

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

President: Brig P Dennis CBE



23 AUGUST 2019

WFRA NEWSLETTER

Volume 10 Issue 36

OBITUARY

It is with sadness that I inform you of the death of Brian Simms, (Simmo) ex B Coy 3WFR.

Full obituary and funeral details to follow.

001 LOVE YOUR GARDEN

The new series of the garden make over programme will see Alan Titchmarsh and his team renovate the garden of Jack Parrot, a Sherwood Forester veteran, who was awarded the Legion d'Honneur in 2018 for his role in Normandy during WW2.

The show will be aired on ITV on Tuesday 17 September at 20:00hrs.

002 FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE

The Field of Remembrance Opening Ceremony will be held on Thursday 7 November 2019 at Westminster Abbey, London with entry by no later than 10:30hrs. Anyone wishing to attend and pay their respects at the WFRA Plot of Remembrance are asked to contact Ms Clark, the Assistant Regimental Secretary at RHQ Nottingham.

cindy.baines247@mod.gov.uk who will provide full details with the ticket.

Please note that this is a ticketed event only and travel to London is at the individuals cost.

003 **70th ANNIVERSARY - SALUTE TO THE VILLAGE EVENT**

The event will take place on Saturday 24th August from 10:00hrs, with activities starting at 11:00hrs until 17:00hrs.

The 'Salute to the Village' is part of a series of celebrations to mark the 70th Anniversary, which started with the visit by HRH Princess Royal on the 18th July. Our Royal Visit was a truly spectacular event, and the 'Salute to the Village Event' will be equally amazing; a full Military Showcase Event, the likes of which this city has never seen before, it will include a number of military displays, military marches, music and a Battle of Britain Commemorative fly past by a WW2 Dakota.

For more information please visit the website

<https://www.warmemorialvillagederby.co.uk/>

004 **NOTTS & DERBYS AREA MEETING**

The Notts and Derbys Area Meeting is to be held at 11:00hrs on Saturday 7 September 2019, at Kilton Forest Golf Course, Blyth Road, Worksop, Nottinghamshire S81 0TL.

005 **WREATH LAYING CEREMONY**

Worcester Branch of The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Association will be holding a short wreath laying ceremony in memory of the 1st, 2nd and 7th battalions of the Worcestershire Regiment who saw action in WW2 at Vernon, France. Burma and Malaya.

The date for the Ceremony is Monday 26th August 10:45 for 10:50am at The Worcestershire Regimental Stone, Gheluvelt park Worcester WR3 7AA. It will be on this date that the town of Vernon hold their own ceremonies to mark their liberation from the Nazi forces in August 1944. This month also marks VJ Day and the posting to Malaya in 1950.

CITATION

Veron

After the Falaise pocket had been dealt with in Normandy there was a dash by the 43rd Wessex Division in which the Worcestershire Regiment served, for the town of Vernon on the river Seine. The French Resistance had kept the Germans from crossing the bridge back into Vernon. The Wiltshires had attempted the first crossing by boats on the right of the bridge, they got stuck on a mud bank and the covering smoke cleared they were consequently cut to ribbons from gunfire from the heights overlooking the river. A few troops landed. The Somersets attempted a crossing by boat on the left of the broken bridge and were stuck on a small island, they managed to get a toe hold on the far bank. The Worcesters were tasked with crossing the broken bridge but were driven back by murderous machine gunfire. Dawn the following morning the Worcesters were tasked with crossing the bridge at 'All Costs'. When they crossed the machine gun post had been abandoned and managed to form a bridgehead. Lt Col. Taylor's famous order of the day which included the words "...this position WILL be held to the last man and the last round." The bridgehead later expanded after passing Vernonette the Worcesters had a hard fought battle on the Tilly road with a German counter attack which included Tiger Tanks. One Tiger had been knocked out with the Battalions small six pounder gun. After the battle the 43rd Wessex Division pressed on north on the liberation of France. Where the Tilly road battle took place there is a memorial of Malvern stone with brass plaques in the 'Worcesters layby' Dave Plant who is present today took the stone there.

The town of Vernon have their remembrance services on this day, placing flowers on the grave of the Worcesters and other Regiments who lost their lives.

Burma

Both the 2nd and 7th Battalions of the Worcestershire Regiment saw service in Burma during the Second World War. The 7th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment were the first to see action arriving in April 1944 in the Assam region. Following the fall of Singapore in February 1942, the 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, who were in India, were then moved to Madras as there was the belief at the time that the Japanese would invade India across the Bay of Bengal. It was not until November 1944 that the 2nd Battalion finally advanced in to Burma. On 1st April 1944 the 7th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment crossed the Brahmaputra river at Gauhati and entered the operational area of Assam, being the first troops of the Division on this occasion to taste the conditions of the Burma war.

They then moved on to railhead at Dimapur and on 2nd April a perimeter was formed to cover the approaches to Dimapur from the north. From 5th April onwards the Battalion was busy patrolling the Kohima road, working in with the armoured cars. The village of Zubza was reached by "D" Company in Motor Transport. Progress was on foot, the immediate objective being a blown bridge. In the darkness they failed to make their objective by dawn and were caught in an ambush, whereupon they concentrated at Zubza and were joined by the rest of the Battalion. After the bloody battles at the Naga Village and Kohima the road into Burma became open and the Allies pressed on through Burma on the heels of the Japanese Imperial Army.

Malaya Emergency 1950 -1953

In February, 1942, after the Japanese had overrun Malaya and Singapore, the Malayan Communist Party offered its services to the British Government in organising a resistance movement. In this seemingly innocent offer lay the seeds of the Emergency. The proposal was accepted, and the Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army (M.P.A.J.A.) was formed. Some of its members had received guerrilla training from the British before Singapore fell, and during the war large quantities of arms and equipment were sent to them, although the actual military activities of the M.P.A.J.A. were very limited and largely defensive.

After the Japanese Surrender in 1945, the M.P.A.J.A. was disbanded and over 5,000 arms were handed in. However, a secret branch, about 4,000 strong, remained in being and kept their arms. It was the intention of the Malayan Communist Party (M.C.P.) to gain control of Malaya, using their secret force if other means failed. Their political expedients proved unsuccessful, and in May, 1948, they embarked on an armed insurrection, calling themselves the Malayan Races Liberation Army (M.R.L.A.), the majority of whom were former members of the M.P.A.J.A. They were, and are still, eighty per cent Chinese, the remainder being Malays, Indians, Indonesians and Siamese. Most of the officers had had previous military experience in the M.P.A.J.A. In Malaya, patrols are usually carried out by platoons, operating independently or in conjunction with other platoons. Battalion operations are not uncommon and even brigade operations are occasionally mounted. Depending on the circumstances an operation might last a few hours or several weeks.

The armament of patrols varies considerably according to the type of operation, but in a section there is always at least one Bren gun. Some grenade-firing rifles are carried. On 27th May, 12 Platoon, "D" Company (2/Lt. W. O. Morris, R.A.O.C. att. 1 Worc. R.)

In the morning the Platoon Commander, with two sections, set out once more in search of the enemy. They moved due West into the jungle and followed a narrow track, which had jungle on the left and felled jungle on the high ground to the right. The track was used by woodcutters who were engaged in cutting the jungle further back. Having moved about a quarter of a mile into the jungle, the leading section came under very heavy automatic fire from the front and left flank. The patrol went to ground and returned the fire. In the first few minutes Private Dykes, the leading scout, was killed. The section commander (Corporal Stanton), two more privates (Hughes and Payne), and the Iban tracker (Awang anak Rawang), were wounded.

The Platoon Commander shouted several times to Corporal Stanton to withdraw his section, but he received no reply. 2/Lt. Morris then moved back and deployed the rear section to the left; they then engaged the terrorists as best they could. 2/Lt. Morris moved forward again to investigate the state of the leading section. During this time he fired two complete magazines from his carbine. The Platoon Commander was killed shortly afterwards, but the Platoon fought on for about forty minutes, when the terrorists withdrew.

The sound of the firing had been heard back at the Company base, and the Company Commander, with two platoons, moved out and arrived at the scene of the action about an hour later.

During the action Private Hughes fell wounded in the middle of the track, and Awang anak Rawang, the Iban tracker, although wounded himself and lying in an exposed position, dragged Private Hughes under cover of a fallen tree. From behind the tree Awang defended Hughes and continued to engage the terrorists when they tried to approach. For his gallantry Awang anak Rawang was subsequently awarded the George Cross. He was the first, and at the time of writing the only, Iban tracker to receive such an honour.

A total of 21 are on the Roll of Honour who were killed in action or died whilst serving in Malaya. A memorial with the names on is in St Georges Chapel in Worcester Cathedral.

006 **1WFR BAND REUNION**

The date of the next Band Reunion will be on Saturday 19th October 2019. The Venue will be the Coopers Brook, Mansfield Road, Daybrook Nottingham. NG5 6HB.

The Band Reunions have been well attended over the years and there have been requests from past members of the Sherwood Foresters Band. So they would therefore like to extend the invitation to all those that served in the Sherwood Foresters Regimental Band to join us on that date.

They will meet up in the afternoon around 14.00hrs in the bar of the Coopers Brook for a catch up and a few drinks followed by a Reunion Dinner at 19.30hrs.

There is a Premier Inn hotel next to the venue should overnight accommodation be required. Members are advised to contact the hotel and book their rooms. Details for this can be found on the Premier Inn website. Should there be "No room at the inn" then there are other hotels within close proximity early bookings are advised.

If you would like to attend please contact Ken Bradshaw.

ken.bradshaw18@ntlworld.com.

There also have a facebook page that is titled "WOOFERS BAND (WFR) REUNION.

007 **VETERANS SUPPORT**

The following are available to support veterans and their families who may be experiencing mental health difficulties;

Forcesline Tel: 0800 731 4880 (between 9am and 5pm Monday-Friday)

Combat Stress (24 hours)

Veterans and their families; Tel: 0800 138 1619

Serving personnel and their families; Tel: 0800 323 4444

Samaritans (24 hours); Tel: 116 123

M A DACK
for Executive Committee

Social media

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Collection\)](#)
 [Stand Firm Strike
Hard](#)
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