



Surrey Infantry Museum

Museum Newsletter – Mar 2021

Volume 1 Issue 20

AIM

To maintain knowledge within the County of Surrey's Infantry
Regiments from 1661 to the present Day

FOSIM – Tony Ward

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1 FOSIM

2-3 Trustees report

4-5 Events

6 Museum matters

7-8 Out and about

9 100 birthdays & Lunch Club Update

Surrey Infantry Museum

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FOSIM NEWSLETTER Mar 2021

"May you live in interesting times" is claimed (incorrectly) to be a traditional Chinese curse whilst seemingly a blessing, it is normally used ironically; as life is better in "Uninteresting Times" of peace and tranquilly. Well, we certainly live-in "interesting times" of a global pandemic and a UK Defence Review! On Monday 22 March, the Defence Secretary announced the Defence Command Paper. This is an important document, following on from the Government's Integrated Review. It provided more detail on the way ahead for our Armed Forces. Defence has sought 'to understand future threats and to invest in the capabilities needed so that we can defeat them'. Defence has been given an increased spend of £24 billion over 4 years and, 'it marks a shift from mass mobilisation to information age speed, readiness and relevance for controlling the threats of the future'. Consequently, Defence capability is being rebalanced with less spending in some areas, but increased investment in others.

So first, the good news! No, not vaccinations are working, rather our successor Regiment the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment does not lose a battalion resulting from the Defence Review. So that is good news.

Even better news is 2 PWRR will form one of the four new "Ranger Battalions". Their role will be to complement the expertise of the SAS and take on "high threat" missions overseas. However, we will retain the cap badge and the battalion, within the Regiment. This is a very exciting phase of our history as 2 PWRR continues under the PWRR cap badge

Last week, I attended the (Virtual) Surrey Military Partnership Conference and was very struck by how busy the Military have been during this pandemic. Within Surrey, the Military provided 2 mobile testing teams, set up vaccination centres, deployed over 80 to help in the hospitals, provided 45 drivers for the Ambulance Service and set up and organised the distribution of PPE and I'm sure many other roles. Both 3 and 4 PWRR were fully involved. Indeed, I wonder if the Reserves (TA) Battalions have ever been so busy since 1945. We should not forget the other tasks and operations continuing during the pandemic. 1 PWRR are actively tasked in Cyprus and 3 PWRR sends contingents on the United Nations Operation Tosca (Cyprus) regularly. 2 PWRR, the Specialist Battalion, soon to be a Ranger Battalion deploy to many parts of Africa. All PWRR Battalions are well recruited. In addition, the Army exercises in the USA, Falklands and Africa. It is remarkably busy.

In spite of the reduction in our Military it is still worth reminding ourselves of the large number within the PWRR recruiting area plus Thames Valley: 23% of the Army, (30% of the RN and RAF) 2, 100 Reservists 14,000 cadets and over 400,000 veterans (you and I!).

Many of you while serving contributed to the "Days' Pay Scheme". This money went to the Regimental Benevolent Fund. I thought you would like to know where and how much money from the former Surrey Regiments is left! In 2011 we passed £1 million to RHQ PWRR for Queens Surreys Benevolence and Reunions. Since that time, we have been generous, making grants up to £1,250 to former members. We still have some £1.4 million. Also, in 2011 we merged the TA Trustees Charity and the Association Charity to form The Queen's Royal Surrey Combined Charities, through prudent investment they now hold some £900,000, having made grants to the Battalions and Re- unions and others of approximately £30,000 p.a. The Surrey Regiments have been very fortunate to have accumulated so much. When I first became a Trustee in 2003 we had some £2.4 M. That 18 years later we still have the same amount having invested much into the Museum at Clandon and handed over an endowment of £300,000 in addition to passing some £50,000 to each of the Regimental Chapels is very satisfactory.

It has been a great shame that we have been unable to have any Reunions/Get together due to "Lockdown". I know Dee is wanting to restart our FOSIM Lunches and lectures once we can meet again. The East Surrey Reunion is being planned for 18th Sept at Whiteley Village, pencil it in now.

During Lockdown Colonel Piers Story Pugh has been going with a bucket and scrubbing brush to clean the Queen's Surrey Memorial on Putney Heath marking the spot where The Tangier Regiment first mustered on 14th October 1661. He has also asked the Park Ranger to have the trees which have grown up cleared back. So, another note for your dairies: 1130 am on Saturday 16th October a parade at the Monument to mark the 360th Anniversary of the raising of England's Senior Infantry Regiment. We are hoping that The Queen's Regiment Riders will join us. Dee Hutchison is also hoping to arrange a gathering at Battalion Headquarters 4PWRR at Redhill for all veteran of former Regiments.

I have also decided that our WW2 Battlefield Tour, originally planned for May 2020 be postponed until May 2022 – just two years delay crossing the Start Line. I felt it better to await more French getting vaccinated and Bars and Restaurants opening up. Thank you all those who have paid a deposit and have indicated that you still plan to come. I know that there will be a few vacancies. The dates are 10th- 14th May 2022. Contact Dee Hutchison for more info.

Lindsay Parsons has been busy making changes and amendments to the Queen's Surrey Website: www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk. It gets better every day and is much visited. It consists of 43,000 files. It must be the largest and most comprehensive of all Regimental websites. Thank you Lindsay.

Now to the Museum. As you will read in David Pollards report we still await the resolution of the insurance claim. But I must thank all the Volunteers for sticking with it, going in when allowed to do research and arranging on Outreach displays. We now have displays at both Guildford Museum and Surrey History Centre see Museum update. I also thank Dee Hutchison for producing this Newsletter. Let us hope we can all meet up soon. Continue to keep an eye on one another in case a friend is having a rough time. Don't be shy of seeking help.

Wash your hands for 20 Seconds and let's hope that The English Rugby Team are better next season!
Cheers,
Tony Ward

Maj (Retd) David Pollard TRUSTEES

- MUSEUM MANAGEMENT and

Given the various lockdowns during the Covid pandemic, there is not an awful lot to report I am afraid. For much of the time the museum at Dover and Dover Castle have been closed, and access to the SIM office at Surrey History Centre has been limited.

The last meeting of the Museum Trustees was again a virtual one and was held on 11th December; the next Trustees' meeting will be on 13th April. At the December meeting RHQ proposed that Henry Thomas of RHQ should become the Museum Director of both Dover and SIM, with Ms Cory Clover (Curator at Dover) assuming the position of Curator of both. The new Collections Officer post for SIM (to replace Steve Johnson and which the Trustees agreed to at the April 2020 meeting) would be appointed for three days per week and on a fixed 18 month contract, reporting to Ms Clover. The Trustees agreed to these proposals. After the SIM Collections Officer position was advertised, a significant number of applications were received and, after narrowing the field, interviews were due to take place in January. However, with the latest lockdown the interviews were postponed to enable face-to-face ones and they are now planned for around the end of April, restrictions permitting.

At Dover Castle, housekeeping work has continued as much as possible during the lockdowns. Work with local schools and the University of Kent has also proceeded when possible. At SIM, Ian Chatfield has been working on the cataloguing of the collection and Dee Hutchison has made periodic visits to the office to clear mail and messages.

In the last newsletter I advised that the insured and uninsured losses claims were submitted to the lawyers acting for the National Trust (NT) in February 2020; apart from some initial questions, which we had answered, our lawyers had heard no more. In the middle of this February, Ecclesiastical Insurance sent RHQ a draft document prepared by our lawyers, BLM, listing all the elements of both the insured and uninsured losses, prior to this being sent to the NT and their lawyers. A few days later, on 26th February, I took part in a video call with Col John Powell (Regtl Sec), Col Mark Rayner (Chairman of Trustees), Henry Thomas (Museum Director) and Ecclesiastical Insurance to go through that draft document. As a result of the video call, there were some issues that needed clarification; I was asked to take that on along with Steve Johnson. Thanks to excellent work by Steve we completed a comprehensive review of the draft document and sent it to BLM and Ecclesiastical just over a week later. To date we have not had a response. As I wrote in the last Newsletter, the aim is to resolve the claims by way of mediation and the NT and their lawyers have agreed to that. Given there is now some light at the end of the Covid tunnel, I am keeping my fingers crossed that by the time I report for the next newsletter there might, just might, have been a settlement.

Guildford Museum and our exhibition there has been closed for much of the last year. However, hopefully once life starts to reopen, discussions with Guildford Council can take place and we can make progress on that front.

Finally, I offer sincere and heartfelt thanks to our volunteers for their continued and much valued support

360th Anniversary of the formation of the Regiment – 16th October 2021



Where does time go it does not seem 10 years since we commemorated the 350th of the formation of the regiment and here we are 10 year later for the 360th. Thanks to Col (Retd) Piers Storie Pugh for some hard work that has gone onto the cleaning of the Memorial and getting the Ranger on side. Please put in your diary the above date as there will be a commemoration service at the site with more information later as we put this event together.

See www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/monuments-and-memorials/monuments13.shtml

QRS and East Surrey Reunions

As you are aware we have been a year of cancellation on these Events. And we are starting to plan ahead. The first on the calendar is the East Surrey Reunion on the 18th September 2021 at Whiteley Village and will be conditional on any changes that might come about.

We are looking at holding a bigger Reunion later on in the year once we know this can go ahead.

All QRS matters are to be sent to Dee Hutchison using the email: fosim@btconnect.com

Battlefield Tour is now May 2022

The Battlefield Tour to Belgium and France following the Apr – Jun 1940 escapades of our former Regiments will now take place on 10th- 14th May 2022. Many of you have allowed Anglia Tours to retain the deposit that you paid in 2020 which means there are only a few places available on this Tour. Please do get in contact for more information but attached to this email is the flyer for interest. We would like to fill the places if we can.

Eastbourne and District armed Forces Day -26th June 21

This will be held in Five Acres field and is a free Community Event. The Blue Van Drop In will be there. See www.eastbourne-armedforces-day.co.uk for more info

One Aim Rally 2nd-4th July 2021 - QRRRA

This will be held at Homestall Road, Faversham, Kent. This is a three day military fundraiser event for the Queens, Royal Hampshire's and PWRR Benevolent Fund. You can do one day or three. With 14 Live Bands stalls, stands Military Vehicles etc. see www.qrra.co.uk. For more info

Operation Sleep out to Help out – Saturday 31st July by -John Bennett, Major (Rtd) VR.



There will be a sponsored sleep out on the 31st July. Remember back in the day waking up in a wood somewhere in the summer, listening to the birds singing and the smell of compo sausages drifting on the air? Well forty years later we want to replicate the experience, this time we are much older and our joints are aching!

Why would we want to do this? Well, the two charities we want to support are in need of some help, our own benevolent fund (Queens and PWRR) and Scotty's little soldiers. Our benevolent fund has seen a decrease in income over the last couple of years. The recent defence review changes and the withdrawal from BAOR have all made the situation more difficult. Those of us who could call on the fund are becoming that much older, so we all need to consider helping.

Scotty's little soldiers are a charity based in Kings Lynn who assist the families and children of serving soldiers who have sadly passed away. In the last few years, they have supported the families of at least two members of our regiment, and many more from across the tri service family who have passed away through illness. They maintain contact with the children on a mentoring and support basis into early adulthood. Please see their website for more details and their mission statement and how they help.

<https://www.scottyslittlesoldiers.co.uk/>

How much do we want to raise? I have set an ambitious target of £10k for this event, I am expecting many veterans to participate. Sponsorship can come from friends, family, local businesses and work contacts. Sponsorship forms are available from johnbennett@pwrr.co.uk they can either be emailed or posted if you don't have a printer.

How does it work? Operation sleep out to Help out, is an individual or group task to stay outside for the night. You will need to choose a site to camp out. You can use an elaborate tent or a simple bivvy bag, it doesn't matter as long as you are outside. When you are set up for the night please take a 'selfie' and send to the organiser for the social media accounts. You could even stay in your garden! If you choose to go to local woods or park, it is up to the individual to seek permissions from the landowners, the organiser accepts no responsibility for failure to obtain these permissions.

COVID 19 implications. At the early planning stages, we are in lockdown but as the year progresses these are likely to be eased. Please ensure that you comply with the latest Government advice at the time, again the organiser cannot be held responsible for failing to adhere to these guidelines.

Summary – the two charities work hard to support our veterans and this event will provide much needed money to support this. A sponsored sleep out will provide money from a wide range of individuals to collectively reach our target of £10k. Please consider supporting this event your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Surrey Infantry Museum - Dee Hutchison

And just as we start to clear our Backlog of work then we all went back into Lockdown! We did manage however to do an Outreach at the Rural Life Centre for the Christmas Fair they held and we had a very successful if not very busy two days. We were housed in a barn which kept some of the wind off but not the cold and raised some much needed funds for FOSIM.

The Appointment of the Collections Officer has been delayed due to the Covid situation but Interviews are due late April 21 so hopefully some news soon on this front.



In the meantime the Surrey History Centre offered us two museum casement cabinets in the Lecture Room where we hold our Lecture Lunches. We have now added some of our Museum items for display. We have themed the two cabinets - Cabinet 1 is Fire Destruction and Restoration with Cabinet 2 some of the fine silver we have as well as swords kindly donated by Maj W Harper and Capt A Birtles.



We are currently in the process of restoring some of the fire damaged swords as we now have a Volunteer - Martin Chapman who knows all about Swords as he has his own collection. He has done a very good job of some of these and has managed to put separated bits back together. We hope to be able to get some of these on display soon. (WW2 German Bayonet and the late 1700 pick head now in Cabinet 1 on display) and Officer Dress Swords. The Middle sword was donated by General Sir GJ Giffard in 1959 but an earlier engraving identified the sword as being won by Sgt Giffard in 1805 by the Military College for Drill.

Ian and Steve B are still updating the returned medals and are in the process of now really being able to identify those that are missing and where they are needed to be replaced. They have replaced missing ribbons and making sure medal sets are complete as they can be. There is a fine collection of our medals on display in the Surrey History Centre Reading Room in a medal cabinet.

Out and about

Somaliland War Memorial at Tug Argan Gap.

An approach from Christopher Allanson led us on another research project. Sadly the War memorial at Tug Argan has had its bronze plaque removed and no one knew where it had disappeared to, nor at the time the knowledge of what was written on it. Research from all sides managed to find what was written on it as well as the photographs of the unveiling event. See Page 8.



This research also led to the action of Eric Charles Twelves Wilson VC of the East Surrey's at Argan Gap as he was instrumental in getting the Memorial in place.



The KING has been pleased to approve of the award of The Victoria Cross to: – Lieutenant (acting Captain) Eric Charles Twelves Wilson, The East Surrey Regiment (attached Somaliland Camel Corps).

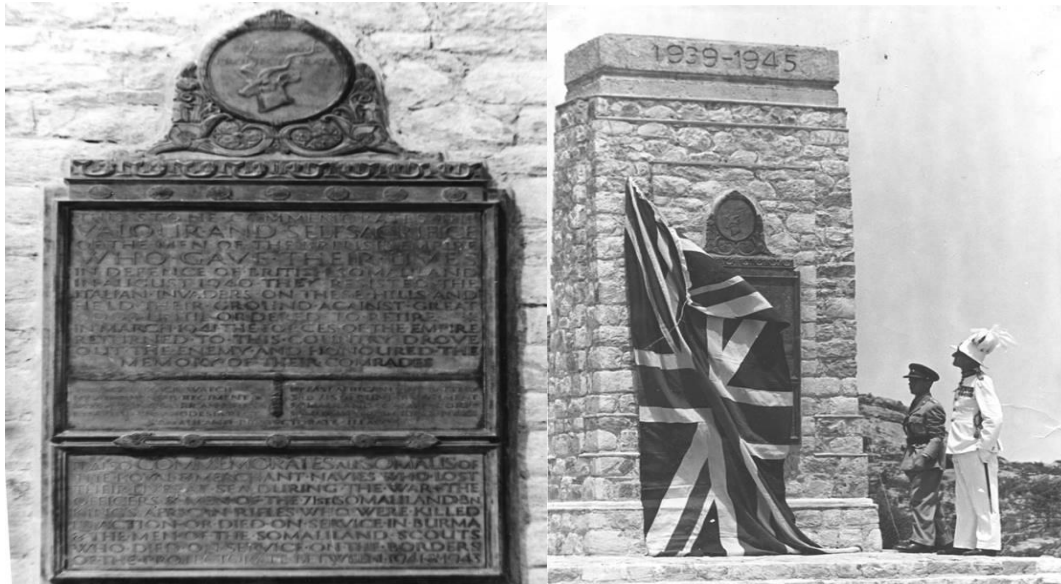
For most conspicuous gallantry on active service in Somaliland. Captain Wilson was in command of machine-gun posts manned by Somali soldiers in the key position of Observation Hill, a defended post in the defensive organisation of the Tug Argan Gap in British Somaliland. The enemy attacked Observation Hill on August 11th, 1940. Captain Wilson and Somali gunners under his command beat off the attack and opened fire on the enemy troops attacking Mill Hill, another post within his range.

He inflicted such heavy casualties that the enemy, determined to put his guns out of action, brought up a pack battery to within seven hundred yards, and scored two direct hits through the loopholes of his defences, which, bursting within the post, wounded Captain Wilson severely in the right shoulder and in the left eye, several of his team also being wounded. His guns were blown off their stands but he repaired and replaced them and, regardless of his wounds, carried on, whilst his Somali sergeant was killed beside him.

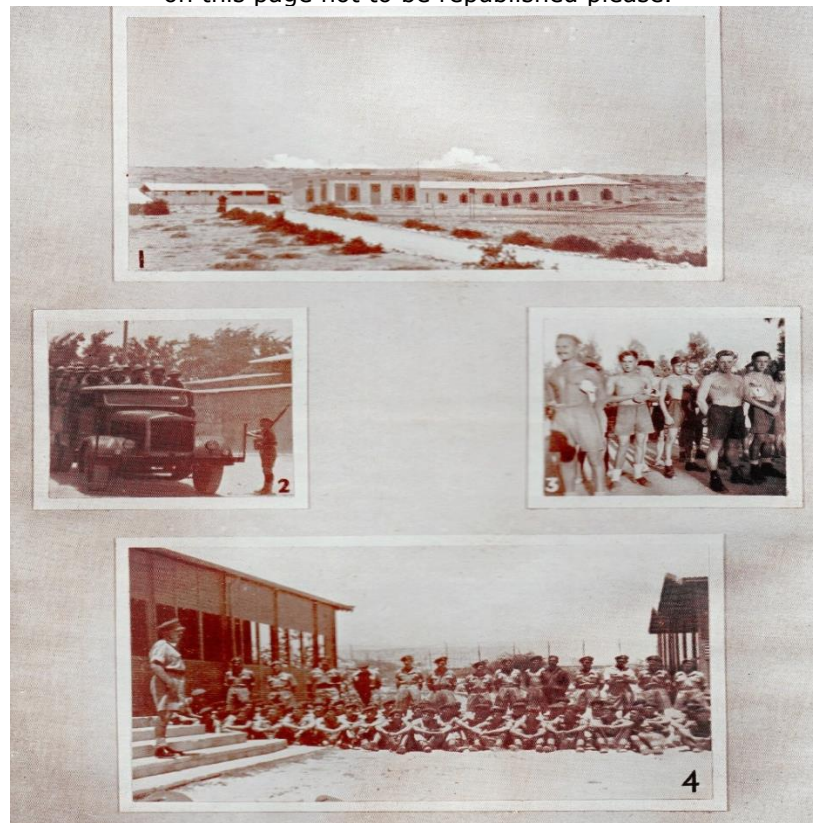
On August 12th and 14th the enemy again concentrated field artillery fire on Captain Wilson's guns, but he continued, with his wounds attended, to man them. On August 15th two of his machine-gun posts were blown to pieces, yet Captain Wilson, now suffering from malaria in addition to wounds, still kept his own post in action. The enemy finally over-ran the post at 5 p.m. on the 15th August when Captain Wilson, fighting to the last, was killed.

The London Gazette: 14 OCTOBER, 1940

However he was not killed but was captured and taken as a POW when he was found lying amongst the dead and wounded. He was amused when it was found he was awarded the VC posthumously after his release in 1941 from a POW camp in Eritrea when the Italians surrendered.



The East Surreys were stationed in Mogadishu when the area was handed back to the Italians and United Nations on 1st April 1950. - Photos below from History of East Surrey Regt - Photos on this page not to be republished please.



1. Merca Camp.
2. Mogadiscio. The first load of Italians to leave the docks.
3. Aliki. The Band ready for a bathe.
4. The C.O. announcing that we are going home.

100 Birthdays wishes

Our Congratulations to two East Surrey Veterans who have achieved their 100th Birthdays'

**Private Eric Reeves, 1/5th Battalion, the Queen's Royal Regiment.**

Eric has recorded some of his experiences and can be found on the the QRS website

Eric received loads of cards and well wishes from the all the Regiments as well as HM Queen Margrethe of Denmark. He was overwhelmed with it all and so pleased he was

remembered by us all.

http://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/video/04ww2_europe_n_africa/eric_reeves_02-trans.html

Captain Dennis Charles Cufley will be 100 on 13th April 2021.

Pte DC Cufley joined the East Surrey in 1940 and was commissioned in 1941. Lt Cufley was attached to the Northamptonshire Regiments and served with them in Burma where he was wounded. He left the Army in 1946 as a Captain.

Cards and well wishes have been arranged to be sent from the Regimental family with more detail on the attachment to this Newsletter - worth a read.

Lunch Club

As you are aware all Events have been canceled until further Notice.
Still on our speaking Schedule is: -

Sir Nick Young
Lt Col (Retd) Peter Swanson
Col (Retd) Piers Storie-Pugh OBE