



Friends of the Herefordshire Light Infantry Museum



Newsletter

Number 12 February 2018

Welcome: Your committee welcomes you to this the annual Friends' newsletter - we hope you enjoy it.

The Museum has again been most active hosting visitors in groups and as individuals and has delivered 8 outreach presentations to local interest groups. Descendants of those that served in The Herefords continue to contact us and we are continuing to add artefacts and information to the Museum's archives.

The web site is up and running and includes a monthly interest feature and an account of what the Herefords were doing 100 years ago that month during WW1. This latter 'post' is attracting much positive comment. If you haven't done already – please take a look!

<http://herefordshirelightinfantrymuseum.com/>

Attendance at the AGM in October was again down slightly, but the Friends were treated to a most interesting presentation by Shane Cusack who has served during the Falklands conflict with the Royal Marines and was able to talk of his personal experiences and perceptions.

The Museum again put on a display at the Orders and Medals Research Society Annual Conference which attracted much interest. The Museum was one of only 2 museums which exhibited.

As a result of the coverage on the TV programme Celebrity Antiques Road Show and despite some initial concerns the show was most favourable and the Museum and The Regiment were shown in a most positive way. Following 'airings' across the world the Museum has received 2 enquiries about ex members of the Regiment from Australia.

The Museum has also purchased 2 new 'state of the art' display cabinets to replace 2 old and damaged cases. These are now being 'dressed' and are a great improvement to the Museum. The Friends contributed to the purchase of these cases and the Museum Trustees are most grateful.

The Museum also took a significant part in The Herefordshire Country Fair, this year held on the King George V Playing Fields, the Museum established itself in the World War One village which had a World War One Home Front theme.

The Museum remains keen to locate an Efficiency Medal (Territorial) to a soldier in The Herefordshire Light Infantry – named 'HEREFORD LI'. The Museum is also planning a new display and is looking for '37 Pattern Webbing' – does anyone have any in their loft!

Dates For The Diary:

10 Mar - Herefordshire LI (Rifles) Officers' Dinner
16/17 Jun - LI & Rifles Reunion (Shrewsbury)
25 Jun - Flag Raising', Armed Forces Week – High Town
30 Jun - Armed Forces Day – Leominster
14 Jul *tbc* - Sounding of Retreat & Reception (Hereford)
8 Sep - Heritage Open Day (Museum Open Day)
13 Oct - AGM & Lunch
11 Nov (1500hrs) - County First World War centenary Service in the Cathedral

Many will be aware that The Weeping Window art installation is to be hosted at Hereford Cathedral between 13 Mar and 29 Apr, to coincide with this the Museum will be supporting a Herefordshire Military exhibition in the Town Hall.

e-mail addresses:

The secretary would be pleased to receive your e-mail address so that all correspondence can be sent electronically and save the Friends the cost of postage. e-mail to james@sufton.co.uk

The Friends' Committee

<i>Patron</i>	The Countess of Darnley
<i>President:</i>	Lt Gen Sir John Foley
<i>Vice-President:</i>	Mr Bill Jackson
<i>Chairman:</i>	Mr Martin Jolly
<i>Vice-Chairman:</i>	Maj Dave Seeney
<i>Secretary/Treasurer</i>	Maj James Hereford
<i>Members:</i>	
Maj Lisa Glover	Lt Col John Marsham
Capt Hugh Patterson	Mr Danny Rees
Sqn Ldr John Scott	
<i>Curator (ex officio):</i>	Col Andy Taylor

There have been changes in the Barracks administration and Lisa Glover has left (and now works at the Cathedral) and is replaced by Lt Col (Retd) Chris Laycock. We thank Lisa for her support over the years and look forward to working with Chris.

In May the Curator received a telephone call from the Courtyard saying they were reviewing their costume holdings and would he like to view their military items – an invitation that was immediately taken up! As a result of this 2 tunics from the early 1900s were identified. The curator had never seen actual examples of these tunics and the Courtyard agreed that they should be held by the museum. One of the tunics, with sergeant's badges of rank, bears the ribbon of the Queen's South Africa medal and it is probable that it belonged to a member of the Herefordshire Rifle Volunteer Corps who served with the Volunteer Service Company of the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry in South Africa. The tunics are now being refurbished/conserved before being put on display. A grant to assist with this was received from the Friends of Herefordshire Arts and Museums.

At the outbreak of war in South Africa it was discovered that there were insufficient regular troops available to undertake operations; many troops being deployed 'policing the empire'. The Government called for 'volunteers' and trained soldiers from the Yeomanry, Militia and Rifles Volunteers readily stepped forward. Local units were formed in South Africa as well – Town Guards (similar to WW2 Home Guard) were formed as well as Imperial Yeomanry units from local horsemen.

The Kings Shropshire Light Infantry called for a Volunteer Service Company of 116 men, One third from the Herefordshire Rifle Volunteers and two thirds from Shropshire. The quota was easily met and 2 VSCs both served in South Africa for 12 months one in 1900/01 and the other on 1901/02. Members of the VSC were awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal with bars: 1VSC: Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Johannesburg & South Africa 1901; 2VSC: Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Transvaal, South Africa 1901 & South Africa 1902.



Whilst on holiday in Malta, the Curator visited the graves of 5 soldiers of the Regiment, who had all been evacuated from Suvla Bay in 1915 and later died of wounds or illness at Malta. The headstone of Pte ET Solomon was erroneously marked with the capbadge of the South Wales Borderers (a regiment that served alongside The Herefords at Suvla). This matter was brought to the attention of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who have undertaken to make corrections. It is perhaps surprising that this error has not been detected in the previous 102 years!

The Curator also visited the National Arboretum at Alrewas, his first visit for about 10 years; the site has seen much development in the intervening years and is certainly 'worth a visit'. The Herefordshire Light Infantry is commemorated in the Light Infantry 'plot'. There is however no recognition of The Herefordshire Regiment.

On the disbandment of the Militia in 1908, the officers of The Herefordshire Militia deposited their mess silver and crockery with the city council, *to be held in safekeeping until the Militia reformed*. In August 2018, the Council had arrived at the conclusion that the Militia would not reform and the remnants of the Officers' Mess crockery was donated to the Museum. This consisted of 2 large wooden trunks bearing the plaques 'Officers Mess Herefordshire Militia China Desert Service' and 'Officers Mess 4 Shropshire Light Infantry No 3' The city have retained the silver items! Over the intervening century much of the crockery has disappeared and much of that in existence is in poor condition – but it does represent a key part of the county's heritage and shows, perhaps the cynicism of the Militia in the Army reorganisation!

Some confusion was caused to the Museum team when on successive days similar Second World War groups were donated to the museum, one was for Pte Baynham and the other Pte Barnham!

The Museum also acquired (at auction) the documents of Sir Richard Harrington Bart; he had been High Sheriff of Herefordshire and a Deputy Lieutenant. Included in 'the haul' was his Commissioning Parchment into the Herefordshire Volunteer Battalion dated 8 August 1917.

The Museum received some documents relating to Pte FG Williams who was killed in August 1944, these included a photograph of him in the Company winning 7's Rugby Team and a moving letter to his mother from the Battalion Padre.

The Museum has also acquired the original cap badge dies for the Herefordshire Light Infantry cap badges.

The Museum staff were 'called in' to help solve a mystery regarding a wooden engraved box. It had 4 regimental names (one being Herefordshire), the Isle of Man trislelion and 'Knockaloe camp'. The probable solution is that the box was made by a member of the Herefordshire Supplementary Company. In 1915 this unit was formed from ex soldiers too old for active service, who were used as POW camps and site guards in UK. The Herefordshire company were deployed to the Isle of Man internment camp, which housed 23,000 'enemy aliens' and later POWs