

THE CHINESE LABOUR CORPS IN FRANCE 1917-1921

BRIAN C FAWCETT

“What were the Chinese doing in France during the First World War?”

The above is a frequent question, not only posed by people in the UK but also, as we found, by amazed French people in their own country.

To answer this, and also as a possibility for a visit by a larger group of Friends of the RAS [Hong Kong Branch] in the UK, a small group under the guidance of Keith Stevens, accompanied by Jenny Welch, Paul Bolding, John Tamplin, David Mahoney, my French wife, Claudine and myself, decided to investigate. Claudine and I have also made separate visits, but more of our findings later.

Introduction

Briefly the reasons as to why the Chinese were in France may be stated as follows :

As China was not a belligerent nation, her nationals were not allowed by their government to participate in the fighting. The recruiting for labourers was launched by the War Committee in London, in 1916, to form a Labour Corps of labourers from China to serve in France and to be known as the Chinese Labour Corps [CLC]. This was because, as the war progressed, Great Britain and her allies required more manpower for their Forces, so releasing those men who were assisting at the docks unloading necessary supplies and war material. The Allies regarded such recruitment of labour in market and business terms rather than as politically significant Chinese participation in the war. The Chinese did declare war against Germany and Austria-Hungary on 14th August 1917, for reasons of domestic policy and also to ingratiate themselves with the Powers and win resources from them which would support a military campaign to reunify the country under Beijing's rule.

The scheme to supply men was originated in June 1915 by Liang

Shiyi who suggested that an army be sent to Europe for training and service with the Allies. He continued to promote China's participation hoping for future political and financial advantages which might accrue providing further expansion of his own empire of bureaucratic and financial interests.

Lord Inchcape, the chairman of the Port and Transit Executive Committee, had already suggested the formation of Transport Workers Battalions to assist in clearing ships' cargoes for speedy turn-around. Some considered that delays in this area resulted from dock-workers not working a full day or were too few in number to carry out the work. To placate the unions, their representatives were appointed to serve on the Committee. Ernest Bevin, the national organiser of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Worker's Union [the Dockers' Union] considered that the port authorities intentionally created labour shortages as an excuse for employing non-union labour. After an agreement had been reached with the Government as to further representation by Union members to serve on the Committee, Ernest Bevin became a member of the Committee. However, because it was considered that agreement with the Unions would not be reached, as to the employment of foreign labour, it was decided to look elsewhere for additional manpower. Throughout the war, trade union pressure prevented the introduction of Chinese labourers to the British Isles.

Many years previously, Chinese had travelled to work, under contract or treaty provisions in, for instance, the gold mines of South Africa. They were tempted to do so due to poor conditions in China and because of the comparatively high wages offered.

Recruitment

The French pioneered the scheme to recruit Chinese to serve as non-military personnel, negotiations being conducted by government officers posing as civilians to protect the Chinese Government and its neutrality from controversy. The contract to supply 50,000 labourers was agreed upon on 14 May 1916 and their first shipment left Tianjin for Dagu and Marseilles in July 1916. In February 1917, in the Mediterranean the French steamship *Athos* was sunk with the loss of 543 Chinese lives, but this did not deter the Chinese from enlisting to serve with the French or British.

On the British side, other nationalities were considered for recruitment for use in Labour Corps, including Egyptians (thought to be reliable), Indians (considered to be lazy and would be affected by the climate), Maltese (whom Kitchener thought bad workers), as well as conscientious objectors, but were deemed for various reasons to be unsuitable. There were Labour Corps serving in France from Egypt, Fiji, India, Malta, Mauritius, Seychelles, the British West Indies as well as a Native Labour Corps from South Africa.

Following protracted negotiations between Beijing, the British Government and the War Office, the first contingent of 1078 coolies, under six officer candidates, one doctor and one regular Army captain, left Weihai Wei on 18th January 1917, three months after recruitment commenced.

The (British Army) Labour Corps was formed in April 1917 from various ASC, RE and infantry labour units which had come into existence from the early days of the war to meet the need for unskilled labour in large numbers for handling stores, constructing rear lines of defence, making and repairing roads, etc.

At the same time a Directorate of Labour was formed at GHQ, BEF, to take over the control, administration and allocation of all labour. Companies belonging to the Chinese or similar Labour Corps were included but not RE technical units.

Chinese were recruited both directly and through the Wei-min and other recruiting companies while Chinese-speaking British personnel for officers were contacted directly through the British Legation in Peking. Later, advertisement were placed in newspapers throughout the British Empire seeking Chinese speaking Europeans to enlist as officers and NCOs in the CLC.

The Chinese, invariably from the “up-country” farming class, were mainly recruited from the provinces of Shandong and Zhili [Chihli in the former romanisation, and the metropolitan area covering much of present day Hubei province]. They were considered physically strong and were used to adverse weather conditions. Others also came from the provinces of Liaoning, Jilin, Jiangsu, Hubei, Hunan, Anhui and even as far as Gansu. This was ascertained from the graves of those visited.

All those interested in joining were told to report to Weihai Wei where they were housed in the barracks of the previous British-officered colonial regiment of Chinese, as the buildings were still in existence. Weihai Wei, located on a bay on the north coast of the province of Shandong, was formerly the HQ of the Chinese Northern Fleet. The British lease of this was signed on 1st July 1898 on the stipulation that the British could lease it as long as the Russians held Port Arthur, the port on the other side of the Gulf of Zhili. Weihai Wei was the summer station of the British Asiatic Squadron, known as the China Fleet. Later, after Qingdao [Tsingtao] had been taken from Germany, this was used as it had better port facilities, railway and roads.

On arrival at the recruiting centre, each prospective recruit received a medical. He could be rejected, amongst other reasons, for having trachoma [an eye disease], tuberculosis, venereal disease and bad teeth. Between 30% to 60% were rejected as medically unfit mostly due to eye troubles, which is not surprising in a region known for its summer sandstorms and dust. Lyn Macdonald, in her book *Somme* mentions that some labourers were recruited from the Chinese prisons. I, personally, would not consider this correct, as the authorities would interview each candidate and, if found to have a criminal record, would be rejected. With the large number applying why would they recruit prisoners, who may cause unnecessary trouble? Daryl Klein mentions that some coolies were recruited from Shandong and comprised men of differing work backgrounds, namely farmers, carpenters, brickmakers and bricklayers, dressers, weavers, brass-smiths, black-smiths, bakers, stonemasons and ex-soldiers. Nowhere does he mention ex-prisoners.

If the above tests were passed, the men were given serial numbers, which, with their names, were written down in romanised letters and Chinese characters. Difficulties arose if the men did not know their names or surnames. He may say that he lives in a family village and offer the village surname as a suggestion or simply give his nickname, but most knew their mother's surname because of the Chinese custom of exogamy. Problems also arose when trying to ascertain the recruit's address, for similar reasons.

A bracelet, stamped with his number, was securely fixed to his wrist. As this was considered degrading this system was eventually discontinued.

The labourer gave such details as age, address, knowledge of English, previous occupations and also details of the person, in China, to whom he wanted the Chinese portion of his pay to be sent. He then “signed” his contract and his identity card with his thumb-prints, so agreeing to the terms of service. Even though recruited as civilians, all were subject to martial law, including field punishments and courts-martial, conviction sometimes including the death penalty. They were considered as mercenaries.

Groups of fifteen were invited to elect leaders, called Under-gangers. These men usually were more literate or had other qualities of leadership. It was necessary for the British officers and NCOs to treat them with respect at all times, otherwise they “lost face,” and their compatriots would then treat them with disdain and not obey their commands.

Equipment and Pay

Being non-combatants, no Army-type uniform was issued to the labourers. They were issued with summer and winter “native-style” clothing. They were also issued with a fur-lined cap made of brown felt, with ear-flaps of grey fur, commonly called the “Shandong hat”. These hats were modelled on similar hats worn by British troops in the North China garrisons prior to World War I. On arrival in France, labourers managed to acquire other types of headgear, namely civilian cloth caps, Australian bush hats, French Army kepis and even steel helmets. Pictures, whether stills or movies, show labourers of the CLC with a variety of clothing and headgear. European officers and NCOs wore regulation British Army uniforms and insignia, either with an Army General Service Corps badge² or the insignia of their parent units during prior service.

A cap badge of sorts was issued. Made of copper, it was oval, one inch by one and a half inches, and had the initials “C.L.C.” stamped thereon. Gangers wore chevrons on their uniform sleeves. The Chinese were proud of their contribution to the war effort and were ultimately awarded with an official motto *Labor Vincit Omnia*. [Labour Conquers all].

In addition to being clothed, fed and accommodated, the labourers

also received a small daily payment, part of which was remitted to his nominated party in China. Invariably gambling was rife and, on pay days, some debts could not be honoured. Fighting ensued and some ensued killed their companions as a result, eventually paying the price by being shot at dawn.

The Army Directorate of Labour laid down payment scales :

Bonus to family on recruitment Chinese dollars 15

Pay to start on arrival at Weihai Wei

	Per diem in France in francs	Per mensem in China in Chinese \$
Labourers	1.00	10
Skilled labourers - carpenters, masons bricklayers, fitter's mates and blacksmith strikers	1.50	13
<i>Gangers [equal to Corporal]</i>	1.50	15
Skilled blacksmiths	2.00	20
Skilled fitters	2.50	30
Chinese Assistant Interpreters [equal to sergeant]	2.60	30
Chinese Interpreter Clerks	5.00	60

Deductions from Pay - Pay stopped for time lost owing to sickness or misconduct : -

sickness - in case of sickness, family pay in China up to 6 weeks

misconduct - entails deductions of family pay for offences involving 28 days

loss of pay and upwards

Compensation - Death or total disablement \$100

Partial disablement, not exceeding \$50

Also, the Ration Allowance per diem as laid down by the Directorate of Labour, subject to modification, was per man [hominum] : -

Rice	24 ounces
Meat or dried fish	8 ounces
Vegetables	8 ounces
Tea	half an ounce
Nut oil	half an ounce
Salt	half an ounce
Flour	4 ounces
Margarine	1 ounce

Summerskill quotes 8 ounces of rice, 8 ounces of flour, 14 ounces of meat and three-quarters of an ounce of tea, with the addition of one ounce of sugar, ten ounces of bread and also wheat and lard.

Cooking arrangements, as laid down, stated that the Chinese ate two meals a day, one before work and one in the evening. The usual camp cooking arrangements were provided - dixies with a percentage of Soyer stoves for heating water. Cooking was done in camp by the Chinese cooks.

Amongst the equipment issued to each coolie in France were boots, ankle and puttees, two pairs of socks, one towel and one piece of soap, one groundsheet and one blanket in the summer and three in the winter, and an enamelled mug instead of a tin mug.

Transportation to France

The Chinese Labour Corps was officially formed on 21st February 1917 with Lt. Col. B.C. Fairfax³ appointed as the officer-in-charge as early as 15th November 1916. In the meantime, the first labourers left China in January 1917 and the first to leave France to return to China left in November 1918. Some of those sent from China died en route to France on the sea voyages. These ships travelled either via South Africa or Suez to England via the Panama Canal or sailed to Canada, the labourers being transported across Canada by train and then sailing on to England. These routes were chosen so as to confuse German intelligence and to avoid the submarine menace. None was lost in this way despite a German presence still in northern China at that time. Thence both groups were shipped to France.

Those travelling via Canada landed at William Head, Vancouver Island, the old quarantine station and, following authorisation, travelled by train to Halifax, Nova Scotia. They were guarded, to prevent escape, and consequently the usual poll tax of Can \$500, levied by the Canadian Immigration Department, was waived. Over a thirteen month period, over 84,000 were so transported. From Canada they would be shipped to the UK to Liverpool or Plymouth, then from Folkestone to Noyelles-sur-Mer in France.

G. E. Cormack, who acted as an escorting officer to five hundred labourers, was stationed at the collecting depot, a German silk factory near Qingdao. This town had earlier in the War been captured from the Germans by the Japanese, assisted by a small British force. On a monolith at one of the forts was a Prussian eagle with an inscription in German stating that this town had been captured by the Germans from the Chinese. Over this there was a Japanese inscription stating that Qingdao had been captured from the Germans by the Japanese! China had declared war on Germany on 14th March 1917.

Again, to quote from G. E. Cormack's memoirs, he sailed, with

his contingent of coolies via the Panama Canal for New York and ahead of them was the *Empress of Asia* which was torpedoed, so they headed for the safety of Jamaica. From his memoirs I cannot ascertain a date. He held a high opinion of his coolies and stated that the greatest aid to maintain discipline was to retain his sense of humour under all circumstances. He also believed in seeing that they were properly cared for when ill and, most important of all, when selecting coolies for promotion, to prefer the old man with character with the slow moving brain to the smart young town coolie.

Daryl Klein, who joined the CLC as a 2Lt in late 1917, assisted in escorting a large contingent by sea, leaving Qingdao in about February 1918, sailing via Japan where they coaled ship and on to Canada where they stayed for about ten weeks. They were then conveyed in June 1918, with some Canadian soldiers, on HMT *Empress of Asia*, this ship being used to convey troops and others, via the Panama Canal to Kingston, Jamaica and, after refuelling in New York, on to France. This contingent consisted of 13 officers [of whom one was an ex-banker, one an ex-officer from Russia and one an ex-missionary], 4,200 coolies with five interpreters and one medical assistant. During the voyage, Klein interviewed two First Class Gangers [or sergeants], Sgt Tang Chi-chang, aged 27 and previously a school teacher in Nanjing and a graduate of Weixin University; he was also a Christian. Sgt. Sen Shin-lin, aged 26, had served in a warlord's army for six years.

As Halifax, in Canada, had been so badly damaged by the accidental explosion of an ammunition ship in harbour, G. E. Cormack and his contingent had to stay at Victoria, British Columbia and whilst there he had to look after a coolie who had been admitted to hospital for a severe operation, which was successful. Later a deputation came to see Cormack and presented him with a carved wooden panel, which they had made, representing two stags fighting. This was their way of showing appreciation of his attention to their sick comrade. This carved panel is now held in the Imperial War Museum, London, and, at the time of writing, is not on display. [see photograph]

Working in France

In a Company of about 500 men, there would be 24 British officers and NCOs, lead by a major or captain; 476 Chinese labourers, with the

balance being formed of an interpreter, a Head Ganger [equivalent to a CSM]. Some Class One Gangers [sergeants], 7 Class Two Gangers [corporals] and 16 Class Three Gangers [lance-corporals] in charge of 14 men. These were known as *paitou*.⁴ No military titles were used for the labourers as they were not regarded as being service personnel.

The labourers were expected to work up to ten hours a day for seven days every week, time off being allowed for Chinese holidays. This was the norm for Chinese workers back in China and therefore not considered untoward. They were employed in ports to unload/load cargoes, repair roads, lay railway lines, build huts and aerodromes. At the end of the War, they were used to level shell holes, search for and unearth unexploded bombs, roll up barbed wire and also to collect the remains of bodies and bury them in graves already dug by CLC labourers. In some areas the labourers were eventually running their own truck repair shop, smith's shop, paint shop and motor-cycle repair shop. Others maintained the artillery and serviced tanks. Some also, as a pastime, constructed items from used war material [bomb cases, bullets, grenades, etc.] as souvenirs for the soldiers, and these items formed and were eventually known as "Trench Art." They were also adept at making items from other materials and also modelling and carving from chalk. The Imperial War Museum, London, has on display two lions carved from chalk and also, not on display, a lion modelled from clay by a labourer no. 53279, of the CLC. Unfortunately, there are no further details about this model. [see photograph]

To provide a picture of how Chinese labourers were employed let us examine the development of their employment on tank repair over the twelve months from August 1917 to August 1918. Members of the CLC first arrived at the Tank Central Workshops on 8th August, 1917. These were located in the Ternoise Valley, on the road between Hesdin and St. Pol. Tank HQ was at Bermincourt, Central Workshops at Erin but the whole establishment later expanded to take over more of the valley and include more villages.

The 51st Chinese Labour Company, consisting of 4 officers, 12 British NCOs and 200 tradesmen, was followed, on 26th August, by an additional 270 tradesmen.

A large number of the men failed the trade tests and, for those who

showed aptitude, they were given training, placing an unskilled man with a skilled man.

On 15th September, members of the 69th Company CLC, consisting of 5 officers, 14 British NCOs and 476 Chinese arrived and these were followed, on 10th October by 5 officers, 14 British NCOs and 476 Chinese of the 90th Company CLC.

Though a large part of the Chinese personnel was absorbed by Central Workshops more than half the total number were used on other duties by the Labour Group HQ for work elsewhere in the Tank Corps Area.

Prior to the Battle of Cambrai in which tanks were first deployed, the Chinese manufactured 400 fascine bundles and 110 sledges. Each fascine had to be chopped to the recognised length, at one time 60 axes were being used and each bundle consisted of from 60 to 100 fascines. For tightening the bundles, 18 specially equipped tanks were used. Between 15 to 20 Chinese were required to move each bundle, often through mud and in bad weather. Members of the 51st Company CLC were employed in this operation.

In January 1918, the establishment of workers was short by about 225 men, with no prospects of receiving technical reinforcements. This problem was discussed by Lt Col. Brockbank, CO of Central Workshops and Section Commanders and it was decided that, for those who showed a tendency for training as fitters and riveters, etc., would be given a trial. It became apparent that the average skilled Chinese excelled at repetitious work, being interested and not subject to interference. They were thus employed on salvage repair work and rough fitting on manufactured articles.

Work in the Tank Repair Section was found more difficult until a squad of Chinese was trained specifically for one particular job, e.g. detracking, derolling, dismantling and assembling sprockets and pinions. The small track riveting shop was run entirely by the Chinese, with excellent results. The monthly average was 4700 plates from 4 gap riveting machines. When moved to Teneur, where there were 6 machines, output increased to 7480 plates per month.

It was considered that more rapid progress could be made with the utilisation of the Chinese [British] officers as they had technical knowledge and could speak the language. At a meeting at which the CO of the 78th Labour Group, Lt Col. Cline, together with all the Chinese Company officers, it was decided that 2Lt Carter be attached to the Works Office staff to administer the Chinese Labour with one Chinese Company officer attached to each section to supervise the Chinese labour. They were responsible, amongst other duties, for bringing to the notice of Section Commanders any coolies for trade training. This scheme produced better results in that the Chinese were continually supervised and also that they appreciated someone looking after their interests.

In March, 1918, a total of 248 Chinese were skilled at varying jobs from fitters, riveters, carpenters and strikers amongst others. Squads were formed for performing particular jobs such as detracking and changing engines.

Between January and March, under 2Lt Burgess, the Chinese were extensively used for the construction of the new workshop at Teneur. Under Captain Jackson, all cement foundations were laid, together with the Decauville Lines system and sleeper roads⁵. At Teneur the Chinese performed similar tasks as previously, first on the repair of Mark IV tanks and then on the conversion and subsequent repair of male and female Mark V tanks⁶. [see photograph no. G]

As a result of heavy demands in the Engine Shop during September and October, 1918, the Chinese skilled labour was increased, with a result that 24 big-end bedders were employed. These men considered themselves the highest grade and refused to work on any other job.

The Camouflage Section responsible for the painting of all tanks and the repair and manufacture of all camouflage material consisted of about 70 Chinese.

According to Sir Albert Stern, a Malay donor, Mr Eu Tong-sen, who was a member of the Federal Council of the Malay States, offered a sum of £6,000 towards a tank, the average price at that time being between £4,000 and £5,000, but whether from his personal resources or as a gift of the Federal Council is not clear. A Mark IV male tank

was selected and marked with the so-called Chinese eyes like those on a sea-going junk. It served with the 6th Battalion first as *Fly-paper* though subsequently it was re-named *Fan-tan*. The 6th Battalion later adopted the eyes as a regimental symbol. Mr David Fletcher of the Tank Museum at Bovington, in correspondence with the author, was not aware that this symbol was not generally adopted in the Great War. The 6th ultimately converted to Whippets, on which Mr Fletcher had never seen the Eyes symbol. When the 6th Battalion was disbanded after the Great War its various honours and customs were passed to the 4th Battalion which then adopted the Eyes as a Battalion symbol. The 4th Battalion used it on their vehicles from the 1920s and, when they amalgamated with the 1st Battalion RTR in 1993, it was adopted by them. In the 1930s the 6th Battalion was reconstituted and was still around to take part in the 1956 Suez action and never got back their Eyes symbol!

In the main exhibition hall of the Imperial War Museum in London there is a Mark V tank with “European” eyes. These tanks were introduced in the Spring of 1918 and first saw action at Le Hamel in France in July 1918. This tank, *Devil* [T9171] was believed to have served with B Company of the 4th Battalion of the Tank Corps and was still in service in 1925. This tank, belonging to the 4th Battalion, would have been entitled to the Eyes symbol.

Camps and Recreation

Camps were maintained behind the Front lines, some of the larger being at Boulogne, Calais, Dunkirk with the Head Quarters at Noyelles-sur-Mer. Hospitals were at Noyelles-sur-Mer, Arques, Mouille and Calais, with the Shorncliffe Military Hospital at Folkestone also being used for sick and injured Chinese. There was a prison for Chinese at Noyelles.

Labourers died as a result of disease, bombings, gassing and, after the war, when clearing the battlefields and when digging graves, by the many unexploded bombs and grenades. Many also died as a result of the post-war influenza epidemic known as the Spanish Flu. I have seen two photographs, taken of the funeral procession of the German flying ace, Baron Manfred von Richthofen [the Red Baron] at Bertangles cemetery on 22nd April 1918 and amongst the crowd looking over the

fence at the proceedings were men with Chinese features. [see photograph] Were they of the Chinese Labour Corps and did they assist in digging his grave? Just a conjecture.

The labourers celebrated their holidays by decorating their huts, making paper lanterns, staging operas or shows and with special meals. Time off was given for these.

The Young Mens' Christian Association [YMCA] sent men and women to France to provide recreation, talks, rest facilities and entertainment, including cinemas. Members of the YMCA also assisted some of the illiterate Labourers in writing letters to their relatives for them. By February 1919 the YMCA maintained in France a staff of 1024 men and 735 women, representing a major increase over early 1917 when only 641 workers of both sexes were active, largely necessitated by the ministry to the Chinese. Some of them, all too few, could speak Chinese.

Discipline

Discipline among the labourers was generally good. The Chinese were predominantly engaged in carrying out, initially, unskilled labouring work. They were commanded by white officers and NCOs and having, in their midst, some literate and articulate men who could organise and represent their fellow countrymen who had no experience of bargaining, they collectively went on strike for better conditions and more food. Labourers were also subordinated to the equivalent of foremen, fellow countrymen known as Gangers, who exercised informal authority.

Because of the strict censorship, members of the Labour Companies were not allowed to mix with others outside their camps. This, in part, can be explained that some nationalities held animosity against others, e.g. the Indian Labour Corps was made up of many tribal groups; the Basutos and Zulus of the South African Native Labour Contingent [SANLC] were mutually hostile and the Chinese and the SANLC were cool towards each other.

It appeared that the Chinese and other foreign Labour Corps members, were, at that time, of unknown characteristics and were

therefore separated into their own camps, for their own protection and also so that they could not mix with the British troops in general. They were supervised by their own British officers and NCOs. In death Chinese members of the CLC were buried in separate cemeteries or, if buried in cemeteries with Commonwealth dead, in separate areas apart from them. However, deceased British officers and NCOs serving with or transferred to the CLC were buried amongst other Commonwealth fallen. In life and in death the Chinese were isolated [reflecting the attitude of Europeans towards Asians in general and non-Christians in particular]

In mid-September 1917, Alec Paton, stationed at Zillebeke, Ypres, and serving with the Royal Garrison Artillery, obtained permission to visit Reninghelst to meet Claude Betts, a friend who had been promoted to company commander in the CLC. Before leaving Paton was in conversation with one of his officers who commented that he thought 'it would be a good idea to use Chinese as infantry, there being so many of them.' Adding that he wondered what the Germans would do if they saw ten thousand Chinamen coming over the top? In reply a wag said 'Run and bring their washing, I should think.'

Claud Betts had learnt a few Chinese phrases as his labourers could speak no English and they were cunning enough to pretend they could not understand sign language if such meant work. As Alec Paton was passing through Reninghelst he noticed a sign, erected by HQ for the troops, which read 'DO NOT SPEAK TO THE CHINESE.' Underneath, also in large letters, a wit had written, 'WHO THE HELL CAN?'

Once again, to quote from the Directorate of Labour's Notes :

Complaints. The Chinese, in China, are accustomed to seek redress of grievances by means of written petitions : locked petition boxes should be provided.

The Notes also included the following facts regarding the Chinese :

- a) The Chinese coolie has an inherent contempt for foreigners
- b) He comes here purely and simply for money, with no interest in the war.

- c] He is a rigid adherent to his contract though agreeable to modifications, e.g. piecework if advantageous to him.
- d] He is unequalled as a judge of human character; the best procurable class of white overseer is therefore necessary to obtain the best results.
- e] He is fond of litigation and lodging complaints, and, though he can be "sworn," his evidence must be accepted with considerable reserve.
- f] He is not addicted to crimes of violence or drunkenness, but is an inveterate gambler and indulges freely in immorality with women, if opportunity offers.

In spite of all the seriousness there was some humour amongst the British officers and NCOs with the Chinese, as these few examples may illustrate :

a] Four coolies had left a railway truck which they were loading and disappeared, thereby delaying work. When charged with leaving work, each had a ready answer. No. 1 declared that he was sick and obliged to retire. No. 2 had seen some friends in the distance and had left to talk to them for a few minutes. No.3 felt the need for some tea, so had slipped away to get it. No. 4 was forlorn at being left alone and so left to escape the solitude.

b] The O.C. had occasion to rebuke some gangers [Chinese NCOs] for slackness. They listened intently and on conclusion of his speech a babel of sound poured forth from the delinquents. The O.C. asked as to what they were saying and the interpreter, a graduate of Peking University replied, 'They wish to say, Sir, that they all like you very much!'

c] A melancholy coolie asked the British Orderly Officer if he could make a complaint. 'I wish to be sent back to the Depot. The men in my hut are wicked men.'

'How's that?' enquired the officer.

‘I am a Christian, Sir.’

‘Very good,’ replied the officer, ‘I hope I am one too.’

‘But I am a Presbyterian, Sir, and at the Depot there were others of that religion, and we could have a service together. In my hut now there are no Presbyterians, and all are wicked.’

Mutinies did, however, occur, not only amongst service personnel of the Allies, but also amongst the various Labour Corps. Some were court-martialled and punished in various ways, i.e. hard labour, penal service, imprisonment or even death.

In September 1917 some British soldiers stationed at the base camp at Etaples, south of Boulogne, caused trouble and rebelled. Word of this spread to some unwilling Chinese and Egyptians, working at Boulogne, who then stopped work unloading supplies and went on the rampage. Field Marshal Haig ordered this to be quelled and, as a consequence, 27 unarmed strikers were shot dead, 39 wounded and 25 imprisoned.

On 10 October 1917, in a serious shooting incident in the Fourth Army area, 5 Chinese labourers were killed and 14 wounded. The inquiry into this incident came to the conclusion that this was due to the CO not appreciating the standard of discipline required to be maintained between his officers and British NCOs as regards the treatment of labourers.

On 16 December 1917, a mutiny, as a result of bullying by British NCOs, was reported amongst 21 Company CLC at Fontinettes. The armed guard fired on the mutineers, killing 4 and wounding 9. A Canadian soldier was also killed. The next day, a British infantry platoon forced the Chinese to resume work and, after the ringleaders were jailed, normality was restored on 23 December.

On Christmas Day 1917, labourers of 151 Company CLC conspired to kill their Sergeant Major, a “half-caste”, as he had been an extortioner and had forced the men to work too hard. Two hundred men of the Royal Welch Fusiliers rounded up some of the mutineers whilst others had fled to near the HQ of 5 Corps at Locre. On Christmas Day, D. H.

Doe who was serving at that time with the 51st Signal Company [RE] and based, I think, at Bailleul, was hoping to watch a football match. As the Chinese were running loose, armed with improvised weapons, he, with others, was ordered to shoot the Chinese to quell this mutiny. Eight were shot on the pitch and 93 were captured. In West Outre British Cemetery, Heiuvelland, Belgium, there are the graves of 3 members of the CLC killed on Christmas Day, 1917, namely Chang Cheh-te [43804], Chang Hung-an [39540] and Wu En-lu [43913], all of the 105th Company, CLC. Three members of the CLC were charged with mutiny and striking : on 9 May 1918, 1968, for mutiny and striking, was sentenced to two years hard labour. Also on the 9 May 1918 40749 was charged with the same offences and sentenced to one year hard labour. On 12 May 1918, 25348 was charged with mutiny, insubordination and disobedience for which he was sentenced to six months hard labour though this sentence was revised and later quashed.

Numbers of those Recruited and Fatalities

Over 94,500 Chinese, recruited for the British Chinese Labour Corps, served in France and, of these, 1834 died in France, 279 died at sea on the way home and 32 could not be traced. These figures are quoted from Summerskill and conflict with those given in an article in the Sunday Times magazine, *Chinese dig Britain's trenches* by J. Hamilton-Paterson. He quotes the British Government as saying that 93,474 had been recruited of which number 91,452 labourers had been returned to China, 1949 had died in Europe and 73 had died on the return journey. The figures cannot be considered as accurate as a small proportion of men had gone to ground in France and some detached themselves in Canada. Some Labourers formed attachments with French women and oft times children were born. At a later date they returned to China with their wives and children. The exact number is not known, but French sources⁸ quote about 30,000, which appears excessive.

These figures may be further confused if those in Norman Mellor's article⁹ are taken as correct. He stated that 97,934 were recruited by the British and at the end of the War there were 195 Companies working in the areas of the five armies or on the Lines of Communication. He does not quote a figure. Mellor was posted to the 4th Bedfordshire Regiment in March 1918, his 19th birthday, saw action on the Albert-Bapaume road and remained with his regiment until the Armistice. Being too

young for demobilisation, he volunteered to join the HQ of the CLC instead of serving with the Army of Occupation of the Rhine, and served with them until being demobilised. In February 1920 he volunteered for repatriation duty and from Le Havre assisted to escort 1000 labourers on the S.S. *Melita* to St John's, Newfoundland, a voyage lasting five days. Seven days journey by Canadian Pacific Railways took them to Vancouver City and then by ferry to the quarantine station at William Head on Vancouver Island, where they were joined by another 5000 coolies who were also awaiting repatriation. After quarantine, with 12 British officers and other ranks, 4730 coolies sailed on the M. S. *Dollar* to Qingdao, a crossing of twenty-one days, where the coolies were demobilised. Mellor then sailed via Shanghai, Hong Kong [staying two months], the Suez Canal to London, where he was demobilised in late 1921.

Again, a further confusion in these figures of those who died arises, as, according to a list of names provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, of those labourers who have graves, world-wide, the number buried is 1952. Their list also includes, separately, names and graves of non-nationals [i.e. Brits, etc.] who were either serving with or were attached to the CLC from other regiments and these totalled 58. A total of 191 Chinese from the Corps served later with the Slavobritish Legion in Northern Russia in 1920. Between March and December 1919, 50,861 labourers were repatriated with shipments continuing for several more years. About 60 men remained behind in France to carve inscriptions on the tombstones of their dead fellow workers, and this may explain why some of the characters on the stones are unusual, if not incorrect. We understand that headstones are today replaced at fairly frequent intervals providing an enduring picture of well-cared for military cemeteries. The stones are produced nowadays in France by a team working for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission [CWGC] using automatic laser guided tools. This means that the Chinese characters are taken from identical templates which may explain why the character that we saw for the surname Liu 劉 has two different forms, each of which is identically turned out on headstones but without any apparent reason for the use of the popular version on some and the obscure version on many more. According to the CWGC a typical headstone would bear one of five phrases¹⁰ engraved both in Chinese and English, the name of the corps, number and date of death in English and the name and province of the casualty in Chinese. We only

found four such phrases.¹¹ They added, in answer to a question, that the CWGC commemorates all members of the Commonwealth forces who died in conflicts regardless of the circumstances of their death. Those who died following sentences given by Courts Martial are commemorated in exactly the same way as anyone else.

Officers and NCOs supplied by the British consisted of volunteers from the British Army as well as British officer-candidates from China, consisting of missionaries and members of the China Customs Service from Treaty Ports. Some were promoted from the ranks.

Those from the Chinese Customs Service in Shanghai include Arthur H H Abel, who was gazetted as a 2Lt in May 1918; George B Appleton, who enlisted with the 16th Bn Middlesex Regt in February 1915 and transferred to the CLC in April 1917 as a sergeant, being promoted to 2Lt in May 1918; Charles N Cross, who in August 1917 joined the CLC as a 2Lt, transferred to the Royal Air Force in July 1918 and transferred back to the CLC in March 1919 as a captain; Arthur H F Edwardes served with the CLC from April to July 1917 as a 2Lt, and in August 1917 was promoted acting captain commanding No 59 Company CLC in Belgium; Ernest N Ensor, enlisted in December 1914 in the 9th Bn Royal Irish Fusiliers and, after promotion through the ranks, to captain in August 1916, was transferred in July 1917 to command No. 27 Company CLC. Amongst his medals, and being Mentioned in Despatches, he was awarded the Order of the *Wen Hu*, Fifth Class, for military services. Hugh G Lowder served in various Army battalions before transferring to the HQ CLC from which he was demobilised in March 1920 in the rank of captain. He also received the Order of the *Wen Hu*, Fifth Class, in 1919. Walter Moore served two and a half years with the CLC, from June 1917 to October 1919. John Murphy served with the Royal Marine Artillery, first in German New Guinea and German West Africa, then in France and also on HMS *Warspite*. In September 1917 he transferred to the Army and from the Armistice to May 1920 he was attached to the CLC conducting coolies from France back to China. Norman Travers was commissioned as a 2Lt into the CLC in May 1917 and was attached to the Royal Flying Corps, with Chinese, on forward aerodromes, subsequently working also in the forward area in trench, ammunition and lines of communication, finally assisting clearance of the devastated areas.

Of those from the Chinese Customs Service in Shanghai who served with the Allied Forces, the names of 23 are on their Roll of Honour and have been buried or commemorated not only in the UK, Belgium and France but also in Greece and Turkey.

Decorations

Many Chinese members of the CLC received the British War Medals but this is a subject into which I have not carried out any research. The Meritorious Service Medal for devotion to duty was awarded to Zhao Wende [30828] and Wang Chenjing [30064], both Labourers of the 57th Company CLC, and to Liu Dianshen, Class One Ganger of the 108th Company CLC. Also to Wang Yushao [15333] Labourer of the 59th Company CLC [of Da Cheng county in Zhili] for bravery, his citation reading :

Near Marcoing [near Cambrai] on June 6th, 1919, he observed a fire on a dump of ammunition situated close to a Collecting Station. On his own initiative he rushed to the dump with two buckets of water which he threw on the fire and then seized a burning British 'P' Bomb [apparently the cause of the outbreak] and hurled it to a safe distance from the dump. He then continued to extinguish the burning dump which had spread to the surrounding grass in which rifle grenades and German shells were lying. By his initiative, resource and disregard of personal safety this Labourer averted what might have been a serious explosion.

Yan Dengfeng [91085], Class One Ganger of the 130th Company CLC was also awarded this decoration for :

On 23rd May 1919 at Bailleul [near Armentieres] following an explosion, he worked constantly for four hours removing tarpaulins from the stacks of ammunition and drenching them with water.

Sgt W J Yaxley [553653] British Army, serving with the 60th Company CLC was also awarded this medal.

The Chinese Order of Wenhū [The Order of the Striped Tiger]

was also awarded to some members, whether serving with or attached to the CLC.

Some Items of Interest

Whilst carrying out research in the Imperial War Museum in London, I came across an undated letter, written in literary Chinese by Zhong Yangchang on YMCA headed paper, giving the address as 'On Active Service with the British Expeditionary Force' and addressed to his wife *c/o Bureau of Recruitment of Chinese Labour, the British Administration, Weihai Wei*. It appears that the letter was also addressed to the Hong Kong University. The writer, a well educated man, was not necessarily the husband of Zhilan and could quite possibly have been one of the Chinese administration staff. The translation is as follows:

To my wife, Zhilan

I had intended to write to you earlier; however, it is only now that I have found a gap in my daily routine to do so. We are still at the same base camp. On the 13th it was Duanyang Festival [the Dragon Boat Festival] and we had the day off. The [Chinese] workers were made-up and put on the Yangke dance [a northern Chinese country peasants' dance] along the street. It was a very good show, but the foreigners seemed somewhat bemused by the event.

Some British Army [officers] came along and they brought with them some other [Chinese labourers], from the Hong clan from the west of Tai [the area around Tai Shan].

I will stop writing now, my spirit will follow the letter to you

My greetings and best wishes

Your clumsy husband Zhong Yangchong.

There is a letter, also written in a similar vein on YMCA paper, but this time in English, [with the Wade-Giles left as in the original]. The envelope on display is addressed to Mrs Sung, Normal School,

Peking, China and the contents reads as follows :

24-6-18

My Dear Wife

I intended to write to you but as you know I am very busy all the time and this year I have been more full of work than ever.

Our Company is still here. All the boys are really happy so that they like to work hard every day.

Now I am going to tell you all about the Chinese Dragon Festival in old custom here [June 13th 1918]. On that day we had no work to do, the boys played a very funny game which I never saw in Hankow before.

Some twenty young boys pretended themselves with northern dress as actors, then walked out and played from company to company all day.

Thousands of foreigners were invited to come with great pleasure and the British general has paid a visit to the Dancing at which he was very pleased and thanked them for their play, but it was to me as nothing.

I am very well now and then doing duty as hard as possible so please do not feel sorry for me.

with great love

Yours

C.W.Sung

Both of these letters and envelopes are on display in the basement of the Imperial War Museum in London in the exhibition of the First World War.

Special envelopes were printed for use by the CLC with a central red band and black printing in English, French and Chinese. In France this mail was posted in special boxes and transported by despatch riders to and from Noyelles. Mail between CLC companies in France did not require stamps or special envelopes.

The Imperial War Museum also holds two notebooks, written in literary Chinese, which may have been compiled by a clerk or labourer in his leisure time. There are random jottings with notes on, amongst other topics, the ancient political system in China, moral precepts, quotations from Chinese poets, lists of 95 individuals names and places of birth, and also three letters.

These letters reveal the feelings of an ordinary man, rural and urban labourers, and his feelings for others. The first letter is addressed to the Kaiser and is a petition to end the war. It was written by 'Spiritual Man Yuan Chun'.

To the Great Emperor of the German Empire.

The war in Europe is a matter that not concern us, the Chinese people, and as Your Majesty knows the world is full of people with greater talents than we have.

However, as the ancients have said, a model emperor would be a brave warrior and merciful: however, if one loves war *for its own sake and treat human lives as blades of grass, you will invoke the anger of the gods.*

We Chinese came to Europe as neutrals, our aim is to make a paltry living; however, the war made our journey to Europe somewhat less than peaceful.

An examination of the world situation now shows that within the universe we are all one family, and a virtuous ruler would *seize this opportunity to put righteousness before profit, to follow the will of the gods and the wishes of men, to stop the evil of the world and together with other nations create a new world. A virtuous ruler's name will be remembered for ten thousand generations, so why not halt your troops and select*

an auspicious location to build a palace [of peace] where all the world's powers could meet and create a peace that will last ten thousand years.

The second letter is not addressed to any specific addressee with the writer also signing himself 'The Spiritual Man Yuan Chun'.

Sir,

Your humble disciple learned that your righteous attempt to bring peace to Europe was rebuffed. Your setback was not due to your lack of sincerity for peace, but is due to the Western people's desire for war.

Sir, you know that the Chinese people [in Europe] have been placed in great danger by the war. We believe in your powers to make further attempts for peace, and to ensure our safety and our eventual return to China.

The third letter is addressed to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and is unsigned:

The current situation is one of utter chaos; the people's lives are very hard and we have waited in vain for the government to alleviate our difficulties. Our country is weak and the people disunited. Now is the time for an heroic brave man to take command and launch a crusade to stabilise the nation and unite the people. I hope Your Excellency will not hinder my efforts to carry out this righteous duty and I ask for your assistance in this endeavour.

I wonder if any of the above letters were sent and, if so, whether the contents had any result on the final cessation of hostilities.

Whilst writing this article I was fortunate to find a book on the life of Two-gun Cohen, the well-known personage with strong ties to China. Morris Abraham Cohen was born on 3rd August, 1889 in Stepney, London's East End, of an immigrant Jewish couple from Poland. He was shipped to Canada at the age of 16 after having come into conflict with the authorities. In Canada he learnt to ride, shoot and gamble, and

it was there that he first had dealings with the Chinese whom he came to like and respect. He was elected to the Tsing Chung-hui tong [secret society], pledging to serve Sun Yat-sen, to overthrow the Manchu dynasty and liberate the Chinese people. He joined the Canadian infantry and in 1917 landed in England, later being sent to France. He was seconded to the CLC, though the opinion he gained of the Chinese with whom he served, of a lower class to those he met and had business dealings whilst in Canada, was not very high. He rejoined his own unit in March 1918, was wounded and returned to Canada in February 1919. Later he went to China where he joined Dr Sun Yat-sen and, after his death, his son, Sun Fo.

He obtained the nick-name "Two Gun Cohen" after an aide of Dr Sun saw him draw both his guns after a fracas in Canton. Dr Sun first called Cohen 'Colonel', then by his surname and then by the nickname of 'Mah Kun 馬坤' by which houseboys and coolies called him, being the next they could get to "Morris Cohen."

But all this is another story!

Observations and Places Visited

Returning now to our Friend's reconnaissance expedition, the first stop was at the extensive Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun, where one member of the CLC, Yang Feng-yung, 91948, is buried: he died on 4 December 1918. A beautiful American boxwood tree, flowering when we were there, stands behind this lone grave.

Ayette Indian and Chinese Cemetery also holds graves of members of the French Chinese Labour Corps. Their members tended to come from southern China and their duties were similar to those of the British CLC. The French graves here are of a similar shape to the British but with only their romanised name and the inscription *Mort pour La France* [Died for France]. I have not carried out any research concerning the French and their recruitment of Chinese and other nationalities who assisted in their fight for freedom. The 34 British CLC gravestones conformed to the usual Commonwealth War Graves Commission shape with each bearing the service number and/or name in Chinese and romanisation, the date of death and details of their place of birth in Chinese. The inscriptions in English, a straight translation of the

Chinese, were one of four forms. 'A Noble Duty Bravely Done', 'Faithful unto Death', 'A Good Reputation endures Forever' and 'Though Dead He still Liveth'. As with all CWGC cemeteries, this one was well maintained.

We (Friends) then visited the Tincourt British Military Cemetery which has 57 graves of the CLC.

The base dépôt, prison and hospital of the CLC was at Noyelles-sur-Mer and the cemetery there contains the graves of 838 men of the CLC, with a memorial bearing the names of 41 men whose graves are unknown¹². The site of this cemetery was selected by the Chinese themselves so that the *fengshui* was correct. Whilst many of the CLC in this cemetery had home addresses in Shandong and Zhili provinces [about 98%] there were also about 25 from other provinces all north of the Yangzi River; two were from Fengtian in Manchuria [the old name for Mukden and now Shenyang], seven from Henan, seven from Jiangsu, five specifically from Hebei [the modern name for Zhili], one from Anhui, two from Shenjing [the archaic name for Jilin province in the north-east] and one from Gansu. The latter is unusual, it being a province to the north-west of China. One grave is noteworthy being that of an early recruit whose serial number was 53. Wang Yufong came from Rongcheng in Shandong, a mere 35 miles from Weihai Wei, and he died on the 10th June 1918. Many of those buried here had died of flu from the post-war epidemic.

Chinese visiting France today appear to be intrigued by signs saying *Cimetiere Chinois* [Chinese Cemetery] and, having visited them, have been surprised to see compatriots buried there. An entry, from a Chinese visitor from Qingdao, in the Memorial Book at Noyelles-sur-Mer, commented that he was a man from Shandong province himself and had not realized so many of his fellow provincials had died and had been buried in France. The CWGC, in response to our comment that we were surprised that there were no signs in French explaining the background to the fallen Chinese, wrote:

A certain amount of historical information can be gleaned from the introduction to the registers made available at the cemeteries and some of the more significant sites have permanent historical notices. However, it should be

remembered that the cemeteries and memorials are primarily places of individual commemoration and excessive signage can detract from this.

There are many cemeteries and memorials in Belgium and France where members of the Commonwealth forces are buried and commemorated. The Menin Gate at Ypres commemorates over 54,270 who died in the Ypres Salient, from October 1914 to the 15th/16th August 1917, and who have no known grave. Those who died from 17th August 1917 to the end of the war and have no known grave, over 34,880, are commemorated on panels at Tynecot, which is also the largest Commonwealth cemetery in the world with 11,856 graves. In France, the memorial at Thiepval commemorates over 72,000 Commonwealth members who died on the Somme and who have no known grave. At none of the above are there any names of members of the CLC. At Etaples, there are over 11,400 graves of World War I, including that of one Chinese member of the CLC, Fu Puzhen, 9436, a Ganger of the 56th Company. As Keith Stevens remarked, Fu here, alone, represents his countrymen with a population amounting to a quarter of the world's total.

The last cemetery the Friends visited was Les Baraques Military at Sangatte, south of Calais. Of the 197 named CLC members buried there virtually all were from Shandong province and the metropolitan area of Zhili. Only two came from other provinces, Anhui and Hubei. There were several seamen commemorated who most probably would have been Cantonese from the south and recruited by the Royal Navy in Hong Kong. There are also graves of British personnel who served with or were attached to the CLC. We saw the grave of 2Lt E S Burley, Army Labour Corps, attached to the Chinese Labour Corps, who died on 15th February 1919, aged 44 years, whose parents came from London, England and whose wife lived in South Africa.

On a later personal visit to this cemetery, with my wife, we located the grave of Gunner M E Barnes of the 43rd Company, Royal Garrison Artillery who transferred, in the rank of corporal, to the 135th Labour Company, Chinese Labour Corps Royal Garrison Artillery. He died on 19th November 1919, aged 49 years; and was a native of Lewes in Sussex. Also the grave of Private M Cooper of the 2nd/6th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry, who transferred to the 88th Labour Company,

Chinese Labour Corps. A native of Pudsey, he died on 16th February 1919. And also the grave of Lt A E Player of the Labour Corps, attached to the Chinese Labour Corps. He died on 10th July 1919.

We also saw the graves of twenty-three seamen from the SS *British Sovereign*, amongst which were those of Ah Ling and Doe Gai [no Chinese characters on their gravestones] who died on 7th September 1918. There is also a grave of a member of the Japanese Merchant Marine Service, 1st Class Engineer Yioshto [or Yiosto as it appear on the gravestone], who died on 31st December 1918. His name is not listed nor his grave location shown in the cemetery register which, I believe, is only used for British and Commonwealth personnel. It is listed on the CWGC Foreign National register database. The CWGC has written to the Japanese Embassy, London, to ascertain the correct spelling of his name and await their reply.

In our wanderings in this cemetery, my wife and I also saw the grave of a young civilian who was buried alongside those who had fought and died in the War. He was Joseph Leng, who drowned at Audricq on 2 October 1917 whilst visiting his father, Sapper J Leng. He was only seven years old and on his gravestone his parents have had carved the epitaph 'Suffer little children to come to me.'

Also in this cemetery are five graves containing the remains of men of the CLC who were 'shot at dawn'. Their gravestones carried the usual epitaphs and were in every way indistinguishable from other CLC gravestones. Wang Enrong (Wang En Jung in Wade-Giles romanisation) [10299] 29th Company CLC was executed on 26 June 1918, together with Yang Jingshan (Yang Ching Shan in Wade-Giles romanisation) [10272] also of the 29th Company CLC, from Liaocheng county of Shandong province, for murdering a French woman at her estaminet [coffee house] during a robbery. The former's gravestone only carries his number and the inscription 'Faithful unto Death' whilst that of the latter bears the inscription 'A Noble Duty Bravely Done.'

Zhao Gongyi [Chao Hsing I (Chao Kung-i) in Wade-Giles romanisation] [46090], 161st Company CLC, from Jinan county in Shandong, having murdered a fellow-countryman, possibly as a result of gambling, was executed on 9th August 1918 and Hui Yihe [Hui I He (Hui I-ho) in Wade-Giles romanisation] [42476], 112th Company CLC,

from Qing county in Zhili, having murdered a fellow-countryman was executed on 12th September 1918. The former's gravestone bears the epitaph 'A noble duty bravely done' whilst the latter's bears the epitaph 'Though dead he still liveth.'

Zhang Ruzhi (Chang Ju Chih in Wade-Giles romanisation), [16174], of the 150th Company CLC, from X-hai¹³ in Zhili appeared to lead a charmed life after murdering a French prostitute and her three children near Amiens in November 1918. He was arrested in April 1919 but in May escaped and boarded a ship in Marseilles in August for China. On arrival at Shanghai he was not allowed to land for not having the correct papers and was returned to Marseilles. After landing he disappeared in France, apparently dealt in cocaine, before finally being arrested in February 1920 near Calais and was interrogated. He eventually admitted his guilt before his execution. His last requests were not to have his eyes bandaged and to sing a hymn, both of which were granted. His gravestone carries the inscription 'A Good Reputation Endures Forever.' The wording of the epitaphs on the gravestones of those executed for such heinous crimes would seem to be ironic in the extreme. On his gravestone his date of death is shown as 14 February 1920, whilst on the CWGC printout of CLC graves, his date of death is given as 10 February 1920. [This has been queried with the CWGC]

Again, on a personal visit with my wife, we visited the Old and New Military Cemeteries at Poperinge, Belgium, in which there are lone graves to members of the CLC. That in the New Military Cemetery is of Yu Eu-peng, [30159], of the 55th Company, CLC, who died on 31st July 1917. In the Old Military Cemetery is the grave of Wang Chin-chih (Wang Jungzhi [sic] in Wade-Giles) [44735], of the 10th Company, CLC. On his gravestone is carved 'A Good Reputation endures Forever.' He killed a colleague in their camp at De Klijte, escaped but was caught at Le Havre, tried on 19 April 1919 in Poperinge and was executed on 8th May 1919. His execution is reputed to have taken place in the courtyard of the Town Hall at Poperinge, opposite the cells in its basement which were used to detain soldiers for minor offences and also prior to being shot, but the Town Hall had already reverted to its former civilian use at this time. Word has it that his execution was the last to be held in Poperinge and the execution post, now on public view in the Courtyard, was used only once, for his execution. [see photograph] The cemetery was in use

from October 1914 and closed to British burials in May 1919. His grave is amongst those saved for officers who had died in early 1915. [see photograph]

My wife and I visited St. Etienne-au-Mont cemetery and amongst the graves is that of Cheng Shun Kung (Zheng Shungong), [53497], of the 60th Company CLC, who died on 23rd July 1918 after being convicted of the murder of a fellow countryman. On his grave is carved 'A Good Reputation lives Forever.' The date of his death, as shown at the Public Records Office, is 27th July 1918. The CWGC, in a letter to the author, state that their records cannot be amended until such time as they have written authorised confirmation. The CWGC also state that the British Library, Oriental and Indian Office and Army Records, Hayes, hold no records for the CLC.

In this cemetery is a large memorial, with inscriptions in Chinese, French and English, stating that it was erected by comrades of the CLC. Close-by, it has four small white magnolia trees, in bloom at the time of our visit in April.

We also visited the cemetery at Abbeville, in which there are the graves of expatriates who served with the CLC. Sgt. E.J. Collins served with the 43rd Company CLC and died on 7th November 1918. Staff QMS (WO II) George William Bashford was with the RASC before transferring to the Labour Corps attached to the 91st Company CLC. He drowned on 18th November 1919. 2/Lt. Henry Elderfield of the Northumberland Fusiliers was attached to the 163rd Company CLC and died on 11th November 1918 [Armistice Day]. Sgt. T. F. Murphy of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers transferred to the 135th Company CLC and died on 26th March 1920. Cpl R H Smith of the 2nd Bn. Cameronians [Scottish Rifles] transferred to the Base Depôt, CLC and died on the 27 November 1918. Cpl. Robert Whittaker of the Royal Welch Fusiliers also transferred to the Base Depôt CLC and died on 3rd November 1918. Cpl. J. Wilkie from the Durham Light Infantry was another who transferred to the Base Depôt CLC and died on 19th September 1919. There are no Chinese buried in this cemetery.

St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, amongst others, holds the graves of 44 members of the CLC and four British attached to the CLC. For the most part, graves in this cemetery are laid head to head. Lt.

Charles Atkinson of the 171st Company, Labour Corps was attached to the CLC and died on 4th July 1919. Pte. W. Brophy of the King's (Liverpool) Regiment transferred to the 43rd Company CLC and died on 10th December 1918. Pte. A. J. Davis of the Infantry Labour Company, Devonshire Regiment, transferred to the 116th Company CLC and died on 19th July 1918. Sgt. F. C. Legg of the London Regiment (the London Rifles) transferred to the 9th Company CLC and died on 9th November 1918.

The gravestones of the Chinese have names carved in English and not in Chinese and, surprisingly, all bear the same epitaph 'Faithful unto Death.' Amongst the CLC graves are those members who were shot at dawn. You Longxi [Yu Lung-hsi in Wade-Giles romanisation] [4976] was court-martialled and convicted of murdering two people and sentenced to death on 28th December 1918, but committed suicide on 29th January 1919 before his sentence could be carried out. On the same date [28th December 1918] Wang Fayou [Wang Fa-yu in Wade-Giles romanisation] [5884] was also sentenced for the same offence as Yu, and was shot on 15th February 1919. Hei Chi-ming [Chei Chi Ming on the headstone] [97170] and Kung Ching-hsing [44340] died on 21st February 1920, after both were convicted for wounding two French prostitutes and the murder of a British Army sergeant at a brothel near Le Havre.

Before becoming interested in the Chinese Labour Corps and whilst researching, especially, the Victoria Cross holders from my old school, I visited Shorncliffe Military Cemetery, near Folkestone in Kent, where I found six graves of labourers of the CLC, all having died in the Shorncliffe Military Hospital in 1917 and 1918. Folkestone area was used as a staging post with the camps located near Sugar Loaf Hill and Caesar's Camp. These gravestones are much larger, of a different material [slate?] and format to the usual CWGC gravestones. The tops are shaped similar to Dutch house roofs. The wording, however, is similar. Those buried here are Niu Yun-huei [24640], died 2nd July 1917; Chen Te-shan [11916], died 30th August 1917; Liu Ching-yi [37614], died 1st January 1918; Wang Chin-tien [109761], died 4th April 1918; Chiao Pi-cheng [105994] died 13th April 1918 and Yang Chi-chun [72367], died 30th April 1918.

Chinese labourers of the CLC are buried elsewhere in England, in

addition to those mentioned above. [see also appendix C] Keith Stevens visited the Anfield, Liverpool, cemetery where are buried three members of the CLC. The first grave is dedicated to Fan Chuan-sheng [70062], died on who 25th January 1918 with a stone bearing no Chinese characters, no date of death, no service number and with a misspelling of one of his names [Chaun for Chuan] The word order of the name is also different on the stone [Sheng Fan Chaun] and it is now difficult to know whether his surname was Fan or Sheng, though Keith Stevens believed it to be the former.

The second grave in Anfield is dedicated to Kuo Te-hsiang [134274], died 6th July 1918 and came from Lintong county in Shandong province. The characters on the stone are quite worn and the name of the county is barely legible. The first character of his personal name, Te, is peculiar and has perhaps been carved by someone who was not fully conversant with the character, despite it being a common enough character.

The third grave is dedicated to Lin Feng-hsiang [131474], who died on 9 August 1918, though his name is recorded on the CWGC lists as Lau Fung-sheng. He too came from Shandong province but with no further detail. Presumably the version of his name from the characters will be the correct one. All three gravestones in Anfield bear the same epitaph "Though Dead He still Liveth".

Keith Stevens was curious as to the reasons for the deaths of the three buried at Anfield and wrote to both the CWGC and the Record Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages seeking information. He was advised that no record of death certificates could be found and therefore came to the conclusion that presumably no death certificates were issued for Chinese members of the CLC.

Keith Stevens, my wife and I, visited the Colchester, Essex Military Cemetery where is buried Yep Fook, who died on 9th November 1918. His stone only carried the epitaph in English and Chinese of 'Faithful unto Death' and his date of death. His name appears to be of Cantonese origin.

From our observations at the cemeteries we visited, it appears that the recruitment catchment area was basically Shandong province with

its British base at Weihai Wei and the other Allied base at Qingdao. The neighbouring province of Zhili, with its cities of Beijing and Tianjin, was a good second with a total recorded from its region of about a quarter of that from Shandong. The total from the two provinces provided nearly 98% of all the Chinese manpower recruited by the British [though not including any naval personnel recruited in Hong Kong or Weihai Wei].

Some of the romanised names on graves have been transliterated by either Chinese or Westerners inaccurately and this has led to confusion when checking details on the CWGC internet for individual graves. Practically all romanisation on the graves and records was in Wade-Giles whereas here in this article I have used the comparatively new native romanisation, pinyin, thus Peking has become Beijing and Shantung, Shandong.

In a letter from the CWGC to the author concerning the reasons as to why many gravestones do not have carved names of the person nor details of the district from which they originated, in Chinese characters, or if carved in Chinese characters and not in romanisation, they replied that the details inscribed on headstones were originally supplied by the surviving comrades of the casualties of the CLC. At that time it was believed to be the best option available to the CWGC and was thought to be sufficient to meet the required criteria.

Dr. E. J. Stuckey and the Chinese Hospital at Noyelles-sur-Mer

Edward Joseph Stuckey was born at Adelaide, Australia on 29th September 1875 and died in 1952. He was the eldest, of nine, children of Joseph Stuckey and Alice Mann, she being the daughter of Charles Mann, the first Advocate General of South Australia.

He was educated at St. Peter's Collegiate School, winning, in his final year, the 'Young Exhibition for the Best Scholar of the Year.' In 1893, at the recently opened University of Adelaide, he began his BSc, graduating in November 1895 with Honours in both Physics and Mathematics. In 1896 he signed accountancy articles for three years with the Australian Mutual Provident Society [AMPS] in Adelaide.

Some years earlier, Stuckey became involved in the evangelical movement. After qualifying as an actuary with the Association of the Institute of Actuaries [London], he left AMPS, returning to Adelaide University to study medicine, so that he could better follow his vow to become a missionary, being accepted by the London Missionary Society [LMS]. Even at University, Stuckey was involved with the evangelical movement, meeting his future wife, also a student, Frances Helen Campbell, who held similar feelings. They both graduated in 1903, Stuckey as MB, BSc [First Class] and Campbell as MA. He was appointed as Junior Demonstrator in Physics at Melbourne University. They became engaged and married on 12th July 1905.

After a year as House Surgeon at Adelaide University, Stuckey went to London for post-graduate study, booking his passage as a ship's surgeon. On arrival in London the LMS notified him that he had been appointed to proceed at once to Siaochang, North China. He immediately returned to Australia, married Campbell and sailed from Sydney on 5th August 1905, arriving at Siaochang on 7th October, staying with Dr. and Mrs E. J. Peill and Rev. and Mrs J. D. Liddell. [Chariots of Fire - the parents of the famous runner] Dr. Peill was the brother of Dr. A. Peill, 'The beloved Physician of Tsangchou' and the Rev. S. G. Peill. Both Stuckeys started to learn Chinese, passing their final exam in 1908. In 1909 Stuckey was appointed Acting Dean of the Peking Union Medical College [PUMC], a teaching hospital supported by various missionary societies, and in September 1911 was appointed its Principal. He had become interested in diseases of the eye, publishing papers on his research.

In May 1913 Stuckey and his family, now four children, returned on leave to Melbourne, where he did eye work in various Melbourne hospitals and Deputation work for the LMS in all states except Western Australia. They returned to Peking in September 1914, where he resumed his role at the PUMC, also being elected Secretary of the Peking District Committee of the LMS.

In December 1916, Stuckey was approached by the British Legation as to his suitability for military service. After a joint decision with his wife, he left Peking on 12th March 1917 for Weihai Wei and to France for service with the CLC as a Lieutenant with the RAMC. He sailed via Nagasaki, Japan, under his C.O. Captain Hall Brutton, on the

Empress of Russia, arriving at Vancouver Island, Canada. During the voyage he discovered two cases of mumps amongst the 2006 Chinese which finally increased to eleven.

During their stay in quarantine the Chinese were trained into disciplined coherent bodies. During this time, even though being well treated, food riots nearly broke out. A white cook was sacked for exorbitant charges on bread sold to the coolies, a gold dollar for an 8lb loaf, making a profit of 400%. He also excessively charged for apples and oranges. Two coolies were caught stealing and were publicly caned. On 8th April, his dressers [medical assistants] reported that trouble was brewing over an insult from coolies from Shandong and Tianjin; fighting broke out, being quelled by Stuckey. The leader of the Shandong men was caned publicly, to set an example.

Footwear, issued in China, was proving unsuitable, so British Army boots were issued, which for some became a tradable item.

They left the quarantine station on 8th April, travelling by train, those with mumps being segregated, to St. Johns and Halifax from where they sailed on the *Corsican*, in convoy, to Liverpool, where they entrained for Shorncliffe, Kent and then across the channel by ferry to Boulogne and another train journey to the CLC HQ at Noyelle-sur-Mer. The officers returned to the UK to order their kit and uniforms, which cost Stuckey £45 at the Army and Navy Store. He returned to France as Eye Specialist in charge of the Ophthalmic Department of the Chinese General Hospital at Noyelles.

The Depot at Noyelles was already established as the central examination centre for all Chinese on arrival in France, before their allocation to various Labour Companies.

The first shipments of Chinese were routed via the Cape, but due to the long journey time and also the shortage of vegetables, leading to scurvy and beriberi, thus making the coolies of little use, the shipment routes were changed via Canada. On arrival in France, the coolies were again medically examined, especially for eye diseases, trachoma and conjunctivitis, usually in the open. Once passed fit they were drafted into various Labour units, consisting of five British officers, 19 British other-ranks and 476 Chinese, and kitted out. Those with eye diseases

were isolated for intensive treatment, and light work. Some worked in the Crecy forest, at Blanchés Hetres, cutting timber for trenches and fascines for the roads, etc.; others worked nearer the camp.

Originally the Hospital compound surrounded by a barbed wire fence, consisted of eight triple marquees, each with 50 beds. Stuckey examined up to 500 coolies each day. In mid-June, Dr. Earnest Peill, also of the LMS China, was appointed Registrar and Surgeon and O.C. Chinese Personnel, the latter post to deal with all the troubles of the Chinese, rosters and employing staff. In December 1917, there were almost 200 Chinese on the Hospital staff.

Under the C.O., Major Gray [formerly of the Peking Legation], the staff functioned efficiently, necessitating expansion of the Hospital from 300 beds to 1,040 beds within six months, capable of inspecting up to 1500 coolies per day.

From bringing water from a pool it now had a well and pump, and shortly electricity would be installed. Stuckey was appointed Treasurer for any money the staff wished to deposit with him for safekeeping, of which he was the President, Cashier, ledger keeper, etc. Such money was utilised to buy bonds earning 5% over six months.

The Hospital received many visitors including Col. Lister and Maj. Cunningham, the British Army's ophthalmic specialists, General Tang of the Chinese HQ Staff and doctors from surrounding hospitals.

It appeared that the death rate was high for a unit whose contract specified that they should not work on any kind of military operation. After China declared war on Germany on 14th March 1917, this clause was not so strictly observed. The British military authorities ordered that the Chinese must be buried in their own plot and not near a Hindu or a Christian plot, in a box or coffin. The cemetery at Noyelles-sur-Mer was selected by the Chinese for its fengshui [on a slope facing a small stream]. It was the Orderly Officer's duty to conduct the burial service, seeing that a party of patients attended and that they returned safely to the Hospital. One returning party raided a carrot field and another raided a turnip field, pulled up and cut off and replaced the heads of the turnips.

A Royal Engineer officer was posted to the camp to supervise the construction of permanent buildings for the Hospital and he also supervised the construction of an officers' mess. The joining fee was F Fr. 40 and a further F Fr. 2 per day. Friday evening was guest night. Stuckey's cubicle was also well fitted-out, made from timber scrounged by his servant, Wu.

The officers and Chinese were well fed, the latter tending their own vegetable gardens near the Hospital. Sir Sam Fay recounts an amusing episode :

'Some genius reported that special food in the form of cuttle-fish and old time eggs were necessary for health. Three shiploads reached Liverpool, but due to the smell were ordered to be sent to Dieppe, where many Chinese worked in the bakery. Being Northerners, they laughed, as they were grain eaters despising southern China's delicacies. The specialities were quickly dumped in the Channel.'

Another story is told of the deputation to an officer from coolies working in an ammunition factory. They requested extra food as they did not have the same opportunity to steal food as did the dockworkers.

In August the Chinese at the Hospital celebrated the 'Eighth Moon Festival' with races and a football match, won by the white staff, 2 - 1. Favourite platoon officers were invited to partake of specially prepared food.

In September 1917, Mr O'Neil from Manchuria, a Chinese speaker, planned to run the YMCA hut for the Chinese, being available for white personnel in the evenings. In early November the Chinese staged a Chinese play as an "opening ceremony" for the new YMCA and a collection by them raised a sum of F Fr. 680, saying that they could not take the benefits freely without contributing.

Stuckey remarked that at least two coolies won the Distinguished Service Medal for conspicuous bravery, going through a barrage three times to get food for their company when its supply had been cut off by enemy fire. Occasionally the coolies fought the war their own way and after one German air raid, killing some Chinese, their friends then killed several German prisoners before the sentries were aroused.

Maj. Gray was sympathetic towards the Chinese and believed in fairness towards them. He said that they were strangers in a strange land and homesick. He suggested the Chinese carpenters build a small pagoda, about 15 feet high, near the entrance to the Hospital. They painted it in bright colours. When Gray was promoted Lieut-Col. he was inundated with presentations - the dressers [medical assistants] presented him with a scroll, the cooks, an honorific umbrella and two flags, the Sanitary Gang, scrolls, etc.

Stuckey's time in France ended on 16th March 1919, when he left Noyelle-sur-Mer for Liverpool to join an Australian Ambulance Transport ship, working his way as Medical Officer, arriving in Melbourne on 15th May.

Sir Douglas Haig awarded Stuckey a Mention-in-Despatches for his work at the Hospital and, on the recommendation of Sir William Lister, Captain Stuckey was awarded the Order of the British Empire, Military Division. He said that this decoration really also belonged to the three doctors of the Ophthalmic staff at the Hospital, namely Captain H. Tomlin, MD and Captain C. A. Hughes, MD, D Ch O. and himself.

In 1920, Stuckey and his family returned to China, with periods of leave in Australia, leaving in 1938, after 33 years in China, returning via Korea to the UK and then, in 1939, returning to Australia.

Noyelles-sur-Mer

The HQ of the CLC was at Noyelles-sur-Mer. Being interested in the CLC and also curious as to whether there were any remains of the CLC camp there, my wife and I decided to visit this small village close to the River Somme and about one and a half miles inland from the sea.

We were very fortunate that, on our first day of arrival, we contacted Mr. C. Gallemant, the butcher and Mr. M. C. Landos, the baker [third generation], but we failed to locate any candlestick maker! They were very helpful, especially Mr. Landos, who, after enquiry, told us the locations of some buildings still standing used by members of the CLC. Unfortunately, there do not appear to be any remains of the CLC camp site nor their hospital, prison or detention centre and other buildings, all having reverted to farmland.

The Mairie is only open part-time and we again gained some useful advice and knowledge.

The Chateau de Fransu, the billet of Col. Fairfax, GHQ Adviser, CLC, is now a logis, mainly for families. During the Second World War it was the local German HQ. [see photograph]

The Chateau de Thesy in extensive grounds was the officers quarters and mess for the HQ, CLC. It is now being extensively renovated. It is privately owned. [see photograph]

The Hotel des Voyages, near the railway station, was the main café of the village and was patronised by British labour Corps NCOs. It is now the Hotel Restaurant Bernard. [see photograph]

When visiting, we stayed at the 16th century Auberge du Chateau de Nolette, about a mile from Noyelles-sur-Mer and within easy walking distance.

Outside the church at Noyelles-sur-Mer there is a memorial to those from the village who were killed. We saw some young children playing around it and I was moved to think that those named on the memorial did not die in vain so that future generations may live in peace and freedom.

On a later visit, a few weeks later, this time accompanied by Keith Stevens, we managed to visit the grounds of both the Chateau de Fransu and the Chateau de Thesy and spoke with the owner of the former and the caretaker of the latter. We also visited the site where possibly the Chinese hospital, with subordinate and ancillary buildings and detention centre had been established. French residents of a lone newish house almost opposite pointed out where they understood the hospital and detention centre had been.

An unexpected, and to date unexplained, observation was the pair of small white stone Chinese lions concreted on to plinths at a main cross-roads within Nolette, very close to Noyelles-sur-Mer. The inscriptions, in Chinese and French, explain that they were donated to commemorate the twinning, in 1994, of the small village of Noyelles-sur-Mer with the fishing town of Tunggang [Donggang] some forty

miles south of Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan. It was assumed that the twinning was linked in some way with the CLC cemetery but why a small town of Hokkien-speaking Chinese, ethnic Min Nan from Fujian province who during the era of the CLC were under Japanese colonial rule, would have any links with the deceased northern Chinese of the CLC, is hard to see. Perhaps the fishermen of Tung kang fled Shandong province ahead of the Communist advance in 1948 and settled there and have family memories of the labourers. Possibly some members of the CLC returned to China and they, or their off-spring, emigrated to Taiwan. Another possibility could be that they wished to remember and commemorate their fellow countrymen, now resting in a foreign country - it is a subject for further investigation. Two characters are carved into the side of the plinth of one, Yidou 益都 which simply means Of Benefit to All.

My wife and I hope to return, to explore the area more fully as we have enjoyed our brief visits.

Memorial

It is very surprising that after all the assistance the Chinese, together with their British officers and NCOs, rendered to the Allies, especially the British, there is still no specific memorial to them, whether they survived or died, other than the various cemeteries, mainly in Belgium and France, in which they lie buried. It is never too late to consider erecting a memorial at one of their major base camps, such as Noyelles-sur-Mer, but I suppose the Governments of the main countries concerned would not be interested in such a project.

On my visits to World War I battlefields in Belgium and France, and if the opportunity arises for me to visit a cemetery in which members of the CLC, whether officers, NCOs or Labourers are interred, then I pay my respects, considering that, even though there may be few graves or many, I am honouring all who gave up their lives.

Finale

Various articles, books and unpublished reminiscences have been used in the preparation of this article. It is not my intention, and never has been, for me to view the various files held at the Public Records

Office, Kew, London, to ascertain details from their records. This I leave to more qualified people. I thank the staff of the Reading Room at the Imperial War Museum for their help and assistance in locating and providing material in their archives from which I obtained some details for this article and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Maidenhead, for information supplied by them. To David Mahoney thanks are due for the various tit-bits sent to me. I also thank Mr. D. Fletcher, of the Tank Museum, Bovington, Dorset, and the Imperial War Museum, London, and also others listed for their permission to reproduce photographs from their archives. All other photographs were taken by myself. I would especially like to thank Keith Stevens for being my mentor and for all his assistance in deciphering the Chinese characters on the gravestones, translating the notebooks held at the Imperial War Museum in London, *together with his invaluable* comments and suggestions for this article. Without his encouragement and pressure this article would not have been written! Finally, I thank my wife, Claudine, for her patience, companionship and for acting as interpreter on our many visits and also for translating various articles written in her native French.

Any errors or omissions are my responsibility.

“What, indeed, were the Chinese doing in France during the First World War?”

Noyelles and Tungkang

As far as we were concerned the story began when we were touring the British military cemeteries in northern France where Chinese Labour Corps members had been buried during or immediately after the First World War. In one small village, Noyelles-sur-Mer, we were surprised to see a pair of Chinese white stone lions mounted on small plinths within the small village square - albeit it was close to what is known as the Chinese Cemetery in which the largest number of Chinese had been buried - and so we sought an explanation.

The immediate response was, as far as we could make out, that in 1994 the pair of Lions had arrived unannounced, borne by four Chinese who proclaimed that they were bringing them from the town of Tungkang in recognition of their twinning with the village of Noyelles on the Somme. Again, as far as we could understand, once the lions

had been handed over the Chinese departed and nothing further had been heard from them. A member of the Mayor's office in Noyelles asked whether we knew where Tung kang was as they had searched the map of China to locate it without success. They seemed quite surprised when they were informed that it is a small fishing town south of Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan. The French and Chinese inscriptions on the socles of the two Lions gave the date as 1984 and not 1994.

Our next move was to telephone the Tung kang Town Council Offices only to find that everyone, though very helpful, had no idea what we were talking about. The Mayor of Tung kang of the time, 1984, had long gone and was, they thought, dead. The more we thought about it the more puzzling it became with the only ideas we could come up with being the short semi-official drive in the 1980s by the Taipei government to widen their contacts with the western world and to remind foreigners of Taiwan's existence.

Some months later, the Mayor's Office in Noyelles came up with two documents. One was an undated invoice to the then Maire de Noyelles, M. Claude de Valicourt, covering the shipment of two 'marble of ramp' as they were called, 'Gift of No Commercial Value' being shipped from the port city of Kaohsiung to Noyelles via Le Havre. It was signed Tung kang Town, Town Office. The Bill of Lading, however, was dated 1st June 1985.

The other was a typed certificate in Chinese signed by both the Tung kang Mayor and the 'Nuo-ye-le' Mayor, with the French translation. Neither signature is legible, though the date clearly is 20th January 1984 [the 73rd year of the Republic and not 1994]. It is headed *Dijie Jiemei Zhen Mengshu* which literally means 'Wedded Sister Towns Alliance' and is addressed to the Noyelles's Mayor [Nuo-ye-le Shizhang]. The flowery language used, typical of such pronouncements, declared everlasting friendship between the people of Noyelles and people of the Republic of China [Taiwan] and good wishes for future co-operation for mutual understanding. The significant line, however, thanks the people of Noyelles for their respect for the graves of the Chinese labourers in the Chinese cemetery.

The French version of the Chinese produced 'Pledge,' freely translated, also mentions the Chinese cemetery. The date in 1984 is

indistinct. It reads:

'The Twinning Pledge between the Town Halls of Noyelles-sur-Mer and Tungkang, in response to the deep aspirations and genuine needs of our nations, is based on an affinity since the beginning of the century between Noyelles and the Chinese, and that the Chinese cemetery has become the symbol of freedom and fraternity, representing the common goal pursued by the French and Chinese nations.'

'Considering that closer co-operation between our two nations is useful and necessary for human progress **TODAY WE UNDERTAKE THE SOLEMN PLEDGE** to maintain permanent links between our two Town Councils; to encourage exchanges in all forms between their inhabitants to develop a living fraternity; and to combine our efforts to encourage, to the full, a better mutual understanding of our two nations.'

Appendix A to CLC In France

I was fortunate to receive a letter from Mrs. C M. Gibb, who now lives in Glasgow, with recollections of her short stay at Noyelles when her father was serving with the CLC

Her father, John M. Morrison, was called up in 1916 and trained with the Scottish Rifles. He was commissioned and stationed in Glasgow where he was fortunate enough to live at home. For the final battles of the war he was found to be unfit for active service and was posted to the CLC. [see photograph] With Mrs Gibb's kind permission, I can do no better than quote her letter dated 28 February, 2001, in full.

My father, John M. Morrison, was a lieutenant in the Highland Light Infantry and from the spring of 1918 until the late summer of 1919 was with No 8 CLC. My father's tartan trews and glengarry fascinated the Chinese. They pronounced his name as 'Modarn.' In the summer of 1919 the British officers were allowed to bring their families out to France and as a small girl of seven I spent nearly four weeks (from August 17th to September 10th.) with my father, mainly so far as I remember at Noyelles. I remember being introduced to the Chinese who seemed to me to be enormous men with very large grins, and I also remember my mother and I watching them from the hotel marching away carrying the goods they had bought (one man was marching with a very large gilt bird cage). A senior British officer with red tabs was also watching with tears rolling down his cheeks, he had spent much of his life in China and called the Chinese his 'children.'

When my father used to talk in later life about his time with the Chinese he expressed nothing but admiration for them, and gave the impression that he and the other British officers regarded the Chinese as being superior both physically and mentally to any of the other labour units either European or non-European. The interpreter with No. 8 CLC was a Mr. Wong who came from Shanghai and spoke a number of languages. Much to the amusement of my father's Commanding Officer, Captain Greenhill, Mr. Wong was not only essential for communicating with the Chinese but also for communicating with the French. The Cook was a very experienced and gifted man who was stolen by a visiting

Staff Officer for the HQ mess. The Head Ganger was from Tsinan [Jinan] in Shantung, under him were I think four Gangers, and the Labourers were all from Northern China, my father said they were all tall men and physically very strong and hardy. While clearing munitions one of them had been very badly injured when he pulled the pin from a grenade out of curiosity, and to the amazement of the British was able to return to work after a few weeks. My father said that for minor ailments the Chinese practised acupuncture on each other using a needle stuck in a cork.

The unit my father joined moved backwards and forwards with the last German Offensive of the War, he had great trouble finding them initially, and after the Armistice seemed to work mainly in the area around Amiens remaking roads, clearing munitions, collecting corpses, destroying animal corpses, clearing wells, and digging ditches to restore the drainage to arable land. It was a priority that the local French farmers were able to plant their fields as soon as possible as the population who had been behind the German lines were close to starvation. The condition of some of the French children in these areas made a deep impression on my father and on the Chinese who seemed very fond of children and used to give them their rations.

Although the Chinese were willing to work waist deep in water, they often refused to work when it was raining much to everyone's exasperation. One who insisted on working while holding an umbrella in one hand had it broken over his back by a Ganger. Punishment was either by fining or flogging. My father asked the Head Ganger which was better, and the Head Ganger assured him that since they were all there to make money flogging was better. The Labourers, said the Head Ganger, would resent a fine but a flogging would be nothing to them. My father said this was borne out by one of the Officers who refused to flog on principle being chased down a road by a crowd of angry Chinese. A flogging would be administered by a Ganger and would be watched by the other Labourers who stood laughing at the victim's stupidity at being caught. The man who was tied to a post, often had wet tea leaves poured over his head. Wherever the Chinese went there was a bonfire with tea brewing.

One of the Officers with the unit, a Mr. Ferguson, was robbed and murdered while off-duty by European labourers who had been paid off

and left to fend for themselves (my father believed they were Spaniards). The Chinese were very fond of Mr. Ferguson and searched for him when he went missing. If they had found those who had committed the crime they would not have lived very long, but by the time my mother and I, and Mrs. Jarvis who was the wife of another Officer arrived in France the security in the area must have improved. We were meant to be there for several months, but the Chinese were marched off and my father demobbed earlier than expected. One of the Labourers was a very skilled carver and my father brought home as souvenirs two German shell cases the man had decorated with ornamental dragons using a razor, and a silver ring he had beaten out of a French coin which was decorated with Chinese characters. He was also presented with a gold half-hunter watch now belonging to my nephew, another John Morrison. My father asked Mr. Wong what would happen to the men when they got home, and Mr. Wong replied that if they didn't gamble their money away on the journey they would be important men in their villages. He also said that what worried him most about the future were the "Yellowmen," by which he meant the Japanese.

Mrs Gibb told me that she remembers a show put on by the CLC for the troops. She recalls that, as the only child of a British officer in the camp, she was rather intimidated when they came and shook her hand, as they were so big!

Appendix B to CLC in France

I am indebted to Claudine, my wife, for translating a booklet I received from Noyelles-sur-Mer, in which there are some personal reminiscences and a few facts, these from a French point of view, concerning life at that time and the CLC.

I quote :

Work conditions were sometimes extremely dangerous. Deaths also occurred from epidemics such as "Spanish flu" at the end of the war and poor hygienic living conditions, with many dying at Camp No. 3 at Noyelles-sur-Mer.

Uniform of the CLC appeared [to the French] bizarre in being blue padded jacket, with funny hats, but not as funny as the kepi.

The Chinese adored to eat apples and so the French locals, as usual, exploited this in charging high prices.

The hospital in the Camp appeared to resemble a park for madmen. On the night of 23rd May 1918, when the munitions dump at Saigneville was bombed, this unsettled some members of the CLC who destroyed the barbed wire surrounding their camp and escaped, being found after a few days.

Mme Nataly Salle [born 1900] remembers the Chinese and said that, due to bad treatment meted out to them, no one wished to speak.

The grandparents of Mme Félicienne Bruvy, stated that they were savages, mad and dangerous. They were lazy, greasy, stupid and ugly. They also apparently murdered her grandparents.

Mme Salle said that many Chinese died from bad treatment. 'The Gestapo never invented anything like this 25 years later'. But Mme Salle, whose husband, Valery, worked in the cemetery for 15 years said "It was the war". 'They would be beaten like dogs by the guards and the English police. They removed their shoes, undressed them and told them to lie on tables where they were whipped until they bled. And then they would be scrubbed with a brush and hot water to cover

the scars of the beating. They would then be sent to the camp hospital, where a kind Scottish doctor, Major Gray, would do his best to treat them...'

'Dead of what? Disease, only attended to when too late. Those who succumbed to harsh treatment, beatings, poor nourishment, the climate and cold. I saw one tied to a tree and savagely beaten. He died. But why such harsh treatment? Because they were not allowed to leave camp to walk in the village. Also, there were problems with the [French] women. This has always been the same throughout history. Some managed to escape at night, for one night. And at dawn, instead of returning to camp, where they knew they would be beaten to death, they would rather hide in the fields, buried in haystacks, where they would be found, weeks later, dead of hunger and cold. After the war many skeletons were found when the camp was dismantled. Many preferred to bury themselves alive rather than to return to the "hell of Nolette." They were buried like animals, standing up, especially at first. Often their heads could be seen. It was only later that gravestones were arranged and maintained properly to erase the awful memories and so that the public could be kept in blissful ignorance of what really happened.'

Monsieur Réveillon recounts : 'In 1917 I was 13 years old. Nobody by then paid any attention to French or English soldiers. But the whole population assisted on the arrival of these "Little Yellow Men" with complete bewilderment. They were odd, with their plait down the back, their padded blue sleeveless clothes, puffed-up trousers and slippers of the same material, which did not appear to have a sole and on which they walked silently.'

'On arrival, the Chinese were directed to the Camp located on both sides of the road to Saily. They live here, slightly in retreat where they have built a pagoda to pray. Only 2 street sweepers, always the same two, have contact with the villagers. Silently, they warm themselves in Mr Réveillon's father's forge. Other workers clean the stables where the English keep their horses. A bamboo stick in one hand, a basket in the other, they remove the manure. They also visit the shopkeeper, who is not always honest and sell them outdated stock - hats, belts - at sometimes inflated prices. Apart from these rare contacts, the villagers did not approach the Chinese whose smile, they thought,

was rather naïve, like the tall Chinese who constantly laughed aloud for no reason.' Mme Réveillon, only 12 years old, did prefer the Indian cavalry, they being far more elegant.

The Camp was dismantled after the Armistice in 1919 and the only witness to this extraordinary story is the Noyelles-sur-Mer cemetery and its 838 graves.

Appendix C [1]

**Members of the Chinese Labour Corps buried or
commemorated
other than in Belgium and France
(As shown on the lists provided by the CWGC
and not mentioned in this article)**

Alexandria [Hadra] War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt

Quang Lung-ye [60919] 17 th May 1919

Hong Kong Cemetery

Capt W Greenhill 18th February 1920

Sai Wan [China] Memorial

Medical Officer Alexander Kidd Baxter, RAMC att CLC
14th March 1918

Civilian Pascoe Thornton, CLC 10th April 1917

Taranto Town Cemetery Extension, Italy

Soot Chin [1469] 62nd Company CLC 26th June 1918

Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore

Capt T L Bryson, Labour Corps att CLC 16th April 1919

Those buried in the UK, the graves of whom I have not visited, [as shown on the lists provided by the CWGC and also not mentioned in this article]

Llanberis [St Peris] Churchyard, Carnarvonshire

Pte William Owen, Royal Welch Fusiliers, tfr to Sgt CLC
11 April 1921

84

Minster [Thanet] Cemetery, Kent

Cpl F E J Sewell, Royal Bucks Hussars, tfr to Cpl 80th Company
CLC 20th October 1918

Appendix C [2]

Plymouth [Efford] Cemetery, Devon

Chen Chu-chieng	10216	29 th June 1917
Shun Yu-tsai	25693	22 nd August 1917
Sung Ching-lung	11078	7 th July 1917
Wang Feng-chu	20012	29 th July 1917
Wang Pu-sheng	21470	3 rd July 1917
Wang Te-fu	11084	3 rd July 1917
Wu Shieng-sheng ¹⁴	11094	28 th June 1917
Yang Wu-liu	25489	3 rd August 1917

Salford [Weaste] Cemetery, Lancashire

Sgt P V R Bowen Lancashire Fusiliers tfd CLC
15th March 1921

Sheffield [Burngreave] Cemetery, Yorkshire

2/Lt Albert Edward Slaney General List att 31st Company CLC
died of sickness 3rd October 1917

St Pancras Cemetery, Middlesex

Sgt W A Burr 2nd Bn Middlesex Regt
tfd 160th Company CLC 31st October 1918

Torquay Cemetery and Extension, Devon

2/Lt Albert Strachan Labour Corps att CLC 30th October 1918

**Some Officers appointed to serve at various times
with the Chinese Labour Corps
at Noyelles-sur -Mer**

GHQ Adviser Chinese Labour	Col Bryan Charles Fairfax CMG
Asst GHQ Adviser Chinese Labour	Lt Col Richard Ireland Purdon
at HQ CLC	
Adjutant HQ CLC	2/Lt [temp. Capt] Howard Norman Cole
OC The Depôt CLC	Major Harold Nicolson Brinson DSO, MC
2i/c The Depôt CLC	Major Edward Charles Fry
Intelligence Officer The Depôt CLC	Capt Cecil Folder Lees
QM The Depôt CLC	Lt (QM) James Henry Elliott MBE
Adjutant The Depôt CLC	Lt David Monro Peattie OBE
Records Office CLC	Lt James Sinclair Hay
	Lt [acting Major] Henry Stuart Weigall
OC Depôt Hospital CLC	Major [temp] (acting Lt Col) William Henry
	Graham Aspland MD, FRCS, RAMC

OC Chinese Hospitals

Major [temp] Stafford
Mouritz Cox MD RAMC

Major [temp] (Acting Lt Col)
George Douglas

Gray OBE, MD, RAMC

Hospital CLC

Ophthalmic Dept. Eye Specialists

Capt Edward Joseph
Stuckey MB, BSc, OBE

Capt H Tomlin MD

Capt G A Hughes MD DChO

Acting Registrar and Surgeon

Earnest Peill

and CO Chinese Personnel

Capt Snell

Lt Little [Quartermaster]

Gordon Struthers [Canadian]

Reeds [Canadian]

Auld [Canadian]

Matthews [pathologist]
[Australian]

Richardson [American]

Bradley [Shanghai]

Appx E to CLC in France

Chinese Labour Corps Cemeteries

Details from list of names from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, showing the graves of labourers and of other nationals who were serving with or attached to the CLC.

This list does not include names on memorials.

	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Other nationals</i> (non-Chinese)
BELGIUM		
Brandhoek New Military No 3, Ieper	1	
Croonaert Chapel, Heuvelland	1	
Dozinghem Military, Poperinge	3	2
Gwalia, Ieper	4	
Haringhe (Bandaghem) Military, Poperinge	4	
Kezelberg Military, Wevelgem	1	
Klein-Vierstraat British, Heuvelland	1	
Kortrijk (St Jean) Communal, Kortrijk	8	
Lijssenthoek Military, Poperinge	35	3
Mendinghem Military, Poperinge	8	
New Irish Farm, Ieper	7	
Poperinge New Military, Poperinge	1	
Poperinge Old Military, Poperinge	1	
Reninghelst New Military, Poperinge	7	
Westoutre British, Heuvelland	3	
CANADA		
Halifax (Fort Massey), Nova Scotia		1
EGYPT		
Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery,	1	
FRANCE		

Abbeville Communal Extension, Somme		7
Albert French National, Somme	1	
Arques-La-Bataille British, Seine-Maritime	71	
Ascq Communal, Nord	4	
Auberchicourt British, Nord	3	
Ayette British, Pas de Calais	1	
Ayette Indian and Chinese, Pas de Calais	34	
Bagneux British, Gezaincourt, Somme	2	
Bailleul Communal Extension, Nord	31	
Beaulencourt British, Ligny-Thillois, Pas de Calais	14	
Bellicourt British, Aisne	3	1
Blargies Communal Extension, Oise	21	1
<i>Bourlon Wood, Pas de Calais</i>	3	
Caudry British, Nord	19	
Charmes Military, Essegney, Vosges	4	1
Chocques Military, Pas de Calais	16	
Croisilles British, Pas de Calais	2	
Cross Roads, Nord	2	
Daours Communal Extension, Somme	6	
Dernancourt Communal Extension, Somme	3	
Don Communal, Annoeullin, Nord	2	
Douai British, Cuincy, Nord	3	
Doullens Communal Extension No2, Somme	1	
Duisans British, Etrun, Pas de Calais	1	2
Ebblinghem Military, Nord	1	
Etaples Military, Pas de Calais	1	4
Fonquevillers Military, Pas de Calais	2	
Fosse No 10 Communal Extension, Sains-en-Gohelle, Pas de Calais	49	
Gezaincourt Communal Extension, Somme	4	
Haute-Avesnes British, Pas de Calais	12	
Hazebrouck Communal, Nord	1	
Huby-St Leu British, Pas de Calais	1	
Lapugnoy Military, Pas de Calais		5
Le Fermont Military, Pas de Calais	2	
Le Portel Communal, Pas de Calais	1	
Le Qusenoy Communal Extension, Nord	2	
Les Baraques Military, Sangatte, Pas de Calais	197	4
Les Rues-des-Vignes Communal, Nord	1	
Lille Southern, Nord	2	2

Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir, Pas de Calais	86	3
Maroeuil British, Pas de Calais	1	
Maroilles Communal, Nord	1	
Mazargues War, Marseilles, Bouches-du-Rhone	8	
Metz-en-Couture Communal		
British Extension, Pas de Calais	1	
Mondicourt Communal, Pas de Calais	1	
Noyelles-sur-Mer Chinese Cemetery, Somme	838	
Noyelles-sur-Mer Chinese Memorial, Somme	41	
Orival Wood, Flesquieres, Nord	1	
Outtersteene Communal Extension, Bailleul, Nord	1	
Pernes British, Pas de Calais	2	
Perreuse Chateau Franco British National, <i>Seine-et-Marne</i>		1
Pommereuil British, Nord	1	
Queant Communal British		
Extension, Pas de Calais	1	
Quirrieu British, Somme	1	
Ramillies British, Nord	1	
Rosieres Communal Extension, Somme	1	
Ruminghem Chinese, Pas de Calais	75	
Solesmes British, Nord	1	
St Andre Communal, Nord	3	
StEtienne-au-Mont Communal, Pas de Calais	147	
St Pierre, Amiens, Somme	1	
St Sever Extension, Rouen, Seine-Maritime	44	4
St Marie, Le Havre, Seine-Maritime	1	5
Terlincthun British, Wimelle, Pas de Calais	3	
Tincourt New British, Somme	57	1
Tourcoing (Pont-Neuville) Communal, Nord	3	
Vadencourt British, Maiseemy, Aisne	4	
Villers-Carbonnel Communal, Somme	3	
HONG KONG		
Hong Kong Cemetery		1
Sai Wan (China) Memorial		1
ITALY		
Taranto Town Cemetery Extension	1	

SINGAPORE

Kranji War Cemetery	1	
---------------------	---	--

UNITED KINGDOM

Colchester Cemetery, Essex		1
Liverpool (Anfield) Cemetery, Lancashire	3	
Llanberis (St Peris) Churchyard, Carnarvonshire		1
Minster (Thanet) Cemetery, Kent		1
Plymouth (Efford) Cemetery, Devon	8	
Salford (Weaste) Cemetery, Lancashire		1
Sheffield (Burngrave) Cemetery, Yorkshire		1
Shorncliffe Military Cemetery, Folkestone, Kent	6	
St Pancras Cemetery, Middlesex		1
Torquay Cemetery and Extension, Devon		1
Total	1952	58

Bibliography

- Anonymous : *Evaluation of Chinese Labour at Tank Central Workshops* : Unpublished Held at the Tank Museum, Bovington, Dorset.
- Cormack, G E : *War Times in Russia* [Unpublished] - held in the Imperial War Museum : London
- Chielens, P and Putkowski, J : *Unquiet Graves* : Francis Boutle Publishers : 2000
- Directorate of Labour : Notes for Officers of Labour Companies : General Head Quarters : 2 April 1917
- Doe, D H : Pocket Diary [unpublished] held in the Imperial War Museum : London
- Drage, Charles : *Two-Gun Cohen* : Jonathan Cape : 1954
- Fawcett, B. C : *First World War Labour Corps Cemeteries in Flanders* : Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society : Vol. 38 : 1999

- Fisher, W M : *Dr E J Stuckey and the Chinese Hospital at Noyelles-sur-Mer. A biographical fragment of World War 1* : unpublished : BA Hons. Thesis at Monarsh University : 1984
- Griffin, N J : *The Use of Chinese Labour by the British Army* : PhD thesis, University of Oklahoma : 1973 - held by the Imperial War Museum, London
- ibid. : *Britain's Chinese Labour Corps in World War 1* : Military Affairs : vol.XXXX No. 3 [Oct 1976]
- Jones, A. Philip : *Britain's Search for Chinese Co-operation in the First World War* : Garland Publishing Inc. : New York and London : 1986
- Klein, Daryl : *With the Chinks* : Bodley Head : ca. 1918
- Loisel, M : *La Chine de l'Empire Celeste [Chine des Han] en Terre Française - Picardie* : 1995
- Lucas, C : *The Empire at War*
- Maxwell, J : *The Chinese Labour Corps : A précis of their participation in World War* : Unpublished
- Mellor, Norman : *With the Chinese Labour Corps - France 1918*
- Paton, Alec : *Occasional Gunfire, Private War Diary of a Siege Gunner* : Bishop-Laggett Publishing : London : 1998
- Putkowski, J : *British Army Mutineers 1914-1922* : Francis Boutle Publishers : 1998
- Stevens, Keith : *British Chinese Labour Corps Labourers Buried in England* : Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society : Vol. 29 : 1989
- Summerskill, M : *China on the Western Front* : pub by Michael Summerskill : London : 1982

Waters, D. D : *The Chinese labour Corps in the First World War : Labourers buried in France* : Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society : Vol. 35 : 1995

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission,
2 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 7DX
United Kingdom
Tel: 44 - 1628 634221 Fax : 44 - 1628 771208

Imperial War Museum
Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ
Tel. 020 7416 5000

NOTES

- ¹ Liang Shiyi [1869-1933]. Chinese government official and financier. Under the Qing government, amongst his financial dealings, he helped found the **Bank of Communications** [1907]. He was **President of the Board of Communications** [1912], **Chief Secretary in the Presidential Office** and **General Manager of the Bank of Communications**, acting **Finance Minister** [1913-1915]; **Director-General of the National Revenue Administration** and **Director-General of the Domestic Loans Office**. He was linked with **Yuan Shikai** and in 1916 fled to Hong Kong. He formed the **Wei Min Corporation** for the recruitment of Chinese labourers to serve in France, as a proponent of China's entry into the war. Returning to Beijing in 1918, he was made **Chairman of the Board of the Bank of Communications**; **Speaker of the National Assembly**; **Director of the Domestic Loan Bureau** [1920]; and **Prime Minister** [1921-1922]. After exile [1922-1925] he again served in the Beijing Government under both **Duan Jirui** and **Zhang Zuolin**. He retired to Hong Kong in 1928 after the Northern Expedition reached Beijing.
- ² This was usually referred to by "real" soldiers as the **Crosse and Blackwells**, as this British provision company had a very similar crest.
- ³ Lt Col. **Bryan Charles Fairfax**, a Yorkshireman, was born on 12th September 1873, the second son of Col. T.F. [or L ?] Fairfax of the Grenadier Guards and passed through the **Royal Military College, Sandhurst**, being commissioned on 8th March 1893 into the **Durham Light Infantry [DLI]** He was posted to the 2nd Battalion, then serving in India. In 1898 he volunteered for service with the newly raised 1st Battalion, **The Chinese Regiment of Infantry**, stationed in **Weihai**

Wei, and saw active service in the Third China War, “The Boxer Rising” [10th June-31st December 1900]. In 1901 he was posted to South Africa to serve with the mounted infantry, taking part in operations in Cape Colony and the Transvaal [December] and the Orange Free State [January to May 1902]. From 1904 to 1908 he was appointed as Inspector of Chinese Labour in the Transvaal. He was the Military Secretary to the Governor of Madras in 1907, and in May 1914 he transferred to the Reserve of Officers with the rank of Major, but was recalled in August 1914 serving again with the DLI before being transferred to the Royal Flying Corps and then transferring back again to the infantry, commanding 17th Battalion of the King’s [Liverpool] Regiment [Pals] before being severely wounded and gassed at Trones Wood in July 1916, being invalided home in early August 1916 aboard the *Asturias*. He was again gassed, after returning to France on the night of the 29th July 1917 at Guillemont. He established the HQ for the CLC at Noyelles in 1917, staying at the villa, with an unusual name of “Daisy Cottage”, serving as GHQ Adviser Chinese Labour, from 1917 to 1919. During World War II he was a Zone Commander for the Yorkshire Home Guard and died on 24th January 1950 at the age of 76.

- ⁴ *pai* is a section and *tou* is a head or boss.
- ⁵ Decauville was a French company that manufactured a portable light railway system much used by the military. It was almost a full-size [but narrow gauge] railway system which could be laid down and picked up like the old model toy train sets.
- ⁶ The difference between Male and Female tanks was based on the type of weapons they carried. Male tanks, like “Fan-tan,” carried a pair of 57mm cannon, one on each side, together with two or three auxiliary machine-guns. Female tanks only carried machine-guns, two each side and one at the front which, in First World War terms made them more dangerous than their male counterparts. [The female being deadlier than the male!]
- ⁷ Numbers after names or in the text refer to the man’s service number.
- ⁸ Demeestre, Matthieu : article in a French magazine
- ⁹ Mellor, Norman : *With the Chinese Labour Corps - France 1918*
- ¹⁰ The CWGC, in a written reply to the author, stated that the fifth phrase used on CLC headstones is translated as “True till death”, but the characters used would



Chinese labourer at dinner near Lillers 11/3/1918
(by courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London, Q10736)



Chinese New Year celebrations in a Labour Camp, Noyelles-Sur-Mer, France 11/2/1918
(by courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London, Q8485)



Celebration of Chinese New Year's day at the Chinese Labour Corps Camp at
Noyelles Sur Mer France 11/2/1918
(by courtesy of the Imperial War Museum London, Q9848)

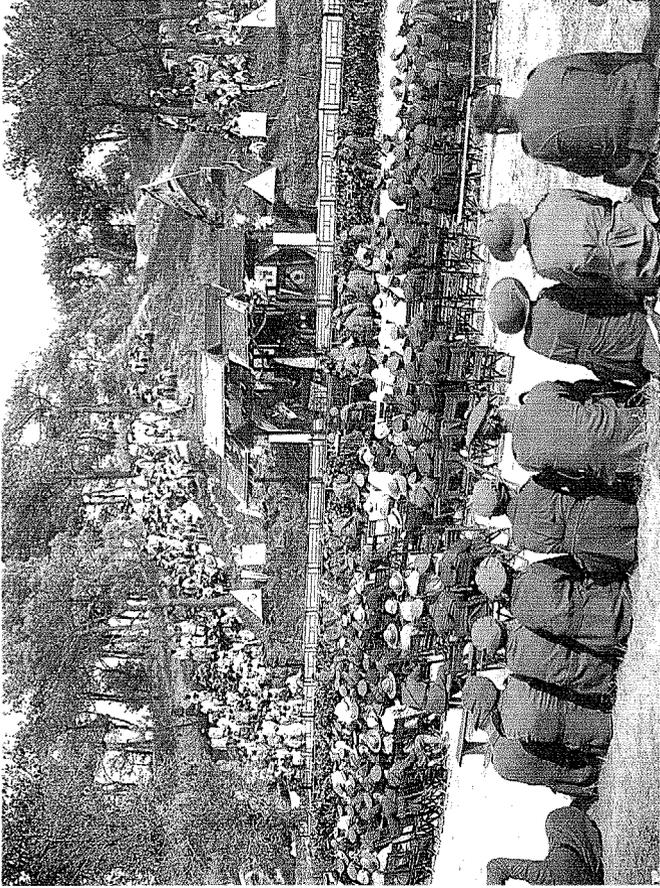


Men of the Chinese Labour Corps interested in the official cinematographer who is taking a record of the New Year celebrations at the Labour Corps Camp at Noyelles-Sur-Mer 11/2/1918

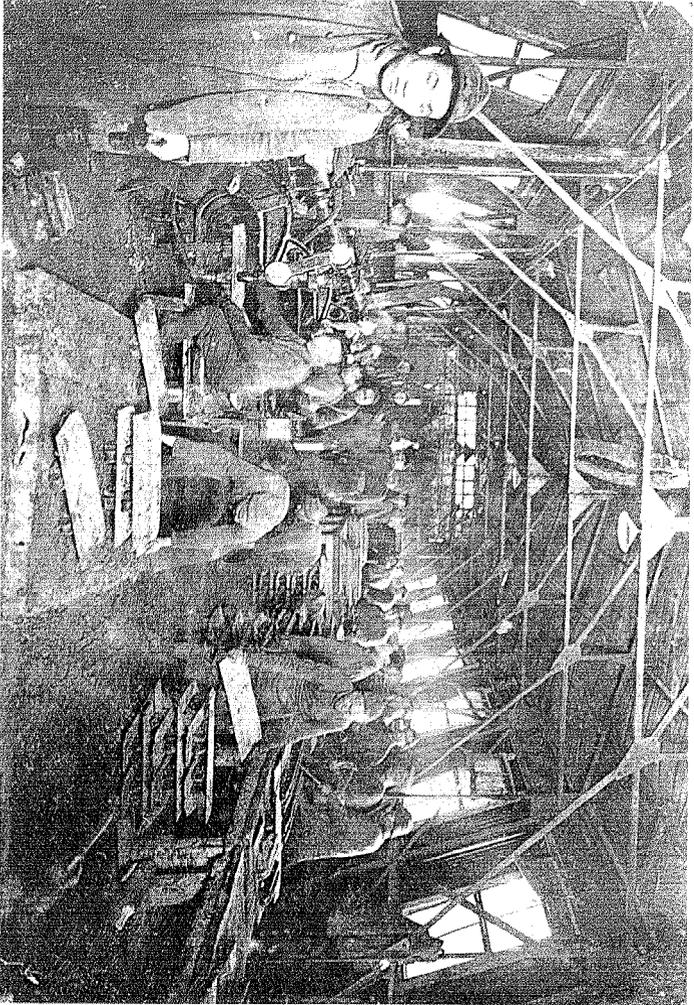
(by courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London, Q10260)



The funeral of Rittmeister Baron M. Von Richtheren at Bertanales 22/4/1918. The air mechanics filling up the grave are from No. 3 SQDN Australian Flying Corps.
(by courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London. Q10922)



Entertainment at the open air theatre of the Labour Corps at Enaples, France
23/6/1918
(by courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London, Q9007)

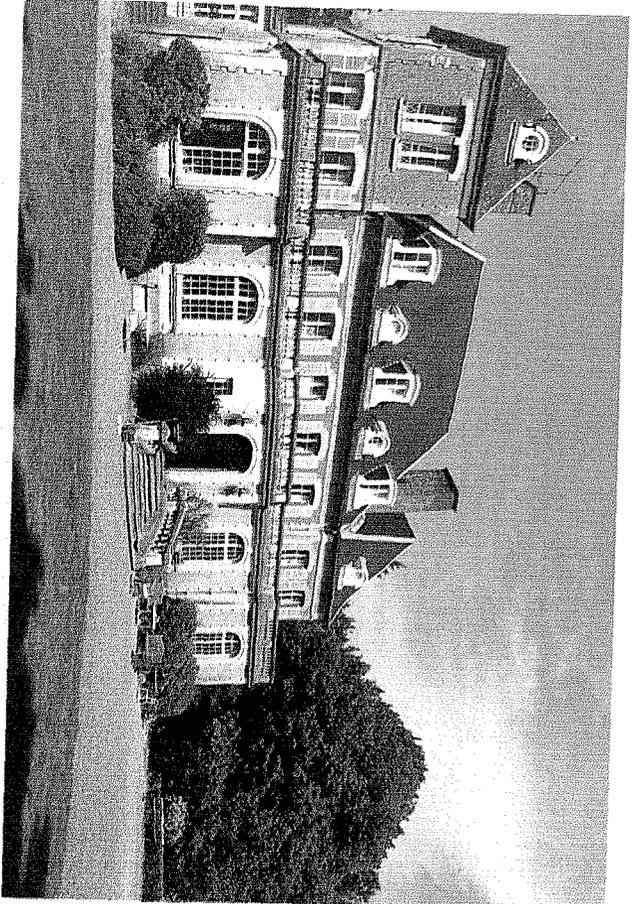


Chinese riveters at work at Tank Corps Central Workshops, Teneur, France, 51st CLC.
(by courtesy of the Tank Museum, Bovington, Dorset, 899/E1)

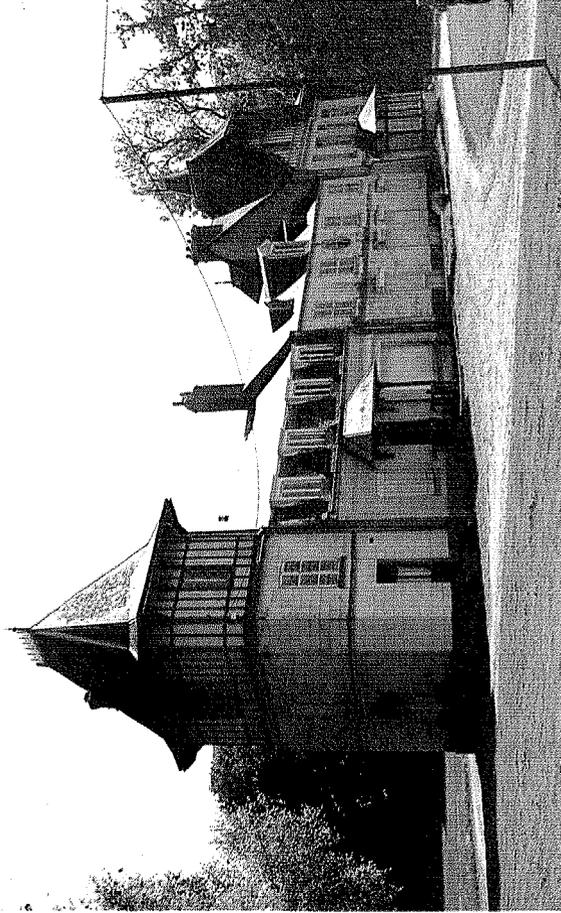


Chinese Labour Corps member Song Xinfeng-18693-Proven, December, 1917.

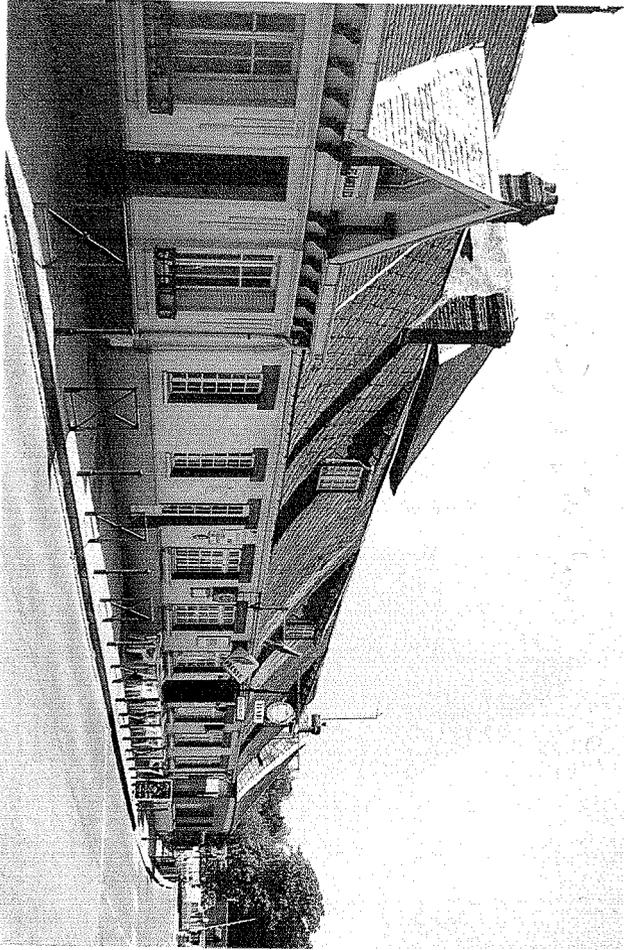
(by the courtesy of the "In Flanders Field " Museum, Ypres, Belgium)



Le Chateau De Fransu, Noyelles-Sur-Mer, France. The former billet and Hq of Lt Col
B C Fairfax, Gdq Abvisere, CLC.
May 2001



Le Chateau De They, Noyelles-Sur-Mer, France. The former Officers Quarters and Mess of the Hq, CLC, May 2001



Hotel restaurant Bernard, formerly Le Hotel Des Voyages, Noyelles-Sur-Mer and the main cafe of the village, patronised by the British NCOS of the CIC May 2001



L/CPL Stuart McKay (pipes and drums, 1st BN Scots guards) playing a Lament at the shooting post, Town Hall, Poperinge, Belgium. November 2000



Grave of Wang Chin Chih (44735) (Shot at dawn).
Poperinge Old Military Cemetery, Belgium.

November 2000



Wooden carves plaque of the deer fighting, presents to GE CORMACK by members of the CLC in appreciation for his attention of their SICR COMRADE. held in the Imperial War Museum.

March 2001



Carved clay lion, made by a member of the CLC No
53279. Held in the imperial war museum, London.

March 2001



Lt J.M Morrison, father of Mrs C.M. Gibb, with his
interpreter, Mr Wong No. 8 Company CLC
(by courtesy of Mrs. C.M. Gibb)