

talbot house

overview



During the First World War, Poperinge was situated a few kilometres behind the Ypres Salient. In 1917 approximately 250,000 men were billeted in the area.

On 11th December, 1915, Chaplain "Tubby" Clayton (pictured) opened a soldiers club at "Talbot House" or "Toc H". For hundreds of thousands of tired soldiers, this site became 'a home from home', where they found a little bit of humanity, rest and peace. Instead of prostitutes and alcohol, the soldiers got books, sing-songs and wholesome humour.

Q. Who was "Talbot" and why was his name given to the house?

Q. Why was Talbot nicknamed "Toc H" by the soldiers?

Tubby Clayton ensured the house was open to men and officers alike. He created a library where soldiers could check-out a book by leaving their cap behind as a ticket. There was a large kitchen which served as a tea room and a beautiful walled garden where men could sit and try to forget about the war for a while.

Most importantly, the attic was converted into a chapel where regular services were held. It was this chapel which became a focal point for many and was known as the 'heart' of the House. Many men would sadly attend their final communion here before heading back to battle, never to return again.

