



The Fusilier Museum

WARWICK

Monthly E-Newsletter - December 2023



MUSEUM NEWS



ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023 – AND LOOKING FORWARD TO 2024

As we see out 2023, it's a time to reflect on what has happened at the museum through the year. The museum opened with two staff and a pool of ten volunteers to a soft launch on Thursday 26th January 2023. Its first major event day was Saturday 18th February when the museum played host to members of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment reenactors and featured on BBC Midlands Today. The museum events in Easter, Whitsun and Summer holidays were quite busy but only partially successful in attracting families. A decision was taken, therefore, to make the museum free for children under 16 years old. The result for the October half term was a positive one with greater number of families and children attending through the week driving up visitor numbers.

Some additional work was done in the museum by designers Far Post Design Ltd. through 2023. The medals were laid out in display drawers and more content added to the touchscreen interactive. Funding secured by the curator Stephanie Bennett allowed for the installation of a hearing loop at the reception and British Sign Language interpretation on the audio presentations. During the year, the Brandwood Room was used as a temporary exhibition space commencing with 'WWI Lives' a study of the lives of soldiers in the trenches, and the 'Lest We Forget' which explored how soldiers are remembered. With your help, we successfully fundraised for blinds with the museum logo in the Brandwood Room and 10 attractive chairs.

2023 saw the museum receive many visitors locally and from across the world including from New Zealand the cousin of Euan Lucie Smith - the first WWI British officer of mixed heritage, the son of two Birmingham Pals, a 94-year-old National Service veteran and historian James Holland. The museum delivered a successful outreach programme during 2023 with stalls at Warwick Market, Armed Forces Day in St. Nicholas Park, Leamington's 'Their Finest Hour' event and Warwick Victorian Evening. This raised the profile of the museum and generated £100s through sales and donations. The 'Building Bridges' project funded by West Midlands Museum Development created a successful partnership with Westgate Primary School which saw a total of 120 children visits to the museum, presentation to an assembly of 190 children and the creation of a new learning brochure.

2024 represents the 350th anniversary of the founding of the regiment and the 80th anniversary of D-Day. The museum will respond to these two major anniversaries with special temporary exhibitions and events alongside the core programme of monthly talks by the Friends of the Museum and living history demonstrations and family activities in the school holidays. Also in 2024 we will improve our offer to blind and visually impaired visitors, extend the scope of our learning offer to secondary schools and further education colleges and develop the Brandwood Room as a hiring venue. It's going to be a busy year!

Thank-you for continuing to support the museum and its mission and have a peaceful and restful Christmas,

-Chris Kirby, General Manager



THANK YOU!
♥



CURRENT PROJECTS

The museum manages 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.

Completing the Building Bridges Project

JOB WELL DONE!

During the last month, we have been working to complete the Building Bridges learning project with Westgate School. Following the success of the three learning sessions with Year 5, it was the turn of Year 3 to visit the museum for the 'Get Marching' learning session. This was a great opportunity for the museum staff and volunteers to adapt the workshops already delivered with Year 5 for a younger age group.

The class really engaged with the activities and particularly enjoyed the marching exercise and dressing up as a soldier, a demonstration of how museums can bring history to life for young people. The delivery of sessions with Westgate School ended with an assembly at the school where the achievements of the students were celebrated. This included playing a recording of Mayura Music's musicians singing the Warwickshire Lads 2023 song with the verses written by Year 5.



The final stage of the project has been to create a learning brochure to effectively promote the museum's learning offer to primary schools, secondary schools, and further education colleges. We have been lucky to get a very good designer on board called 1017 Marketing who are experienced in working with museums.

They have created a clear and attractive brochure which hopefully will gain much interest and bring lots of students into the museum in 2024.

SEE NEXT PAGE! 

We are delighted that the project has worked so well. **Matthew Watson, Head Teacher at Westgate said: 'It has been a wonderful project and the children have loved it and engaged with the content amazingly well.'**



CURRENT PROJECTS *Continued!*



What's Next in 2024

The plan for the museum in 2024 is to build on the success of the Westgate Primary School project to further engage with local schools and colleges.

One of the ways that we can improve our offer is by build a collection of **quality learning resources** which will enhance the student experience. This will include commissioning child-size replica uniforms and hats that reflect different periods of the Regiment's history and the associated kit that goes with them. Specially made replica uniforms can cost £100s each, so we will need to secure additional funding to make this possible.

Another aspect of learning development will be to provide **more digital resources** through the museum website that can support the student experience both in the museum and when they are back in the classroom.

It looks like 2024 is going to be another exciting year for working with schools!

HANDS-ON HISTORY

COME EXPLORE DISCOVER MORE

LEARNING PROGRAMME

FOR EARLY YEARS, PRIMARY, SECONDARY, FURTHER EDUCATION AND INFORMAL LEARNING

FUSILIERMUSEUMWARWICK.COM



The Fusilier Museum Warwick provides informative and engaging workshops to inspire and educate students. The museum tells the story of Warwickshire's oldest regiment through rich displays of objects covering 350 years of history. Learning workshops are delivered by trained staff and volunteers using handling objects and real and replica uniforms and kit.

MUSEUM WORKSHOPS MAY INCLUDE:

- DRESSING UP
- OBJECT HANDLING
- STORY TELLING
- CRAFT ACTIVITIES
- LOCAL HISTORY

We are very flexible and are always willing to adapt sessions to cover your needs. Please contact the museum's General Manager to discuss sessions in more depth.
Tel: 01926 258 288 | Email: learning@fusiliermuseumwarwick.com
www.fusiliermuseumwarwick.com/learning

TEACHER TRAINING SESSIONS
Our team offers teacher training sessions by appointment. These can be designed according to your needs but could include how to present local soldiers' stories using document facsimiles and handling objects. Alternatively, you could explore key historic events, like Dunkirk or D-Day, through the lens of people's stories and objects. One session is free when you book two museum learning sessions, otherwise the cost is £50/hour.

OUTREACH SESSIONS IN SCHOOLS
The museum team can offer classroom-based workshops and assemblies in schools within the Warwick District. These may include trained and DBS-checked staff facilitators, the provision of worksheet resources, handling objects and real and replica uniforms and equipment.

MUSEUM LOAN BOXES
The museum has a series of loan boxes containing original objects. Themes include WW1, WW2, Home Front and Toys and Games.

TRAINING AND OUTREACH

"You have done a great job collaborating with a supportive partnership with the School Museum Education Societies"


LET'S DO OUR BEST



If you can donate at least £10 to the **BUILDING BRIDGES LEARNING PROJECT** to help the Fusilier Museum Warwick to create effective learning sessions for regional primary schools, then please donate and make a difference - <https://fusiliermuseumwarwick.com/support>

CHRISTMAS IN WORLD WAR I

A SPECIAL SECTION WITH OBJECTS OF THE MONTH & REGIMENTAL STORIES



Four of our museum volunteers write about events and objects related to Christmas in the WW1 trenches - from a site of the Christmas Truce to William Tapp's diary entry on the event, the tradition of WW1 Christmas cards and the Princess Mary boxes in Christmas 1914.



Museum volunteer Martin Shalders describes a WW1 site where members of the 1st Battalion, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment were involved in the famous Christmas Truce.

This photo shows Rifle House Cemetery deep in Plugstreet Wood. I have been here three times over the years, and it remains a favourite of mine. I have parked opposite the imposing lions guarding the main Plugstreet cemetery and wandered through Mud Corner cemetery with its surviving 'pig tail' barbed wire stakes. From there, it is a short but tricky walk into this wood which hides two other cemeteries. This wood is not spooky like Delville wood, but deciduous, green, and strangely pleasant despite its dreadful history. This cemetery is a bit special being off the tourist route and surrounded by dense greenery. In spring there are azaleas and rhododendrons flowering close by. It is always serene and slightly claustrophobic.

Of course, this wood was fought over for two years at least and reduced to matchwood like many others. But here, took place the extraordinary 'truce' of Christmas 1914. It has become clear in recent years that fraternisation took place at several places in No Man's Land, although at the time this was kept away from the general public! The Plugstreet truce is one the better known. Of course, the higher up the ranks you went, the more this fraternisation was decried as poor for morale! In most cases, the front-line troops shouted greetings and sung carols before venturing into the mud and debris of No Man's Land. Once there, cigarettes, drink and sweets were often exchanged as well as opinions about the futility and stupidity of the existing situation. The English supplied rum and the Germans reciprocated with schnapps!

At Plugstreet, where Bruce Bairnsfather was stationed with the 1st Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, the truce lasted for several hours. A football match was rumored to have taken place, but the facts behind this famous legend remain unsubstantiated. Here Bruce exchanged uniform buttons with a German machine gunner from Saxony and one British soldier set up a temporary barber shop and cut the hair of several German soldiers! It has been said that up to 100,000 soldiers took part in this truce which in places lasted two or three days over Christmas. But once the higher ranks became aware of this situation, orders swiftly followed on both sides to ban any such event occurring again; and that the slaughter should continue for another three years, and 15 million lives should be lost.

As one German soldier said at the time in his diary: "Today we have peace. But tomorrow I fight for my country, and you fight for yours. Good luck."

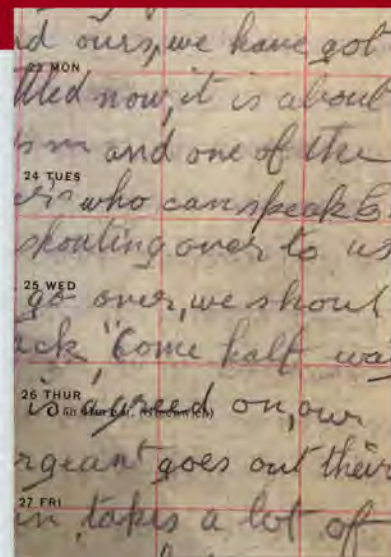


CHRISTMAS IN WORLD WAR I



The Diary of William Tapp - Contributed by Chris Cox

At this time of year, we will hear many accounts and variations of the fabled 'Christmas Truce'. We are fortunate to hold the original copy of one man's time in France, in which he details his own experience from that Christmas. Private William Tapp, batman to Lt. Richard Bateson Blunt Tillyer, served with 1st Battalion, The Royal Warwickshire Regiment. After a short period of rest near La Creche, William and The Battalion returned to the front line at St Yvon in the early hours of Christmas Eve...



24th December 1914: "...it is going to be a moonlit night so I think we shall lose a few men while we are relieving the other regiment, we get near the trenches but can't hear any firing now, we hear some singing from their trench and ours. We have got settled now, it is about 7pm and one of the Germans who can speak English is shouting over to us to go over, we shout back 'come half way'. It is agreed on, our sergeant goes out..."

"We can hear them talking quite plain, they exchange cigarettes and the German shouts to wish us a merry Xmas. We wait for the sergeant returning, he gets back and tells us they are not going to fire tonight nor tomorrow if we don't, they have got lights all along their trench and also a Xmas tree lit up. They are singing, so we give them one, it is funny to hear us talk to one another. Our stretcher bearers have nothing to do, no wounded to carry tonight, so they have all come from headquarters and are going round carol singing... The Germans give them a cheer for singing. This night I would not have missed for a lot, I don't go to sleep until 2:30 Christmas morning."

25th December 1914: "Get up at 6:30, see all the Germans walking about on the top of their trenches. Now some of them are coming over, without rifles of course, our fellows go to meet them including myself, it is a strange sight and unbelievable, we are all mixed up together. There are quite a lot can talk English they all say they are sick of the war and wish it as over, they say it is a pity to fire while we are all up to our knees in mud, their trenches are worse than ours. We exchange souvenirs, I pull a button off my coat, a German does the same, we exchange also cigars. I have got 2 buttons, one cap badge and 2 cigarettes."

"9am Xmas morning, a mist comes over and their men and ours are ordered to the trenches. About an hour after the mist suddenly lifts and we catch them putting barbed wire out and they catch us doing the same thing, but there is not a shot fired. Here today we have another gathering of Germans and us, it was one mass, about 150 of them and half as many of us all in a ring laughing and talking. We are trying to arrange a football match with them for tomorrow, Boxing Day."

"...being mixed up with Germans it is certainly go as you please today, we have arranged not to shoot til 4:30pm on Boxing Day, I don't know what our general would say if he knew about this. Food is pretty good today, beef, potatoes and plum duff for dinner, toast and butter, stewed prunes and custard and Christmas cake for tea. The Germans all have electric lights and lots of cigars... they seem a decent lot of fellows in front of us, I think they know they are beaten..."



CHRISTMAS IN WORLD WAR I



The Diary of William Tapp

"It's Xmas night, how different to the Xmas nights I remember, especially the one four years ago when I stood under the mistletoe with the girl I married later. I never thought of all this happening, although I dreamt it just as it is happening.... To bed at 10pm, quite early for Xmas night."

26th December 1914: "Get up at 7:40, had to be called too as the officer was waiting for breakfast. I am surprised to see the German and our fellows still walking on top, it's too ridiculous for words, we are all mixing up again... We asked them when they get relieved, they say "never", so we say the same, their regiment is the 134th and they are Saxons."

27th December 1914: "Another day and night gone and still they walk about on top of their trenches but they don't come over, we have been told this friendliness has got to stop, so we keep apart, although we walk about on top without fear of being shot.... The fighting is still going on on our right and left, but these lot in front of us don't want war."



Private Tapp, photographed in the trench he has so gallantly helped to defend. He is a keen Birmingham F. C. supporter and has tipped them for promotion. His forecast, however, has caused a lot of argument in the trenches.

This was not to continue, taken from the memoirs of Sgt. George Henry Morgan also of the 1st Battalion: "However, this pleasurable affair eventually came to an abrupt end. A German soldier was walking along his parapet carrying a bucket when one of the members of my company further up the line, took deliberate aim and shot him... The unfortunate man had no sooner hit the ground, when they hit us with everything they had... The war was on again with a vengeance."

The Battalion stayed in the line until 30th December 1914 before being moved back for rest and to be reinforced with new recruits.

Sadly, Private William Tapp was later killed at St Julien, on 25th April 1915, before ever seeing the girl from under the mistletoe again. His body was never recovered, and his diary is all that remained, cut off mid-sentence by incoming shellfire.

I am sure that each of us will take a moment this Christmas to be thankful, and to honour and remember the sacrifices that so many made for us and for our futures.

CHRISTMAS IN WORLD WAR I

Christmas Cards Sent Home from the Trenches

by Anne Morton



Our 21st century Christmas will see at least a few electronic cards landing in our inboxes, but conventional cards are still popular; some will be charity cards, some on recycled paper - the latest fashions in colour, design and important issues will all affect these cards. With their personally written messages, no matter how short, they connect directly with the sender. All this was true of the Christmas cards sent home by the British troops at the front in WWI; perhaps the connection was even more important because of the uncertain, dangerous situation, and cards and letters were the only way of communicating with those back home.

Regimental cards were professionally printed in colour. They weren't new to WWI but due to the increase in regiments during WWI there was an increased market for regimental cards. Regimental pride often featured as did parodying life in the trenches with a humour which was dark at times. Lists of battles often appeared on or in the cards. Some Christmas cards were cartoons such as the line of jolly, upright, red-cheeked soldiers marching along with a Union Jack flying; a 21st Division Christmas card from 1917 is a rather roughly drawn cartoon of a smiling soldier splashing through the mud towards Berlin with the words "Born 1914 - Still Going Strong."

A rather darker card shows a Tommy and French soldier both grinning while jointly holding a large, round bomb labelled "Somme Pudding," the card bordered by grenades with pictures of entrenching tools in one corner and an artillery gun and shells in the other. The British Bulldog makes a not infrequent appearance; on one card accompanied by a short poem of stirring sentiments.

There are more realistic cards - possibly from later in WWI - like the one showing a beautifully drawn, sombrely coloured line of untidy, tired soldiers marching along - very different from the bright and breezy cartoons. Another card is dark in hue showing a line of soldiers, in the distance, crossing no man's land by the light of flare.

CHRISTMAS IN WORLD WAR I

Christmas Cards Sent Home from the Trenches

One range of beautiful and delicate Christmas cards have embroidered panels, done by women in Belgium and France who were possibly refugees from war-torn areas. Early in the war this type of Christmas card was hand-embroidered but later machine embroidery was employed to keep up with the high demand.

There are examples of the ordinary field service postcards being used at Christmas. These cards had various standard phrases to be deleted as applicable which avoided censorship. At Christmas soldiers were allowed to add their own very short messages such as 'Christmas Greetings'.

Even PoWs were allowed - possibly encouraged - to send Christmas cards home to family. One from 1917 is a drawing of a snowy POW camp. It's thought that these cards were used as propaganda by the Germans who wanted those in England to think prisoners were being treated humanely.

The range of WWI Christmas cards sent home from the front is very wide. There is something for everyone to send whatever their taste was and whoever the card was destined for, mothers, sisters, grandparents, sweethearts.



That so many WWI Christmas cards sent home from the front have survived is not just a consequence of the large numbers produced but also the way in which they were treasured and kept safe and secure.

WWI Christmas cards sent home from the front can be seen here:
[Christmas greetings from the front line | National Army Museum \(nam.ac.uk\)](#)
[First World War Christmas cards | HistoryExtra](#)
<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/sarahb0673/christmas-cards-1914-18/>
<https://digventures.com/2014/12/christmas-cards-from-ww1/>

CHRISTMAS IN WORLD WAR I

Princess Mary Gift Box



Princess Mary Christmas Gift Box

Museum volunteer Graham explores the story behind the Princess Mary Christmas Gift boxes of which there are many in the museum collection.

"For many weeks we have all been greatly concerned for the welfare of the sailors and soldiers who are so gallantly fighting our battles by sea and land. Our first consideration has been to meet their more pressing needs, and I have delayed making known a wish that has long been in my heart for fear of encroaching on other funds, the claims of which have been more urgent, I want you now to help me to send a Christmas present from the whole nation to every sailor afloat and every soldier at the front.... Please will you help me?"

These are the words of the 17-year-old Princess Mary, written in the letter sent out by Buckingham Palace on 15th October 1914

During the first few months of the First World War there was a mass of sympathy and charity for the men fighting for Britain and her Empire. There were many charity schemes in operation which included dispatching "comforts" to the frontline troops such as knitted items, socks, mufflers & balaclavas etc. Being inspired by her visits to hospitals for wounded and injured soldiers, the young Princess Mary wanted to show her support.

The Princess Mary Christmas Gift Fund progressed quickly and within the first few weeks it had raised over £12,000 in donations. The money was to be used to provide gift boxes for soldiers, sailors, nurses and other people involved in the war effort at Christmas 1914.



The boxes were five inches long, three and a quarter inches wide and one and a quarter inches deep, with a hinged lid. In the centre of the lid is an image of Princess Mary, surrounded by a wreath, with two Princess Mary 'M' monograms either side of this. Inscribed on a cartouche at the top of the box are the words Imperium Britannicum, a reference to Britain's imperial power. In

other cartouches, around the edge of the box are the names of Britain's allies in the First World War; Belgium, France, Servia, Montenegro, Russia, and Japan. At the bottom is inscribed Christmas 1914.

The design for the boxes was provided by Messrs Adshead and Ramsay, architects of Kennington, London. In November 1914 three companies had been contracted for production of the gift box, by the end of production this had expanded to six. The brass tins' lids were stamped out from positive and negative dies and surviving examples reveal some small variations to the lid, e.g. smaller font, head size.

The standard box contained a pipe, one ounce of tobacco, a lighter and twenty monogrammed cigarettes, along with a Christmas card from the royal family, and a picture of Princess Mary



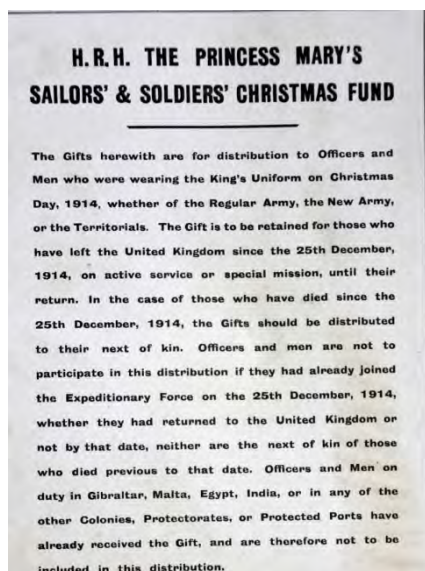
Several practical obstacles had to be tackled and overcome in the production and distribution of the Gift Box. The numbers of boxes and their contents required was huge. Several manufacturers produced the monogrammed cigarettes, pipes, chocolate, sweets & writing sets. Other gifts were also sourced to fill the box such as a silver bullet pencil, knives, scissors, combs & postcards. A total of over 2.5 million gift boxes were distributed during & after the war.

Filling the boxes required over 44,000 lbs of tobacco, 710,000 pipes, 13 million cigarettes and 500,000 cards. Despite the initial problems amazingly an estimated 425,000 boxes were delivered by Christmas 1914. Recipients were drawn from a qualification list of three classes of priority:

Class A consisted of all Naval personnel, troops at the front & wounded soldiers in hospital. Men on furlough, prisoners of war, nurses, widows & parents of those killed in action;

Class B, all British Colonial & Indian troops serving outside the British Isles not provided for in Class A;

Class C, all troops stationed in Britain.



Postcards like this were sold to raise monies for the gift fund

This label was found in an unopened box full of undistributed gift boxes in 2014

Did this Boer War soldiers gift influence Princess Mary?

Queen Victoria was the first monarch to send a gift tin to soldiers abroad, when she decided in 1899 to send chocolate

to her troops in South Africa. The three leading chocolate manufacturers of the time, JS Fry and Sons, Cadbury and Rowntree refused to be paid for the order, and by 1900 123,000 tins had been sent out. They contained one pound of vanilla chocolate, and had rounded corners so they could be stored more easily in soldiers' knapsacks.



The contents of the Princess Mary gift box varied according to the recipient, either smokers or non-smokers, and to those troops from the Empire fighting for the British, many of whose religion did not allow smoking.

Type of Gift Box	What Was Included?
Standard smokers 1914 Royal Navy Army (inc. Ghurkhas)	Brass box, Christmas card, Princess Mary picture, Lighter (sometimes replaced by an alternative small present), Pipe, One ounce of Tobacco, Twenty monogrammed Cigarettes. The Royal Navy received a silver bullet pencil instead of the tinder lighter
Royal Navy boys	Brass Box, Silver bullet pencil, Christmas card
Standard non-smokers 1914	Christmas Card, Princess Mary Picture, Bullet casing pencil, Acid tablets, Khaki writing case.
Sikh gift box 1914	Christmas Card, Princess Mary picture, Sugar candy, Box of Spices.
Bhistis 1914	Christmas Card, Princess Mary picture, Tin box of spices.
Other Indian Troops 1914	Christmas Card, Princess Mary picture, Sugar candy, Packet of Cigarettes, Box of spices.
Nurses 1914	Christmas Card, Princess Mary Picture, Chocolate.

Wounded men (smokers)	Brass box, Pipe, Christmas card, Princess Mary picture, One ounce of Tobacco, Twenty monogrammed Cigarettes
Wounded men (Non - smokers)	Brass Box Christmas Card, Princess Mary Picture, Acid tablets, Khaki writing case.
Members of the French Mission	Brass box, Pipe, Christmas card, Princess Mary picture, One ounce of Tobacco, Twenty monogrammed Cigarettes
Prisoners of war & interned men	Similar to the smokers gift. These were held in reserve & given out once released & back home
Widows & Parents	Brass box & Christmas card
Universal box 1915-1918	Brass box New Year's Card, Pencil.



The silver bullet pencil engraved with the letter M & a crown



The khaki cloth writing set with Princess Mary's monogram and stamped Christmas Fund in red lettering given to non-smokers



An opened packet of 20 cigarettes. The photo card of Princess Mary was inside each packet



A soldier with his gift box



Many soldiers & sailors were delighted and so grateful to receive the gift they had them framed

Princess Mary received many letters of thanks from serving troops expressing their gratitude at the thoughtful generosity of the young Princess and from the British nation. The Princess Mary Gift Box became the most common keepsake of World War 1

The legacy continues

To commemorate the 100 years since the First World War, in 2014 Fortnum & Mason produced a similar Brass tin box known as the Tommy's Tin. This was filled with Chocolate & a set of playing cards which was sent to all service personnel on operational deployment at Christmas 2014



Also in 2014 the Daily Mail newspaper produced a replica tin box, possibly due to its co-founder donating thousands of pounds to the original gift fund or for being such a morale booster at the time

Further information

<https://oldfrontline.co.uk/2021/04/17/the-princess-the-christmas-box/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2s1YvnfcFVs> (Sainsbury's advert for the Story of the Christmas truce)

VISITOR NEWS

A Busy November - Remembrance & Christmas Celebrations

The museum was involved in a number of key local community events in November.

There was a special opening of the museum on Remembrance Sunday (12th November), following the wreath-laying ceremony at the Warwick War Memorial. Admission was free for this occasion, and a good number of people came through the door on the wet afternoon and gave donations.

We sponsored a Christmas Tree for the annual St. Mary's Church Christmas Tree Festival 23rd November until 3rd December. The Fusilier Museum Warwick tree was decorated with coloured baubles in the regimental colours for both the Royal Warwickshire Regiment (blue and gold) and Fusiliers (red with white lights). The tree was further embellished with Warwickshire Fusilier hackles and an array of 'medals' made from chocolate coins attached to medal ribbon (Defence medal).

The tree was finished off with some excellent children's drawings representing peace and remembrance. My thanks to our volunteer Anne for helping with both the install and deinstall of the tree decorations.

Although not winning a prize (the competition from the other 60 trees was particularly tough), our tree was given a mayor's certificate as the 'Most Decorated Tree'; a nice play on words.





VISITOR NEWS

The museum also had a stall at the Warwick Victorian Market on the 23rd November. We had a very successful evening promoting the museum to 100s of people and selling lots of shop items.

Our fantastic volunteers on the stall were Alan, Graham, Chris. and Freddy who all dressed the part, encourage children to dress in scarlet jackets from the handling collection for photo opportunities, and for over six hours, were great advocates for the museum. Nearly £200 was made on the event and many leaflets given out.



REGIMENTAL STORIES

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

A REGIMENTAL "FATHER CHRISTMAS"

Christmas spirit was a priority for then Lt. Gen. Bernard L. Montgomery when he took command of the Eighth Army in North Africa in 1942. Aside from beating Rommel, Monty put Christmas at the top of his priority list. He made sure it would be a festive occasion for his troops, with puddings, alcohol and holiday rations for all, and a special Christmas Message he delivered that would become an annual custom looked forward to by the men. Monty also regularly took part in carol services with the men. Although the war brought great hardship, Monty did his part to make sure that the Christmas holiday was an occasion of warmth, cheer and comradeship for all men under his command. Of all World War II commanders, Montgomery can be credited with putting the most effort into sharing the Christmas spirit with those fighting far from home and their families.



Eighth Army Christmas carols in the desert, 1943



Monty delivers his Christmas message after joining in a carol service on the front lines, 1944



Troops who have decorated their tank for the holidays enjoy Christmas pudding as German POWs pass by



Christmas mail is distributed to Eighth Army troops in Europe,



STAY TUNED FOR MUSEUM EVENTS AND FRIENDS' TALKS FOR 2024

(Hint: We have some special events and programmes planned for next year, including for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day, and more...)

See You In The New Year!