



The Fusilier Museum

WARWICK

Monthly E-Newsletter - March 2023



MUSEUM NEWS

NEW MUSEUM, NEW E-NEWSLETTER!

Welcome to the new Fusilier Museum Warwick e-newsletter! This will appear monthly to give news and stories about the museum, its collections and the regiment's history. There will also be details on talks and events, and on-going development projects. We hope you enjoy reading this and pass it on to others who may be interested. To subscribe to the e-newsletter, please go to the www.fusiliermuseumwarwick.com and scroll down to the red bar and press the 'register' button. Please note that the museum will only use your email to post the e-newsletter and you can unsubscribe at any time.

After the major upheaval of the transfer of the museum from St. John's House, its home for 60 years, to Pageant House in the centre of Warwick, the museum is entering into an exciting new phase with new brand, museum displays, website, and brochure.

In this issue we would like to pay tribute to the talented designers who have created a striking and engaging display of the museum's wonderful collections - Mike Cashman the project lead, James Cumper who created the case layouts, mounts, and graphics and other team members such as Tony who built the cases. Far Post Design Ltd. managed to squeeze 350 years of regimental history into a lobby, landing and two rooms using a clever combination of case design, lighting, props, video, sound, and graphics to tell the vivid stories of soldiers' lives.

A notable highlight is a recreated WWI trench which conveys the appearance, sounds, and smells of the dug outs experienced by soldiers in the Great War. Embedded in the wooden ramparts are display cases filled with well-chosen objects by the museum's curator Stephanie Bennett that give powerful testimony to heroic lives of the soldiers of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

A series of touchscreens, including one with film footage from recent Fusilier missions in Afghanistan further help visitors to understand the experience of soldiers on the frontline and brings the regimental story up to the present day.

Going forward there are plans to add a hearing loop for the audio aspects of the displays and provide linked access between the displayed collections and on-lined resources and materials using QR codes. Thanks to all involved, The Fusilier Museum Warwick is a museum fit for the twenty-first century that is seeking to keep the memory of the soldiers of the Sixth of Foot, the Royal Warwickshires and the Fusiliers alive for many generations to come.

-Christopher Kirby, General Manager



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



A welcome addition to the suite of rooms used by the museum for the display of its collections is the Brandwood Room, a space with many possibilities for learning activity and hire. This room has been funded through the Brandwood Trust a charity who supports members of the 6th Battalion The Royal Warwickshire Regiment and its successors. Already it has been used for a series of successful public re-enactor events over the February half term. **However, the room requires two additions to make it an effective learning, exhibition, and lecture space as well as attractive for potential hire:**

1) The first of these will be **the installation of fitted roller blinds** for the two large windows that face out on to Jury Street. The plan is to have the Museum name and logo on the outside of these so they can as an effective advert for the museum looking out on Warwick's main thoroughfare. The blinds will allow the room to be used flexibly from daytime lectures in summer to evening events in winter.

2) The second addition is **fold-up seating** that can be used flexibly to create a lecture room or meeting space for up to 25 people. This will be used by the Friends of the Museum so they can recommence their face-to-face lecture programme (although broadcasting on Zoom will also continue) but also for school groups. It would also create essential facilities for commercial hire necessary for the museum to generate income to support its future development.



The total cost of both purchases will be in the region of £1000.

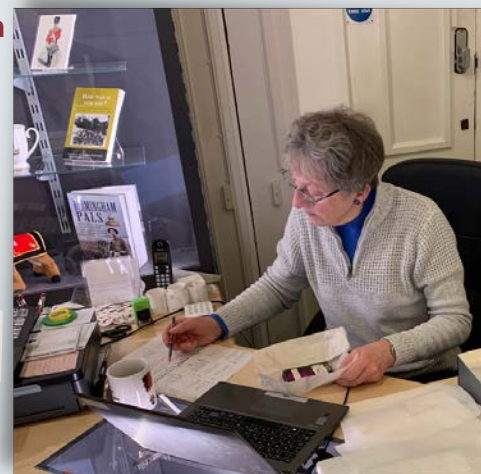
If you can donate at least £10 to make the Brandwood Room an effective learning and hiring community space for the museum, please support this project and make a difference -

<https://fusiliermuseumwarwick.com/support>

OBJECT OF THE MONTH

Each e-newsletter, we will be asking someone to choose an object from the collection to tell its story and what it means to them. This month, the object has been chosen by our museum volunteer Anne Morton.

My choice of object or set of objects from the collection are 6 napkin rings dating to the 2nd Anglo-Boer war (1899 - 1902) which were made in Bermuda by Boer prisoners of war (PoWs) who were being guarded by members of the 3rd Battalion.



– Anne Morton

Between June 1901 and January 1902, 4,600 Boer PoWs were interned on several islands in Bermuda's Great Sound. While disease was no doubt present on these tropical islands it's said the PoWs' biggest enemy was boredom. Dealing with the tedium of isolation, the longing for home and daily life, and even grieving because of separation from loved ones, the PoWs needed things to keep them occupied. Competitive games - swimming, high jump, races and such are captured on photographs, many PoWs made items from whatever they could find. Anything which gave a purpose to their far-from-normal lives was a necessity.

Each of the islands with a PoW camp eventually had an Industrial Association which assigned maintenance duties to PoWs and encouraged participation in various crafts, especially carving a range of items from Bermudan cedar wood. The Industrial Association arranged for craft items to be sold at the Hamilton stores (on Main Island). Some of the proceeds from sales were given to the PoWs. To earn more money, small objects such as letter openers, walking sticks, clips, and napkin rings were mass produced.

The six wooden napkin rings in the Fusiliers Museum are likely to be made of Bermudan cedar as this was the dominant tree species on the islands at that time. The size of the rings varies slightly but they are approximately 2 inches high and just over an inch in diameter. Shaped like barrels, each ring is different although all have the name 'Bermuda' carved on the side.

Were these rings made by the same man or different men? It's possible that four napkin rings may have been made at the same time by one person as they all show the date '1903', have large leaves of a similar design stretching around the ring, and carry the letters 'KGV'. These letters are probably an abbreviation of the Dutch word for prisoner of war: "Krijgsgevangene." So whoever made these four rings was likely to have been a Boer PoW rather than one of the foreign soldiers fighting in support of the Boers. The fifth ring is very plain compared with the others and also carries the date 1903.

It is the sixth ring which I find really interesting. Not only does it look different from the other five but it bears the date '1902.' This, along with the different design suggests a different craftsman. Unlike all the other napkin rings though, this one has two differences: it carries the letters 'PoW' instead of 'KGV' suggesting that the maker may have been English; and it has a name - J. Denner. Was this the maker of the napkin ring? It's known that there were soldiers of other nationalities fighting for the Boers so was J. Denner one of them? Another possibility is that it was made by a PoW for J. Denner; a British officer perhaps?

Our records show that the napkin rings were given to Howard Armishaw when the 3rd battalion were acting as guards, the great grandfather of the person who donated them to the Fusiliers Museum. So my guess is that J. Denner was the maker of this napkin ring.

That's what I find so interesting about these six napkin rings: they generate so many questions. Who were the men who made them? Which islands were they interned on? How old were they? What were they like? What happened when they were repatriated after the war? Were they reunited with their families? And especially who was J. Denner?

These six small napkin rings can be easily overlooked but they each have a story behind them because of the men who made them.



REGIMENTAL STORIES

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

In the Regiment's 50th year the Regimental Council decided to mark the operational service and sacrifice of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers in the Middle Eastern theatre with a new Regimental Day (28th February) which will be known as the Middle East Theatre (Operation GRANBY and Operation TELIC) Day.



Image source: www.thefusiliers.org

During Operation GRANBY six Fusiliers were killed alongside three Privates alongside three Privates from the Queen's Own Highlanders, who were attached to C Company in a 'friendly fire' incident. A further Fusilier was killed whilst training immediately after the cessation of hostilities. Subsequently the Regiment was awarded the battle honour 'Gulf 1991' which appears on the Regimental Colour.

Operation TELIC was the operational name under which all the United Kingdom's military operations in Iraq were conducted between the start of the Invasion of Iraq on 19 March 2003 and the withdrawal of the last remaining British forces on 22 May 2011. The bulk of the mission ended on 30 April 2009.

The First Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers deployed on Operation TELIC in February 2003 as part of 1 (UK) Armoured Division which was involved in operations in southern Iraq around and in the city of Basra. They were instrumental in the capture of Basra and then the subsequent stabilisation operations. During Operation TELIC four Fusiliers were killed and there were numerous injured.

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 many occasions throughout Operation TELIC. Subsequently the Regiment was awarded the battle honour 'Iraq 2003' which appears on the Regimental Colour.

FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM TALKS

SPRING 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.

MONTY IN ITALY



**Zita Ballinger Fletcher,
Author and Historian**

2 PM London Time
Saturday, 25 March

WHO WERE THE ROYAL WARWICKS?



**Jonathan Davy, Historian
and Battlefield Guide**

2 PM London Time
Saturday, 23 April

ANIMALS IN THE GREAT WAR



**Alan Reed, Author
and Local Historian**

2 PM London Time
Saturday, 27 May

To register for these events, please email:
a.reed315@btinternet.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

general.manager@fusiliermuseumwarwick.com

VISIT THE MUSEUM

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

01926 258288

enquiries@fusiliermuseumwarwick.com



VISITOR NEWS

Learning from the past

On Monday 13th March the museum played host to a large group of members from Strategy and Training who included a range of NATO and military officials, and civilians. They were given a guided tour by Museum Assistant David Baynham and Chair of Trustees Col. John Rice. One member of their department is a Lessons Learnt Officer emphasising the importance that history (and museums) have in global affairs today.

National Service Veteran

The museum was delighted to receive a visit from Arthur Davis who was a National Service soldier from 1946-8 serving as a Private in Germany. He was initially with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, but had a period of bereavement leave, after which he transferred to the Royal Leicestershire Regiment.

Arthur was also on parade when Monty got the Freedom of Coventry in 1946 (see image of the parade outside Coventry Council House).

Arthur was accompanied around the museum by David Golden, a family friend.



Do you have stories you would like to share with us?

Email:
enquiries@fusiliermuseumwarwick.com