



The Fusilier Museum

WARWICK

Monthly E-Newsletter - April 2023



MUSEUM NEWS

THE CAPITAL PROJECT IS COMPLETED!

Welcome to the April edition of the new Fusilier Museum Warwick e-newsletter! Thank you for the positive feedback we received from readers of the March edition which is also reflected in a notable increase in subscribers over the last month. As always, we hope you enjoy reading this and please do pass it on to others who may be interested. Please note that the museum will only use your email to post the e-newsletter and you can unsubscribe at any time.

Over this last month, the museum capital project has reached a conclusion with two major tasks being realised - the completion of the medal drawer displays and the printing and distribution of the new museum brochure.

Medals are a key component of any Regimental Museum, and it was an essential feature of the new museum design that there would be pull-out drawers containing significant medal groups for the public to see. This work was completed by our gifted designers Far Post Design Ltd with the medal groups being chosen for their historic importance by museum curator Stephanie Bennett. In total, visitors can now view 201 medals in the drawers spanning the early 19th century until recent times. The plan is to add QR codes to link these displays to online information about the medals' owners and more details about the different types of medals.

The Fusilier Museum brochure has also been printed and distributed. It is a six-page leaflet presenting what the museum has to offer and all the essential information you need for a visit. The front image was taken by talented local photographer Gillian Fletcher and captures a group of young people of different ages dressed in military hats standing at the entrance to the museum. We chose this picture to demonstrate that the museum is inviting and accessible but also relevant in the modern world. The distribution of this brochure around Warwickshire will hopefully put the museum on the map in its new Pageant House location and draw in both local visitors and tourists during the Spring and Summer months.

Many have been involved in completing the complex move of the museum to its new location at Pageant House from project managers to staff and volunteers and designers to marketing officers. It is worth noting though that this is only the beginning. The museum still has much more to achieve in both how it tells the stories of soldiers' lives in Warwickshire's oldest regiment, but also the audiences it tells these stories to. This newsletter will document these developments at the museum as they unfold, to help bring soldier's stories to new audiences and enrich the ways in which these stories are presented.

-Chris Kirby, General Manager

www.fusiliermuseumwarwick.com



CURRENT PROJECTS

Although the main capital project for the new displays is now completed, the museum continues to manage different projects that will both enhance the access to the collections, promote the Regiment's story and provide opportunities to generate funding essential to the organisation's future.

REFURBISHING THE BRANDWOOD ROOM *Progress Made!*

Since the appeal opened to raise funds to equip the Brandwood Room, the museum has raised almost half the funds needed to purchase suitable furniture and new window blinds. Thank-you for those who have made donations so far which are allowing us to now purchase the roller window blinds with the museum's logo on the outside.

However, another £500 is needed so we can fit out the room with suitable furniture for museum talks, school sessions and commercial hire.



Several events in the Brandwood Room over the last month have demonstrated how important a space this is to the museum in fulfilling both its learning and commercial objectives.

On the 30th March, the museum welcomed 40 Beavers and Cubs from Hampton Magna for an out-of-hours visit. Activities included make a medal, design a camouflage uniform and dress-up in different uniforms. The Brandwood Room was a wonderful venue for young learners to do craft activities to create medals and it was possible to fit over 20 students into this space. Ticket income and shop sales on the evening raised £200 towards the museum's running costs.

The room was also used for public events run by the Royal Warwickshire WW2 Re-enactment Group over the Easter break. For the first time since the pandemic, face-to-face Friends talks will be starting in May in the Brandwood room, albeit using an odd range of furniture! With your help we can start to extend the use of this lovely period room in the heart of Warwick for both the benefit of the local communities and to help support the future financial sustainability of the museum.



We still need to raise a further £500 to the completion of this project.

If you can donate at least £10 to make the Brandwood Room an effective learning and hiring community space for the museum, please support this project and make a difference –

<https://fusiliermuseumwarwick.com/support>

OBJECT OF THE MONTH

Each e-newsletter, we will ask someone to choose an object from the collection to tell its story and what it means to them. One of the museum volunteers, Dave Spiers (ex 2nd Battalion RRF) talks about an object on display that is special to him.

PRISONER OF WAR TAG 1960.879.2



I have picked a WW2 POW dog tag displayed in the WW2 case. I have chosen this piece because it holds memories of my late father: the tag has a connection with him because it belonged to 39313 Capt. PBIO Burge, commanding officer of B Company 1/7th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

My father was 5111665 Pte John Spiers, formerly of the 1/7th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, so Capt. Burge may have been his commanding officer. They would have both been in the British Expeditionary Force in France in September 1939. Later during the evacuation of Dunkirk, forming the rear-guard action to try and allow enough time to get the troops off the beaches, they both were wounded and taken prisoner at Ypres Comines Canal. Capt. Burge being an officer was taken to Offlag VIIC in Bavaria (Offizierslager), meaning prison for officers, my father being ordinary rank was taken to a Stalag (Stalag meaning Stockade for none commissioned officers and soldiers). He was taken to Stalag XXA in Marienberg in Germany where prisoners captured at Dunkirk were taken. He remained a POW until the war ended in 1945. Capt. Burge later became CO of the 1/7th Battalion in 1950 with the rank of Lt. Col.

When we were children, my father would show us his medals and his POW dog tag. He would tell us of his time there and the hardships they had to endure. Some of the stories were sad but some were funny. My father was and still is, although sadly passed some 22 years now, my hero. It was through him that I was inspired to join the army myself. I went to the recruiting office in Birmingham and declared I want to join the Royal Warwickshire Regiment please, only to be told they are now the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. That's fine, I said, and so my journey began.

I was first a junior Fusilier at Junior Tradesman's Regiment Rhyl. Then on entrance to man service my first post was to the 3rd Battalion and finally the 2nd Battalion, joining them on their first tour of Northern Ireland. I finally finished my time as a regular and became a Reserve soldier with the 5th Battalion RRF, serving until 1995 after transferring to REME.

However, in my heart I'm still a Fusilier and always will be thanks to Dad and that's why the display of the POW ID tag creates powerful memories for me. I am now a member of a brotherhood that will never die.



Dave Spiers

HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE

REGIMENTAL STORIES

Honouring the enduring legacy of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, formed on April 23, 1968.



1st May 2023 is the 60th anniversary of the start of The Royal Warwickshire Regiment's journey to become Fusiliers.

Top: The new hackles and badges are brought on parade.



Below left: RSM King prepares to issue the new badges.

Below right: The Inspection



Image source: The 'Antelope' journal of The Royal Warwicks

On 1st May 1963, 1st Battalion paraded at Gordon Barracks in Hameln, West Germany, to receive their new Fusilier cap badges and hackles in blue and orange (best known as "royal blue over old gold with a touch of Dutch pink").

From that date onward, they were called The Royal Warwickshire Fusiliers until St George's Day - 23 April, 1968 when, along with the other English Fusilier Regiments, they formed the new Large Regiment - The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM TALKS

SUMMER 2023

We invite you to attend our history talk series hosted by the Friends of the Fusilier Museum Warwick. Talks are offered online and in person.

ANIMALS IN THE GREAT WAR



**Alan Reed, Author
and Local Historian**

2 PM London Time
Saturday, 27 May

MONTY'S FLYING FORTRESS



**Zita Ballinger Fletcher,
Author and Historian**

2 PM London Time
Saturday, 24 June

DASHING HUSSAR, BRAVE CUIRASSIER



Maj. Mick Atkinson

2 PM London Time
Saturday, 29 July

To learn more about & register for these events,
please email: rrfwarwickfriends@outlook.com

For Zoom talks, a link will be sent to your email upon registration.

JOIN THE FRIENDS

The Friends support the museum and its mission of preserving regimental history and also promote education and activities for history lovers, both online and locally. All are welcome to join!

To learn more, contact us at

davy.jd@gmail.com

or

rrfwarwickfriends@outlook.com

VISIT THE MUSEUM

**Pageant House,
2, Jury Street,
Warwick,
CV34 4EW**

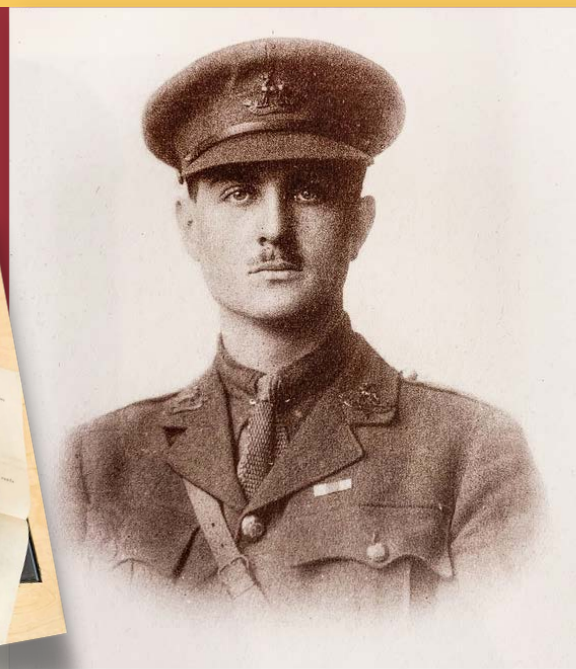
01926 258288

enquiries@fusiliermuseumwarwick.com



VISITOR NEWS

The Mysterious Case of the WW1 Photo Album



Cathie and Clancy Wilson

The museum was contacted by Cathie and Clancy Wilson about a find they had made in their attic. They had moved into a family house formerly belonging to Cathie's grandfather Capt. Leysters Greener. He was in 2/6th Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment during WW1 where he had been awarded a Military Cross.

In the attic was a small photo album containing images of the regiment in the trenches and the name 'General Sladen'. This seemed an exciting find until David from the museum team realised that the museum already held an album of General Sladen's photos that included duplicates of the ones held by Cathie and Clancy.

So what had happened here? Capt. Greener had served briefly in 1/6th battalion which was part of 143 Brigade when it was commanded by Brigadier General Sladen. It is possible, therefore, during this period, that Sladen gave copies of photographs he'd had commissioned to Greener and perhaps other officers in the Brigade.

This was news to the museum, and we are most grateful to Cathie and Clancy for taking the time to visit the museum to compare the two albums and add to our knowledge of the collection!

Is anyone else aware of this practice taking place in WW1? Please let us know by contacting general.manager@fusiliermuseumwarwick.com