



Salisbury Military History Society

October 2021 eNewsletter

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

Parish Notices

Wed 27th Oct: 'The RNAS Armoured Car Expeditionary Force on the Eastern Front, 1915-17' with Alan Wakefield

In 1914 the Royal Navy's Armoured Car Section was deployed to the continent to perform communications and aircrew rescue roles. As the war descended into sodden trench warfare though, the newly re-badged Armoured Car Expeditionary Force set sail for Archangel for a new mission on the Eastern Front. Next week the Imperial War Museum's Alan Wakefield will tell us their story. [Read more](#)

For full members, entry is included in the 2019/20 membership fees already submitted. For non-members, entry is £10 on the door. We hope to be able to accept card payments at the front desk from this meeting onwards.

Upcoming talks

Wednesday 24th November - 'The Changing of the Guard' with Simon Akam

Wednesday 26th January - 'The Light Division in the Peninsular War' with Tim Saunders

Wednesday 23rd February - 'The Bruneval Raid, 1942' with Paul Oldfield

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

Flyers

Now more people are visiting the city centre and other community hubs, we will recommence producing flyers for our talks and we'd welcome any members taking these away for posting or distribution.

Review: Wed 22nd Sept: 'British Volunteers and the Spanish Civil War' with Ray Wilkinson

Surprising to many, I'm sure, was the fact that it was MI6 that flew General Franco from the Canary Islands to Morocco to take command of the Army of Africa in support of the Nationalist cause. And so began Ray Wilkinson's fascinating talk revealing little-known facts and the war's far-reaching consequences for Europe. We know of the Luftwaffe's involvement, but heard too of Barcelona's bombings by Italy and how the Soviets provided planes and tanks but were geographically inhibited from greater involvement in support of the Republicans. Franco's greatest strength was in his impressive ability to form a cohesive fighting force from the battle-hardened Army of Africa and Spanish Foreign Legion along with the Carlists and Fascists. However, our focus was on the British volunteers of which all but a dozen joined the International Brigades of the Republicans. These weren't unemployed fantasists. We saw how 30% came from construction and manufacturing, 20% from transport and 20% from other trades. Upon their return they were greeted by thousands in the streets of London, Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester.

Ray Wilkinson's recommendations for further reading:

'The Spanish Civil War' by Hugh Thomas

'British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War' by Richard Baxell

'Unlikely Warriors' by Richard Baxell

'Franco's International Brigades' by Christopher Othen

Annual General Meeting and 2022 membership

The Committee invites full members to the AGM on Wednesday 26th January 2022. More details will follow in due course, but motions will include the moving of the membership year from September-to-August to January-to-December, and enhancing the £45 annual subscription to include 10 talks (January to October) plus the AGM event in November.

Military History News

Swindon WW1 soldier finally receives headstone - 107 years after his death

In 1914 L/Cpl William Nurden was struck and killed by a train near Newton Toney station and was buried in Radnor Street Cemetery in Swindon. However, his was an unmarked grave that was discovered by volunteers from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and thus began a campaign to identify and commemorate properly this veteran of the Wiltshire National Reserve. Now – 107 years later – L/Cpl Nurden has an official headstone. [Read more](#)

Why the Royal Air Force Burns Pianos Every Year

Perhaps the airmen among us can verify American publication *Military.com's* suggestions as to the reason the RAF burns an upright piano every year. Is it because newly-qualified pilots eagerly destroyed the instrument they'd had to learn to demonstrate their gentlemanliness, or is it to commemorate fallen comrades? [Read more](#)

Other articles

[The 4 goofiest tactics in military history \(that actually worked\)](#)

[The ancient Greeks at war: hoplites, the phalanx and the greatest battles](#)

[Sparta Was Much More Than an Army of Super Warriors](#)

[Poignant sketches drawn by medic who treated hundreds of wounded Tommies at Battle of Somme go up for auction](#)

[Only Two Submarines have Sunk Ships since 1945, here are their stories](#)

[Army Museums Ogilby Trust \(AMOT\) Annual Review 2020-2021](#)

Local events, online talks and podcasts

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

As societies, clubs and other groups return to in-person meetings, we'll be phasing out the online talks section of the eNewsletter. For now though, 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.

[Classic Battlefield Tours](#)

Next talk: 'Malta's Second Great Siege, 1940-43' (Friday 22nd October)

[Western Front Association](#)

Next talk: 'Ill Met by Moonlight: British and German raiders clash in the outpost war' (Monday 25th October)

[Wessex Military History Group](#)

Next talk: 'Isandlwana, 1879' (Wednesday 27th October) - £5, email jameskrporter@aol.com

[British Modern Military History Society](#)

Next talk: 'The Role of NCOs in the British and Dominion Armies' (Tuesday 2nd November)

[The Manchester Military History Society](#)

Next talk: 'Lepanto - Naval Engagement 7 October 1571' (Tuesday 9th November)

[Old Front Line](#)

A weekly 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 welcoming more of you back to 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:

Joint Chairman & Speaker Secretary: Alan Rooney

Joint Chair: Bob Kershaw

Treasurer: John Loades

Secretary & Bookstall Co-ordinator: Andy Sharpe

Membership Secretary: Keith Rigden

Marketing Officer: Dave Simons

Joint Events Officer: Alex Howie

Joint Events Officer: Sandy Forrest