



Salisbury Military History Society

September 2022 eNewsletter

If you've missed any previous editions, you can find them on our website – [click here](#).

Parish Notices

Wednesday 28th September

7.30pm (arrive from 7pm) - 'Dünkirchen 1940: The German View of Dunkirk' with Robert Kershaw
'Dünkirchen 1940' cuts through Churchillian rhetoric, to account for the miracle of Dunkirk through German eyes. Hitler's generals thought Dunkirk an untidy battle with an unsatisfactory outcome, an awkward signpost on the road to Paris and beyond. Bob Kershaw reveals it was this inherent German misunderstanding of the significance of the battle and the numerous German strategic and tactical miscalculations that turned the tide of the war. This was not merely a miracle of little ships. [Read more](#)

For Full Members, the cost of entry is included in your annual subscription. For all other attendees, you can pay £10 on the door.

We accept cash, card and cheque payments at meetings. Cheques should be made out to the 'Salisbury Military History Society'. For bank transfers, the Society's account details can be found on the [membership form here](#). As we're half way through 2022, part-year fees apply ([see here](#)).

The bookstall will not be open at next week's talk, but will return (for the last time) in October.

Upcoming talks

Wed 26th Oct - 'Counter-Insurgency in Malaya: An Imperial Success Story' with Dr. Robert Lyman
Wed 23rd Nov - 'The Soldier's Soldier: A Leadership Life – Erwin Rommel' with Prof. Lloyd Clark
Wed 25th Jan - 'The Great Game: Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Central Asia' with Major Gordon Corrigan
For more information on all our talks, click through to each from [our 'Events' webpage](#)

30-minute member talks

A number of members have expressed the wish to give a talk to the society. Therefore, we are planning to dedicate our March meeting to 30-minute talks (plus Q&A) from two members. If you would like to be one of those speakers, please let us have a brief synopsis of your talk, a little about you and, if possible, a suitable picture we can use to promote the talk on our posters and website. We'd like to have all 2023 speakers registered with us by the end of October so we have sufficient time to promote the talks. If we have more than two responses then we may repeat the event in September 2023 as well.

Review: 'Old Wardour Castle & Salisbury during the English Civil War' with Julian Humphrys (Wednesday 24th August)

Really, the English Civil War should be called the 'British Civil War', as it touched all parts of Great Britain and Ireland. 'Cloth towns' tended to be Calvinist and cathedral towns Royalist, but while the latter would raise armies and join the King at his side, Parliamentarians would raise an army and stay where they were. This meant that, although Salisbury's MP was a Royalist, there was no local Royalist military leadership in Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Somerset. However, the majority of the country was neutral or disinterested, with allegiances largely swung by the ascendancy of power in their locality. Neither Salisbury nor Old Wardour Castle were strategically important, as the former was not a walled city and thus difficult to defend, and the latter was built as a residence rather than a fortification. However, battles and skirmishes were fought for both, as loot and securing transit routes were vital for both sides.

Pyinbongyi, Burma

Following Mike Tickner's talk about Burma, Charles Ottowell found an Imperial War Museum film of the attack at Pyinbongyi that our members may find interest - [Tank, Air and Infantry Attack on Pyinbongyi at 68 Milestone](#)

It shows the tanks and infantry of 63rd Brigade, 17th Indian (BLACK CAT) Division, supported by aircraft, overcome unexpected Japanese resistance at the village of Pyinbongyi, approximately 20 miles north of Pegu (Bago), Burma at the end of April 1945.

The unit involved was the 6/7th RAJPUTS attacking the position supported by the 7th CAVALRY in Stuart Tanks and Armoured cars. A 1/3rd GURKHA Company was also attached in Direct Support for the initial phases of the attack. The RAF were involved too. The battle was filmed and a report appeared later in the "*Fauji Akhbar*" - an Indian periodical paper printed in English and Hindi. Charles' father was the battalion's MTO at the time.

'Military History Matters' magazine

One of our members has subscribed to the 'Military History Matters' (previously 'Military History Monthly') magazine for many years and has issues 45-79, 91-102 and 115-129. If anyone would be interested in them, please reply to this eNewsletter and we'll put you in touch.

AGM and your 2023 Committee

At our AGM in November, we will elect our 2023 Committee, which books speakers, hosts talks, organises events and fulfils a range of administrative duties. Your current Committee has served for over three years and so we're always keen to invite new people to join us in order to encourage fresh ideas. Andy stood down as Secretary in January, but has served as Interim Secretary while a successor has been sought. Please do reply to this email or speak to any Committee member at the next meeting if you're interested in any of the posts.

Military History News

Who were the Huns, the nomadic horse warriors who invaded ancient Europe?

Today, reference to 'Huns' evokes images of barbarity and cruelty, but this image was drawn by the Romans; victims of the Huns' successes in Europe. Thought to have come from Mongolia, they were expert horsemen who roamed as a nomadic tribe. As they migrated west, others joined them and they became a population of many nationalities, as we'd know them in modern terms. However, more recent studies have found settlements and agriculture to be a part of Hunnish life, and research shows a much more nuanced picture of what may more commonly be perceived as simply a marauding horde. [Read more](#)

'Princess Auto Mechanic' - Here's how Queen Elizabeth served in World War II

While the 16-year-old Princess Elizabeth was made an Honorary Colonel of the Grenadier Guards, she took an active role in World War Two by joining the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) when she turned 18 in 1944. Initially a Second Subaltern, she rose to Junior Commander (the female equivalent of Captain) within five months. Before her passing, Queen Elizabeth II was the last living head of state to have served in World War Two. [Read more](#)

Lauri Törni: The Only SS Member to Be Buried At Arlington National Cemetery

Finn Lauri Törni began the Second World War fight the Russians in the Winter War of 1939 before his courage and successes saw him promoted to Second Lieutenant and sent to Germany for training with the Waffen SS in anticipation of further attacks by the Soviet Union. His daring actions in the Continuation War saw a bounty put on his head, and upon his demobilisation he travelled to Germany and joined the Wehrmacht fighting in the East. Though imprisoned for joining the German Army, he was pardoned and emigrated to the USA where he joined the US Army in 1954 and served in the special forces in West Germany, Iran and Vietnam. Before he went missing in action in 1965, he was awarded two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star. When his body was found in 1999, he was repatriated to the USA and buried as 'Larry Thorne' at Arlington. [Read more](#)

Other articles

[Why do royal guards wear bearskin hats? The history of the helmets worn by the King's soldiers, explained](#)

[How did military weapons evolve through history?](#)

[Snipers: The Four Greatest Marksmen In Military History](#)

[The Peak Strength of History's Most Powerful Navies](#)

[Heinz-Wolfgang Schnauer Was the Luftwaffe's Best Night Fighter Pilot](#)

[The Latest in a Long Line: Ukraine's International Legion and a History of Foreign Fighters](#)

Local events, online talks and podcasts

[Click here](#) to see a wealth of upcoming events in Salisbury and surrounding areas.

While online talks continue, we'll include them in our eNewsletters. Click on the links below for the next (and future) webinars from a range of organisations. Some of these talks may charge a small fee to join.

[British Modern Military History Society](#)

Next talk: 'Army Aviation in Northern Ireland' (Tuesday 4th October)

[The Army Flying Museum](#)

Next talk: 'Test Pilot' (Monday 10th October)

[Manchester Military History Society](#)

Next talk: 'Dambusters with Frank Plezak' (Tuesday 11th October)

[Institution of Royal Engineers](#)

Next talk: 'Lt Col Sir Richard Fletcher' (Wednesday 16th October)

[Old Front Line](#)

A fortnightly World War One podcast featuring 30-45min episodes.

[Pete and Gary's Military History: Peter Hart and Gary Bain](#)

For more than 40 years historian Peter Hart has interviewed thousands of veterans about their experience of war.

[New Books Network](#)

A series of interviews with authors of military history books.

We look forward to seeing you all at St John's Place next week.

Dave Simons
Marketing Officer

Keith Rigden
Membership Secretary

Useful links:

Website - <https://salisburymilhist.com>

Email - SalisburyMilHist@gmail.com

Facebook - [SalisburyMilHist](#)

Twitter - [SalisburyMHS](#)

Who's who:

Chairman & Speaker Secretary: Alan Rooney

Vice Chair: Bob Kershaw

Secretary & Bookstall Co-ordinator: Andy Sharp

Treasurer: John Loades

Membership Secretary: Keith Rigden

Marketing Officer: Dave Simons

Events Officer: Sandy Forrest