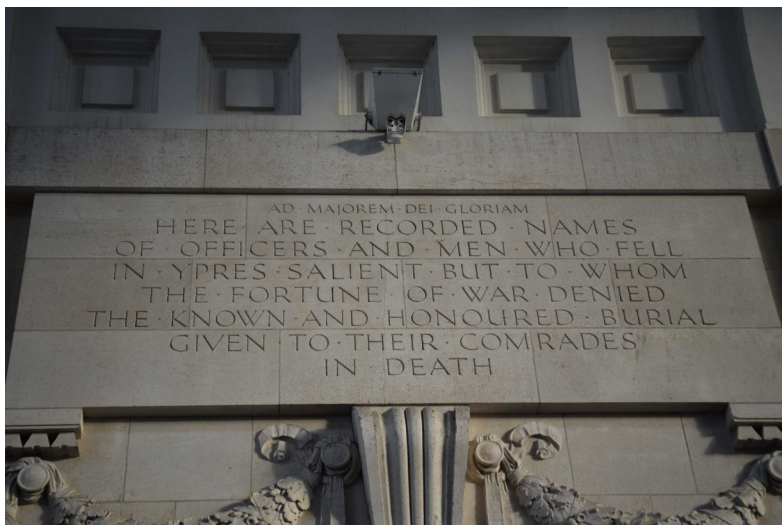


Trip to Menin Gate Belgium May 2022

Friday 6th May 2022

At 6:00pm we all met in the hotel lobby to make our way to an extremely special event that, although many of us had been on this trip before, we had never visited the Menin Gate in the village of Leper, to local battlefield of Ypres, for the ceremony that has taken place since the end of the First World War, including during the period of the Covid Lockdown by special permission of the Belgian Prime Minister.



The organiser of the trip, W.Bro Kevin Kemp, had made contact with the Last Post Association based in Belgium, who were responsible for the Menin Gate and the evening tribute to the fallen, to ask if we could take part in the ceremony on this evening, this was granted and four of our party, dressed as Freemasons, wearing collars were able to lay a wreath in memory of the fallen.

Attention was drawn to the start of the ceremony by a bugle call, then the Last Post was played by the Buglers after which, W.Bro Peter Guise, Current Worshipful Master of the Septem Lodge, W.Bro Mark Bassant, APGM, W.Bro David Graeme ProvGSec and W.Bro Kevin Kemp, PPrDepGReg, Secretary of the Septem Lodge, formed the escort to the Worshipful Master as the Wreath was laid.

Every member of the party was visibly moved by the ceremony, but as the only armed forces veteran, W.Bro Kevin was pleased to see the respect and support that the group had given to make this possible, as a mark of respect to the fallen men who could not come home.



Many of the party were not aware that the thousands of names engraved in to the beautiful stonework of the Menin Gate represented the fact that these men had made that ultimate sacrifice, but they had never been found, nor did they have a marked grave. Some of the photographs will show you this, but the size of the Menin Gate which is covered with names, is truly astounding.

The amount of people who attended the ceremony is amazing, from small children to older veterans, everybody came and paid their respects.



The camaraderie that was shown, is incredible, with many people coming to us and shaking our hands with a greeting of "Hello Brother" other Freemasons in the crowds of people from Warwickshire, Suffolk, Norfolk and the Midlands who were just paying their respects, but we only discovered after the ceremony that the first party to lay a wreath were from the 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment and it was the Dover Branch of the Parachute Association, as always, during conversations, a potential new candidate was found amongst one of these veterans.



Additional Photographs of the Trip to Menin Gate Belgium May 2022

