



Salisbury Military History Society

March 2020 eNewsletter

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

Hopefully this finds you all fit and well.

Last week's declaration by the World Health Organisation that Covid-19 is now a Global pandemic will have ongoing ramifications that will obviously affect us all for some time.

CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19:

As you'd expect, the Committee has followed news of the evolving Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic closely, particularly with regard to holding our monthly meeting next Wednesday. The Prime Minister has set out a number of social distancing measures aimed to reduce the risk of infection from the spread of the coronavirus, implemented with immediate effect.

With this in mind, the decision has been made to postpone all of our talks for the foreseeable future. St John's Place has also, temporarily, ceased hosting clubs and societies.

The Spanish Civil War talk, which should have taken place on 25th March, will now be rescheduled for another date hopefully, in the not too distant future.

Please be assured that we are determined to re-start our monthly talks as soon as the situation allows, and we will update you as soon as we have any further information.

On Wednesday 26th February Professor Jeremy Black addressed the question:



“Could the British have won the American War of Independence?”

For those in attendance, a treat was in store, as Jeremy took us on a journey through the war and the numerous missed opportunities for outright victory on both sides.

A fascinating aspect was the expertise of the British when conducting seaborne invasions and the strength of the British Naval presence in the area with numerous secure harbours such as those in Jamaica and Halifax. All of this meant that re-supply was never really a problem for the British whereas the Colonists suffered with major problems throughout the conflict.

Another aspect was the lack of the use of Cavalry in the conflict. The Colonists rode to battle but then dismounted to fight. The British couldn't ship their horses to America as they would not survive the lengthy ocean crossing. This allowed for looser engagements, as there was no need to be in such close proximity as was normally needed to enable troops to be able to swiftly form defensive 'Squares'. It mainly disadvantaged the British as the lack of Cavalry allowed the Colonists to break, fall-back and re-form without the fear of slaughter by Cavalry sabre on breaking formation.

Having presented all the various threads Jeremy concluded that, yes, the British could have possibly have won the war against the Colonists but they certainly won the peace. The Peace Treaty left the Colonists main ally, France, isolated and seriously politically and financially weakened by the conflict and in many ways laid some of the seeds of the French Revolution of 1789.

A wonderful talk and a privilege to welcome such an accomplished speaker to address us.

Parish Notices

Saturday 4th April 2020: Please note that our visit to [The Infantry and Small Arms School Corps Weapons Collection](#) at Waterloo Lines, Warminster has been **cancelled** due to recent events.

Saturday 9th May 2020: (Again, to be confirmed) **Overlord Wargame with Major General John Drewienkiewicz** (AKA 'John DZ')
At February's meeting a show of hands indicated a good level of support for this event but unfortunately, not all of those who indicated an interest actually gave their names to Sandy or Alex, our joint Event Officers. At present we have 6 members expressing an interest in taking part, should you wish to add your name to the list please contact us via the website.

Saturday 6th June 2020: The 42nd Annual World Ship Society (WSS) Naval Meeting to be held in Bristol has been postponed. We await a new date potentially in late-October/early-November.
[Read more](#)

Future dates for your diary:

Wednesday 22nd April: Reflections on the First World War - [Brig. Alan Mallinson](#)

Wednesday 27th May: Victory in Burma – Lt. Col. Mike Tickner

Wednesday 24th June: Seapower States: Culture, Identity and Strategy - [Prof. Andrew Lambert](#)

Wednesday 23rd Sept: The Battle of Britain - [Col. Paul Beaver](#)

Military History News:

Book review – Charles XI's War: The Scanian War Between Sweden and Denmark, 1675-1679

Michael Fredholm von Essen's recent book on a war relatively unknown in the English-speaking world sets the scene well, introducing the opposing kings and their forces before recounting the origins and detailing the actions. For those interested in the politics and conflicts on late-Seventeenth Century northern Europe, this book offers valuable context. [Read more](#)

The National Archives Just Digitized Hundreds of World War I-Era Military Films

The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration has digitized hundreds of old film reels shot between 1914 and 1936. In addition to coverage of events on the home front are scenes shot by British, German and Italian troops on the front lines. [Read more](#)

Book Review – Emperor's Own: Ethiopians in the Korean War

After the failure of the League of Nations saw Italy invade Abyssinia (modern Ethiopia) in 1936, the Ethiopian Emperor was keen to fight for the United Nation's principle of collective security at the outbreak of war in Korea. In all, Ethiopia raised four specially trained battalions to serve with the U.S 7th Infantry Division. [Read more](#)

20 War Movies Officially Ranked From Least To Most Accurate

This article focuses more on blockbuster movies released in the last two decades than the classics, but does offer insight most likely shared by many of our members. [Read more](#)

Current and forthcoming events in Salisbury (and around Wiltshire and across the SW)

Temporary exhibition: "WW1", Fordingbridge Museum ([click here](#))

15th Feb to 28th Nov – “Dunkirk”, The Rifles Berkshire & Wiltshire Museum at The Wardrobe, Salisbury ([click here](#))

19th Mar – “Formation of the Rifle Corps in the Context of Changes in the British Army and the Development of the Light Infantry”, Royal Green Jackets Museum, Winchester ([click here](#))

19th Mar – “The Great War in Africa”, Royal Green Jackets Museum, Winchester ([click here](#))

25th Mar – “656 Sqn talk part 1 - Formation and the Far East”, Army Flying Museum, Middle Wallop ([click here](#))

26th Mar – “Western Front Logistics” and “The Arras Counter-Attack, 1940”, Wessex Military History Group, The Keep, Dorchester (email jameskrporter@aol.com)

28th Mar – “Devizes Castle - Norman Stronghold to Victorian Folly”, Wiltshire Museum, Devizes ([click here](#))

8th Apr – “‘Wonderful Things’: The Archaeology of the Army Basing Programme in the Stonehenge landscape”, Wessex Archaeology (South), Salisbury ([click here](#))

21st Apr – “‘I learned about flying from that’ - mistakes and mishaps in the air”, Boscombe Down Aviation Collection, Salisbury ([click here](#))

22nd Apr – “656 Sqn talk part 2 - Reformation back in UK with operations in Rhodesia, the Falklands and Bosnia/Kosovo”, Army Flying Museum, Middle Wallop ([click here](#))

30th Apr – “The Air War in Burma Campaign”, Wessex Military History Group, The Keep, Dorchester (email jameskrporter@aol.com)

Don't forget, Ray Wilkinson's talk on 25th March, “**British Volunteers and the Spanish Civil War**” has been cancelled due to the Coronavirus.

Hope to see you there!

Kind regards,

Keith Rigden
Membership Secretary

Dave Simons
Marketing Officer

Useful links:

Website - <https://salisburymilhist.com>

Email - SalisburyMilHist@gmail.com

Facebook - [SalisburyMilHist](#)

Twitter - [SalisburyMHS](#)

Who's who:

Joint Chairman & Speaker Secretary: Alan Rooney

Joint Chair: Bob Kershaw

Treasurer: John Loades

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Secretary: Andy Sharpe

Membership Secretary: Keith Rigden

Joint Events Officer: Alex Howie

Joint Events Officer: Sandy Forrest

