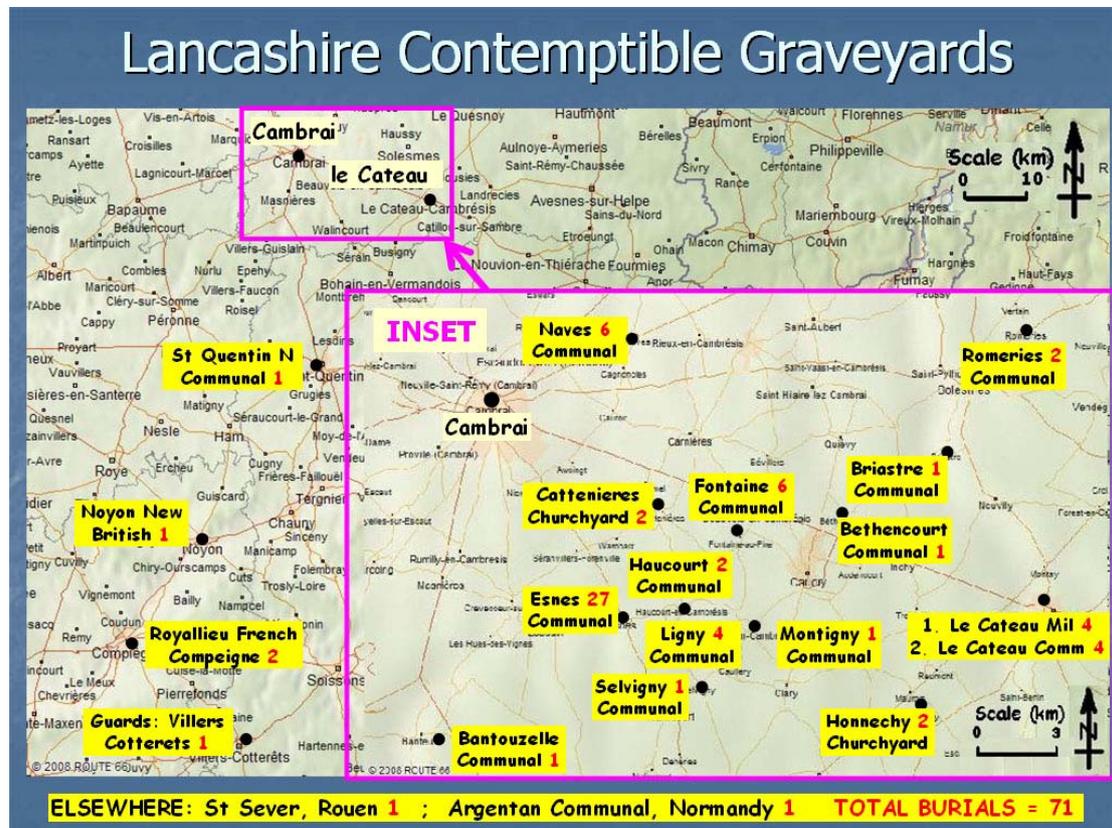


## RESEARCHING PRIVATE RIGG

In early 2008 I analysed the information from the Commonwealth War Graves (CWGC) and produced a summary map showing where the Lancashire Contemptibles killed in the retreat from Mons are buried.



I contacted Peter Donnelly to see what he knew about Rigg and added to my file on him a group postcard photo which Rigg had sent to a relative from Dover in August 1914. Unfortunately the card had come from an unknown donor so this did not give a "lead".



I came back to Rigg in late summer (2008) thinking he could be the subject of an article for the November Despatch. Dave O'Mara from the East Lancashire Branch, who provides WW1 research services, kindly obtained his papers from the Public Record Office (PRO). His Statement of Service ended with "Died (killed) at Argentan Railway Station (France) 31-8-14". His papers gave other pieces of personal information together with his entries in the Defaulter Book and his second enlistment in the Manchester Regiment. The pages for his first Attestation and confession of his second enlistment are on the next page.

ARMY FORM B. 217.

**SHORT SERVICE.**  
 (3 years with the Colours, and 9 years in the Reserve. If the man completes his 9 years' service with the Colours while beyond the sea, he will go next home, with all convenient speed, for transfer to the Army Reserve.)

**ATTESTATION OF**  
 Corps

No. 1001 Name John William Rigg  
 \* Recruit selected

Questions to be put to the Recruit before Enlistment.

1. What is your Name? John William Rigg
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? St. Peter's Church, Manchester
3. Are you a British Subject? Yes
4. What is your Age? 18
5. What is your Trade or Calling? Labourer
6. Have you resided out of your Father's house for three years continuously in the same place, or occupied a house or land of the yearly value of £10 for one year, and paid rates for the same, and in other cases? No

You are hereby warned that if after enlistment it is found that you have given a wilfully false answer to any of the following seven questions you will be liable to a punishment of two years' imprisonment with hard labour.

7. Are you, or has your father, an Apprentice? If so, where? No
8. Are you Married? No
9. Have you ever been sentenced to Imprisonment by the Civil Power? No
10. Do you now belong to the Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Royal Navy, the Volunteers, the Yeomanry, the Army Reserve, or the Special Reserve Force, or any other Corps? No
11. Have you ever served in the Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, or the Royal Navy? If so, state which, and for what period? No
12. Have you truly stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? Yes
13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for the Military? No
14. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? Yes
15. For what Corps are you willing to be called out or sent to sea? Infantry
16. Do you understand that although every endeavour will be made to exempt you from military service, you will be liable to be called out to serve with any regiment of the Corps for a period of 12 years, or until you are discharged? Yes
17. Did you receive a Notice, and do you understand its contents? Yes
18. Do you understand that notwithstanding you enlist for a dismounted Corps, you are liable to be called out and employed in such mounted duties as may be required of an Infantry Soldier? No

19. Are you willing to serve upon the following conditions provided His Majesty King Edward VII. shall be pleased to grant the same:

- (a) For the term of 12 years for the first three years in Army Service and for the remainder of the term in the Special Reserve. If at the termination of each period of 3 years you are not called out to serve, you will be sent home, with all convenient speed, for transfer to the Special Reserve.
- (b) If, at the expiration of the above-mentioned term of Army Service a state of War exists, then, as directed by the Dispositive Military Authority, to serve in Army Service for a further period of not exceeding 12 months.
- (c) If, at the expiration of the above-mentioned term of Army Service, you are so required by a Proclamation from His Majesty in case of imminent national danger, or great emergency, to serve in Army Service as to complete your term of 12 years, and for a further period not exceeding 12 months.
- (d) If the above-mentioned term of 12 years expires while you are on service with the Special Reserve, beyond the sea, or (2) while a state of war exists with a Foreign Power, or (3) while the British Empire is threatened by proclamation to continue in, or re-engage Army Service, and you are so required by a Proclamation, having returned upon Army Service, then to serve for a further period of not exceeding 12 months.

John William Rigg do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made.

SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT.

SIGNATURE OF WITNES.

WITNES TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

I, John William Rigg, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and loyal to His Majesty King Edward the Seventh, His Heirs, and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, obey and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, in Person, Crown, and Dignity against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING OFFICER.

The Recruit above named was examined by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as required to, and the said recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me at MANCHESTER on this 19 day of December 1908.

Form of confession.

I John William Rigg, now being No 1001 Private Robert Rigg, 3rd Battalion Manchester Regiment, do hereby confess that I was No 7893 Private John William Rigg in the King's Own Royal Lancashire Regiment, & that whilst serving on the 1st Class Army Reserve of that Corps, I fraudulently enlisted in the Special Reserve 3rd Battalion Manchester Regiment, on the 8th day of December 1908, at Manchester.

Signed this 11th December 1908

John W. Rigg  
Richard

Commanding 3rd Bn Manchester Regiment

The statement about his death caused me postpone my planned article for November '08 Despatch. In my visits to the PRO in late 2008 to complete my talk "Several Battalion Commanders" I checked the diaries of the 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Ambulance Trains and could find no clues about Rigg.

Last February I picked up Rigg's file again and contacted the Archives Department at Argentan. Several weeks later they sent me his "Acte de Deces" dated 9<sup>th</sup> June 1919. I struggled with the French handwriting as did my consultant (Andrew Brooks) but Robin Schlich, great nephew of Major-General James Sandilands came to my aid. Robin narrated the part of his great uncle in my talk "A Highland Officer's War and brought to the translation his skills as ex-Head of Languages at Uppingham School.

A copy of the Rigg's "Acte de Deces" follows with Robin's translation of key parts:

