



Salisbury Military History Society

December 2022 eNewsletter

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

Parish Notices

2023 membership subscriptions

Rather than queuing to pay your 2023 subscription at the door at the January meeting, we encourage everyone to pay in advance by bank transfer if possible. The Committee proposes to keep the annual subscription at just £45.

Sort code 40-40-14

Account No. 02293544

Please include your name as the payment reference

Alternatively, if you'd prefer to receive an invoice, please email our Treasurer, John Loades (at john.loades@hotmail.com), who will arrange for a Subscription Invoice to be emailed to you from Zettle.com. Upon opening the emailed invoice, there is a link to an online payment page.

Upcoming talks

Wed 25th Jan - 'The Great Game: Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Central Asia' with Major Gordon Corrigan

Wed 22nd Feb - 'The Battle of Minden, 1759' with Major General Ewan Carmichael

Wed 22nd Mar - 'Desert Warfare: The Experience of British Empire Armies in the Two World Wars' with Prof. Gary Sheffield

Wed 26th Apr - 'Why does the British government never talk about Nuclear Weapons?' with Dr. Andy Corbett

Wed 24th May - 'The Soldier's Soldier: A Leadership Life – Erwin Rommel' with Prof. Lloyd Clark

Wed 28th Jun - 'Alfred the Great and the campaign of 878 – What can we know?' with Prof. Ryan Lavelle

For more information on all our talks, click through to each from [our 'Events' webpage](#)

Review: 'What does a Curator of Artillery do?' with Philip Magrath (Wednesday 23rd November)

Last month we welcomed Philip Magrath to discuss his role at the Royal Artillery Museum, the collection of which is currently in stores, but primarily based in Larkhill. In the early-Twentieth Century, museums were very much arranged to put everything on display, but today museums are aimed more at storytelling and interpretation. While the RAM owns 22 of the Royal Artillery's 65 Victoria Crosses, what do those medals and citations tell us about the men who won them?

Currently, there are four or five possible museum sites under consideration since Firepower! closed in Woolwich in 2016. For now, the larger pieces are in hangers at Netheravon and the stores contains a range of field guns and the conservation workshop.

In the New Year, the Society will arrange a behind-the-scenes tour of the Royal Artillery Museum Stores at Larkhill and, following the request made at last month's talk, it has been confirmed that the visit will include lunch in the Royal Artillery Mess and a tour of the Regiment's silver and artworks.

Christmas meal

It was great to welcome a number of you to our Christmas meal at The Chapter House on Monday 12th December. We intend to arrange more social events in 2023 and details will follow in the New Year.

Annual General Meeting: New date

Due to a number of Committee member absences next month, we have moved our AGM to **Wednesday 22nd February**. The formal notification will be sent to Full Members in the New Year.

Glossary of terms

We're fortunate to include a great range of experience and interests among our membership. However, during our Christmas meal last week, it was discussed how the knowledge gap between the services, generations, professionals and hobbyists can vary widely. Therefore, we are developing a new 'Glossary of Terms' webpage and we invite everyone to reply to this email (or email salisburymilhist@gmail.com anytime) with suggested entries, or requesting what particular abbreviations and acronyms mean.

The Gallipoli Evacuation

On the anniversary of the Gallipoli Evacuation in December 1915, the Society has been contacted by representatives of an author of a new book on the operation.

'The Gallipoli Evacuation', Peter Hart

The evacuation of Gallipoli was a life-or-death gamble.

The expedition to wrest the Narros from the Turks had failed, and Constantinople remained an impossible dream. Now in December 1915, some 135,000 men, nearly 400 guns and 15,000 horses were collectively trapped in the bridgeheads at Anzac, Suvla and Helles.

The invaders found themselves caught in a nightmare scenario: they could not advance, but how was it possible to retreat from trenches overlooked by the Turks? With every day that passed the Turks moved up more guns, threatening to blast to pieces the flimsy piers, breakwaters and blockships that acted as makeshift harbours to feed and supply tens of thousands of men. And winter was coming. But the evacuation plans were brilliant, especially the early introduction of 'silent periods' to confuse the Turks. But it was a damn close-run thing. This is the story of how the Gallipoli garrison escaped to fight another day.

About the author:

Peter Hart was the oral historian for 39 years at the Imperial War Museum, during which time he interviewed thousands of veterans. He has written several books on the First and Second World Wars, but has long been obsessed with Gallipoli. He has appeared on numerous television documentaries and is a well-regarded tour guide to the Gallipoli battlefields.

Order copies from:

<https://livinghistorytv.com/book/the-gallipoli-evacuation/>

Military History News

Revealed: The Secret Anti-Soviet Army Founded by German Officers in 1949

Just a few years ago, a German researcher came across an incredible trove of secret documents in a box labelled "insurance" in the archives of the BND, Germany's foreign intelligence service. The papers revealed that in 1949 up to 2,000 former Wehrmacht and SS officers united to establish an anti-Soviet army in West Germany. When the Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, discovered the existence of this 40,000-strong paramilitary force in 1951 he instructed the BND to co-operate with and oversee its operations, which largely took the form of spying on suspected Communists. When the Bundeswehr was established in 1955, the secret army was made redundant, though it is not known how and when it was formally disbanded.

Read more: [The Secret Army Founded by Nazis After World War 2](#)

Is the Pentomic Army of the late-1950s relevant again today?

As Russian sabre-rattling includes the threat of 'tactical' nuclear weapons again in the Ukraine War, commentators are looking back to the U.S. Army's structural experiments of the late-1950s and early-1960s and asking if we need to re-evaluate their relevance if NATO is to consider boots on the ground in Eastern Europe. During WW2 and the Korean War, the U.S. Army deployed infantry divisions in a triangular structure – three regimental combat teams each consisting of three battalions – whereby two-thirds were committed and one-third held in reserve. However, nuclear-equipped defenders could wipe out that attacking two-thirds and subsequently overwhelm the reserve. Instead, Exercise Sage Brush considered the 'Pentomic Division' made up of five self-sufficient air-transportable Battle Groups of five companies each. However, the plans were never codified in the updated field manual and the infantry maintained its focus on conventional warfare.

Read more: [The Rise and Fall of the Pentomic Army](#)

Other articles

[6 of the Greatest Medieval Military Leaders](#)

[Five of the Boldest Military Plans from History](#)

[The most creative \(and bizarre\) military tactics in history](#)

[300 years of war: the history of the Devonshire Regiment](#)

[Outnumbered 25:1, the 'Glorious Glosters' Put Up a Heroic Last Stand on Hill 235](#)

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: '[Pearl Harbor](#)' (Tuesday 3rd January)

Institution of Royal Engineers

Online talk: '[Sappers at Suez](#)' (Wednesday 11th January)

[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.

Finally, we wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year!

Dave Simons
Marketing Officer

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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: Ian Thomas

Treasurer: John Loades

Membership Secretary: Keith Rigden

Marketing Officer: Dave Simons