



Missing Soldiers of Fromelles Discussion Group

Digitization of WWI Red Cross records



POST CARD: 'Harefield House and Lawn'—Manufactured in England, this memento depicts the First Australian Auxillary Hospital, Harefield. *Harefield evolved into a fully-fledged ANZAC-only hospital during WWI and was visited by King George V and Queen Mary in August 1915, in recognition of its unique nature and the sacrifices being made by the First AIF.* [The card was printed by Craft L.D., 4 & 5 Adam Street, Strand]. The keepsake was provided courtesy of Alan Bennett.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7940540.stm

Red Cross headquarters has decided to release its Great War casualty records, according to British military historian Peter Barton when interviewed about the plan to digitize the historic archive and have them posted online by 2014. Co-Secretary of the All-Party Parliamentary War Graves and Battlefields Heritage Group, Barton is currently collaborating on a book about The Battle of Arras [April/May 1917] and has participated in a number of archaeological ventures on the Western Front, including the mass grave at Fromelles.

Breathtaking in scope the digitization project being proposed by the Red Cross Museum will hopefully be completed in time for the centenary of the start of World War I if international co-operation is obtained. Apparently

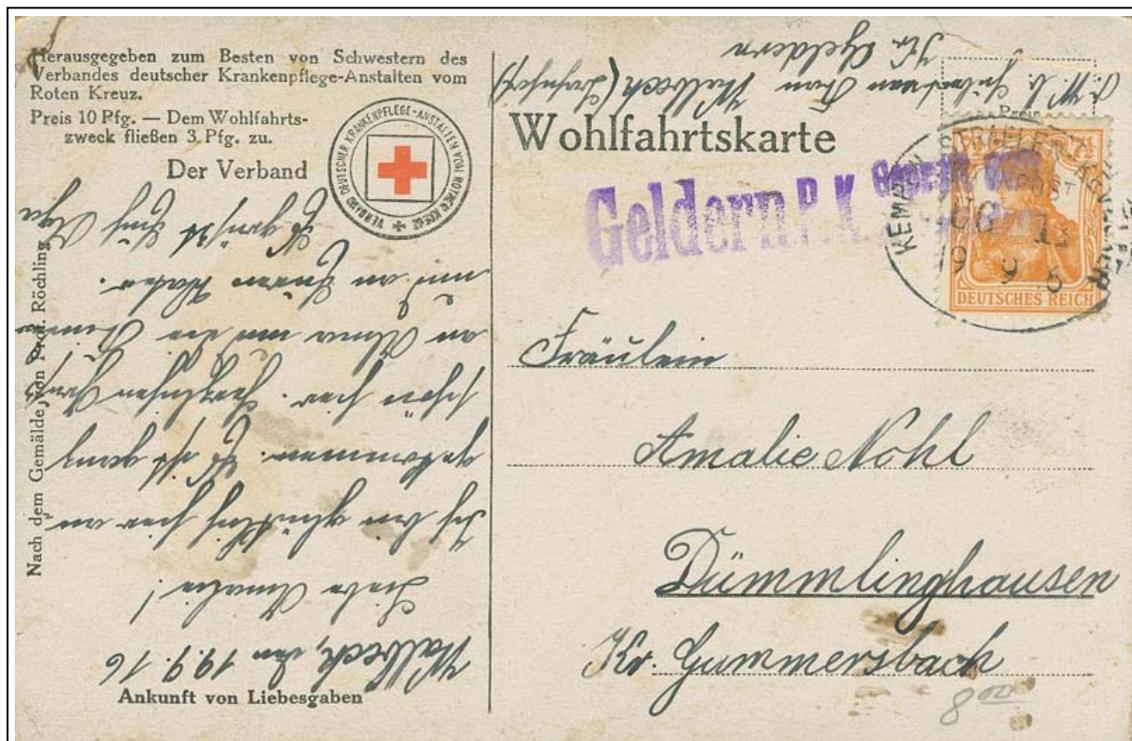
untouched since 1918, the information being disclosed will represent an ultimate tribute to the millions of servicemen killed, captured or buried during the war to end all wars, particularly if the original card indexes and ledgers held by the Red Cross lead to other authentic document files which, when first collated, were used to produce the many pro forma letters, notices and memoranda sent to the home nations from which combatants were drawn.

No doubt some will argue the burgeoning Imperial War Graves Commission from its inception in 1917, was greatly assisted by the early archiving of this repository, as one of the primary functions of the corporation was to disallow the individual repatriation of deceased soldiers by grief-stricken relatives, during the era immediately following the First World War when allied governments were probably equivocating about the horrendous cost of recovering the remains of fallen personnel. Be that as it may, what is important now is to support the International Red Cross and help this renowned philanthropic and humanitarian organization work toward realizing the goals of a project which has almost universal implications.

In a brief introductory word at http://www.micr.ch/index_e.html the Director of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum, Roger Mayou reminds us that in a world of political, economic and climatic upheaval it is always possible to act in a public-spirited and compassionate way for the betterment of mankind.

There would be no better way to inspire hope for future generations and provoke reflection about the sacrifice of brave soldiery than to subscribe to the E-Newsletter of the museum and to press national governments like Great Britain, France, Germany and Australia to support the digitization project being promoted by the Red Cross. Especially when the long neglected archive has the potential to pinpoint unmarked graves along the Western Front and other infamous battlefields from the Great War.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORLD WAR I CASUALTY RECORDS HELD BY THE RED CROSS MUSEUM IN GENEVA



GREETING CARD – **Wohlfahrtskarte**: Originally priced 10 Pfg., this postal item addressed to Miss Amalie Nohl was printed and published for the benefit of the Sisters of German Red Cross Hospitals, with 3 Pfg. being donated to the Welfare Association of German Red Cross Hospitals. Reproduced courtesy of Alan Bennett, Eastern Regional Libraries Military History Group, Fromelles Discussion Group.

Fromelles 1916: Is the Australian Official History more 'truthful' than the British?

<http://www.rusinsw.org.au/Papers/2008SU02.pdf>

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