

Press Release

For immediate release:

Daring First World War 'escapees' revealed

Analysis of over 2 million new military records, released for the first time online at TheGenealogist.co.uk, helps uncover the determined Allied servicemen who escaped from First World War PoW Camps

- Names and details of the men who made these daring escapes revealed
- Research conducted using a database of over 2 million First World War records made available for the first time
- Part of a comprehensive range of military records recently added by TheGenealogist.co.uk

In the year commemorating the centenary of the start of the First World War, as part of the release of over 2 million unique new military records, TheGenealogist has uncovered the records of the many Prisoners of War held in German and Turkish camps. Covering both officers and other ranks, the names list those men who endured the hardships and often brutal regimes as a prisoner of war. It's an area of the Great War that is very rarely looked at.

As we commemorate the centenary of the start of the First World War, a UK company has uncovered records of the many Prisoners of War held in German and Turkish camps through research on 2 million military records released for the first time online at TheGenealogist.co.uk. Covering both officers and other ranks, the names list those men who endured the hardships and often brutal regimes as a prisoner of war. It's an area of the Great War that is very rarely looked at.

The hardship and disease that became rife in the camps made many men look to escape. The Allied Officers, although held in slightly better conditions, also had an unwritten code that it was every officer's duty to try to escape and many tried and failed.

The new records give details of the Allied Officers behind the escape attempt at Holzminden Camp in 1918 near Hannover where a tunnel was dug for 8 months using cutlery as digging tools. 29 men escaped, 19 were eventually caught but 10 got away



and returned to England. Their daring escape inspired the prisoners in the famous 'Great Escape' of The Second World War.

Holzminden Camp held a number of high profile Allied servicemen. Conditions were harsh as it was used for the most troublesome prisoners who made regular escape attempts. Prisoners listed on TheGenealogist records include Michael Claude Hamilton-Bowes-Lyon (brother of the future Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother), William Leefe Robinson (who shot the first German airship down over London and was kept in solitary confinement for repeated escape attempts) and James Whale (future Hollywood Director of 'Frankenstein').



One man who won a Military Cross for his repeated attempts to escape from Holzminden camp was Lieutenant Brian Horrocks. He later went on to become a famous senior officer in The Second World War under General Montgomery. Here is his record on TheGenealogist:

Military » Casualty Lists » Full	
Forename	B G
Surname	Horrocks
Casualty Status	Repatriated Prisoner of War In Germany, Released and Arrived In England
Rank	Lt.
Regiment	Midd'x R.
Daily List Date	6th January 1919
Category	Officers
Source	Daily Casualty Lists

Another fascinating escapee also appears in the new records. Private Robert Phillips of the Welsh Regiment was imprisoned at the Homsburg Camp in Germany and ill-treated and forced to work down a mine. His determination was such he broke out and walked over 200 miles to reach neutral Holland, narrowly avoiding capture a number of times.

To learn more about the daring exploits and antics of prisoners who escaped their captors visit TheGenealogist.co.uk/POW which also allows you to freely search the records by name.

Put on our web page

Some of the main techniques used to escape by Allied servicemen included:

- Tunnelling
- Dressing as a German Guard
- Dressing as a woman
- Dressing as a civilian worker
- Pretending to be psychic
- Faking insanity

Mark Bayley, Head of Online Content comments: *"Our new unique records are a great resource to track down those First World War ancestors. With our extensive range of military records it's now possible to find out if your ancestor was a casualty or taken prisoner of war or if they were one of the lucky ones who made it through unscathed. With this being the centenary year of the outbreak of The First World War, it is the perfect time to explore your family tree to discover the war service of your ancestors."*

More details on the records of the First World War 'Prisoners of War' can be found at www.TheGenealogist.co.uk/Prisoners-of-War

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More details on the new online Casualty and Prisoner of War Records at TheGenealogist are available. For more information on TheGenealogist, please contact David Osborne at david.o@sandn.net or 01722 717003.