



The Fusilier Museum

WARWICK

Newsletter | April 2026



A Museum for different communities

The museum has just had its best February for visitor numbers and income since relaunching at Pageant House in 2023. Much of this is linked to a series of successful engagement with community groups including schools, U3A groups, members of the armed services – both cadets and veterans, and a rather specialist but not insignificant community of historical embroidery enthusiasts. This demonstrates very well the variety of users the museum can and does attract. For April, we are focussing on a community that lies at the heart of the museum's mission – the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. Our next temporary exhibition, *A Day in the Life of a Fusilier – A Personal Look at the British Army* launches on 22nd April and will present some fascinating insight into what makes a modern Fusilier click. Excellence, comradeship and duty are themes that feature heavily in the soldiers' interviews which were undertaken in preparation for this exhibition. Such subjects are echoed in the diaries in the museum collection of soldiers who fought in the two world wars, proving that times change but the qualities that make a good soldier remain the same.

- Multiple visits by classes from Maple House School, Birmingham:** The museum was delighted to host visits from different year groups from Maple House School, Birmingham. On several occasions, we were joined by Will Thatcher from the Royal Warwickshire Regiment Reenactors group who brought history to life with his demonstrations of weapons and kit of a soldier of the 2nd Battalion from 1944. The young people responded enthusiastically to the subject although it was the teachers who were most eager to dress up in the kit!
- Museum to feature in Museums Journal Article:** The Museum Journal is the key periodical read by museum professionals in the UK. The Fusilier Museum Warwick will feature in either the June/July edition in an article looking at the highlights of the museum collections and the audiences we serve. The Museum Journal has a wide professional readership both in Britain and internationally.
- Family of Private William Tapp visit the museum:** Private Tapp served in the Warwickshire Regiment during WW1 and recorded his daily activities in a pocket diary, now in the museum collection. What makes him special is that he was an eyewitness to the Christmas Truce of 1914, where allied soldiers in parts of the Western Front came out into No Man's Land to meet their German enemy and swap gifts. Tantalisingly, Tapp describes plans to arrange a football match on Boxing Day, although this was not to happen. We were delighted to have some members of the Tapp family visit and to show them the original diary as well as pass on to them a digital copy.
- All speed ahead with the new Friends organisation!** To mark a new chapter in the Friends of the Museum, each member was sent an attractive greeting card with an image of a regimental embroidery made by the soldiers of the 2nd Battalion in India in the late Nineteenth Century. The cards and postage were paid for by a kind benefactor. On the 2nd May from 11am until 1pm, we have a free social event with speakers and displays which is linked to family history research in military records. The opportunity will be taken at this event to promote the advantages of Friends' membership including both the social and educational benefits. Make sure to save this date for your diary!



NEWS BULLETIN

In this newsletter: an overview of our Easter / Spring programme, including new exhibitions and talk events, and an article from author and military historian Zita Ballinger Fletcher reflecting on the Fusiliers in Iraq and Afghanistan.



2026 Spring programme

For this issue, we look at a new exhibition on the modern-day Fusiliers launching after Easter, a special family history event in May and a talk by author Helen Frost on the little-known story of the Land Girls of the First World War.

Exhibition: A Day In The Life Of A Fusilier – A Personal Look At The British Army

22nd April – 20th June 2026

This new exhibition presents the inside story of life in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers through photographs and personal accounts of members of the First and Fifth battalions. The high-quality photos, demonstrating different activities by members of the regiment, will be accompanied by personal accounts of different members of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, from officers to NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers).

Four different members of the Regiment explain why and how they joined the army and describe the journeys they have taken in their military careers to the present point. They discuss what serving in the army, and specifically the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, has meant to them and provide a snapshot of the activities that make up their everyday lives. Candidates have been picked across the First Battalion of Regular (full-time) soldiers and the Fifth Battalion of Reservists (part-time Soldiers). In each case, these individuals provide valuable insight into what it is like to be in the modern British Army. To set the scene, there will also be a display of modern Vertus kit (webbing and carrying bags) as well as other equipment used by the British Army including Multi Terrain Pattern (MTP) uniforms.



History Event: What Did Uncle Bill Do In The War? Discovering Your Family's Wartime Past

2nd May, 11am – 1pm

On Saturday the 2nd May, the museum is hosting a free Family History event in the Brandwood Room. The museum's own David Baynham will be providing some tips on how to decipher military records related to family history and museum volunteers will provide fascinating stories about various soldiers of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment which they researched. In addition, museum supporters Paul Jacques and David Vaux will be presenting a table of original objects linked to the Regiment in wartime which they will explain and present. This event is being run in conjunction with the Friends of the Museum and is designed to raise public awareness of the organisation and the benefits of membership which are both social and educational. Tea, coffee and cake will be available to help make the day an enjoyable and thought-provoking occasion.

Talk Event: Voices From The Great War Women's Land Army by Helen Frost

23rd May, 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Based upon her published book on the subject, Helen Frost provides a vivid picture of the Women's Land Army during the First World War. The role of the Land Army tends to be much better known for WW2, but accessing personal collections and previously unpublished photos, Helen has pieced together a striking picture of the ups and downs of the daily lives of the women who served to bolster Britain's food production during the Great War, replacing the men who had left for the Front.

Tickets can be booked at:

<https://bit.ly/WW1LandArmy>

Reflecting on the Fusiliers in Iraq and Afghanistan

by Zita Ballinger Fletcher

The history of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers reflects the most remarkable and proud accomplishments of the British Army stretching back over 350 years. As we mark the birthday of the Regiment this month on St. George's Day on 23 April, I would like to offer this brief tribute to the accomplishments of the Fusiliers in wars of recent memory—namely, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Fusiliers played a significant role in Operation TELIC, the operational name for all of the United Kingdom's operations in Iraq from 2003 to 2011. The First Battalion deployed to Iraq in early 2003 as part of the first wave of 46,150 British troops sent in during the war's initial phase. It was the largest deployment of British forces since the Second World War. The battalion played a critical role in capturing Basra and conducted two additional six-month deployments in 2005-6 and in 2008. The Second Battalion also deployed company sized reinforcement groups whilst based in Belfast and Cyprus between 2005 and 2008. Our Fusiliers gave their lives in Operation TELIC and many more were injured. The Regimental Colour bears the battle honour Iraq 2003.

The Regiment also saw noteworthy action in Afghanistan during Operation HERRICK from 2002 to 2014. British troops conducted significant counter-insurgency operations against the Taliban in Helmand Province, with 137 UK bases in the province and 9,500 British troops there at the height of combat operations. The Second Battalion deployed to Helmand on multiple occasions. The Battalion defended Nowzad in 2006 and deployed in 2007 to Sangin, Kajaki and Musa Qala. Casualties peaked in 2009 and 2010, with 2009 marking the British Army's bloodiest summer in over 50 years. The Regiment lost seven soldiers of the Second Battalion that year. Soldiers of the Regiment continued to deploy to Afghanistan while attached to other units over the span of two decades. In 2013, the First Battalion returned for strike operations and stabilisation initiatives in Helmand. A total of 457 British military service members gave their lives in Afghanistan, and there were additionally 616 who sustained severe casualties. Eight dedicated soldiers of the Regiment sacrificed their lives in Afghanistan, including four courageous young men from Warwickshire: Lance Corporal James Fullarton of Coventry, Sergeant Simon Valentine of Bedworth, Fusilier Louis Carter of Nuneaton, and Fusilier Shaun Bush of Coventry. The Regiment honours their memory with a service every year on 4 October on Afghanistan Day.

It should not go unmentioned that many officers and soldiers from the Regiment, both Regular and Reserve, deployed as individual reinforcements to other units and HQs on both TELIC and HERRICK.

British troops brought counter-insurgency expertise, steadfastness and finesse to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, in addition to courage that continues to be an inspiration.

