



# *f*riends of the Herefordshire Light Infantry Museum



## Newsletter

Number 16 - February 2022

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

At the end of this, again most unusual year, we hope you have kept well and that the return to normality (whatever that is!) is achieved soon. The situation has meant that access to the Museum has been severely restricted and we have been unable to host any visitors this year. That said much work has been carried out remotely and the team have been on site and made a considerable amount of progress. We are hopeful that we will be able to 'receive visitors' by the Spring. - updates will be posted on the website.

The website has proved popular and as a result of a generous grant from AMOT, the website is now live and is attracting a good number of 'hits' and positive comment. We have also expanded our on line presence with a you tube channel which hosts short presentations. We are also planning to launch a podcast in the next few months.

The ISO storage facility is up and running, and literally as I type this, electrics are being fitted - this will allow much of the 'clutter' to be moved out of the museum and will hopefully produce a much more organised display environment. The new displays are proving to be both an interesting and taxing exercise - deciding what to include (and more challenging what not to include!) and how to present it!

We are most grateful to AMOT for all their support.

The cases we acquired from the RLC Museum are in and assembled and will form a significant part of the Museum's 'revamp'! We are theming the display cases and a new one will centre on the post WW2 period and we are keen to locate items for the display. We are particularly looking for 58 pattern webbing, early combat kit and 'compo rations'!

So despite a frustrating year much has been achieved and I am sure you will agree that despite considerable restrictions on our personal and corporate activities there has been a lot going on and much has been achieved for the Museum. We all look forward to 'the virus' being beaten and things getting back to normal.

We have also created a 'Patreon' support system, details are on the website and the scheme enables individuals to make a monthly donation to the Museum. Quite a few people have signed up, and they automatically become Friends and receive this newsletter.

## The Friends' Committee

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|------------------------------|--|
| <i>Patron</i>                | Mr Edward Harley                           |
| <i>President:</i>            | Lt Gen Sir John Foley                      |
| <i>Chairman:</i>             | Maj James Hereford                         |
| <i>Vice-Chairman:</i>        | Maj Dave Seeney                            |
| <i>Secretary/Treasurer</i>   | Revd Paul Roberts                          |
| <i>Members:</i>              |  |
|                              | Capt Hugh Patterson      Mr Danny Rees     |
|                              | Mr Pete Weston          Sqn Ldr John Scott |
| <i>Curator (ex officio):</i> | Col Andy Taylor                            |

## Dates For The Diary:

It is hoped that The Herefordshire LI (Rifles) Officers' Dinner can be held in the late Spring and planning is underway for it.

- 7 May (tbc) - Herefordshire Light Infantry officers Dinner
- 18 Jun - LI & Rifles Reunion (Shrewsbury)
- 8/9 Jun - Rifles Sounding of Retreat, Horseguards
- 20 Jun - Flag Raising, Armed Forces Week
- 25 Jun - Armed Forces Day - Ross On Wye
- Sept/Oct (tbc) - AGM - due to dwindling attendance this again is expected to be a 'hybrid' event with the committee meeting in person and others 'zooming' is as desired.

Much activity is being planned but depends on Government rules, venue availability and the willingness of individuals to attend.

## e-mail addresses:

If you have received a 'hard copy' of this newsletter and have an e-mail address please pass that address on to the secretary and save the Friends the cost of postage. The secretary can be contacted at: [hfdlifriends@gmail.com](mailto:hfdlifriends@gmail.com)



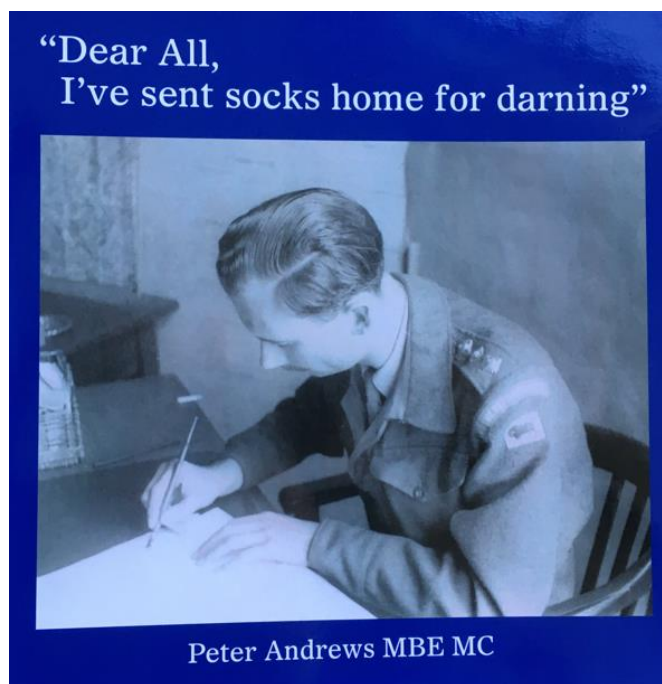
The new display cases - under construction!

**Westminster School.** The Curator, whilst doing some research at the National Archives came across the intriguing notice published in 1943 authorising the School's Officer Training Corps to wear the cap badge of The Herefordshire Regiment!

Further research by the Secretary discovered that during WW2 the school had been evacuated to sites at Buckenhill, Whitbourne and Fernie Bank, and that senior boys paraded with the local Home Guard. Presumably these boys wore the Herefordshire Regiment capbadge and it therefore was adopted by the school OTC. An article in the school magazine also says: *During the holidays, many boys undertook work of various forms: several worked in munition factories, farming and market gardening, Home Guard, military training courses, ARP and fire watching duties, Army and WVS messengers, general duties at an RAF station, Post Office sorters, Red Cross workers, waste paper salvagers and more.*

The article goes on to say: *but it is the actual work we do in the form room which is so important ..... after the war brainpower, backed up by knowledge and experience will be essential for any attempt to solve the immense problems with which the world will be confronted.*

The museum was delighted to receive a book privately produced by the family covering the war experiences of **Capt Peter Andrews**. The book is enigmatically titled *Dear All I have sent my socks home for darning*.

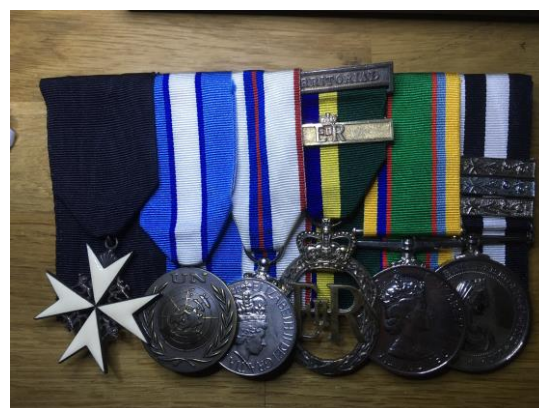


Capt Andrews was commissioned into the KSLI, but attached to The Herefordshire Regiment in Northern Ireland. He served with the Battalion 1941 - 46, but for most of this time was attached to HQ 159 Infantry Brigade, firstly as the Defence Platoon Commander and latterly as the Senior Liaison Officer. It is a fascinating account and gives the 'story' from the perspective of a Brigade HQ Officer. There is a close association with the Herefordshire Regiment throughout the book, given his capbadge and the fact that the Brigade Commander was Brigadier Jack Churcher, who had been CO of The Herefords.

**The Camera Returns** - In this year of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, the camera returns to Ledbury when C (Ledbury) Company of the Herefordshire Regiment paraded through the town, led by Lt FW Jukes on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of HM King George V in 1935



**Dr KCD Steen** - Many will remember Ken Steen, a GP from Ledbury, but also the RMO for 6 LI for many years. Ken died in February 2020 aged 93 and via Major Robert Barnes, his medals have been donated to the Museum.





**11 Armd Div - Web Site** - A group of individuals have started this web site (<https://sites.google.com/view/11th-armoured-division/roll-of-honour>) covering the history of the 11 Armd Div in North West Europe. There are some real gems of information and the Museum is a supporter. In parallel to this one member (Bob Curtis, whose great uncle (Cpl Joseph Curtis) was killed with The Herefords on 1 July 1944 has started a project to gain a photograph of all of the Division's casualties. To date he has secured 425 photos including 30 of over 200 Herefords casualties. Some example are given below.



**4104960 Pte A Welsh** - Various items belonging to Pte Welsh were donated to the Museum, including his medals which consisted only of the 39/45 Star and War Medal as he had been wounded and taken POW in the 1940 retreat to Dunkirk. John Scott determined he was also entitled to the Efficiency Medal (Territorial) which Pte Welsh's NOK claimed and also donated to the Museum.

Pte Welsh had enlisted in The Herefordshire Regiment and was on a Boyes Anti-Tank Rifle course and was 'struggling with angles and degrees' so volunteered for transfer to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Kings Own Royal Regiment with whom he went to France.

As a POW he took part in the 'long march' westward from the camps in Poland and was released in Spring 1945.



Pte Welch - 1939

No member of the Herefordshire Regiment was awarded the Victoria Cross, but 2 recipients had associations with the Regiment.

Capt John Fox-Russell was the RMO of the 1/6 RWF, but attached to the Herefords for the period of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Gaza in November 1917 when he gained his VC. Capt Fox-Russell died as a result of his wounds.

Sergeant Joseph Davies was serving with the RWF on the Somme in July 1916 when he was awarded the VC for action at Delville Wood. He moved to Hereford after the First World War and served with The Herefordshire Regiment for 3 years. Unfortunately no photograph can be located of him in Herefordshire Regiment uniform wearing his VC.

Read more at the Museum's you-tube channel [[Herefordshire Regimental Museum - YouTube](#)]



Pte Welsh's ID Discs including his POW disc

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Lockdown has given the Curator time to look at the archives and one interesting piece discovered in Ken Crockford's documents relates to the Battalion's time in North West Europe. Ken was a platoon commander with the Herefords from 1944 and was awarded the Military Cross. He was later ADC to General Jack Churcher. The quote is from an officer of the Fife & Forfar Yeomanry.

Moving on I suddenly saw 3 men walking towards me right in the middle of the road. I had a good look at them through my binoculars and decided that they looked like one British soldier and two German parachute soldiers (the German parachute helmets were fairly easily recognised).

Eventually the group reached me and I saw that they were a D.R. of 1 Bn Herefordshire Regt - our infantry partners that day and 2 German parachute medical orderlies. The Englishman said that he had lost his way and had been taken prisoner. He had then persuaded the Germans that he had passed some German wounded (he hadn't) and offered to guide stretcher bearers to them - hoping that we would come along and release him.

The two Germans pointed to their Red Cross armbands and then made signs that I should let them go free. I obviously could not do this and I ordered all three to continue to the rear. This they did.

The DR's story was established as correct but the medical people decided that his action was in breach of the Red Cross treaty. The two German stretcher bearers were returned to their own lines a couple of days later.

The guile of the Herefordian infantryman!

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It is not entirely clear when and where this photograph was taken, but it is thought to be the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in 1914 or 1915, either digging training trenches, or 'real' trenches for the East of England/North London defences. I suspect at the start of the exercise!



An internet auction site advertised this pair of shoulder titles. No record exists of them ever being worn; were they created by an enterprising member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion as a trial, but not adopted or just made up!

