



THE LOCHNAGAR CRATER MEMORIAL

Pilgrimage: Tom Easton's visits to his friends at Bécourt

Pte. Tom Easton, No 1000, 21st Northumberland Fusiliers (2nd Tyneside Scottish) had a special affiliation with the Lochnagar Crater. He fought hereabouts on the 1st July 1916 and after the war made many pilgrimages to France with the 34th Division Officers' Club, and later in the 1970s with George Harwood and Richard Dunning. He made his last trip in 1980 shortly before he died.

But for each visit to the Lochnagar Crater, another was also made to a place nearby equally poignant and close to his heart.

From his base in Albert, he would quietly walk the two miles up to Bécourt and the CWGC Military Cemetery there. On finding the neat row of headstones so special to him, he would softly speak to the graves of his best mates, all killed shortly before the battle. Each of whom, all those years before, he had buried here side by side. For he had made a vow to care for their kith and kin back home, and on every pilgrimage, he would regale them with news of their families and their towns and villages in Northumberland. With tears in his eyes but warmth and cheer in his voice, he spent many hours of his long life at that special place, in communion with his departed friends.

What Tom started is continued now by the Friends of Lochnagar. Late in the evening on each 1st July, Friends make a similar journey up to the CWGC Bécourt Military Cemetery for a short Act of Remembrance, quietly reflecting on Tommy and the events of the day.



Top: Proud Fusilier. Below: Richard Dunning and Tom Easton, Lochnagar, 1979.

Pèlerinage : visites de Tom Easton à ses amis à Bécourt

Le soldat Tom Easton, No 1000, 21^{ème} Northumberland Fusiliers (2^{ème} Tyneside Scottish) avait un lien particulier avec le Cratère de Lochnagar. Lors du 1^{er} juillet, il a combattu dans les alentours et après la guerre, il a effectué de nombreux pèlerinages en France avec le Club des Officiers de la 34^{ème} Division, et plus tard, dans les années 1970, avec George Harwood et Richard Dunning. Il y a effectué son dernier voyage en 1980, peu avant son décès.

Mais lors de chaque visite au Cratère de Lochnagar, il se rendait également à un autre lieu tout proche, tout aussi poignant et cher à son cœur.

De sa base à Albert, il parcourait à pied et en toute discrétion les 3 km qui le séparaient de Bécourt et de son cimetière militaire CWGC. Y retrouvant la petite rangée de stèles qui lui étaient si précieuses, il parlait doucement aux tombes de ses meilleurs copains, tous tués peu avant la bataille, à chacun de ceux qu'il avait enterrés ici côte à côte tant d'années auparavant. Car il avait promis de veiller sur leurs proches au pays, et lors de chaque pèlerinage, il les régala de nouvelles de leurs familles, de leurs villes et villages du Northumberland. Les larmes aux yeux, mais d'une voix empreinte de chaleur et de gaieté, il a passé d'innombrables heures de sa longue vie dans cet endroit spécial, en communion avec ses amis défunts.

Ce que Tom a commencé est aujourd'hui perpétré par les *Friends of Lochnagar*. En fin de soirée, chaque 1^{er} juillet, des *Friends* effectuent un voyage similaire jusqu'au cimetière militaire CWGC de Bécourt pour y tenir un court Acte du Souvenir et penser, dans le silence, aux événements de cette journée.



The Lochnagar Crater is privately owned by Richard Dunning MBE and is dedicated to Remembrance, Respect and Reconciliation.
www.lochnagarcrater.org



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thanks the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) for its support with this visitor information project.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission Bécourt Military Cemetery commemorates over 700 servicemen who died in the First World War. The CWGC commemorates the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died in the two world wars. For more information visit www.cwgc.org or download the free CWGC War Graves App.



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