

THE MERCIAN REGIMENT

**QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
Q2 2021**

98th ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO THE CRICH MEMORIAL

Ms Cindy Clark, Assistant Regimental Secretary

With the sad news that the Crich Pilgrimage had to be cancelled due to the Government restrictions, wreaths were laid at both Crich and in the local area, so that we could continue to remember those who we have lost.

While this year's annual pilgrimage is the second in a row to be cancelled, we shall never forget about those who made the ultimate sacrifice to allow us the lives we live today.

1 MERCIAN B (MALTA) COMPANY

Capt Adam Keenan

Malta Company has gone from strength to strength while deployed on Operation CABRIT. As the only UK's only armoured infantry rifle company in Estonia, the breadth of training has been extensive: from links ups with British and American airborne forces conducting parachute drops in the country, to travelling to Latvia to conduct live ranges with an aviation task force of Apache helicopters.

The foundation that this advanced training was built on was first the opportunity for the Company to first break away to refine our own, low-level drills. In Nursipalu the troops conducted tough, Corporal led, live fire tactical training in trench clearance and urban warfare, also using simunition to hone the core infantry skills and the small team cohesion that will ultimately decide any battle. This served as an ideal springboard to Ex SPRING STORM, where B Company faced game, but ultimately overmatched 2nd Estonian Brigade troops who could not stifle Malta's aggression and armoured shock action bursting through their defences time and again over the 2-week exercise.

The culmination of all this training was the live firing in Adazi, Latvia, where the company conducted integrated, armoured, and dismounted ranges alongside French armour from the 12th Curassiers and Apaches from the UK's Aviation Task Force. Vehicle commanders learning how to coordinate close support by attack helicopter and tanks to deliver their dismount sections onto the position with maximum firepower, as when it comes down to it, it's the young B (Malta) Company soldier, bayonet fixed, who owns the last 20 metres of the fight.

1 MERCIAN JAVELIN PLATOON

Capt Oliver Scott

The Anti-Tank Platoon have grown in size and capability over Operation CABRIT. Manning 10 Warrior and 12 Missile Posts, the platoon rivals any sub unit in the Battlegroup for manoeuvrable firepower and was thrown straight into the action by BGHQ during Battlegroup Missions on the Central Training Area.

1 Section Commander Sgt James fully integrated his section of three Warrior into an Estonian Anti-Tank Platoon for Ex Spring Storm Live Fire. This 48-hour Live Firing exercise saw 1 Section engage multiple armoured targets with Javelin whilst working amongst Estonian Javelin and Spike Missile operators mounted in Patria APC. Highlights included Cpl Wilson coordinating UK Javelin fire with Estonian APCs, and LCpl Scarrot thoroughly sampling every item the Estonian Ration Pack has to offer.

June and July will see the platoon grafting hard through the annual Anti-Tank cadre, fifteen new faces welcomed over the past 12 months aim to earn the right to wear the Anti-Tank flash whilst the older and bolder refresh their skills.

In August the platoon will welcome Anti-Tank operators from multiple NATO nations for Ex BOLD SPEAR, an international anti-tank patrol competition hosted by Estonia and delivered by the NCOs of 1 MERCIAN Anti-Tank Platoon.

The Platoons final test before preparing for the return home will be LFTT with the simultaneous live firing of all the weapon systems available to an Anti-Tank Section, 30mm Cannon, 7.62mm Chain Gun and Javelin Missiles as well as the 5.56mm SA80– a true test of the platoon's professionalism as Armoured Infantry Anti-Tankers.

1 MERCIAN MORTAR PLATOON

Capt Samuel Richards

The men of iron have continued Op CABRIT with the zeal and desire to learn that characterised their training pathway to get here. Balancing their commitment to be held at high readiness with new opportunities to explore Estonia and train with other nations learning from them. The Platoon spent an enjoyable day with a Mortar Platoon from the American 82nd Airborne, sharing individual experiences and mortaring techniques. Seeing 120mm mortars in action was a sight to behold, giving key insights into the workings and character of an American Mortar Platoon.

Mortars moved forward to Ex SPRING STORM, working hard to overcome the frictions of a multi-national live fire package to impress our Estonian hosts with the timely and accurate mortaring. The personal highlight for myself was seeing MFCs working with Estonians, French and The Royal Artillery. Interoperability and adaptability were key, supporting partner nations night firing with 81mm Illumination, showing international partners the skill and professionalism we bring to the role every day. The Platoon's sights are now firmly set on utilising the excellent training facilities available to us to conduct a mortar cadre, welcoming 8 new members into the Platoon. It's been a fantastic start to Op CABRIT, with many more opportunities to come. As always, the Men of Iron march on.

2 MERCIAN B COMPANY

Pte Bailey

Learning the upkeep, functions and capabilities of the Foxhound was at first a little overwhelming but after the first week when you start to drive it everything comes together and starts to make sense.

Using the vehicle on road and off road both day and night really boosts your confidence in what the vehicle is capable of as well as, what the Foxhound can bring to your multiple. Especially the Foxhounds night capabilities and 360 thermal cameras and infrared lights. The vehicle also gives you a sense of security with its V Shape hull helping to protect from I.E.Ds and other small arms threats giving both the driver and dismounts a safe area to work from.

With the upcoming tour of Afghanistan approaching, knowing that we have not only the best vehicle in the British army's arsenal for the task but also the most effective APC out of the rest of the NATO forces is a comforting concept for both the soldiers deploying and the family's that are left at home.

2 MERCIAN C COMPANY

Cpl Lucic, 7 PI

Since returning from Kenya in April, 2 Mercian have been in constant preparation for deployment to Afghanistan on operation TORAL later this year. We have been engaged in various mission specific training for our role on tour. This has focused on guardian angel training and operating from Foxhound armoured vehicles.

The Guardian angel role is usually fulfilled by a private soldier and places a lot of responsibility on our junior members. They were assessed on their skills recently in a 2-week exercise "KABUL EAGLE" at Swynnerton in Staffordshire. The exercise involved many scenarios of various situations the soldiers might find themselves in on tour and as usual the lads performed very well. During the exercise at Swynnerton we operated from Foxhound armoured vehicles. Many of the lads have recently completed driver and commander courses for these vehicles and it has been impressive to see how quickly we have changed roles from light infantry to light mechanised infantry.

Following on from Swynnerton we have a busy summer ahead with a 2-week LFTT package in Warcop followed by "Ex KABUL DAWN" - the final battalion led exercise that will see the lads hone their skills before summer leave.

The Battalion have been deployed on similar tasks in recent history, with B and C companies in Iraq in 2017 and A and D in Afghanistan in 2018. This experience will no doubt help the battalion as we get ready for our next deployment.

2 MERCIAN - LIFE AS A PL COMD DURING PRE- DEPLOYMENT TRAINING FOR Op TORAL 13

Lt Oakes

My career in the MERCIAN Regiment started unlike any of my fellow MERCIAN officers. Having commissioned into the AGC(SPS), I successfully transferred into the regiment after completing the Platoon Commanders Battle Course. Following 4 months in Brecon, I arrived at 2 MERCIAN eager to meet my fellow officers and soldiers and commence pre-deployment training for Op TORAL 13. The unique training requirements of this operational tour instantly presented difficulties as I found most of my soldiers out of camp on courses in preparation for the tour. I myself was almost instantly placed onto the Foxhound Commanders course in Bovington. This allowed me to gain experience commanding, driving and operating with the Foxhound. The stark difference between the arduous experience of Brecon, and the comparatively relaxing Cavalry experience in Bovington was a welcome relief, with the odd opportunity for a beer on the beach.

After arriving back to Battalion from Bovington, I was instantly thrown into the midst of Ex KABUL EAGLE in Swynnerton training area. This presented an opportunity to work with both the Foxhound and my platoon on exercise, developing TTP's and SOP's. We have been training for the worst day in Kabul, which could entail complex attacks, suicide bombers and drone attacks. Training for the worst scenario will allow us to feel fully prepared for our day-to-day role in Kabul, and anything that is thrown at us. Shortly after returning from Ex KABUL EAGLE, the Coy deployed to Warcop ranges for a LFTT package. I instantly used my training to plan and deliver a Coy live firing package, from ACMT's up to Platoon attacks. This was a steep learning curve, luckily I was supported by my fellow platoon commanders in A (Grenadier) Coy. These weeks away from Weeton also provided me with the opportunity to get to know my platoon slightly better, a great opportunity for any new platoon commander.

I have been amazed and impressed by the level of skill, knowledge of motivation at all levels within my platoon. Despite future amalgamations,

pride within the 2nd Battalion The MERCIAN Regiment still lives on. I look forward to conducting future exercises and training packages in preparation for Op TORAL 13.

2 MERCIAN SPORT

Capt Darkings, OC Mortars

Sports is a vital part in ensuring a healthy, robust, fighting-fit Battalion. It was essential to ensure that sport was accessible and available after the Unit move to Weeton and Ex ASKARI STORM. The Sports Fayre allowed the entire Battalion to enquire and further make a decision about what sports they could participate in on a Wednesday afternoon.

The Battalion has a diverse range of sports available; these range from fishing to motorbike riding. Clubs are encouraged to be formed by the Battalion and this has led to great success in building more engagement and a competitive spirit within sports. Within a few weeks, the Battalion held an inter-company 7's touch rugby tournament, which provided the opportunity for newcomers to participate and gain perspective on joining the rugby team.

The inter-company rugby was a great success, with all company's entering the tournament and playing in a round robin which after an afternoon of rugby, DRAGON company came out victorious. Most recently, the Battalion rugby team represented 2 Mercian at the Army Rugby League Naivalurua 9's competition – an army wide inter-unit competition.

4 MERCIAN B (MALTA) COMPANY

Capt Robbie Davies MBE PSAO

B Company has had a busy time as training picks up and covid restrictions begin to ease. We have been gradually increasing the workload and steadily returning as normal a training programme as possible and in the background we have maintained our high levels of support to operations. We have welcomed back from Op CABRIT WO2 Buckley, LCpl Turner and Ptes Goldsmith and Sanderson who has come back qualified to promote having passed a PJNOC Cadre whilst out in theatre. The OC, Maj Bowden-Williams also but extended in theatre for an extra 2 months and is now enjoying some quality family time, covid isolation and well-earned leave!

At the same time as welcoming those back, we have deployed three more on Op CABRIT supporting 1 MERCIAN. Ptes Stafford, Stanley and Kirby all are settling into life on operations well with Ptes Stafford and Watts about to attend a PJNCO cadre so we wish them good luck.

Despite the challenges that recruiting has faces we have managed to maintain a steady inflow of recruits and three members of the company have passed the Combat Infantry Course at Catterick. Another two have successfully completed Module 2 (BRAVO). Sadly, we have bid farewell to CSgt Gregory who has completed 32 years of exemplary service with the Army Reserves. With his retirement, we lose a wealth of knowledge and experience and we wish him well and thank him for his loyal and long service.

Our training has needed to be adapted to ensure we maintain Force Health Protection measures and are able to still enjoy practical training in a safe environment.

4 MERCIAN C (KOHIMA) COY

Maj Deepe Rawji

Personnel in C (Kohima) Coy have reacted like coiled springs as we witnessed the easing of lockdown restrictions that permitted the reopening of our Army Reserve Centres and a return to face to face, physical, military training (albeit whilst still maintaining social distance).

First and foremost, handover of the Company Commander appointment was conducted. Incoming is Maj Deepe Rawji, who hails from Staffordshire and takes hold of the baton, hitting the ground running as OC with an inbox full of training and engagement matters. Maj Gaz Dixon, also from Staffordshire, bid farewell and moves on to a staff role in PJHQ. We wish him every success in his new appointment; Gaz has served 4 MERCIAN loyally in several appointments including Operations Officer.

The reopening of ARCs was met with so much positivity as it led us in to our first Battalion training weekend, Ex SAXON SPEAR held in Sennybridge. The troops wiped down their webbing and got back to work doing what they enjoy most. Personnel in the coy also deployed to Leek in May, on Ex KNIGHTS CROSS. They conducted section attacks with LCpl Jack Higgs stretching his legs as a Section Commander on not the flattest training estate to be running around on!

Our recruits got together for the first time after a number of months too. They prepared for their Pre-Battle Camp and Pre CIC training with the main highlight being live CQB shoots. Within the Apr to Jun C Coy has attested three recruits and seen two complete elements of their modular training.

Individuals have also been conducting personal development throughout. CSgt Oli Lloyd from Nottingham, completed his 7 Bde Engagement Course, 2Lt Emile Mackney from Derby completed the Platoon Commander's Battle Course (Reserve) and Range Management Qualification course, Cpl Craig Dodsley from Bulwell became the next CBRN Instructor and LCpl Chris Ventress from Retford returned with a strong pass on All Arms Skill at Arms.

Finally, our congratulations go to Cpl James Noble from Newark who was recognised for an outstanding performance over the past 12 months being awarded our internal 'Most Outstanding Contribution' to C Coy award. Cpl

Noble was recognised for his superb efforts throughout Op RESCRIPT and his time mobilised as an instructor at ATR Grantham.

C Coy are looking forward to the planned range days and not to mention weapon cleaning that follows on in the next couple of months!

PLATOON COMMANDERS BATTLE COURSE 2101

2Lt Emile Mackney

When the RSM said I was going on the PCD summer course I did not expect this weather. Gusts of 50+ mph with horizontal rain, this was Brecon, no mistake. The four-week arduous course kicked off with seven days of gruelling physical activity which inevitably secured my place in the platoon.

The course motto of crawl, walk, run is instilled by the focus on section level tactics and basic combat infantryman skills and drills. This was complemented by vignettes of operations and platoon command which gave a true picture as to what life is like in a regular battalion.

Ex DRAGONS BLOOD was a harsh reminder of what being in the infantry means, the cold reality of being sodden wet, sleep deprived and enforcing wet dry drills reinforces the infantry's reputation for having strong physical and mental robustness.

The equipment was another focus. Use of new technology such as the ARILLS II and TI sight combination is one of the best bits of kit I've seen. It does cost about £15,000, so my administration skills heightened! The week finished with a rough section three miler uphill. This pushed me to the limit of exhaustion. Over the weekend, the course received some well earned downtime, so we bolstered the local economy.

The final week consisted of minimal sleep with constant platoon level conventional attacks, this tested the courses mental fibre. Command appointments that tested tactical know how and leadership were thick and fast, ending in a platoon five miler into an advance to contact.

4 MERCIAN D (DRAGON) COMPANY

Maj Will Rose

D Coy has been busy training within changing Covid restrictions; weekend training has recommenced, and D Coy Reservists trained twice at Brecon (focusing on Harbour Drills and FIWAF) and once at Leek Training Area, where the focus was Section Attacks.

LCpl Danny Britton from Nantwich has been preparing himself for SCBC in July and we have bid farewell to Sgt Shawn Mills, who at short notice vacated his PSI slot to join 1 YORKS as a CQMS, we look forward to welcoming his replacement, Sgt Ashley McGraw, in July. We also said goodbye to Cpl Sue Vaughan from Crewe who retires after 26 years of exemplary service supporting us and the Bn as a Chef based at Bucknall New Road, Stoke.

We welcome back Sgt Tommy Birks from Crewe after his operational deployment with 5 RIFLES on Op CABRIT where we currently have Pte Andrew Bradley from Stevenage also deployed as a Chef with 1 MERCIAN. We also briefly say welcome back to LCpl Ross Dawson from Newcastle Under Lyme who returns to us having mobilised in support of Op RESCRIPT and is now preparing to mobilise again in support of RMTC moving from Chilwell to Bassingbourn.

The recruiting pipeline continues to flow: Ptes John Hardy from Stoke on Trent and Thomas Samways from Newcastle Under Lyme both completed Mod 1 & ALPHA; Ptes Kyle Barley from Castle Donnington and William Turner from Biddulph Moor both completed Mod 2 and Pte Jonnie Baxter from Crewe has successfully completed CIC (R).

4 MERCIAN, HQ (EAGLE) COMPANY

Maj Brian Johnston MBE - OC HQ Coy and QM (V)

This quarter has seen the Battalion get back to basics with Exercise SAXON SPEAR which took place in Sennybridge Training Area. This was the first Battalion Training Weekend of the year after another period of lockdown and was led by HQ Coy. As this was the first run out in a while, we returned to basics practicing occupation and routine in patrol base harbours, PI SOPs and we also deployed our Support Weapons Platoons in their roles with the Mortar Platoon deployed onto a tactical Mortar Line, Anti-Tanks deployed in OP screens and the Machine Gun PI into a harbour. This was the first of our exercises designed to build our preparations Ex SAVA STAR taking place in Croatia in Sep 21.

As part of the exercise we also delivered training to our junior officers preparing to attend Platoon Commander's Battle Course and the CIS PI conducted command post training to officers, SNCOs and the echelon. Our Medical Sgt, Sgt Faye Shotton also delivered Medical Trg to complete a challenging but rewarding training weekend for all.

Everything we do continues to have a Force Health Protection Risk Assessment completed, ensuring we remain able to operate safely in a Covid-19 environment and are able to conduct physical, robust and challenging training designed to maintain readiness and a warfighting ethos.

All of HQ Coy's platoons remain flexible and adaptable. The QM's Platoon are a very experienced, tried and tested close-knit team, who are relied on to deliver G4 support and MT expertise to the Battalion. The Javelin PI continues to build up for the Support Weapons Cadre which will take place in Warcop in October and the CIS PI has supported all Battalion and coy exercise throughout the training year particularly in the development of Company Command Post capability.

4 MERCIAN - ARMED FORCES DAY

Sgt Mark Killeen, HQ Coy

Following the cancellation of last year's Armed Forces Day, this year saw thousands of people mark the event paying tribute to those currently serving, their families, veterans and cadets across the region.

The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire hosted a ticketed event for 4,000 people on both Saturday and Sunday which saw The Band of the Mercian Regiment provide an outstanding performance playing for guests and HRH Princess Anne who was in attendance at the annual celebration, now in its 30th year. The Princess Royal was accompanied by her husband, Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence.

In Wolverhampton, a free family event was held in West Park on Saturday 26 June with 2000 people in attendance. This was a fantastic opportunity for members of the public to meet serving service personal and the first time in over a year that they were able to interact with members of the Armed Forces.

On show were members of 4 MERCIAN who provided an interactive weapons display stand where the public had the opportunity to engage with soldiers and handle the array of weapons in use within the Infantry.

The Mayor of Wolverhampton, Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire and local MPs were also in attendance and took the opportunity to speak to soldiers and thank them for their service and their recent support in response to the pandemic on Operation RESCRIPT.

POTENTIAL JUNIOR NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER (PJNCO) COURSE – INFANTRY TRAINING CENTRE (CATTERICK)

Pte Cooling

HQ Company's Pte James Cooling attended the PJNCO at ITC (C) in May and this is his account of the experience:

The first few days of the PJNCO course involved the normal introductions, ice breakers and general information. It was emphasised from the start by the training staff that the course was about learning and not a thrashing and this reassured the students, however looking around the room I don't think many believed those words.

Week one was made up entirely of theory-based lessons, focusing on leadership skills, styles and most importantly, the expected standards required. It was also a good time to get to know the other members in my section.

The pace of the course started to ramp up in the second week, moving onto more practical aspects of the Section Commander and Section 2IC roles including quick battle orders, administration of the section and preparing lessons. This was followed up with time in the field to practice what we had learnt, with the most enjoyable part for me being the chance to be Section Commander during a section attack. Once each attack was completed a debrief would take place by the training staff and other members of the section, highlighting both the good and points which needed to be worked on. This happened throughout the course on any task, from delivering orders to taking classroom lessons.

The third week was taken up with the field exercise. We were sure this was going to be the week when the thrashing would be unleashed, but again we were pleasantly surprised. Obviously when mistakes were made, extra field PT was arranged and CASEVACs would suddenly spring up, but by no

means a thrashing. The hardest part of this week was the sleep deprivation throughout the exercise. Trying to plan, make decisions or write reports with little to no sleep was a challenge both physically and mentally but one I ultimately enjoyed.

Finally, I would like to thank the training staff on the course from ITC Catterick, who I thought were excellent throughout.

THE BAND OF THE MERCIAN REGIMENT

CSgt Jake Lees PSI

This quarter has seen The Band of the Mercian Regiment return to face-to-face training. They have thoroughly enjoyed being back together and having the opportunity to play music in ensembles. There have also been occasions to refresh marching skills and embed new Covid safe musical drill manoeuvres ready for the summer season and we have been taking full advantage of the recent good weather to play outdoors. The return to training has also allowed the contemporary band to reform and they have been working on improvisation skills to create a flexible, reactive and laid-back ensemble.

At the time of writing, we are deployed on our Annual Training Exercise at Holcombe Moor Training Camp in Lancashire. This two-week block of training is the perfect opportunity to really work on developing that ensemble sound, perfect marching skills and work on small ensembles. We are taking full advantage of the opportunities for intensive face to face training to refresh skills and extend our repertoire ready for being able to play in public again.

The Band performed The National Memorial Arboretum as part of Armed Forces Day celebrations. There was definitely a buzz in the air as the scarlet jackets were put on again and we performed publicly once again. We played several sets throughout the day and as the Red Arrows flew overhead and HRH The Princess Royal watched on, we performed 'Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines' to the delight of the crowd.

This quarter, the hard work done on Continuous Professional Development during lockdown has paid off and several Musicians have cause to celebrate as they have passed sections of their CEQ qualifications. Congratulations go to Musician Cooper who has passed his CEQ3 General Musicianship papers 1 and 2, and his CEQ 3 Aural Exam, whilst Musicians Ernest Appleby, and Kerrie Green also passed their CEQ 3 Aural Exam and Musician Laura Morris has completed her Common Military Syllabus weekend.

CHESHIRE ACF - ARMED FORCES FLAG RAISED AT CHESHIRE POLICE HQ

Capt Simon Protano

A scaled back ceremony to raise the flag marking Armed Forces week was held at Cheshire Constabulary Headquarters hosted by the Chief Constable of Cheshire Constabulary Mark Roberts and Cheshire's Police & Crime Commissioner Mr John Dwyer.

With outside gatherings currently limited to 30, a number of specially invited guests including Armed Forces personnel past and present representing the Mercian Regiment, the Queens Own Yeomanry, The Duke of Lancaster Regiment, the Royal Engineers, the Sea Cadets and Cheshire Army Cadet Force.

As the flag was raised the padre proudly stood to attention and Sergeant Instructor Lucy Golding from Cheshire ACF played reveille.

Chief Constable Mark Roberts said "Cheshire Constabulary values the veterans within the community and understands their experience which helps the constabulary actively recruits veterans into the force" he went on to say "We also understand when our officers have contact with veterans, they face their own difficulties and we want to support them as a debit of gratitude to the military"

This week the Armed Forces community will continue to celebrate the week with a number of theme days including highlighting the Armed Forces Covenant, a partnership between the serving population, charities and organisations which seeks to ensure that those who serve and have served in the Armed Forces and their families are treated fairly.

STOCKPORT BRANCH CRA & MVRA THE MERCIAN REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Steven Gregory, Publicity Member

The Coronavirus pandemic continues to thwart a return to normal, but the branch has striven to 'adapt and overcome'.

As reported previously, during the lockdown period, 'Zoom' made it possible to hold Committee Meetings and full Branch Meetings. It has been so well received that the Branch has invested in IT equipment in order to 'Zoom' face-to-face meetings to enable participation by members who are unable to attend in person. Friday 4th June 2021 was a beautiful balmy evening so we contrived to conduct a covid-compliant meeting. 23 were in attendance, with 10 apologies and 3 via Zoom – a great turnout that demonstrates the strength of the branch after 15 months of lockdowns – well done all!

If any branch wants to know what our setup is for broadcasting face to face meetings, then drop a line to mrastockport@outlook.com and we'll try to help.

Branch Standards were on parade on the 18th June to celebrate, to the hour, the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Bredbury and Romiley War Memorial. Our Chair, Mike Pilkington laid a wreath alongside the Mayor of Stockport. Standard bearers are Derek Sykes (Union Standard), Brian Hartigan (CRA Standard) and Keith Mort (MRA Standard).

Now that the outdoor gathering limit has been raised to 30, we have re-established the Monthly Association Walk. Breakfast, Boots and Beer is the theme and on Thursday 10th June, we had 12 for breakfast before 7 of us set off for a gentle 6 miles around Adlington, Cheshire. Here we can be seen resting on a canal bridge after coffee and cakes at Clarence Mill, Bollington (well you do need the fill the gap between breakfast and beer!).

One of our Welfare Officers, Derek Sykes, has been acknowledged for 10 years volunteering at Stepping Hill Hospital by Stockport NHS Trust. It's

actually 30 years but he only ended up on their radar after he requested a Volunteer's Car Park Pass after 20 years visiting! Here he can be seen after the award ceremony in June. Well done Derek!

Another individual effort by one of our members is in the angling field. Phil Milward is a member of a Facebook group entitled Ex-Mil Carp Group. They have competitions and socials up and down the country most months. If you have a love for carp fishing, then apparently this could be for you! Phil can be seen below with one of his recent catches.

You will all be aware that the Crich Pilgrimage has again had to be cancelled due to the most recent revision to lockdown release, so our next planned event is canoeing down the Mersey on Saturday 17th July – what could possibly go wrong? Hopefully there will be enough survivors and pictures to give an idea of how things went in the next newsletter.

Don't forget the diary date of 30th October for the 74th occasion of the East Cheshire Reunion at Stockport ARC.

WORCESTERSHIRE AND SHERWOOD FORESTERS REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Ms Cindy Clark

DERBY BRANCH

Derby branch continue to keep in touch with its members and remain healthy. To commemorate Armed Forces Day, Mick Doyle assisted by John Higginbottom put on a display, albeit reduced from what he normally does, at the War Memorial Village Derby.

CHESTERFIELD BRANCH

Although the branch remains healthy, sadly, they have lost 2 important branch members this year; Karen Sales, wife of Gary Sales and Patrick (Paddy) Harvey. They will be both sadly missed and will always be Remembered in our thoughts. The branch continues to 'meet' by Zoom and is now trying to organise a calendar of events for the rest of 2021

WORCESTER BRANCH

The branch remains healthy and continues to support each other. On the 1st June (the 'Glorious 1st of June'), the Worcester Branch held a short wreath laying ceremony in memory of 29th Foot who fought as Marines on Lord Howes Channel Fleet in 1794. In Attendance were 14 members of the Association representing Worcester, Dudley and Kidderminster branches. The Standard Bearers were Mick Leeming, Alan Fish and Barry Kemp, the Parade Marshall was John Walters and the Bugler was Nigel Fish. The wreath was placed by branch President, Lt Col (Retd.) Mark Jackson OBE

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

On 2nd July 2nd Ernest Rathband celebrated his 103rd birthday and was delighted to receive a card from The Mercian Regiment along with a copy

of the latest Eagle. Ernest served in the Sherwood Foresters from 1939 – 1946 and served in Dunkirk, Anzio and Palmaria

LONG SERVICE ADVENTURE GIFTS

23921545 CSgt Frank Inniss, from Barbados, spent 22 years with The Worcestershire & Sherwood Foresters, followed by 10 years NRPS with The Mercian Regiment and is now completing a 22-year stint in the Civil Service as the AO to the XO 4 Mercian Regiment. At the sprightly age on 79 years, Frank will be retiring in December.

Frank is a much valued member of the 4 Mercian team and they intend to ensure Frank has 1 adventure each month until his retirement. For July, the BQMS who works with Frank took Frank to the Walks with Hawks . She said it was also a much deserved tonic for Frank after recently losing his wife, Angella, after more than 50 years of marriage. Angella was from St Vincent and she and Frank met whilst she was nursing in Colchester and Frank was serving there and they were married for over 50 years

MERCIAN VOLUNTEERS REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Keith Jeavons

Unfortunately, there is little to report, as activities have been limited due to the Virus; but members of the Association have had the unenviable task of attending the funerals of fellow members. Due again to the lock down, the number of members that could attend was limited.

Branches continue to make good use of the many technical opportunities available. Very good use is being made of 'Zoom', The Stockport Branch held a branch meeting via Zoom and attracted members from overseas. Branch Chairman's' meeting has been held via zoom. Philp Fairbrace continues to manage the Association Facebook page with great success and enabling members to keep in touch, Lt Col Tony Angel has now got the website back into use. The telephone used regularly to keep in touch with members.

On behalf of the Walsall Branch and the Association we wish a speedy recovery to two of our members Mr Paul Gedling and Mr Adrian Kenn following their recent illnesses.

FUTURE EVENTS

Because of the extended 'Lock down' the AGM on Sunday July 11th at 'Rock Steady Eddies' will now be by Zoom.

Sunday September 5th there will be a parade at The National Memorial Arboretum. Further details will be sent out nearer the time. The Tenbury Wells Town Band has been provisionally booked.

Stockport Branch have been able to enjoy some of their walks and Members at Kidderminster have been able to play Golf during this limited period. Edward Mole, ex B Company I Mercian V at Kidderminster visited the Mercian Grove at The National Memorial Arboretum recently.

VETERANS RAILCARD

The Veterans Railcard is available for UK veterans, giving 1/3 off most rail travel. You can get your railcard on your phone for just £30 for 1 year or £70 for 3 years.

Want to know more? Visit: <https://www.veterans-railcard.co.uk/>