose of the meeting, he left to the Registrar Campora to explain the aims that the newly-formed association aims and that the temporary committee had synthesized in a short statute. He took over the generous act of Mr. Bicknell, leaving free association and to the soldiers recovering the use of the beautiful room used as museum on the Roman Road and its charming garden. The assembly giving manifest signs of approval of the Statute, declared the new association formed by acclamation elected Honorary President General Senator Luigi Pelloux. A member of the Executive Committee were then nominated: Mr. Cav. Leopoldo Jung, Mr. Bicknell, Ing. Woodhouse, Mr. P. Rolleri, Rag. P. Biancheri, Mr Giovanni Campora, President of the Pious Union of the Ladies of Charity and President of Dame Catholic Lady Biamonti.

Before the meeting was dissolved, the Rolleri lawyer, saying he was pleased, as a representative of the City, the beautiful and numerous charitable work that membership was rising, thanked the attendees and noted with sincere satisfaction as always alive was the patriotic spirit that in this time of war once again joined our population to the British colony. And evoking the union of arms of the two allied nations in the current major offensive on the Carso with a closed admirable, highly acclaimed, inneggiò the next victory that Italy will have to give us a stronger, larger, more respected.

The June 17, 1917 arrived at the station of Bordighera, the first 100 wounded for the new hospital set up in the sumptuous Hotel Miramare Mr. Happy Court. The station was prepared, for care of the new association "Pro wounded", a diverse refreshments service. The Boggi and Odello doctors had made available their cars. The Steering Committee, with the Prefectural Commissioner lawyer. Rolleri and many ladies were present.

June 1917, the Sub-district prisons for the processing of military clothing, chaired by the Commissioner of the prefect, has proceeded in these days of the end of the 1916-1917 management and the report could not be more satisfactory. The workers involved in the process, almost all belonging to the family called, were this year in the number of ninety. The work is performed in number three hundred sacks for mattresses, 910 pairs of gloves, 15 scarves, 1795 ventriere and 606 pairs of socks, so a total of 3826 heads for a total of 3,259.40 pounds.

It should be bestowed due praise to the members of the Committee: Mr. Grima Beatrice Tassarotti, Biamonti Catherine in Biancheri and Miss Eugenia Sosto, which vigilarono with zeal and activity to the perfect execution of the work, and so did the cav. Antonio Sandri, Secretary of the Committee, who edited so impeccable accounting and payment to the workers. In November 1917, after the disaster of Caporetto, the Allied troops transited from Bordighera, direct to the Italian front, and were hailed with enthusiasm by the entire population.

On trains, on trucks, on motorcycles, on horses, on cars of all shapes and sizes, every weapon, every province, brave and strong our generous beautifully equipped allies, bold and trusting, have passed on several occasions, by our towns, always enthusiastically greeted by the citizens.

In all its forms by all means, with cigarettes, postcards, flowers, fruits, the humble working as rich lady, the urchins and the most distinct people with spontaneous upsurge were able to demonstrate all the gratitude for our brothers onrushing our aid. We have seen them go and we greeted them more than once we felt the eyes dimmed with tears. In all the cities and villages they were formed of the fundraising committee to bid for Allied troops.

Appendix 2

Bordighera e la Guerra 1915-1918 - seconda parte

Fonte: Le Journal de Bordighera - ricerca e stesura Ferruccio Poggi.

Immagini fotografiche della collezione Ferruccio Poggi.

Nel novembre del 1917, dopo il disastro di Caporetto, le truppe alleate transitarono da Bordighera, dirette al fronte italiano e furono acclamate con entusiasmo da tutta la popolazione.

Sui treni, sui camion, sui motocicli, sui cavalli, sulle automobili di ogni forma e dimensione, di ogni arma, di ogni provincia, valorosi e forti i nostri generosi alleati magnificamente equipaggiati, baldi e fidenti, sono transitati in parecchie riprese, dalla nostra città, sempre entusiasticamente salutati dalla cittadinanza. In tutte le forme con ogni mezzo, con sigarette, cartoline, fiori, frutta, l'umile operaia come la ricca signora, i monelli e le persone più distinte con spontaneo slancio seppero dimostrare tutta la gratitudine per i nostri fratelli accorrenti in nostro aiuto.

Li abbiamo veduti passare e li abbiamo salutati: più di una volta ci siamo sentiti gli occhi velati di lacrime. In tutte le città ed i paesi vennero costituiti dei comitati di raccolta fondi per fare offerte alle truppe alleate. Ventimiglia, come tutte le altre città della Riviera, ha entusiasticamente salutato il passaggio delle truppe alleate e il sindaco, interpretando i sentimenti della cittadinanza, ha pubblicato il seguente saluto:



"Soldati Inglesi,

A voi figli della gloriosa Inghilterra che ha sempre vibrato di forte e sincero amore per la causa della indipendenza Nazionale, il saluto affettuoso del popolo Italiano. Siate i benvenuti o vincitori di Ypres!

In voi nessun segno di stanchezza e di depressione; in voi la fede nella vittoria e la volontà indomabile di conquistarla a prezzo di qualunque sacrificio.

Sulle vostre bandiere, come su quelle dell'Italia e Francia, sta scritto, Guerra al militarismo tedesco, per la civiltà e la libertà del mondo!

Presto arriderà la vittoria alle armi alleate, sui barbari invasori!"

Il Sindaco, C. Laura.

"Soldati Francesi,

Ancora una volta, o discendenti dei valorosi che trionfarono sui campi di Magenta e Solferino, ancora una volta, o Eroi della Marne e di Verdun, della Somme, dell'Aisne ci siete fratelli d'armi e di fede, e combattete cotè a cotè col soldato vittorioso di Gorizia e del Carso, per realizzare nei piani d'Italia il profetico detto del vostro generale Petain:

Nous les auron, les boches".

Il Sindaco, C. Laura.

Ferruccio Poggi

12 dicembre 2012

Appendix 3

Bordighera e la Guerra 1915-1918 - terza e ultima parte

Fonte: Le Journal de Bordighera - ricerca e stesura Ferruccio Poggi.
Immagini fotografiche della collezione Ferruccio Poggi.

Non passò lungo tempo che molti soldati tornarono in assai gravi condizioni per essere ricoverati negli Ospedali Militari n° 62 e 66, qui impiantati sotto la direzione del Col. Lyndon Bell. Gli Hotel Angst, Belvedere, Londra e Royal furono altrettanti piccoli quartieri; l'Hotel Victoria e la Pensione Jolie, furono riservati alle infermiere e crocerossine; Villa Almora e Casa Sant'Agnese, furono infermerie per Ufficiali, la Pensione Michelin e Villa Clara posti di rifornimento per ambulanze, a Villa Speranza si era insediato il Comando del Presidio Inglese.

Piccoli ospedali da campo furono attendati nell'area pianeggiante, ora occupata dai campi da tennis, e dietro la Casa Bianca.



Le Cantine militari erano insediate al Victoria Hall e nel Museo Bicknell; Villa Valentina era sede del Nurse's Club. Come si può notare la città di Bordighera era militarizzata di tutto punto. Settantadue salme di militari di quel nobile esercito alleato, furono allora accolte da questo nostro suolo.

Anche alcuni prigionieri, fatti dagli Inglesi, morirono a Bordighera.

Accanto al Cimitero Evangelico, venne perciò eretto il Cimitero Militare Inglese, nel cui centro campeggia una grande Croce fregiata di una spada nera.

Sul piedestallo si legge: Il loro nome vivrà per sempre.

Ad ogni militare, sia Ufficiale o Soldato, è dedicata un'identica pietra sulla quale si legge il nome, il grado, l'arma e la data del decesso.

Le singole fosse, sono tutte ordinate e ben adorne di piante e fiori.

Elenco dei militari Inglesi sepolti a Bordighera

- Infermiera Raches Ferguson
- Capitani Gilbert M. Parkinson, George Kneit
- Sottotenente William Mac D. W. Scott
- Sergenti Gustave Remmos, C. S. Craighead M. M., Francs M. Mckenzie, J. T. Coleman, A. Hedgecox, James Cyril Goodal
- Caporali William S. Macperson, Charles William Letckton, F. Walton
- Appuntati Robert Walsh, J. V. Walsh, E. Day, John Henry Noble, Alexander Wood, Walter Oxley
- Soldati

A. Po' Connel
Joseph Young
Charle Sckeete
Joe Manning Pryer
G. Hill
Charles Henry Farnaby
J. T. Douglas
George William Gould
Alfred Housden
Benjamin Stephen Cooper
Daniel Driscoll

Frank Brown
C.W. Connel
G.Basson
Henry Artur How
Albert John Marshall
W. Ross
David John Hougton
Ceasor Thomas J. Hancock
Alfred Fearnlly
John William Bastok
A. Reid

Thomas William Roles
artigliere, J. M. C. Kenna
Alfred Ernest Mills
Stanley Herbert Mayall
S. Wood
Ernest Walter Riches
William George Huxted
W. E. Kenny
Clerk William Shirley Fagel
F. F. Chat Taway
artigliere, L. Thomasson

Frank W. Underhill
Abraham Peters
John Kilgour
J. W. Mellor
Samuel Sikes
William Stevens
W. Coubrough

James Milton
S. J. Thomson
Harry Milcham
John Orthur Thomson
B. H. Walker
Frank Dah
William Peutman

Frank O. Gentleman
John Crossley
Ralph Tipladi Metcalpe
Vernon Edgard T. Salmon
Rupe Lal.

Anche ai loro prigionieri qui deceduti, la piet  degli Inglesi ha eretto per ciascuno una piccola croce bianca.

Sono dodici, questi piccoli tumuli, confinati a parte, ma ugualmente custoditi con generosa diligenza. Una placca d'alluminio ne porta inciso il nome.

Hardea Sandos
Staleno Vitch
D. Bisilj
Vokacs Josef

Rumpold Heinrich
Konnas Vosckc
Kaocie Hermann
Anton Stephanovic

Monus Frang
Klenscigl Blasuis
Narbu Nattan
I. Svare.

Ferruccio Poggi

21 dicembre 2012

Machine translation (part)

Bordighera and the 1915-1918 War - the third and final part.

It was not long that many soldiers returned in very severe conditions to be admitted to the Military Hospital No. 62 and 66, here implanted under the direction of Col. Lyndon Bell.

The Hotel Angst, Belvedere, London and Royal were many small neighborhoods; the Victoria Hotel and Pension Jolie, were reserved for nurses and Red Cross; Villa Almora House and St. Agnes, were infirmaries for Officers, Pensione Michelin and Villa Clara places replenishment to ambulances, Villa Speranza had settled the English Presidio Command.

Image: Small field hospitals were encamped in the plain, now occupied by tennis courts, and behind the White House.

Military Cantine had settled at the Victoria Hall and the Museum Bicknell; Villa Valentina was home to the Nurse's Club. As you can see the city of Bordighera was militarized at all points.

Seventy two corpses of soldiers of that noble allied army, were then welcomed by this our land. Even some prisoners, made by the English, died in Bordighera.

Next to the Evangelical Cemetery, the English Military Cemetery was erected, in the center of which stands a large cross decorated with a black sword. On the pedestal we read: Their names will live forever. For each soldier, either Officer or Soldier, an identical stone is dedicated on which the name, rank, weapon and date of death can be read. The individual graves are all neat and well decorated with plants and flowers.

List of British soldiers buried in Bordighera

Appendix 4

Nursing With The Italian Expeditionary Force

Dorothea Matilda Taylor was born in Edinburgh in November 1873, the daughter of a doctor. She trained as a nurse at Dundee Royal Infirmary before joining Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service in 1903. She acted as Principal Matron in Italy during the Great War and in addition to service medals she was one of only a small number of women to receive both the Royal Red Cross and an Bar to the award. This account was later published in 'Reminiscent Sketches,' published by John Bale, Sons and Danielsson, Ltd., 1922

An account by D. M. Taylor

New Year's Day, 1918, was passed at Padova. The night being spent at the hotel – a dreary and dreadfully cold place – the people had no fuel by which to heat the hotel, and even cooking was a great difficulty, as was also food. They had three meatless days at Padova each week – we hit upon one of them and dined in one corner of a large cold dining-room. Most of the night was spent in the cellar as the place was being bombed. We were politely informed that as they had only one charcoal fire for everything, we could not be supplied with both coffee for breakfast and hot water to wash in, but must forego one or the other. We chose the coffee – hoping to wash in the water that was in our hot bottles – this hope, however, had to be abandoned as on pouring out the water it was evident that it had been used for washing the dishes in from the previous night's dinner.

The scenery right up by the mountains was magnificent. Later on in the summer, one of the Casualty Clearing Stations was moved to a wonderful shooting box standing on a hill, looking across to the Austrian mountains. The shooting box was used as the officers' hospital for Casualty Clearing Stations and a beautiful hospital it made. Some of the rooms had wonderful embroidered silk hangings. The sisters' quarters were on the top floor, and were very compact; they had a kitchen and a delightful mess room with the most wonderful views right over towards the mountains. There was also a very beautiful garden with quantities of flowers. At the camp outside Taranto there was a large General Hospital. It was in the process of reconstruction at the time I was there, the Nissen huts were being replaced by brick huts with verandahs and tiled floors. The Sisters had good quarters with rooms opening out on to a verandah and a nice large mess room. There was also a hostel at this hospital for nurses passing to and fro from the East. As a large number of nurses were accommodated in this hostel, the post of Sister-in-Charge was a very responsible one. Large parties frequently arrived at very short notice, but they always met with a hearty welcome. I remember one sister telling how she remembered being one of a large party who arrived late one Christmas Eve, and how surprised they all were to find that a Christmas dinner was forthcoming for the whole of the party. The staffs of the Scottish Women's hospitals, lady doctors and others, shared the hospitality of the Taranto hostel with members of our own services. In Taranto there was a Nurses' Club, run by the British Red Cross Society, which was a great boon to those nurses who had to spend some time at Taranto waiting for boats.

There was a very nice little hospital at the Rest Camp at Faenza. It was situated outside the town, which was a quaint old place. From a hill close to the hospital, a most wonderful view of the surrounding country and some very beautiful cypress trees, could be obtained. At Turin there was a small hospital which was taken over from the British Red Cross Society. It had been equipped privately and used as a women's hospital before it was given to the British Red Cross Society. Originally it had been a private house and additions had been made to it. There was a nice garden and the part that had been intended for sick officers was used as a convalescent hospital and hostel for sisters passing through. Later there was a small hospital at Fiume, where the nursing staff had an exciting experience when the British Forces left the town in September. The hospital had to be evacuated hurriedly, the most serious cases being put in an ambulance, while the nursing staff and convalescent patients had to walk a distance of several miles to Abbasia, where the patients were put into an Italian hospital and the sisters in a hotel till they could rejoin their headquarters. The hospitals at Taranto, Faenza and Turin were on the lines of communication to the East, and used for troops passing backwards and forwards, not for the Italian Expeditionary Force.

Appendix 5

More on the Bordighera British Cemetery

11 November 2018

Members of the public gather around a portrait drawn in the sand of British Army Staff Nurse Rachael Ferguson (1886-26 June 1918) on Downhill beach, for filmmaker Danny Boyle Pages of the Sea, commissioned by 14-18 NOW to mark the centenary of Armistice Day on November 11, 2018 in Downhill, Northern Ireland. Staff Nurse Ferguson lost her life serving her country at Bordighera, Italy where she she lies at rest in Bordighera British Cemetery. Actor Rosie Barry, playing the part of Staff Nurse Ferguson read out the poem The Wound In Time overlooking the portrait.



PICTURE CREDIT: CHARLES MCQUILLAN/GETTY IMAGES

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/0/lest-forget-first-world-war-centenary-commemorations-pictures/members-public-gather-around-portrait-drawn-sand-british-army/>

How to find the Bordighera British Cemetery

Exit the A10 motorway at Bordighera and follow the signs in the direction of San Remo - this road leads east along the coast. Pass a small yacht harbour on your right and take the second left after the yacht harbour, following Commission signs. The cemetery is 350 metres on the left, within an Italian Communal Cemetery.

This is a CWGC cemetery with its own entrance and is permanently open.

Historical Information: The 62nd General Hospital was posted at Bordighera from January, 1918, to January, 1919, and the 66th from January to March, 1918. The British Cemetery was used from November, 1917, to January, 1919. There are now nearly 100, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. The cemetery covers an area of 315 square metres and is enclosed by a wall