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Members of the Keeping the Memory Alive tour left a row of Canadian flags atop the dyke that holds the sea back at the Scheldt Estuary in the Netherlands, while visiting the area earlier this week. Members of the tour had fathers fighting in that area during the fall of 1944. (Right) Dave and Connie McMenemy of Georgetown laid a wreath at the Memorial erected to the efforts of the Highland Light Infantry (HLI) at the Scheldt Estuary. Their late father and father-in-law, Bob McMenemy of Georgetown, fought with the HLI 1944, during the fighting in Holland.


Visit to historic battle sites an overwhelming experience

The town of Ieper in Belgium has a history bathed in conflict over the centuries, the First World War being the most significant.

In those days it was called Ypres, and I feel a certain attachment to this place—I personally knew two First World War veterans who fought there.

One was Gilbert English, who I interviewed in 1992 when he was 102 years old, the other was Jim Noble, who lived in Limehouse when I was a kid.

Gilbert told me how he first saw action in Ypres in 1916. Though he was wounded at the Somme and out of action for seven months, he returned to see action at Mons in Belgium, where he was when the Armistice was signed in 1918.

**Keeping the
Memory Alive**

Ted Brown
...in France

Jim Noble wasn't so lucky. He was gassed at Ypres, and although he lived to be a fairly ripe old age, he hacked up phlegm all his life as a result of the gassing.

All at Ypres, now called Ieper.

Today, almost 90 years later, the farmers in the area still plough up shell casings and artillery shells as they plough their fields—an indication of the intensity of the shelling the soldiers endured, nearly 90 years ago.

And I saw it first-hand.

The next leg of the trip we saw an equally interesting place—Juno Beach. Three local veterans I've known for years landed at Juno Beach.

Both Bob McMenemy and Trevor Williams came ashore amid heavy fire on the morning of D-Day, June 6, 1944, while Tom Given landed D-Day plus six (June 12) and fought his way through France until he was wounded. All were members of the Highland Light Infantry.

Now only Tom remains.

I had the privilege of standing on Juno Beach with some of the children of McMenemy and Williams— Dave McMenemy and Hugh and Jane Williams—to share a special moment as they looked out to sea at the exact place their fathers had come ashore nearly 61 years ago.

It was quite a feeling for me, and must have been simply indescribable for them.

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