

FIRST WORLD WAR SEMINARS

ACADEMIC YEAR / ACADEMIEJAAR 2015-2016

THURSDAY 11 FEB 2016, Ieper, 8.15 p.m.

Prof. Michael Hammond (University of Southampton – Department of Film Studies)

Forbidden Zones: War Nurses in Hollywood 1931-32

In 1929 Mary Borden published *The Forbidden Zone*, a book of poems and short stories drawn from her experiences as a volunteer nurse with the French Army. The title referred to 'the strip of land immediately behind the zone of fire' where she worked. In 1930 Rebecca West wrote four monthly instalments for *Cosmopolitan* about her experiences as a nurse on the Western front under the title "War Nurse: An American Woman on the Western Front." This popular series drew the attention of MGM's Irving

Thalberg and resulted in *War Nurse*, released in November of 1930. The following year another war nurse film, *The Mad Parade*, was produced by minor production company Liberty. Both films were scenarios based on the experiences of frontline nurses adapted and/or written by women. This paper will examine the particular challenges that war subjects presented for these scriptwriters both in terms of their representation of the horrors of war, and in terms of the cultural myths which circulated in this period around the role nurses played (or were supposed to have played) during the war.

THURSDAY 25 FEB 2016, Canterbury, 6 p.m.

Senior Captain Tom Simoens (Royal Military Academy, Brussels – Department of Conflict Studies)

Discipline in the Belgian Army (1914-1918)

Between 1914 and 1918, discipline in the Belgian army was deeply modified by the extreme living, working and fighting conditions of the trenches. Trench warfare not only modified the equipment, techniques and tactics used by the military, but also the relationships

between officers, NCO's, corporals and their men. I will claim that the Belgian Army - generally spoken - made a swift move from a rigid and formal discipline towards a more loose and informal discipline based on mutual respect. My presentation will be based on military archives, war diaries and archives from the courts-martial of the 1st Army Division.



Belgian *chasseurs à cheval* arriving the cavalry barracks in Brussels during the mobilisation of the Belgian army, 29 July-3 August 1914. © In Flanders Fields Museum



Three British soldiers posing in front of the ruins of the Town Hall on the Market Square in Ypres, December 1914. © In Flanders Fields Museum



www.inlandersfields.be

www.gatewaysfww.org.uk/news/seminar-series-2015-16

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Het **In Flanders Fields Museum** en de **University of Kent** organiseren in het **academiejaar 2015-16** een reeks van **acht seminars** die gratis toegankelijk zijn voor alle geïnteresseerden.

De vier seminars die doorgaan in **Ieper** vinden telkens plaats op een **donderdag** om 20u15 en gaan door in de **conferentiezaal** van het stadhuis (2de verdieping), Grote Markt 34, 8900 Ieper. De voertaal is Engels.

THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER, Ieper, 8.15 p.m.

Tim Fox-Godden (University of Kent – School of Architecture)

Khakitects: Experience, Memory and Design in the War Cemeteries of the old Western Front

In 1917, the decision was taken that every junior architect working for the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) should have served in the armed forces during the war. Ostensibly, this was a decision to ensure that the cemeteries, to be designed by a group of older architects, would retain a legitimacy and connection with those who were buried within them. The few works on the subject of the IWGC architecture, notably Longworth and Stamp, conform to the idea that Lutyens, Baker and Blomfield are chiefly accountable for the architectural response visible today. In contrast, the group of young architects that formed the IWGC architectural department in France is rarely given more than a mention in passing. This

THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER, Canterbury, 6 p.m.

Dominiek Dendooven (In Flanders Fields Museum/University of Antwerp- Department of History)

The Chinese Labour Corps, 1917-1920

From 1917 to 1920 more than 140,000 Chinese labourers were sent to the Western front. They were mainly deployed for construction and demolition work, road construction, digging trenches and clearing battlefields, work on the railways, loading and unloading of ships and trains. Despite the apparently ephemeral

In Flanders Fields Museum and the **University of Kent** organize a series of eight seminars, accessible to all.

The four seminars in **Ypres** are scheduled on **Thursdays** at 8.15 p.m. and take place in the **conference room** of the Town Hall (2nd floor), Cloth Hall, Grote Markt 34, 8900 Ieper. In **Canterbury**, the seminars will be held in **Darwin Lecture Theatre 2** at 6pm. All are welcome.

paper will explore how the war experience of this group of junior architects influenced almost every part of the design process, aspects that have hitherto been considered the realm of the senior architects. It will show how the junior architects shaped everything from the practicalities of location and siting, to the preservation of battlefield features within the cemetery plans. Moreover, it will go on to show how the process was a personal journey of remembrance that included the design of cemeteries and memorials that contained friends and family members. For the first time, this paper will show how this group of architects used their experience of the war and the landscape to design an architecture of memory that is resonant with both personal and general experiences of the war on the Western Front.

al nature of this work, it was vital for the allied war effort. Moreover, the political stakes were high: by sending labourers to the Western front the new Chinese Republic aimed to obtain a seat at the post-war peace conference. Yet, the Chinese Labour Corps left a lasting but contested legacy that has not been fully acknowledged to this very day.

THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER, Ieper, 8.15 p.m.

Keith D. Lilley (Queen's University, Belfast – Institute for Collaborative Research in the Humanities)

Behind the Lines: Frontline geographies, spatial technologies and mapping First World War landscapes

Maps were a crucial tool in the military campaigns along the Western Front and elsewhere during the First World War, with great innovations in the development of surveying and cartography through photogrammetry and aerial photography. While historical geographers and historians of cartography have in recent years used qualitative approaches to understand the efficacy of these military developments in 'spatial technologies', this paper sets out an analytical framework for using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) – as a 21st century spatial technology – to explore how British trench maps were made and used. Using recent collaborative cross-disciplinary research linking the National Library of Scotland,

University of Kent and Queen's University Belfast, the paper explores otherwise 'hidden histories' of frontline geographies that emerge through using geovisualisation tools and analysing digitized trench maps. The paper focuses on a series of 1:20,000 scale mapsheets, covering Messines between 1916 and 1918, to look 'behind the lines' on the map by using MapAnalyst software. This allows us to assess the accuracy of the underlying geodetic network, such as trigonometrical stations and survey work, that underpinned these larger-scale Allied topographic maps of the Western Front. Clearly, examining how far these trench maps were cartographically 'accurate' is of great importance in evaluating their efficacy in conducting warfare on the ground, both in Belgium and in France. The results of our initial analyses will be presented and discussed in this paper, and their wider potential and significance evaluated.

N.B. TUESDAY 24 NOV 2015, Canterbury, 6 p.m.

Dr. Birger Stichelbaut (University of Ghent and In Flanders Fields Museum - Centre for Historical and Archaeological Aerial Photography)

World War One aerial photography in Belgium: a landscape archaeological perspective

During the First World War, millions of aerial photographs were taken by all fighting countries, documenting a cultural landscape from which the relicts sometimes remain visible as scars on the landscape. Most often however this landscape is preserved beneath the surface as archaeological heritage. Since 2006 the Department of Archaeology (Ghent

University) and the In Flanders Fields Museum explore the archaeological potential of these historical aerial photographs. This presentation explores how thousands of these images are now converted into a primary source on their own and complemented with other non-invasive techniques. This presentation also highlights how these historical aerial photographs are used in modern museum contexts presenting a bird's eye view of the Western Front in Belgium and France.

THURSDAY 14 JANUARY, Ieper, 8.15 p.m.

Dr Rebecca Wynter (University of Birmingham – Department of Education & Social Justice)

Keeping the Peace: Working Relationships and the Friends' Ambulance Unit in the First World War

In August 1914, the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) was established by Quakers, a faith group with firm pacifist principles. The FAU operated under the authority of the Joint War Committee of the British

Red Cross and the Order of St John, but these parties were just two of those the corps worked with. Over the next four-and-a-half years, the FAU had to negotiate with governments, armies, local authorities, faith organisations, wealthy and philanthropic Belgian women, farmers, and with Quakers who objected to frontline service. This paper will explore how the FAU attempted to keep the peace in the mid-

dle of war in order to work effectively. In the centenary year of the 1916 introduction of conscription in Britain, it will also consider how members of the FAU

coped with the conflict that consciences brought, as well as the influx of a new sort of less-privileged recruit.



Post-war visitors with Chinese Labourers, 1919. © In Flanders Fields Museum

THURSDAY 28 JAN 2016, Canterbury, 6 p.m.

Prof. dr. Luc Rason (University of Antwerp – Department of Literature)

A Path of Glory leading toward the Stars: Film and the Great War in the Air

In this lecture I would like to focus on what has been called the "bifurcated vision" of the Great War in film. A movie taking place in the trenches will mostly describe the war as an absurd waste of young lives and, at least implicitly, advocate a pacifist attitude.

However, films showing the war in the air will very often carry values of romantic heroism and chivalry and will not question the legitimacy of the war. These films seem to be impervious to a pacifist stance, even in the Thirties. I will focus on the first feature film made about the young air forces, William Wellman's Wings (1925) and, if I have enough time, dwell on the trend of films about the air war in the Thirties.

