THE MERCIAN REGIMENT

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
Q3 2026

Print-friendly Edition

The Mercian Regimental Association Introduces New Regional Branches

14 November 2026

Four new branches of The Mercian Regimental Association launch today: North, East, South, and West.

Whether you served with 1 or 4 MERCIAN, or with the Cheshires, The Worcesters and Foresters, or The Staffords, there is now a branch near you.

Find your branch and meet your committee below, and register your interest on the form link below. Our first meetings take place in December and double as a Christmas social.

Mercian Regimental Association: New Branch Register of Interest.

Or visit www.mercianregiment.co.uk/mra for the link to register your interest.



1 MERCIAN

Ex IRON STORM

Exercise Iron Storm marked the final validation of the King's Royal Hussars (KRH) Battle Group ahead of deployment on Op CABRIT, providing a demanding and realistic test of its operational readiness.

Facing Task Force Hannibal, an opposing force built around the 1 MERCIAN Battle Group comprising Headquarters, C (Kohima) Company, Dragon (Fire Support) Company, and B Squadron KRH, the Battle Group was challenged by contemporary threat tactics including persistent Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) surveillance, aggressive reconnaissance activity, and decentralised manoeuvre.



1 MERCIAN C (Kohima) Company set up at sunset to assault the KRH Battlegroup's Main Defensive Area (MDA) at Sunset. This tested our forces on their own understanding of how our adversary's own tactics could be utilised.

Drawing on lessons from modern conflicts, Task Force Hannibal employed layered ISTAR, drone-enabled target acquisition and innovative battlefield tactics to create a complex and contested operating environment.

The exercise tested commanders and soldiers across tactical decision-making, communications, force protection and combined arms integration, while demonstrating the growing importance of technology, intelligence gathering and adaptability on the modern battlefield.



1 MERCIAN C (Kohima) Company are seen leaving camp to deploy on Ex IRON STORM. Despite experiencing incredibly high temperatures, the troops were excited to deploy and take the fight to KRH.

Exercise IRON STORM successfully delivered a rigorous assessment of KRH Battle Group readiness and highlighted the value of realistic training in preparing soldiers for future operations.



1 MERCIAN on the move to a Forming Up Point (FUP) where they assaulted positions of the KRH battlegroup's MDA, utilising simulated Indirect Fire (IDF) and initial layered ISTAR assets of Recce, Anti-tank, and Drones.

Ex DRAGON FORGE 1

Capt A Roberts

DRAGON FORGE 1 was conducted across two weeks in September, designed to assess our junior soldiers across the battalion on their basic infantry skills and suitability to join the Support Weapons Company or Communication Information Systems (CIS) Platoon.



DRAGON FORGE 1 included a Range Package, focusing on the firers' position and perfecting the shot.

At its core, the aim was to develop our people, and in turn develop the capability of Support Company in creating lethality within the Battalion.



A soldier from DRAGON (Fire Support) Company builds his position in the standing unsupported, homing in on basic shooting skills.

Week one consisted of in camp stands and presentations, with week two seeing Junior Non-Commissioned Officer (JNCO) led ranges, navigation, and a round robin of stands out in the field.



Corporal Moore demonstrates the new capabilities in CIS and Electronic Warfare to cadre students.

Successful personnel will progress to join Recce-Strike and CIS, working hand in hand with the rifle companies to deliver success on the battlefield.



Anti-Tanks demonstrates deploying a post for ambush onto an enemy vehicle.

Inter-Company Boxing Finals

The 1 MERCIAN Inter-Company Boxing Finals brought a successful Battalion 12-week Boxing Training Camp to an exciting conclusion, showcasing the determination, courage and competitive spirit of soldiers from across the Battalion. Following four preliminary bouts and eight championship final contests, competitors demonstrated exceptional resilience, discipline and commitment in the ring, reflecting the hard work invested throughout the training programme.



Private Mohamed (Red) versus Private Jn Baptiste (Blue). This fight was awarded "Fight of the Night", picked out by the Commanding Officer for an equal measure of skill, grit, and heart which made a spectacular fight for the crowd to watch.

The standard of boxing on display was outstanding, with personnel from all ranks embracing the challenge and testing themselves in a demanding environment. Beyond the competition, the training camp and

championships significantly enhanced unit cohesion and morale, fostering camaraderie, mutual support and pride across the Battalion. The programme also provided an excellent opportunity to develop confidence, leadership and personal resilience, qualities that directly contribute to operational effectiveness.



Lance Corporal Ratavo walking to the ring. He was later awarded "Best Boxer" of the night following a tremendous fight.

Several individuals were recognised for their exceptional performances throughout the championships. LCpl Ratavo was awarded Best Boxer for demonstrating superior skill, composure and technical ability. The Fight of the Night award was presented to Pte Mohamed and Pte Jn Baptiste, whose contest captivated spectators with its intensity, determination and sportsmanship. Pte Story received the Most Gallant Boxer award in recognition of exceptional courage and resilience throughout the competition.



Pte King (Red) presses forward in search of the advantage during a closely fought encounter. The bout highlighted the high standards of preparation, resilience and competitive spirit fostered through Battalion boxing.

The success of the training camp and finals is a testament to the commitment of the coaches, organisers and competitors who made the event possible. Congratulations to all participants for contributing to a highly successful championship and for embodying the fighting spirit and values of 1 MERCIAN.



Craftsman Sowah (Red) looks to press home his attack as Private Lea (Blue) responds during a hard-fought bout. The contest highlighted fitness and discipline, and fighting spirit developed through Army sport.

Infantry Football Cup

1 MERCIAN's run under WO2 Luke Mason (Manager) to the Infantry Cup Final was built on resilience, commitment and determination. With the battalion heavily committed to training, operational readiness, courses and deployments, preparation time was often limited. Despite this, players and staff consistently gave up their own time to train and prepare, creating a close-knit squad capable of overcoming any challenge.

The campaign gained real momentum with a 3-2 victory over reigning holders 2 PARA. The result gave the squad belief and showed that 1 MERCIAN could compete with the very best teams in Army football.



Teams pre-training session before 1 MERCIAN's 3-2 win against 2 PARA.

The Quarter Final brought unique challenges, with the team required to travel to Cyprus amidst disruption and uncertainty affecting movements in the wider region.

With limited preparation time and difficult build-up, the squad adapted brilliantly and delivered one of its strongest performances of the competition, securing an impressive 3-0 victory over 4 Scots.



Team photo before taking away a 3-0 victory in the quarter final against 4 SCOTS in Cyprus.

The Semi Final against ITC presented another obstacle, with several key players unavailable through military commitments. Once again, the team found a way, remaining disciplined and organised to grind out a hard-fought 1-0 victory and secure a place in the Infantry Cup Final.



WO2 Mason (Manager) presenting a well-earned "Man of the Match" award to Sergeant Bray in front of the Regimental Colours.

Unfortunately, the final did not go to plan. Despite the hard work invested throughout the campaign, the team did not arrive strategically prepared for the challenge and delivered a performance well below the standards it had consistently maintained throughout the competition. It was a disappointing end to an otherwise outstanding cup run and one that left the squad knowing they were capable of much more.



Post-match stretching session with Natasha from (Sponsor) Wood Wellbeing. Some sore legs!

However, one result does not define 1 MERCIAN football. The battalion has a proud history of responding positively to setbacks and adversity. Previous disappointments have been followed by successful campaigns that saw the team regroup, raise standards and go on to win the treble.

That is now the aim once again. The squad will take the lessons from this defeat, use the disappointment as motivation and look to come back stronger. If this cup run has demonstrated anything, it is that the resilience, commitment and character within the group remain as strong as ever.



Infantry Cup Final against 1 LANCS at Bolehall Swifts FC in Tamworth. (WO2 Mason and LCpl Nicholson)

4 MERCIAN

Annual Pilgrimage to the Crich Memorial Tower - July 2026

Soldiers from 4 MERCIAN and The Band of The Mercian Regiment joined 1 MERCIAN, along with cadets, veterans, dozens of civic dignitaries, and many more for the annual pilgrimage at Crich Memorial Tower.



The service was in honour of all those who had lost loved ones or paid the ultimate sacrifice whilst serving their country.



Adventurous Training - August 2026

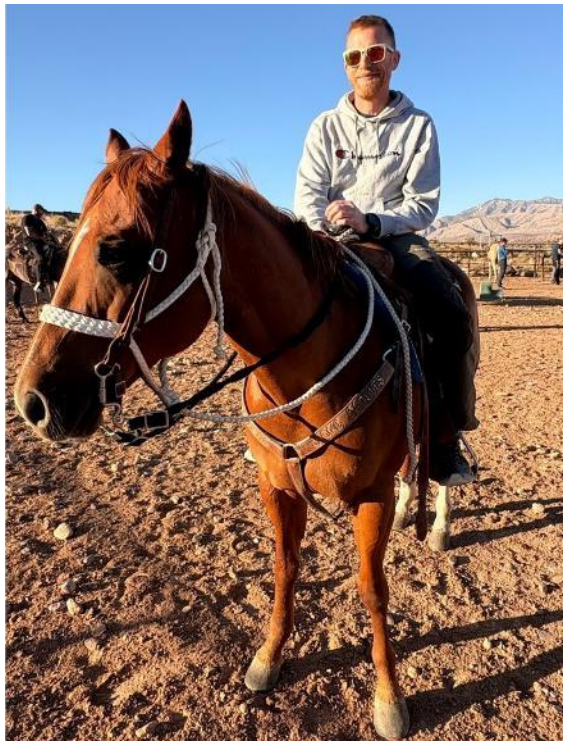
Soldiers from 4 MERCIAN took part in numerous activities including hill walking, mountain climbing, bouldering and mountain biking whilst camping out under the stars.



This was a fantastic opportunity for the soldiers to socialise with each other whist taking part in fun activities.

15 members of 4 MERCIAN deployed to the USA and completed Summer Mountaineering Foundation in the Zion National Park as well as visiting the Grand Canyon and learning to ride horses.





Ex FIRM BASE - September 2026

This exercise was an essential training exercise in preparation for the 2-week Annual Training Exercise. The soldiers conducted battlefield first aid, weapon handling and fitness.





Annual Training Exercise

4 MERCIAN is currently on the Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) at the start of its Annual Training Exercise (ATE), focused on increasing capability and competencies through Support Weapon Cadres, Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT), up to Live Section Attack, specialist courses (drone operator, team medic, and comms) as well as Battlegroup Headquarters (BGHQ) synthetic training, and a 36hr exercise focused on likely taskings and current threats in the event of mobilisation.



THE BAND OF THE MERCIAN REGIMENT

Regimental Pilgrimage, Crich - July

On the first Sunday in July, the Mercian Regimental family met at the Regimental Pilgrimage at Crich Stand, coming together in celebration, contemplation and Remembrance.



The combined Bands of the Mercian Regiment and Derbyshire ACF at Crich Memorial for the Annual Pilgrimage, July 2026.

As the Standards were paraded, the last post sounded and wreaths laid, the crowded hill top was filled with serving soldiers, both Regular and Reserves, Veterans, Cadets and their families, all stood shoulder to shoulder and honouring the traditions and sacrifices of those who had come before them.



Reserve and Cadet Musicians playing together as part of the service for the annual Crich Pilgrimage.

The Band of the Mercian Regiment were joined by Cadets and Adult Instructors from Derbyshire Army Cadet Force Band, who are also a part of the Mercian Family, and guests from the Band of the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment – together providing the musical support to remember and reflect, and to play the regimental marches as the various groups and standards climbed the hill.

With a bright sunny day and breath taking views for miles in all directions, it was a pilgrimage tradition well done by all.



A view through the Band at Crich Memorial Pilgrimage, marching the Standards and VIP's up the hill takes coordination and all eyes on the Bandmaster.

Saragarhi Day, Wednesfield - September

The Band of the Mercian Regiment proudly took part in the ceremony held at the Wednesfield Saragarhi Memorial, where the local Sikh community, representatives from the UK Armed Forces, dignitaries, veterans and local people of all denominations stood together to commemorate the bravery of those at Saragarhi, and the shared history and traditions of the Sikh community within the Armed Forces.



The Band formed up ready to march on the parade to the Saragarhi Memorial.

Saragarhi Day, a day to remember the 21 Sikh soldiers of the 36th Sikhs, British Indian Army, who in 1897 defended the isolated signalling post at Saragarhi on the North-West Frontier against an estimated 10,000 Afghan/Pashtun tribesmen. Saragarhi is one of the great last stands in British military history.



Musician Kirk ready to sound the last post during the ceremonies at the Saragarhi Memorial.

Last Post was sounded by Musician Lewis Kirk, and a commemorative plaque gratefully received by the Band. After the parade, service and prayers the community came together for a very tasty curry.

The Band were joined by colleagues from the Lancashire Artillery Band and from British Army Band Catterick.



Armed Forces, community and local dignitaries gathered together for a photograph with the memorial sculpture.

The Band of The Mercian Regiment on Annual Training Exercise - "Camp!"

In August, the Band of the Mercian Regiment travelled to Lancashire for their 'Annual Training Exercise', known informally just as 'camp'. With two weeks of intensive training that focussed on the band's repertoire for upcoming engagements such as the concert on the bandstand in The Quarry, Shrewsbury.



Full band rehearsals, sight reading and ensemble work on annual "camp", Holcombe Moor, Lancashire.

There was also opportunities for individual, small group and full band work to develop not only personal musical skills, but also the ensemble playing of the band, alongside progress towards the Army's Career Employment Qualifications.



Recording the full band to aid with professional development, conducting skills and to allow the Band to see themselves from the audiences POV, whilst on annual camp.

Musical CEQs are designed to support the development of musicians through practical, theory and marching skills at different levels. CEQ3, involves written General Musicianship assessments, scales and arpeggios, aural assessments, a practical performance and the presentation of programme notes. Musicians took full advantage of the support, lessons, and rehearsal time on offer to prepare for their upcoming professional assessments, with some musicians being assessed while on camp.



Saxophone group rehearsals, working on their new repertoire while on annual camp.

The Band also spent some time doing recordings of conducting and rehearsal techniques to analyse and use for professional development. This provided a rare opportunity for the Band to hear and see themselves perform from the audience's point of view.

Two weeks of hard work, collaboration and musical progress mean the Band came back set up for upcoming engagements and working well as a team.



CEQ Professional musical training and assessments, lessons and study using a range of technology, resources and techniques. Musician Kinsey leading the training team on annual camp.

Shrewsbury "Summer of Music" Concert

Shrewsbury came alive as the Band of the Mercian Regiment filled the air with music, energy and community spirit, as part of the Shrewsbury Town Council Summer of Music Concert series in Quarry Park. The audience were treated to a whole variety from stirring marches to film favourites, the mastery of Sousa to the lilting Amazing Grace, every note reminded us of the power music has to bring people together.



Full musical cast for the Summer of Music Concert held on the Bandstand in The Quarry, Shrewsbury in August.

It was a privilege to share the Bandstand with friends from other bands and to celebrate what happens when people come together with purpose, passion and commitment. It was the perfect day to be in the park, and the reaction from the crowds was fantastic!



On the Bandstand at The Quarry, Shrewsbury for the Summer of Music Concert in August.

Musician of the Year Award 2026

The Band Sargeant Majors Musician of the Year award 2026 was presented to Musician Tom Cripps on the bandstand in Quarry Park, Shewsbury. This award recognises a Musician who has impressed the BSM during the training year and annual training exercise (camp).

Musician Cripps has been the only Mercian percussionist this summer, and has stepped up to fill the section leader role, coordinating parts, other players and the equipment to ensure that the music on the repertoire had all the bells and whistles, drums and everything else it needed.



Musician Cripps presented with Mercian Musician of the Year Award 2026, on the Bandstand at The Quarry, Shrewsbury.

He has shown hard work, resilience and spent long hours working with other players and the BM, to plan, practice, and organise what was needed for the engagements.

Well done Musician Cripps 👏 – Mercian Musician of the Year 2026.

Being Part of History - Opening the New History Centre on Cannock Chase

In September, Corporal Wendy Robert took part in the inauguration of the new History Centre at the German War Graves Cemetery on Cannock Chase.

The German War Graves Commission, in association with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), are currently reburying German Soldiers from various cemeteries around the UK to a central place of remembrance on Cannock Chase. There are currently around 5,000 soldiers who are currently buried here.



Opening of the New History Centre at the German War Graves Cemetery on Cannock Chase, September 2026.

The new centre features a bilingual exhibition and workshop facilities explaining German-British history and the reconciliation that followed World War Two.

After a service of remembrance, HRH Princess Royal officially opened the new History Centre. The service finished with and Cpl Robert from the Band of the Mercian Regiment sounding the Last Post and a member from the Luftwaffenmusikkorps Munster playing "*Ich hatt einen Kameraden*".



Last post sounded by Cpl Robert, and a member from the Luftwaffenmusikkorps Munster playing "Ich hatt einen Kameraden" as part of the service the open the new history centre at Cannock Chase, September 2026.

THE STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT MUSEUM

Museum Weekend Honours the Fallen: Arnhem / Market Garden Commemorative Event a Triumph

The Museum's recent Battle of Arnhem / Operation Market Garden commemorative weekend proved to be an overwhelming success, drawing crowds and keeping regimental history vividly alive. Held over a packed Saturday and Sunday, the gates opened from 10:00 to 16:00 daily, welcoming over 500 visitors to the site. This incredible turnout marks it as one of the most successful public events the Museum has hosted in years.



As a registered charity, the Museum relies entirely on volunteer support to preserve and share the proud heritage of the Staffordshire Regiment and the Mercian Regiment. In addition, the Museum were joined by Private Derby alongside the Ram Major and Ram Orderley. Lance Corporal Mitchell and Private Bramley, and other members of their team, did a fantastic job engaging the public and educating visitors on the current role of the Mercian Regiment.



Living History in the Trenches

The highlight of the weekend was the exceptional energy and realism brought to life by the reenactors and display teams. Meticulous detail went into representing the historic Airborne forces, featuring an outstanding portrayal of the 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, alongside corresponding German forces.

From highly accurate uniforms and authentic equipment to an impressive array of historic vehicles, the display teams spared no effort. The live battle reenactments and tactical displays in the woodland area thrilled crowds of all ages, offering a vivid glimpse into the conditions faced by the brave men of the regiment in 1944.

Beyond the skirmish line, the mechanised heritage of the regiment was also on full display with a spectacular MTLB vehicle demonstration, keeping families and enthusiasts thoroughly entertained.



From The Front Line to the Home Front

Providing vital context to the thundering bangs, Charlie delivered an excellent historical commentary during the main tactical skirmishes. Following the action, the public swarmed the display lines, enjoying deep, educational conversations with the reenactors about the real officers and soldiers they so brilliantly portrayed.

The event expertly balanced the frontline action with a holistic look at wartime life and technology

- **The Home Front**: Expert tour guides led numerous public groups through 'Smart Street', showcasing the resilience, struggles, and daily life of civilians on the Home Front.
- **The Lectures**: Speaker and Museum volunteer Matt Johnson delivered fascinating history talks detailing the technical development and strategic deployment of the iconic Airspeed Horsa glider.
- **The Music & Trades**: The musical group Shades on Black filled the air with authentic 1940s melodies, while a variety of stallholders provided nostalgic memorabilia and engaging activities.



The Driving Force Behind the Gates

An event of this magnitude simply could not function without the tireless, behind-the-scenes dedication of the Museum's incredible volunteers, staff, and cadets (Lichfield Detachment Army Cadets - C Company).

Working long hours before the gates opened and well after they closed, they managed the crowds and ensured a seamless, safe, and welcoming environment for all. The Trustees extend their heartfelt thanks to every single individual who contributed their passion and time.



Looking Ahead: Day and Night in the Trenches

With the success of the Arnhem weekend still fresh, the Museum is already looking toward its

next major event. Mark your calendars for the Day and Night in the Trenches event on Saturday 14 November.



THE MERCIAN REGIMENT MUSEUM (WORCESTERSHIRE)

The Museum reached an important milestone this quarter as we achieved Permission to Start from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the Worcestershire Soldier at The Commandery Project. This meant we finally had the go ahead to appoint a project manager and get moving on our plans to create a new permanent gallery display for the Regimental Museum collections.



Waterloo Medal of Private John Griffin.

This summer, the Museum also made a significant acquisition with the help of the Friends of the Museum and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund.

The Waterloo Medal of Private John Griffin is the first of its kind in the collection and fills a gap which we have been seeking to address for many years.

Griffin is an example of a soldier of the Worcestershire Militia who volunteered for service with a regular line regiment in the Napoleonic Wars and fought in 1815 at Waterloo. His medal will go on display in our new gallery from February 2028.



Student volunteer placements Joe and Izzy working on collections digitisation.

During the summer vacation from college and university, the Museum has also been lucky to have two student volunteers who came to us on short-term placements.

Over the holidays, they have made a significant contribution to our behind-the-scenes work, helping us complete research enquiries, and list, catalogue and digitise items from the collection.



Volunteer team participating in database training.

Our long-standing volunteers
also participated in some internal training this quarter to optimise use of our First World War database in research enquiries.

THE MERCIAN REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Stockport Branch (CRA & MVRA)

St Julien's Annual Memorial Service - Sunday 26th July 2026

The Annual Memorial Service for members of The Cheshire Regiment lost in the Battle of St. Juliens took place at St. George's Church Stockport, attended by members of the Association, standard bearers and local dignitaries as well as The Bishop of Stockport Sam Corley.



The new vicar for Stockport, The Rev'd A.Daniel Ramble wrote a poem especially for the service entitled '*Beneath The Standards*'

After the trumpet After the silence We Stand beneath the Standards They hang not as trophies But as witnesses thread and colour Holding sorrow, courage, and prayer. They Speak of Stockport's Sons Of Pilkem Ridge, of Rain and Mud Of a line held at fearful cost. Nearly five hundred fell, a remnant came home. So, we remember them, not by glorifying war but by seeking peace. Micah calls to us; to do justice, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God. Christ calls us; to love one another, as he has loved us. May these standards lead us, from memory into mercy, from sorrow into service, From remembrance into reconciliation. Beneath these colours, beneath the Cross, beneath the mercy of God we will remember them and by Gods Grace, we will be peace makers.

After the service, there was a small wreath laying ceremony at St. Juliens Barracks, followed by a buffet and drinks.



CRA Memorial Staffordshire - Sunday 31st August 2026

The Annual CRA memorial service took place at the National Arboretum, attended by members of the association, and past members of The Cheshire Regiment, taken by the Chaplain and Mr Peter Gresty Chairman of The Cheshire Regiment. After the service, and a brief separate service at The Garden of Remembrance to those who died during the Northern Ireland Troubles, everyone sat down to a picnic and drinks catching up with friends and comrades, and swapping memories.

Mayor of Stockport's Civic Service - Sunday 4th October 2026

Mike Rogers and Derek Sykes carried the standards for both the CRA and MRA at the annual mayoral civic service, in the presence of

The Worshipful Mayor of Stockport Councillor Mark Hunter and Mrs Rachel Hunter.



Also in attendance were civic members as well as members of other faith denominations, the service being taken by The Rev'd Chris Brunt, Rector of Stockport and Brinnington and The Right Rev'd Sam Corley, Bishop of Stockport, with the choir of Great Moor Junior School.

Wolverhampton Branch (Staffords)

Annual Black-Tie Dinner

The Wolverhampton Branch held its annual Black-Tie dinner on Saturday 3rd October 2026 at the Pavillion in Wolverhampton.



Top Table. L-R: Mark Rayson, Helen Rayson, Lady Mayoress, Lord Mayor of Wolverhampton, Branch President, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Mrs. Levermore, Jeanette Cox, Brigadier (Retd) Peter Dennis

Once again, we had an excellent attendance with VIP gusts including the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands (Professor Martin Levermore DL), The Lord Mayor of Wolverhampton (Councilor Paul Singh), Brigadier (Rtd) Peter Dennis (Mercian Regimental Secretary) and Mrs. Helen Rayson (Retired SRA Regimental Secretary).



Claire Hamilton - Recipient of Annual President's Award

It was also the inaugural award of the President's award for the person considered to have gone way above that expected of our volunteers.



Mayor of Wolverhampton (Councilor Paul Singh) With Derby, Watchman and Branch Standard Bearer (Stacy Hamilton)

Members attend the D-Day Darlings event

Gordon Parrtridge and Peter Clarke, both 90 years young in 2027, were invited by the D-Day Darlings to attend a very special evening at their recent concert Near Birmingham.



Peter Clarke (Left) and Gordon Partridge (Right) pose with the D-Day Darlings.

Gordon and Peter were treated like VIP's and thoroughly enjoyed the evening.



L-R:- Claire Hamilton, Anne Partridge and Patrica Clarke with the D-Day Darlings.

The D-Day Darlings were so enamored by them both that they have said they would perform for us at one of our future events:



D-Day Darlings On-Stage

More Wolverhampton Branch News

The Wolverhampton Branch have had a very busy period since the last Newsletter. We have completed 7 Range events, including Armed forces Weekend at Wolverhampton (West Park) and Walsall (Arboretum).



Range set up for Wednesfield Canal Festival.

We have had a visit to the Regimental Museum at Lichfield, followed by Lunch at the King's Head to celebrates Reg Smith's 100th Birthday.



Branch Members support trip to Museum to celebrate Reg Smiths 100th Birthday. L-R: Front: Jane Fairbrace, Shelia Hadfield, Reg Smith, Claire Hamilton. Rear: Phillip Fairbrace, Mark Banks, Rose Davies, Paul Davies Stacy Hamilton, Ant Hadfield

We also had a coach trip to Llandudno for the branch members and their families, several Minibus trips, weekly coffee mornings at our Branch HQ, a Monthly veterans coffee morning hosted by the Ashmore Park Care, and a *Pie and Mash* evening on a Steam Train in Staffordshire.



Stacy Hamilton parades Branch Standard at VJ Day in Wolverhampton.

We were also fortunate to receive a donation from the Owners of the Mercia Forest Crematorium in support of the charity work we do in support of our veterans.



Branch President (Major (Retd) Mark Banks receives Donation of £500 from owners of Mercia Forest Crematorium in support of our charity work.

THE CHESHIRE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

CRA Annual Service of Remembrance

The Cheshire Regiment Association held a Service of Remembrance at The National Memorial Arboretum on Sunday 6th September, and what a great service it was.



Led by Padre Vic Van Den Bergh and including contributions from Peter Gresty, Ron Goodwin, DG Cheshire Willis and Maj Gen (Ret'd) Dr Andrew Sharpe CBE.



Music was provided by 4 ex Regimental Band members, plus a friend, they were conducted by Eddie Pickering, whilst also playing, and sounded really good. Steve Beswick played the Last Post and Reveille.



A poignant moment in the service was the laying up of the Standards of both Nantwich Branch and Stoke On Trent Branch, these branch standards have been laid up following the closure of those branches.



Following the main service, we reassembled at the Northern Ireland Copse for a short wreath laying service where Ron Goodwin read the Roll of Honour. Mike Smith recited the Exhortation and Steve Beswick again played the Last Post and Reveille before we retired to the Cafe restaurant for some refreshments.

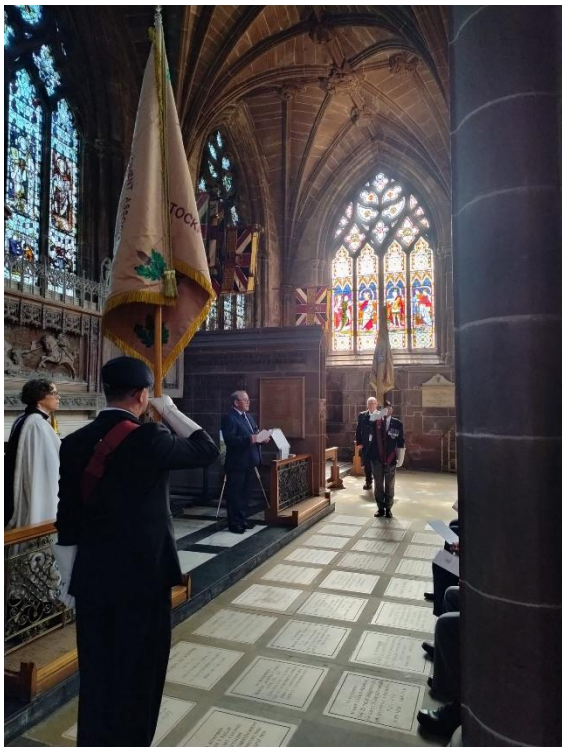


Mons Wreath Laying Service

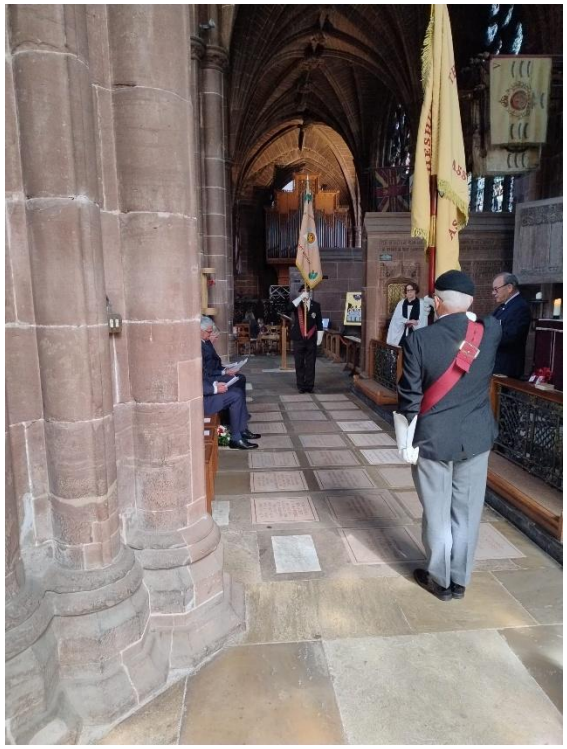
Monday 24th August, at 12 noon, on the 112th anniversary a short wreath laying service was held, at the Regimental Chapel in Chester Cathedral, to commemorate the actions of the 1st Battalion The 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment which took place on 24th August 1914, during WW1, and to commemorate The Battle of Mons.



During the short service, led by Canon Rosie Woodall, a wreath was laid by Maj Gen (Ret'd) Keith Skempton CBE DL, CRA Vice President.



Mr Peter Gresty, CRA Chairman, read out the details of the battle, Dave Willis carried the CRA Standard and Mike Rogers carried Stockport Branch CRA Standard. Steve Beswick played Last Post and Reveille.



Others on parade where Lt Col (Ret'd) David Oak MBE, Maj (Ret'd) Mike Huntriss, Steve Whaite and Geoff Crump (Regimental Historian).

Mons Wreath Laying in Audregnies

Monday 24th August, Eddie Pickering and Martine Pickering attended, and took part in, commemorations of The Battle of Mons in Audregnies, Belgium, to commemorate the actions of the 1st Bn which took place on 24th August 1914, during WW1, and to commemorate The Battle of Mons.



The Battle of Mons was the first major action of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in the First World War. It was a subsidiary action of the Battle of the Frontiers, in which the Allies clashed with Germany on the French borders. When Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, British soldiers were sent to the eastern French border to meet a rapidly advancing German Army. On 24 August 1914 they took part in The Battle of Mons.

At this battle the 1st Battalion of the 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment, as part of 15th Brigade, 5th Division, stood outside the Belgian village of Audregnies, near Mons, with orders to take up a defensive position together with the 1st Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment. The role of these two Regiments, together with L Battery RA, the 9th Lancers and the 4th Dragoon Guards was to provide cover for the withdrawal of the British 5th Division. Their action delayed the advance by four hours and in the end, it took 4 German Regiments, each of 3 Battalions to surround the Battalion, which was by now, standing alone.

A senior German officer is reputed to have said "*I have captured a Division, but have nothing but Cheshire's*".



During the short service wreaths were laid by local dignitaries and Maj (Ret'd) Eddie Pickering MBE, CRA Treasurer.

THE WORCESTERSHIRE & SHERWOOD FORESTERS REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Chesterfield Branch

On the evening of the 26 September, Chesterfield Branch commemorated Alma Day with a 1940s evening. An enjoyable evening was held at North Wingfield Social Club, attracting around 90 guests.

Those attending enjoyed a lively raffle and auction, which proved a great success, while Stacey 13's and bingo games also helped to raise a good sum for the evening's winners. Entertainment was provided by a talented 1940s-style female singer, who delighted guests with a selection of popular wartime songs and helped create a wonderful atmosphere throughout the event. And the generous buffet was provided by Sophie, of Crich Tea Rooms, adding to what was a thoroughly enjoyable and well-supported occasion.

The evening concluded with a joint prize for Best 1940s Fancy Dress, awarded to Roy Trip & Margaret Hannah alongside Ken Keelimg & Maria Ruffin. The event was a great success, bringing together so many people for an evening of entertainment, fundraising and community spirit.



Left: Roy Trip & Margaret Hannah - Right: Ken Keelimg & Maria Ruffin

Derby Branch

We continue to meet at the Derbyshire ACF HQ on Sinfin Lane, the venue proving very good, and suitable for our needs. We are attracting a decent attendance; the only downside is that is it the same hard core of members at every meeting. Three come from Burton and another from Swadlincote. We do have quite a number

of members living locally, and it would be good if they could attend a meeting.



The service at Rolls Royce Derby commemorating those who lost their lives during an air raid on 27 July 1942. Attended by John Higginbottom, Rev Norma Bracewell, Mick Doyle.

Members attended the funeral of Keith Ford, who before illness, attended every meeting, coming with his friend Brian Bunting all the way from Ripley. Members also attended the funeral of Ronnie Smith, who had been our Secretary for forty years. W02 Paul Derbyshre kindly paraded our WFRA Standard for Ronnie's last journey.



The "trouble makers" table; what a merry bunch!

Mick Doyle and John Higginbottom, accompanied by Rev Norma Bracewell, represented the Branch at a memorial service at Rolls Royce to commemorate the loss of life of workers during an air raid on 27th July 1943. On Sunday 20th September (Alma Day) we held a curry lunch at our normal "*watering hole*" the Mount Everest Gurkha Restaurant. Thirty-seven members and guests attended the event which proved, as expected, to be most enjoyable. Derby Branch offers a warm welcome to all. Our meetings are held in a friendly casual manner, with dress also being casual.



Our latest "recruits". Adult members of the Derbyshire ACF, and staff from the Cadet Training Team. They have proved to be a valuable asset to the Branch

<u>Worcester Branch</u>

Worcester Branch WFRA has been busy of late. They have been enjoying their monthly coffee morning at the old Sgts Mess at Norton where the atmosphere is very friendly. Also the cakes are very good!

On a more formal side Worcester Branch organised a VJ Day Ceremony at the Worcestershire Regiment Malaya Memorial Bench for the Tri Services in Worcester to make it all inclusive, not just a Regimental, occasion. Hopefully this will be taken up by the City Council or RBL, as it is felt that the City of Worcester should mark the 15th of August, VJ Day every year.



VJ Day

On the 26th August, the Branch held their annual service at the Worcestershire Regimental Stone to mark the liberation of Vernon France (26th

August 1944), where The Worcestershire Regiment, as part of the 43rd Wessex Division were at the spearhead of the Allies push through France, crossing the Seine at Vernon. The Worcesters were involved in some heavy fighting after they had crossed the river Seine. The French tend the graves of the fallen laying flowers every year on the 26th August, when they hold their annual services. Members of Worcester Branch have attended the services in Vernon, the last time being for the 80th anniversary in 2024. This year was special as ten citizens of Vernon were present with the Worcester Twinning Association. The French visitors remarked that the service was the best part of their visit to Worcestershire.





The Vernon Ceremony

On the 19th September Worcester Branch held their annual service to mark the service of The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment at the WFR Memorial Bench.





WFR Commemoration Service

All three ceremonies happened in Gheluvelt Park, Worcester where Worcester Branch have memorials that they keep in good order. Thanks go to Branch Honorary Member Mr Alan Bray for taking the photos

Worksop Branch



July – Worksop Branch Annual attendance at Crich pilgrimage, going up the Tower seems to have become part of the day now.





August – a small group set up stall in the military section at Cromford Steam Rally to raise awareness of the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regimental Association.





August – A good turnout for the Rededication of Worksop War Memorial following the addition of a plaque in memory of Sgt Wayne Rees (IRAQ 2007)

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/