

WORCESTERSHIRE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT



September 2014

WELCOME

Welcome to the latest edition of the Worcestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership newsletter.

Just over a week ago we held our first joint partnership meeting with Herefordshire AFCC Partnership. It was a great opportunity for the two neighbouring partnerships to come together to share best practice and discuss ideas for common areas we can work on in the future.

Coming up over the next two months are a couple of events for your diary. Firstly is the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gheluvelt on Friday 31 October in Worcester and on Sunday 2 November we are holding a service to commemorate the contributions and sacrifices of the horses in WW1 at The Three Counties Showground, Malvern. You can find more details on both of these events in this newsletter.

And finally I am pleased to announce that our WW2 veterans' film has been shortlisted as a finalist in the prestigious Royal Television Society Midlands Centre Awards 2014. 'We Did Our Bit' is one of 10 finalists in the running for the Best Promotional Programme Award and we will find out whether we've won at the awards ceremony at the National Motorcycle Museum on Thursday 30 October.

Let's keep our fingers crossed!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Rob Adams'.

Cllr Rob Adams

Chair of Worcestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership

FUNDING LATEST

There is only more opportunity to apply for funding through the **Community Covenant Grant Scheme**.

The scheme provides grants of £100 to £250,000 for local projects which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live.

Applications need to be made through the Partnership to ensure that the project meets the grant criteria and local requirement before they can be submitted to a regional panel for consideration.

The final deadline for applications to be submitted to the Partnership is Friday 19 December 2014.

For more information on applying for funding visit www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk or contact Worcestershire Partnership Relationship Manager, Alan Smith by email at asmith3@worcestershire.gov.uk or phone him on 01905 822836.

WORCESTER ARTILLERY DAY

Thousands of people turned out to support the troops at an event marking the 150th anniversary of the city's local Army Reserve unit, 214 (Worcestershire) Battery Royal Artillery, and the centenary of World War One.

Tanks, rocket launchers, a re-enactment of War Horse-style First World War battles and a parachute display by the RAF Falcons were just some of the attractions on display at Worcester's Artillery Day on Saturday, August 16.



The day started at 9.30am with a service of remembrance at Worcester Cathedral and was followed at midday

by members of 214 Battery who paraded through the city centre, with artillery guns past and present and the famous Royal Artillery Band.

A salute was taken outside the Guildhall by the Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Lt Col Patrick Holcroft LVO OBE; the Mayor of Worcester, Councillor Alan Amos; and Major General JR Free CBE of the Royal Artillery before the parade made its way to Pitchcroft racecourse.





At Pitchcroft, an opening salute of regimental light guns from WW1 and WW2 set things off with a bang as thousands of visitors enjoyed an afternoon of military activities, music, displays and exhibitions.



Army vehicles throughout the ages were on show as well as many charities ready to tell people about their experiences in war, battle, training, and how it all was during WWI and the differences with armed forces today.

Visitors also got to try a bit of target practice on a laser clay pigeon shoot and face the challenge of an army climbing tower with younger visitors having the opportunity to drive miniature tanks.

The Army Reserve unit, today's 214 Battery was originally formed in 1864 as the Worcestershire Volunteer Artillery Corps. The regiment fought in France and Italy during the First World War and in North Africa during World War Two. In more recent years, soldiers from 214 Battery have seen action in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Worcester Artillery Day was supported by Worcester City Council, the Worcester Festival and the Worcestershire World War One Hundred campaign with additional funding provided through the Worcestershire County Councillor Divisional Fund and the Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant Scheme.

VICTORIA CROSS PAVING STONE UNVEILED TO COMMEMORATE LOCAL HERO

Worcester people have held a special ceremony to remember one of the city's bravest sons. The event, organised by Worcester City Council, saw the unveiling of a commemorative paving stone to honour George Wyatt, a soldier who valiantly contributed to the First World War effort on the front line.



The unveiling of the Commemorative Paving Stone is part of a national programme, co-ordinated by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG.) The programme invites local authorities to participate in commemorating those who were awarded the Victoria Cross during World War One. Worcester is among the first ten cities nationally to commemorate this event which was attended by representatives from the Royal British Legion and the Coldstream Guards.



George Henry Wyatt went above and beyond his duty as a soldier in the war and was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery in the face of the enemy. To commemorate this prestigious award, Councillor David Wilkinson, City Council cabinet member for safer and stronger communities unveiled the stone at a ceremony outside the Guildhall on 26 August.

Wyatt was born on September 5, 1896, in Britannia Row, Worcester. At the outbreak of the First World War, he left for France on 14 August 1914 as a member of the British Expeditionary Force. During the War, Wyatt risked his life by saving his Battalion from burning farm buildings which were set alight by the Germans during heavy fire. Wyatt then demonstrated his extraordinary courage again, through his continued support of his comrades on the front line despite suffering serious head wounds. Upon receiving the Victoria Cross, Wyatt modestly said, "I just did as I was told." After the war, George Wyatt served with Doncaster Police until his retirement in 1934.

Councillor David Wilkinson said: "I am proud that Worcester has been able to commemorate the courageous actions of a soldier born in Britannia Road. The Victoria Cross is the most prestigious military award and this is an appropriate and important way of marking the bravery of our very own World War One hero."

Frederick Dancox, who served in the ranks of the fourth Battalion Worcestershire regiment, was also awarded the Victoria Cross in 1917 for his courage and dedication to the war effort. The commemoration of a second paving stone to mark Dancox's achievements will take place in 2017.



Worcestershire Branch Countryside Alliance and Worcestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant invite you to a

Service to commemorate the contributions and sacrifices of the horses in WW1



on **Sunday 2nd November 2014 10.30am – 12.30pm**
at **The Three Counties Showground, Malvern**

Please come along on horses, ponies or on foot to be part of this unique event to be led by Rev Phillip Jones

Collection in aid of Armed Forces Charities

For further info:

Audrey Steel 01386 792266 email: panda@broadclosefarm.wanadoo.co.uk

Rob Adams 01905 345223 email: radams@worcestershire.gov.uk



THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF THE BATTLE OF GHELUVELT



**GHELUVELT PARK, BARBOURNE ROAD, WORCESTER WR3 7AA
10AM UNTIL 2PM ON FRIDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2014**

**TO INCLUDE THE OFFICIAL UNVEILING OF A COMMEMORATION
STONE TO THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT.**

- BANDS IN THE PARK
- ARTILLERY GUNS
- DISPLAY STANDS & STALLS
- MUSEUM DISPLAYS

Organised by the Worcester Branch of the Worcestershire & Sherwood Foresters Regimental Association www.wfraworcester.com

Supported by the Worcestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant and Worcestershire County Council.



worcestershire
county council

WORCESTERSHIRE AT WAR EXHIBITION



TheHive

a partnership between



An exhibition to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War opened at the beginning of August at The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester.

The displays include photographs and documents from Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, including scenes at Home and at the Front.

The exhibition has three main themes about Worcestershire and the war:

- gender and home front
- childhood
- cities at war

The exhibition is part-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Voices of War and Peace, First World War Engagement centre and runs until the end of October and is free to visit.

CENTENARY CHORUS

Sing UK is managing a project culminating in a concert in the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday 28 September at 3.00pm.

Their specially-formed 'Centenary Chorus' is made up of 600 young singers from England, France, Germany and Belgium. Of the 600, 300 are from Worcestershire and that's because of the work Sing UK has been doing in the county for the last five years during which time they've created exceptional singing opportunities for hundreds of teenagers from 14 of the county's state secondary schools (10 of those are taking part in their First World War project). These young people will be coming together in a spirit of peace and reconciliation to perform Karl Jenkins's *The Armed Man* - a Mass for Peace with the Philharmonia Orchestra, and to make their own contribution to the centenary commemorations taking place.

Worcestershire is playing an important part in this national and international event and it really is going to be a quite extraordinary and unique concert.

A special feature of the concert is the screening of photo-journalist Mike St. Maur Sheil's 'Fields of Battle - Lands of Peace' exhibition (currently in St. James's Park, London) during the performance of *The Armed Man*. Mike's images are stunning: he has spent the last eight years photographing the battlefields of the First World War - all over the world:

www.fieldsofbattle1418.org. His images show how, over the last 100 years, nature has helped to heal the battlefield landscapes. There is a natural synergy between Mike's work and what Sing UK are setting out to achieve in terms of international collaborative working and demonstrating how the universal language of music brings people and countries, who were once at war, together.

For more information please visit their website where you can find out everything you need to know about the project and concert. www.singuk.org/tam

The Armed Man

a Mass for Peace

Karl Jenkins

Beethoven Symphony No.5

Centenary Chorus

600 young voices from the UK, Germany, France and Belgium
mark the 100th anniversary of the First World War

Philharmonia Orchestra

Conductor: **Malcolm Goldring**

Fields of Battle **14-18** **Lands of Peace**

Photographs from **Mike St Maur Sheil's** stunning
exhibition will be screened during the performance of
The Armed Man. www.fieldsofbattle1418.org

Royal Albert Hall
London

Sunday 3.00pm
28 September 2014

BOX OFFICE: 0845 401 5034 www.royalalberthall.com



sing  UK
singuk.org

philharmonia
orchestra

UPDATE ON ARMY BASING PLAN

In July 2012 the outcome of the Army 2020 Study was announced. It said the Army would be made up of an integrated force of 112,000 personnel; 82,000 Regular soldiers and 30,000 trained Reserve soldiers.



The Army 2020 structure will be made up of a Reaction Force capable of undertaking short notice operational tasks, and an Adaptable Force used for a wide range of tasks including providing HQs and units for ongoing operations, Defence Engagement and homeland resilience. Support to both these forces would be provided by Force Troops with a wide range of capabilities such as artillery, logistics, military intelligence and signals.

18 months ago the Defence Secretary Philip Hammond announced the Regular Army Basing Plan. This sets out the future permanent laydown of the army as it moves back to the UK from Germany and restructures to deliver its future operating model, via the Army 2020 programme.

The Army Basing Plan has transitioned into a delivery Programme and this will affect most areas of the Army as more than 100 units will either relocate, re-role, convert or disband over the next six years. This is a massive undertaking and the Army Basing Team and Headquarters Support Command have the Army lead for implementation of the plan, working jointly with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation within the Army Basing Programme.

On 14 November 2014 our local 143 (WM) Brigade will close and merge with 11th Signal Brigade to form the **11th Signal and West Midlands Brigade**. Our Covenant contacts within the Community Engagement Team will be transferring to the new Brigade so their service will remain unaltered with just a change of title.

CHAMPION FUND RAISERS FOR SSAFA IN WORCESTERSHIRE

For a large number of years now Neil and Meg Spalding from Astwood Bank have opened their garden and house to visitors and arranged for refreshments to be provided, many of the cakes being cooked by Meg herself. They also arrange the sale of a number of different items.

This year for example they had a jewellery stall whose owner donated £100 from her profits and their drawing room was crammed with books.

On average this wonderful couple raise some £800 every year to be used to help give lifelong support for our Forces and their families.

In recognition of their tremendous contribution, they are to be made Honorary Life Members of the Branch.



Col. Tony Ward O.B.E.
Chairman of SSAFA Worcestershire

If you have any feedback or would like to contribute to future issues please contact Worcestershire Partnership Relationship Manager, Alan Smith by email at asmith3@worcestershire.gov.uk or call him on **01905 822836**.

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER FAMILIES PROJECT



Be *involved*
Be a volunteer

Families of ex-Servicemen and women face unique challenges in understanding and dealing with the issues their partners, sons and daughters are going through. They may also have been located in a variety of towns and countries and find it hard to settle into a new community.

The Shoulder to Shoulder Families project supports families across the West Midlands by recruiting and training volunteers to act as mentors to help tackle their isolation and signpost them to services that can help. It's run by the national volunteering charity TimeBank, which has extensive experience of volunteer mentoring.

Through their work supporting veterans on TimeBank's Shoulder to Shoulder Project they've learnt a lot about the frustrations families face in adjusting to civilian life, such as registering for a GP when you have no NHS number, having to choose your clothes after years of being told what to wear, the problems children experience when they have no friends in a new place and how hard it is to go from being called 'Sir' to Mr.

Most military leavers' packs don't provide information for the wider family - they are very much focussed on the Service leaver. That's understandable - but the family can also be leaving their home and all they know, with little support.

TimeBank's Shoulder to Shoulder Families project in the West Midlands recruits and trains volunteers to act as mentors to support ex-Service families. Through one-to-one and group mentoring it aims to provide:

- support, advice and guidance to family members of ex-Service personnel and reservists
- help them integrate into community life, build supportive social networks and give them improved chances and choices
- tackle loneliness by building closer links with the local community
- enable family members to increase their self-esteem, social skills and overall mental well-being.

Shoulder to Shoulder believes this will help to strengthen the family unit and benefit the wider family including parents, grandparents and children.

If you or someone you know could benefit from this unique type of support, take a look at www.timebank.org.uk/shoulder-to-shoulder or get in touch with Laura at laurad@timebank.org.uk or by phoning 0121 236 2531.

If you would like to volunteer as a mentor you can register at: <http://timebank.org.uk/shoulder-to-shoulder/register> or contact Laura to discuss what is involved.

ARMED FORCES DISCOUNT SERVICE CALLS FOR RETAILERS TO SHOW SUPPORT

rewards *for* forces.co.uk

REWARDING THOSE THAT HAVE SERVED OUR COUNTRY



'When we heard that a member of the Armed Forces, who had recently returned from military operations, was denied a discount in a major high street store, but a student in front of him was given one, we knew we had to act'.

Reward for Forces is a national discount scheme that offers serving members of the Forces, Veterans and their families' premium discounts and benefits and they are calling out to retailers up and down the country to get involved. Rewards for Forces was launched with the ethos of giving back to those who deserve these benefits and to say thank you for serving our country. Rewards for Forces recognises that wives and partners are also entitled to claim forces discounts and make savings for the whole family.



Since its 2011 launch, 1000s of companies have signed up to offer unique discounts as a way of giving back. Apple, Virgin Holidays and Merlin Entertainments are all companies on the site that are offering money off but Managing Director Peter Raith (pictured left) wants more retailers to sign up.

He states: "Here are Rewards for Forces we strive to get useful discounts for members of the Forces and their Families. We are lucky to have over 229,000 members who are on the lookout for Forces Friendly stores where they can make savings. With a Rewards for Forces member card, our members can set to save £500-£1000 a year with participating retailers. Our main goal is to change the way our Forces Personnel are treated upon leaving the Forces. In America, the Forces are treated with such respect and almost every shop offers money off to them. This is what we at Rewards for Forces are looking to achieve".

Rewards for Forces are calling out to businesses large and small to get involved in offering discounts to the Armed Forces. Their website is free to join and all members can access the online discounts where codes can be entered at the checkout to redeem savings. There is also an option for members to purchase a Rewards for Forces membership card that is recognised at participating retailers throughout the UK. This means that Veterans, who have no ID upon leaving the Forces can present their Rewards for Forces card and redeem the offer on the high street. With the number of Veterans in the UK set to rise of the next few years, it is no wonder businesses want to tap into this market and show their support.

If you are interested in taking part and becoming a Forces Friendly store, please contact Rewards for Forces on 01604 647770 or email simon@rewardsforforces.co.uk.

WE DESERVE IT!

We believe that when one person serves, the whole family serves.



rewards *for* **forces**.co.uk

REWARDING THOSE THAT HAVE SERVED OUR COUNTRY

