

THE MERCIAN REGIMENT

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Q2 2026

Print-friendly Edition

1 MERCIAN – Ex EAGLE CYCLONE

Ex EAGLE CYCLONE is a demanding field training exercise designed to develop combat effectiveness, leadership and tactical proficiency, preparing soldiers and units for operations in realistic battlefield conditions.

Throughout the exercise, soldiers progress through Training Levels A to F, reinforcing and refining core military skills while building confidence and competence in increasingly challenging tactical scenarios.



Sgt Hebb of C (Kohima) Company, maintaining vigilance during a Fighting in Woods and Forest scenario on Ex EAGLE CYCLONE demonstrating the experience, focus and tactical awareness expected of a 1 MERCIAN Platoon Sergeant.



Pte Firkins demonstrated exceptional hard work, dedication and professionalism while erecting an 8-metre mast to ensure BGHQ maintained the high standard of communications consistently delivered by the CIS Platoon.



C (Kohima) Company and 2 ROYAL ANGLIAN conduct the clearance of Greenland's Camp during Ex EAGLE CYCLONE demonstrating effective teamwork, aggression and tactical proficiency in a demanding field environment.



Snipers from Dragon Company manoeuvre through the training area on Ex EAGLE CYCLONE, showcasing patience, precision and fieldcraft as they identify and track enemy positions.

1 MERCIAN- Ex IRON STORM CALFEX

A (Grenadier) Company worked alongside C Squadron KRH, within the KRH Battlegroup, and completed Ex IRON STORM CALFEX in June 2026. The Combined Arms Live Firing Exercise which took place at Castlemartin Ranges was a key part of the Combat Ready Validation Pathway for the battlegroup.

The exercise made full use of the space available with a wide range of offensive and defensive activity, simultaneously coordinated between tanks, infantry, engineers and artillery. The exercise was designed to reflect the contemporary operating environment against a peer threat with UAS being used by both sides and engaged as targets.

The clearing of complex terrain was of the most significant value to the Company, given the opportunity to conduct live FIWAF, urban and trench clearance, with supporting armour in both day and night attacks.



An A (Grenadier) Company and Squadron (KRH) Leaguer during a scenario pause on the Castlemartin Ranges.



A (Grenadier) Company in defensive fire team trench positions with dismounts supported by dug in Warriors on the Castlemartin Ranges.



A (Grenadier) Company manoeuvre by the sea on the Castlemartin Ranges.

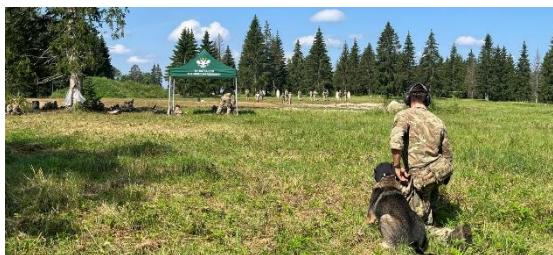
1 MERCIAN - Ex KUKRI WARRIOR

C KOHIMA Company, alongside elements of 1 Military Working Dog (MWD) Regiment, conducted experimentation during KUKRI

WARRIOR 26 to develop Infantry-Dog Pairing at section level in support of 12 Armd Inf Bde's WARDEV.

The activity, conducted in complex environments including subterranean infrastructure, sought to assess the operational value of MWDs as a low-signature sensing capability in environments where conventional ISR is degraded.

The event confirmed that Infantry-Dog Pairing enhances situational awareness and force protection, particularly in urban, trench and subterranean contexts.



A Military Working Dog and Handler support C (Kohima) Company's Dog display as part of WARDEV on KUKRI WARRIOR 26.



C (Kohima) Company recently conducted Ex KUKRI WARRIOR alongside 104 Squadron Military Working Dogs at Corsham Mines, delivering focused Close Quarters Battle training in a challenging underground environment.



A Military Working Dog in routine as part of KUKRI WARRIOR 26, supporting C (Kohima) Company in complex terrain clearance in CORSHAM.

1 MERCIAN - BOXING TRAINING



Private Kanaebogi takes a moment to catch his breath as the intensity of the 1 MERCIAN boxing training camp steadily increases.



In C (Kohima) Company, Private McDonald skilfully blocks incoming shots while engaging in light sparring with Private Heller, as part of their preparation for the upcoming preliminary bouts.



Privates King and Mohamad from Headquarter Company participating in technical sparring, practising a variety of combinations with the goal of identifying areas for improvement.



Sergeant Dobinson provides expert coaching to Private King, demonstrating how to slip a right-hand punch and counter with a powerful lead hook.

4 MERCIAN - OPERATIONAL SHOOTING COMPETITION

The Bn Shooting Team attended, at incredibly short notice, the Army Reserve Operational Shooting Competition at Lydd & Hythe Ranges.

The competition brought together teams from across the Army Reserve to compete and practice their marksmanship in complex shoots designed to simulate operation scenarios.

Bonds were formed across companies and it was a good opportunity to meet people from across the Reserve and across a wide range of cap badges.



The troops had the added challenge of needing to memorise each shoot, as minimal instructions were given by the range staff.



4 MERCIAN Shooting Team taking part in Army Reserve Operational Shooting Competition at Lydd & Hythe.



The troops had a demanding time practicing firing from irregular shaped cover; firing with a bayonet attached; engaging moving targets; and learning to stay in control of their breathing after evacuating a casualty.



4 MERCIAN Shooting Team. Left to right: Pte Phillips, Pte Baroy-Jones, Pte Mealor, 2Lt Lynch (Team Captain), Pte Molyneux, Cpl Neal, Pte Sanders.

4 MERCIAN - GREENTRAINING

4 MERCIAN has started the new training year focusing on core green skills in the build up to their LFTT annual camp on SPTA. The Bn has trained at Nesscliffe and Catterick focusing on section battle drills, comms, fieldcraft and casevac as well as house clearing drills and operating at night. Offrs and SNCOs have conducted battlegroup planning exercises to train them for mobilisation.



Ex EAGLE SPRAWL

Soldiers from 4 MERCIAN conducted Urban training on 5-7 June, focusing on clearing a building as a section and conducting night operations using head-mounted night vision systems (HMNVS).

Officers and senior soldiers took part in battlegroup planning, delivering orders for a battlegroup attack.



Ex EAGLE ASSAULT

8-10 May 2026 4 MERCIAN soldiers deployed to Nesscliffe Training Area to practice and develop their military skills, on exercise EAGLE ASSAULT.

This included section attacks, section battle drills, communications, fieldcraft and CASEVAC (Casualty Evacuation).



4 MERCIAN - LONDON MARATHON & TENNIS

Outside of core business members of 4 MERCIAN have been busy on the sporting front. Pte Jeffries from D Coy won the Army Novice Tennis competition and Pte Carty from C Coy ran the London Marathon raising £2,750 for Barnardos.



Private Jeffries being presented his trophy for winning Army Novice Tennis Championship.



Private Ryan Carty ran the London marathon in April with a time of 04:57:36, raising £2,750.00 for the Barnardo's children's charity.

BAND OF THE MERCIAN REGIMENT

The Next Generation - Concert in Walsall, April 2026



The Band of the Mercian Regiment in concert with Walsall Music Education Service's Intermediate and Senior Wind Ensembles at Walsall Arena. Linking with the musicians of the future is always important, and it was fantastic to have the opportunity to work alongside and

support some fantastic up and coming young talent. Maybe one day soon some of them will be sitting there in their scarlet uniforms mentoring and supporting the next generation themselves.

The Saxophone Quarter - Wolsley House, May 2026



The saxophone quartet have been performing at events around the area, adding pomp and ceremony to regimental events.

One event was at the Joint Officers', Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess dinner night at Wolseley House.

They performed a selection of music including Band of Brothers, Bohemian Rhapsody and Friend Like Me to entertain during the dinner, to an audience that included some of the Band's senior ranks.

There was a lot of praise for their performance, both from their fellow musicians and from the wider regimental attendees.

Farewell To Captain Ian Johnson, Director of Music, May 2026



In May, the Band of the Mercian Regiment said goodbye and good luck to our Director of Music, Captain Ian Johnson, as he leaves Wolverhampton to move north and take up the post of Director of Music for The Royal Signals (Northern) Band in Darlington. Captain Johnson joined the Regiment seven years ago when he transferred from Regular to Reserve and settled in his hometown.

During his tenure as DOM, the Band of the Mercian Regiment performed at many prestigious events around the UK and further afield, and its various ensembles have featured in events around the world. Captain Johnson received a regimental presentation as a memento of his time with the Mercians. He is moving areas to be closer to his family and everyone wishes him good luck with his new post, house move and future musical endeavours. There is now a current vacancy for a Director of Music for The Band of the Mercian Regiment.

Duty Bugler - Chester Cathedral, June 2026



Our duty bugler Corporal Wendy Robert has been at many events this quarter, including the consecration of a memorial to the fallen of the Afghanistan conflict in Chester Cathedral. The Service of Remembrance was attended by some of the soldiers' families as well as senior commanders of the Regiment.

Congratulations To Musician Andrew Elwood



The Band of the Mercian Regiment would like to congratulate Musician Andrew Elwood on the completion of his CEQ 3 qualification on Trombone.

The CEQ exams are the career employment qualifications which musicians in both Regular and Reserves sit as part of their continuing professional development, and completing these can lead to increases in pay and becoming eligible for promotion.

They cover elements such as General Musicianship and Theory, Marching Band Assessments and Practical Performance. Congratulations on all your hard work.

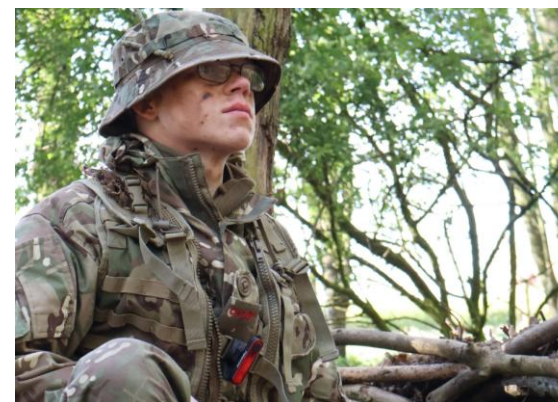
DERBYSHIRE ARMY CADET FORCE



Derbyshire ACF's A, B, C & D companies completed fieldcraft training weekends at Defence Training Estate Beckingham, Lincolnshire.



Fieldcraft is a core subject in the progressive army cadet syllabus. By living in the field, cadets improve confidence and resilience; tactical battle exercises develop leadership & teamwork.



Our dedicated Cadet Force Adult Volunteers train and mentor cadets to provide a taste of military life and to instil the qualities of a good citizen.

MERCIAN REGIMENT MUSEUM- WORCESTER

It has been a busy period for the Regimental Museum, as we announced in May the award of a grant of £1,045,122 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver a new Worcestershire Solider Gallery at The Commandery in Worcester.

The display will open in its new home in early 2028, and there will be a range of activities to get involved in as we prepare for the installation and grand opening.

The museum team have been working hard to fulfil the conditions for starting the project, and we are grateful to everyone who has supported our recent fundraiser to help us reach our match funding target.

We have also been testing out new displays and interpretation on the experiences of Worcestershire Regiment soldiers in the Malayan Emergency.

We were delighted to share these with veterans and families at this year's Regimental Reunion in Worcester on 6 June.

The display included the General Service Medal of Private Banner, who was killed in action in Malaya, and whose medal was purchased with the support of the WFRA and the Mercian Regiment Regimental Heritage Fund in 2024.



Visual of the planned 'Beginnings' gallery for the Worcestershire Soldier at The Commandery by Redman Design.



New interpretative panels on the Malayan Emergency at the Worcester Reunion.



Display on the Malayan Emergency including the GSM of Pte Banner.

THE MERCIAN REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

The Mercian Regiment Association - Annual General Meeting (AGM) - Saturday 12th September 2026

The Mercian Regiment Association AGM for 2026 will be held in The Founders' Room at The National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire on Saturday 12th September 2026.

Attendance is open to all, including serving, as well as veterans of both The Mercian Regiment and our antecedent regiments, and any family or friends of the regiment.

Those wishing to attend in-person are requested to RSVP via the event page on Mercian Connect by early September. You do not need an account to RSVP. Please note that the option of virtual

attendance is yet to be confirmed, pending a recce of the site.

Timings:

- Arrive: 10:00 hrs
- Start: 10:30 hrs
- Finish: Around 12:30 hrs

Venue Address: The National Memorial Arboretum, Croxall Road, Alrewas, Staffordshire, DE13 7AR

If you have any questions, please contact the Secretary for The Mercian Regiment Association: RHQ@mercianregiment.co.uk

Wolverhampton Branch (Staffords)



Branch Official Photo 2026

Joseph Reginald Smith (Reg) 100th Birthday Celebration

Reg Served in the South Staffords from November 1944 to March 1948. Reg Retired as a WO2 (CSM), most of Reg's service was in India.

Reg is a life member of the branch, and we celebrated his birthday with the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands and the Lord Mayor of Wolverhampton.



WO2 (CSM) Smith with Local dignitaries celebrating 100th Birthday at home



Branch Chairman, Chris Whitehouse and Gordon Partridge (Ex South Staffords) present gift on behalf of the branch



Reg Poses with 2 Ex South Staffords left to right - Peter Clarke, Reg Smith and Gordon Partridge.

Branch Range and Asset Manager (Stacy Hamilton) and Branch Chairman Chris Whitehouse in the background.

Wolverhampton Branch Celebrates Armed Forces Week

The branch once again has been busy with supporting local events with the Airsoft Range, We have supported events as follows:

- Bike for Life at Westin Park- April
- 26Willenhall Carnival - June 26AFD Wolverhampton - June 26AFD Walsall - June 26
- Willenhall Carnival- June 26
- AFD Wolverhampton- June 26
- AFD Walsall- June 26

The Owner of the Ashmore Park Cafe invited branch members to a coffee morning to celebrate Armed Forces Week. This has now turned into a regular monthly event.



Branch Members attend coffee morning at Ashmore Park Cafe hosted by owner (Kelly)



Branch President (Major (Ret'd) Mark Banks says thank you to Kelly (Owner Ashmore Park Cafe) for hosting a veterans coffee morning during Armed Forces Week.



Branch President Major (Ret'd) Mark Banks hands over donation to the Air Ambulance at Bike for Life event at Weston Park (April 26).



Airsoft Range at Armed Forces Day Wolverhampton



Armed Forces Day Walsall- Robert (Range Volunteer) supervises members of the public on the pistol range.

CHESHIRE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Chester Race Day Gathering

Saturday 13th June saw Chester Branch lay on an afternoon gathering for members of the Cheshire Regiment Association.



A raffle, also organised by Chester Branch raised £555.00 for Cheshire Military Museum.



Many thanks to the work party who set up and stripped down the venue to allow the museum to use the courtyard again on the Sunday morning.



Tom Sephton Trophy



Armed Forces Day saw Dave Willis, CRA Standard Bearer, attend the Tom Sephton Trophy to lead out teams from The Mercian Regiment and The Duke of Lancasters for this annual match in memory of Tom Sephton who lost his life in Afghanistan whilst serving with 1 Mercian (Cheshire).

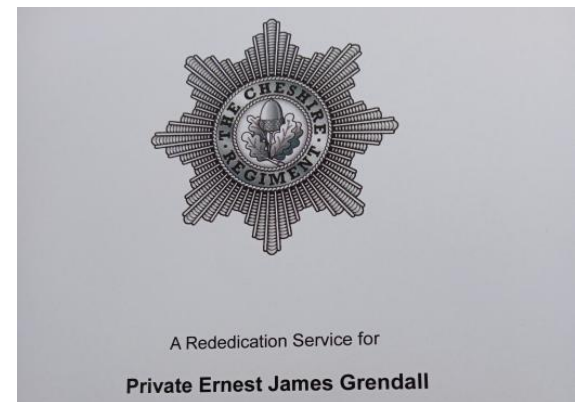


The match was played in very hot weather with The Duke of Lancasters Regiment running out as winners with a scoreline of 42 - 10.



WW2 Rededication Ceremony - Berlin

The 17th June saw Peter Gresty, CRA Chairman and the Mercian Regiment Military Representative, attend the Rededication Ceremony for Pte Ernest James Grendall some 81 years after he died.



The clues which led to his final resting place were discovered by private history researchers, in the diary of a CSM from The Seaforth Highlanders so his unnamed headstone was replaced with one bearing his name and details.



Accompanying Peter for the service was Mr David Willis, CRA Standard Bearer.

David had served in Berlin in the early 1970s and Peter was the last Garrison Sergeant Major in Berlin in 1993-94 and led the ceremonial handover of Berlin to the German authorities when the Allies left the city.

Bosnia Commemoration

In April, Honorary Secretary of the CRA, Tudor Ellis, arranged a 5-day visit to Bosnia. Members of 3 Platoon, A Company were in the main and were accompanied by Mike 'Smudge' Smith who was a PI Sgt in C Company in 1992-93. Family members also attended and 19 people made the trip from UK to Bosnia.



It was an emotional visit, with family ties strengthened through understanding and old service friendships rekindled and kept strong.



Flowers were laid at Wayne Edwards' Memorial and the 3 PI team repaired the plot, planted flowers and spent a good few hours tidying up. The group travelled the country and a few ghosts were, if not laid to rest, were confronted.

An emotional ceremony took place at Ahmici on 16 April, where Tudor Ellis spoke - his speech being published online by BosnianTV. A fantastic trip and one that will be repeated.



THE STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

The Staffordshire 3 And Watchman Memorials Unveiling

The Staffordshire 3 memorial which is a memorial for 3 Staffordshire Regiments soldiers that lost their lives on Op Telic 6 was unveiled on Saturday the 11th of April 26 on the lower lawn of Tamworth Castle Grounds as well as the Watchman memorial. The 3 members of the Regiment were 2nd Lt Richard Shearer, Private Leon Spicer, and Pte Phillip Hewett.

The unveiling was carried out by the Kings representative in Staffordshire the Lord Lieutenant Professor Liz Barnes CBE alongside acclaimed artist Johanna Domke Guyot. The memorial was kindly dedicated by The Staffordshire Regimental Padre Keith Barry.

The Staffordshire 3 formed as a community group in August 2023, and with the help of former members of the Regiment as well as local government and communities, raised around £55,000 over the course of 2 years and 8 months to bring this project from a dream to reality. We would like to thank everyone for their support on this project, especially team Watchman, who have been there with advice, support and most importantly friendship. Greg, Mandy, 6 & 7 thank you will never be enough.



Both the Oaths Taken, Oaths Fulfilled and Watchman memorials covered in Union flags prior to the unveiling. The artist Johanna Domke Guyot between them, Anthony Frith, Padre Keith Barry, and Father Andrew Lythall on the right (L-

R) Rugeley town crier (a former Stafford) and SRA standards to the rear.



WO2 Greg Hedges and Sgt Watchman explaining about the Mercian formation bench to the artist and the Regimental Secretary for The Mercian Regiment.



Former members of the Staffordshire Regiment grabbed Anthony for a photo with the memorial.



The memorial made up of 3 Knots for 3 men of the Staffordshire Regiment, 3 Bayonets for 3 men of the infantry, 3 Prince of Wales plumes representing each of the lads with their heads bowed but also representing the PoW division that the Staffords were a part of. All of these elements are in a subdued bronze to represent them no-longer being here. They are protected all around by the crown, a lighter bronze prince of Wales coronet.



Sergeant Watchman VI & Private Watchman VII



The boys visited Tamworth once again after the memorial unveiling to visit the statues and lay a wreath. They stopped and had a chat next to the statue, but the bronze dog didn't say much!



During Uttoxeter's Armed Forces Day, the boys met with The Mercian Regiment's Ram Major and Ram Orderly.



They also met with members of SSAFA - the Armed Forces charity, Veterans hub, the Deputy Mayor, and the local Member of Parliament.



On 1 May, the "Staffy Trail" was unveiled, which saw 10 large-scale sculptures of Staffy, the

mascot for Staffordshire, appear in various locations across Staffordshire.



Sgt Watchman VI and Pte Watchman VII have been busy trying to complete the trail as part of the 10th Anniversary of Staffordshire Day.



Watchman visited the ANZAC Memorial at Cannock Chase War Cemetery to remember the ANZAC sacrifice.



Watchman is no stranger to The Staffordshire Regiment Museum. He recently saw some Cadets, as well as various members of the team at the Museum.

WORCESTERSHIRE & SHERWOOD FORESTERS REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Worcester Reunion

On Saturday 6th June 2026, the annual Worcester Reunion took place at the Worcester Rugby Club.



While the weather was not particularly glamorous, that did not dampen the spirits of the veterans and their families in attendance.



Private Derby XXXIV was in attendance, along with his rather wet handlers. Also attending were cadets, various volunteers, and the Tenbury Town Band, the latter of whom provided live musical entertainment.



A service was led by Rev'd Peter Hart, with readings from Nigel Fish.



Maj (Retd) Bob Prophet was presented with a Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Association Merit Award for outstanding service over a number of years by the Regimental Secretary for The Mercian Regiment: Brig (Retd) Peter Dennis CBE.



The Ram Orderly from 1976-78 got his old job back, just for a brief moment!

Chesterfield Branch



Branch members and families and friends enjoyed a fantastic day out on our recent trip to Liverpool. The day began with a hop-on, hop-off open-top bus tour, giving everyone the opportunity to explore some of the city's most iconic landmarks and attractions. Highlights of the day included visits to the famous Penny Lane, the magnificent Liver Building, the world-renowned Cavern Club, and the vibrant Chinatown. And also the museum. The trip was rounded off with a relaxing ferry ride across the River Mersey, providing wonderful views of Liverpool's waterfront. A thoroughly enjoyable day, filled with great company, sightseeing, and lasting memories.



WFRA members are proud to support Armed Forces Day and went to Worksop Armed Forces Weekend and had a stall presenting a display of military arms and memorabilia, showcasing the proud history and traditions of our regiments. The display provided visitors with the opportunity to learn more about our military heritage and to honour the service and sacrifice of those who have served.

Derby Branch

In June, branch members, Kirstie Parker and Harry Parker represented the Branch at the Commemoration of the sinking of the Lancastrian off Dunkirk in WW2, resulting in the loss of many Sherwood Foresters. With Harry parading the branch's Sherwood Foresters Standard.

Peter Zapoticznj, a branch member of two years, and Ronald (Ronnie) Smith, who served as branch secretary for 41 years, have both passed away.



On 11 April, branch member Craig Payne, along with a friend conducted a sponsored walk from Pride Park, Derby, to the Regimental Memorial at Crich, to raise money for the site. The distance of 25.62km was completed in 5 hours 8 minutes

(which included a quick stop at the Memorial Tea-room). A grand total of £521.93 was donated to the site.



On 19 April, the branch held a Curry Lunch at the Mount Everest Gurkha Restaurant. The venue was decorated with some members dressing the part! As well as celebrating St George's Day, the members also celebrated the birthday of the owner, Suresh. L-R Alan Derbyshire, Paul Derbyshire, Suresh, John Higginbottom, Mark Brocklesby.



For Armed Forces Day, one of the branch members, Mick Doyle, displayed this outside his home at the War Memorial Village, Derby.

Worcester Branch



The Glorious First of June, to mark the First of June 1794, was commemorated by the branch at the Worcestershire Regimental Stone in Gheluvelt Park, Worcester. A wreath was laid by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Fiona Charmy, and the Mayor of Worcester, Cllr Tor Pingree, talked on the importance of Remembrance even though it is not in living memory. Also in attendance were Wychavon District Chairman, Cllr Gregory Wilkins and veterans of the branch and a few members of the public, some from as far away as New Zealand.



On the 16 June, branch twins, Brian and John Hewlett celebrated their 90th birthday. The branch Coffee Morning on the 12th was the closest time to their birthday, to meet. Where they were presented with a surprise Regimental badged birthday cake and those gathered sang Happy Birthday! With a family party organised for their actual birthday, they ate cake a lot for a few days!

Worksop Branch



On 10 May, branch members attended, along with family members, a Rededication of Retford War Memorial. The name of local man, Thomas H Ellis was added to the memorial.



The branch are very involved with the Worksop Armed Forces Weekend which ran on Saturday

27 and Sunday 28 June, this year. It was a fantastic community event attended by the Mercian Regimental Support Team and Regimental Mascot, with stalls from Chesterfield and Worksop branches of the WFRA. This growing event now has a true military feel with serving personnel and veterans from a wide area travelling to enjoy the camaraderie and celebrations.

STOCKPORT BRANCH CRA & MVRA, THE MERCIAN REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Afghan Memorial Service in Chester Cathedral

Sunday 7th June saw the unveiling of a memorial board in Chester Cathedral to members of the Regiment who lost their lives on Operation Herrick.



Operation Herrick, which lasted for more than a decade, operated in some of the most demanding, and dangerous conditions in recent history.



The Mercian Regiment served with Courage and professionalism throughout their campaign, and the memorial board serves as a testament to their determination and dedication.



Attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, as well as Major General (Retd) Keith Skempton CBE, Major General (Retd) Dr. Andrew Sharpe

CBE, Colonel (Retd) Andy Hadfield, Colonel Jamie Nowell, and dignitaries attended the Service. Stockport Branch was represented, led by Mr. Peter Gresty, Standard Bearers Mike Rogers, and Dave Willis among the association that attended.

Mercian Volunteers Picnic at the NMA

Members of the Association attended the annual MRA/MVRA service and Picnic at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.



Mike Pilkington, Chairman of the Mercian Volunteers Regimental Association welcomed the guests to the service, which was led by Major General Alan Hawley CBE President of the MVRA, with music being provided by the Tenbury Town Band.

After the service, there was a picnic, and an opportunity for people to get together, and meet up with old friends.

Armed Forces Day in Stockport

The People of Stockport once again came out to support the Association, and other branches of the Armed Forces on the 4th Annual Armed Forces Day. Many Members of the Association attended to man the stall, where the association displayed a selection of weapons, kindly loaned to the association by the Cheshire Regiment Museum in Chester.



The stand was very busy throughout the day, and this year the association, ran a raffle with many wonderful prizes, including a £200 Restaurant voucher, trip to Haydock Park among the prizes.



The Raffle was held to raise money for The Cheshire Regiment Museum, and the money raised will be donated to the Museum in due course.

WELFARE NEWS

Armed Forces Pension Schemes (AFPS)- Deferred Pensions

Overview and History

Pension members who have served in the Armed Forces since 1975, and did not qualify for an immediate pension may be entitled to a Deferred Pension. Prior to 6 April 1975, there was no provision for a preservation of pension benefits and Service personnel who left the Armed Forces had to have completed 16 years service from age 21 (Officers) or 22 years from age 18 (Other Ranks) to be eligible for a pension. Those who left before that date, without completing the above criteria, had no pension entitlement unless they were medically retired. The Pension rules were changed so as to allow for individuals who left before the immediate pension point to accrue benefits under the scheme but not to be paid until they had reached pension benefit age:-

- From 06 April 1975, deferred pensions could be claimed for payment at age 60 for all those discharged over the age of 26 with a minimum of five years reckonable service. Reckonable service starts from age 18 for other ranks and age 21 for officers;
- In 1978, the age criterion was removed;

- From 06 April 1983 Service personnel no longer needed 5 years reckonable service, but 5 years contracted out service (contracted out service is service from age 16 earned after 6/4/78
- On 06 April 1988, the qualifying period was reduced from five years to two years
- On 6 April 2006, the deferred pension age changed to age 65

AFPS 75

AFPS 75 deferred pension member whose service ended before 6 April 2006, should claim their pensions, from Veterans UK, at age 60. AFPS 75 deferred pension members whose service ended on or after 6 April 2006, but who had at least two years service before 6 April 2006, should claim the proportion of their pension which relates to their pre 6 April 2006, service at age 60 with the remainder becoming payable at age 65.

AFPS 05

AFPS 05 was introduced in 2005 and for those joining or rejoining the Regular Armed Forces from 6 April 2005. Serving members of AFPS 75 were given the opportunity to transfer to AFPS 05 by 6 April 2006. AFPS 05 deferred pension members should claim their pensions from Veterans UK at age 65.

RFPS 05

RFPS 05 is a scheme applicable for those starting or renewing a Full Time Reserve Service commitment /contract from 6 April 2005 and Serving members of FTRSPS 97 were given the opportunity to transfer to RFPS 05 by 6 April 2006. AFPS 05 and RFPS05 deferred pension members should claim their pensions from Veterans UK at age 65.

Claiming an Early Payment of a Pension in the Event of Permanent ill Health

A deferred member of any of the pension schemes mentioned above, is entitled to apply to claim for an immediate payment of a deferred pension and lump sum before reaching age 65 and:

- In the opinion of Veterans UK (who has received evidence from a medical practitioner or other specialists) that the deferred member has suffered a permanent break down in health which has left them unable to work full-time, in any capacity, and this condition will continue until deferred pension age (age 65).
- He is not an active member of another occupational pension scheme
- Early payment of the pension may be subject to review and stopped if it is considered that the criterion for payment was no longer met.

Early Payment of Deferred Pensions with Actuarial Reduction

A deferred member can claim for an immediate payment of a deferred pension but with an actuarial adjustment to take account of the longer period for which the pension will be in payment. The ages from which this form of early payment may be claimed are:

- AFPS 75 member- the proportion of the deferred pension payable at age 65 may be claimed from age 60;
- AFPS 75 Pension Credit Member (PCM)* – If this pension is the result of a Pension Sharing Order (PSO) and the PSO has taken effect then the PCM can opt to claim it from age 55
- AFPS 05- from age 55. Such a claim will not affect any EDP payments which are being paid.
- AFPS 05 PCM* – If this pension is a result of a Pension Sharing Order (PSO) and the PSO has taken effect then the PCM can opt to claim it from age 55
- Reserve Forces Pension Scheme (RFPS) from age 55
- RFPS 05 PCM* - If this pension is a result of a Pension Sharing Order(PSO) and the PSO has taken effect then the PCM can opt to claim it from age 55

** Pension Credit Member (PCM) – This relates to an ex spouse of the member in whose favour a Pension Sharing Order has been made by a Court as part of a divorce settlement. A PCM becomes a member of their ex-spouses pension*

scheme and they are a member of that pension scheme in their own right.

Reduced life expectancy

Deferred members of AFPS 05 and RFPS 05 and Pension Credit Members of these schemes, with a reduced life expectancy of 12 months or less may claim their deferred entitlement earlier. Applications of this nature should be made to Veterans UK

What do I do next?

Veterans UK will not contact you to commence payment of a deferred Pension you must contact them. To find out if you are entitled to a deferred pension ring or write to the Veterans UK Enquiry Service on 0800 085 3600 or 94560 3600 or alternatively, e-mail: **Veterans-uk@mod.uk**

VALOUR - The new UK-wide veteran support system

VALOUR is the new national programme that makes it easier for veterans and their families across the UK to access care and support they deserve. Getting support as a veteran should feel simple. VALOUR connects veterans and their families to the services, people and organisations that understand your experiences. Whether it's critical help or simply a listening ear, use VALOUR to find the right support options for you.

What VALOUR does

- Connects you to trusted local support in your area.

- Helps services work together so you don't have to repeat your story.
- Makes it easier to find the right help quickly.

It's here to make sure veterans and their families get the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

How you can use VALOUR

Veterans and their families can use the VALOUR system in different ways. Choose the way that works for you.

Find support online

Use the online guidance to find the right support options for you. Start by selecting which part of the UK you live in. This helps us show the support available to you.

If you'd rather speak to someone, you can also:

Visit a VALOUR-recognised centre near you

The number of support centres will increase to 14 throughout the UK in the next year.

Call their support team: 0808 1914 218 (Option 6 for Veterans Services)

They're open 8pm to 4pm, Monday to Friday
Email their support team: DBSAFVS-VSTriage-Team-National@mod.gov.uk

For more information about VALOUR please visit the VALOUR website.

<https://valour.campaign.gov.uk/>