



Newbury U3A Military History Group

At each monthly meeting we normally have a couple of presentations given by members of the Group. People talk on subjects which interest them, and within the Group we have a wide and eclectic range of interests.

Subjects covered at meetings have included:



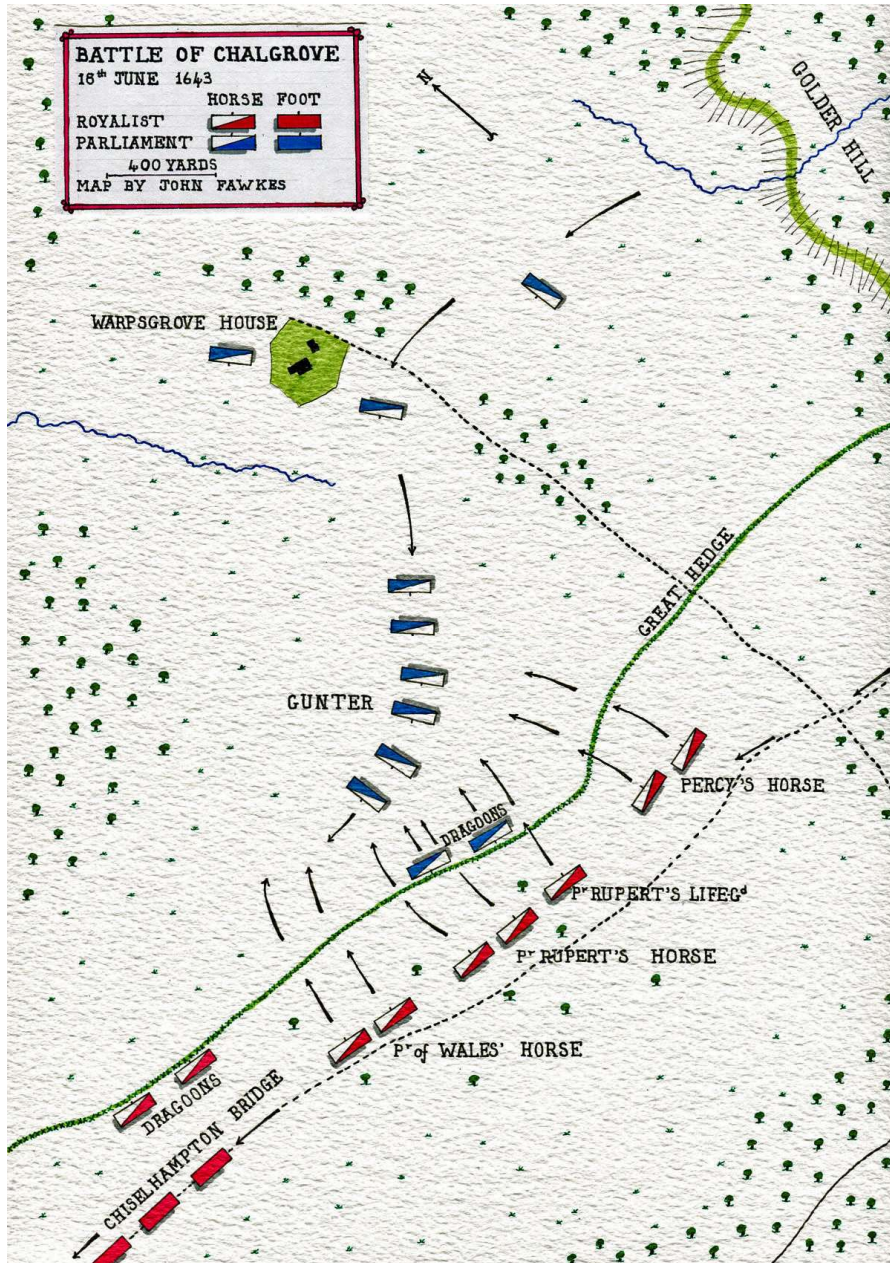
Ancient warfare is always an interesting topic. There is so much to discover as the period itself is vast. Plus the history is blended in with the mythology, literature and tales of our youth.



British Battles You've Probably Never Heard Of

The Battle of Ancrum Moor 27th February 1545

Part of 'The Rough Wooing', one of the Anglo-Scottish wars of the 16th Century when Henry VIII attacked Scotland partly to force the Scottish Parliament to agree to the planned marriage between Edward, who was six years old at the start of the war, and the infant queen, Mary Queen of Scots, thereby creating a new alliance between Scotland and England.



**Local Battles You've
Might Not Be Aware of**

The Battle of Chalgrove Field 18th June 1643

A Royalist victory during the English Civil War known for the hard fighting around a hedgerow and the death of the Parliamentarian John Hampden.

REF: MAP SHEETS 21 & 31. & 3
SCALE: 1:250,000

POSSIBLE
DETOURS -----
CANALS -----
L - LENGTH OF DR
IN FT
R - WIDTH OF RD
IN FT



(A) RD ON BANK WITH
DITCHES EITHER SIDE
MT EXITS BY EXISTING TRACKS
ORCHARDS PASTURE & ARABLE
LAND MOSTLY VERY LOW
LYING.

(D) ND ON BANK. DITCHES BOTH SIDES. MAINLY PASTURE ARABLE WITH DRAINAGE DITCHES AND A FEW TREES.

© DITCHES BOTH SIDES OF
RD. MAINLY PASTURE
WITH DRAINAGE DITCHES.
FEW ORCHARDS.

(D) P.D. ON BANK. DITCHES
ON EITHER SIDE. LIMITED
DEPLOYMENT POSSIBLE FROM
P.D. ALONG EXISTING
TRACKS ONLY.

(E) DITCHES BOTH SIDES OF
A.D. DEPLOYMENT
PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE.
SMALL FIELDS, NUMEROUS
HEDGES & DITCHES.

(F) GOOD BY-PASS NOT
SHOWN ON 1:100,000
MAP.
BA CLASS. 28 - 40

③ DITCHES ON BOTH SIDES OF
R.D. EMBANKED IN PLACES MT
EXITS BY EXISTING TRACKS
COUNTRY MAINLY PASTURE &
ARABLE DIVIDED BY DITCHES
DEPLOYMENT POSSIBLE BUT
GREAT DANGER OF BOGGING

(H) DITCHES EITHER SIDE OF RD
MT EXITS ONLY ALONG EXISTING
TRACKS. COUNTRY MOSTLY WOODS
OR PASTURELAND INTERSECTED
BY DRAINAGE DITCHES.

Battles That You Will Have Heard Of

Operation Market Garden 1944

We looked at the intelligence behind the decisions that led to Operation Market Garden and some of the 'myths' that have developed over the years.



Wars That You've Probably Never Heard Of

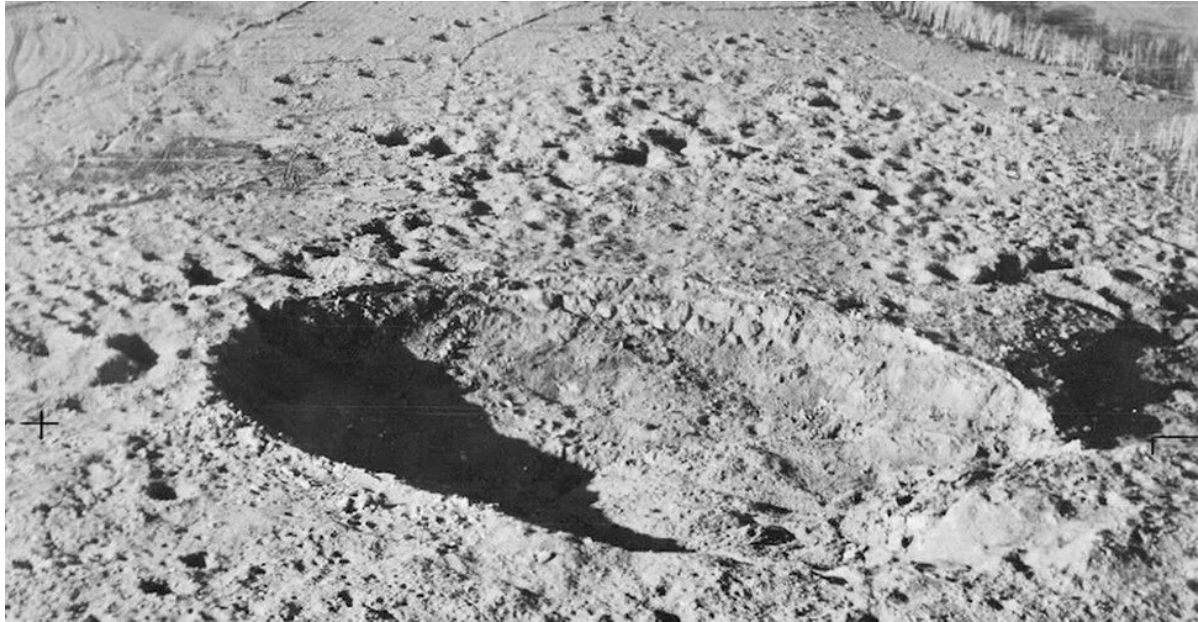
The Sonderbund War of 1847 in Switzerland

The Sonderbund War of November 1847 was a civil war in Switzerland, then still a relatively loose confederacy of cantons. It ensued after seven Catholic cantons formed the Sonderbund ("separate alliance") in 1845 to protect their interests against a centralization of power. The war concluded with the defeat of the Sonderbund. It resulted in the emergence of Switzerland as a federal state.

Armies You've Probably Never Heard Of



As it says, how many of us could identify even one of these armies from the flags or even name the armies involved in the Russian Civil War, other than the Russian and White armies.



Places You've Probably Never Heard of

RAF Fauld Explosion 27th November 1944

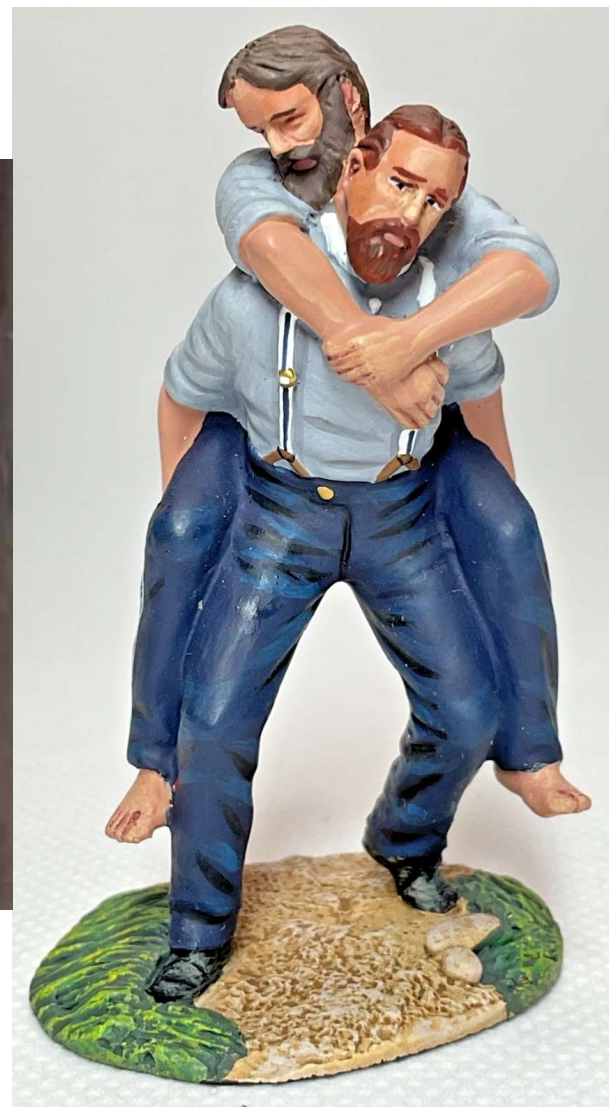
The blast, which was one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history, detonated 3,500 to 4,000 tons of explosives at an ammunition dump in Staffordshire. An estimated 70 people died including RAF personnel and Italian POWs working on the site

The explosion created the Hanbury Crater

National Memorial Arboretum



Visits to interesting places with a military connection
are always worth a discussion and picture or two.



Rorke's Drift VC – Immortalised in Film and Metal

Private William Jones

2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment of Foot (later became the
South Wales Borderers)

William, an ancestor of one of our members, won the
VC at Rorke's Drift on the 23rd January 1879. He has
been immortalised in the media of the time, film (Zulu)
and recently in the production by Britains of a model
figure.

Family History



Thomas Wren

Grandfather to one of our members. Enlisted in the East Surrey Regiment in 1911, fought at Mons and killed in action on the 10th November 1914



Individual Events

One of our members, with a comrade, honouring L/Cpl Fred Greenhalgh of the 2nd Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry; the first Allied serviceman to die on D-Day, 6th June 1944, when his glider crashed on landing at Pegasus Bridge.



History in the Local Landscape

Anti-tank/vehicle blocks on the Kennet and Avon
Canal near Great Bedwyn

What are they ?



Any ideas, because after a number of discussions we still don't understand the real function of the building at the top, in Hermitage, or the function of the object at the bottom, in Papua New Guinea.

Any answers welcome, though please don't say air raid shelter or ammunition store for the building.



Simple Weapons

Caltrops

Used from before the Roman period through to the current day (Vietnam etc.). Dropped on paths and roads to injure troops and horses' feet and latterly bicycle and vehicle tyres. They impede and as a result slow the movement of troops and supplies.



Complex Weapons - where Is The Bow ?

There is no bow, it's a circular warship

Designed by Admiral Andrei Popov for the Imperial
Russian Navy as a coast-defence ironclad

.

It was built, commissioned and operated, relatively
unsuccessfully, between 1876-1903

**‘Mythical’
Troops that
were Real**



A Polish Winged Hussar

The Polish winged hussars, were an elite heavy cavalry formation active in Poland and in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from 1503 to 1702. Their epithet is derived from large rear wings, which were intended to demoralize the enemy during a charge. The hussars ranked as the elite of Polish cavalry until their official disbanding in 1776.



Characters That Were Real



Vlad III (1428/31 – 1476/77), commonly known as Vlad the Impaler or Vlad Dracula was Voivode of Wallachia three times between 1448 and his death. He is regarded as a Christian hero in Romania due to his opposition to the Ottoman Empire and he is considered an important ruler in Wallachian history.

Not Colonel Blimp but Lt Col Stewart Blacker the inventor of a number of weapons during WW1 and WW2 including the Blacker Bombard.



Inspiration for Science Fiction?

The Riout102T Alerion Ornithopter
Built in France in 1937

Inspiration for many science fiction books and films
e.g. probably the ornithoptors in Dune and the
gyrocopters in the His Dark Materials books.



The Shortest War ?

Anglo-Zanzibar War 27th August 1896

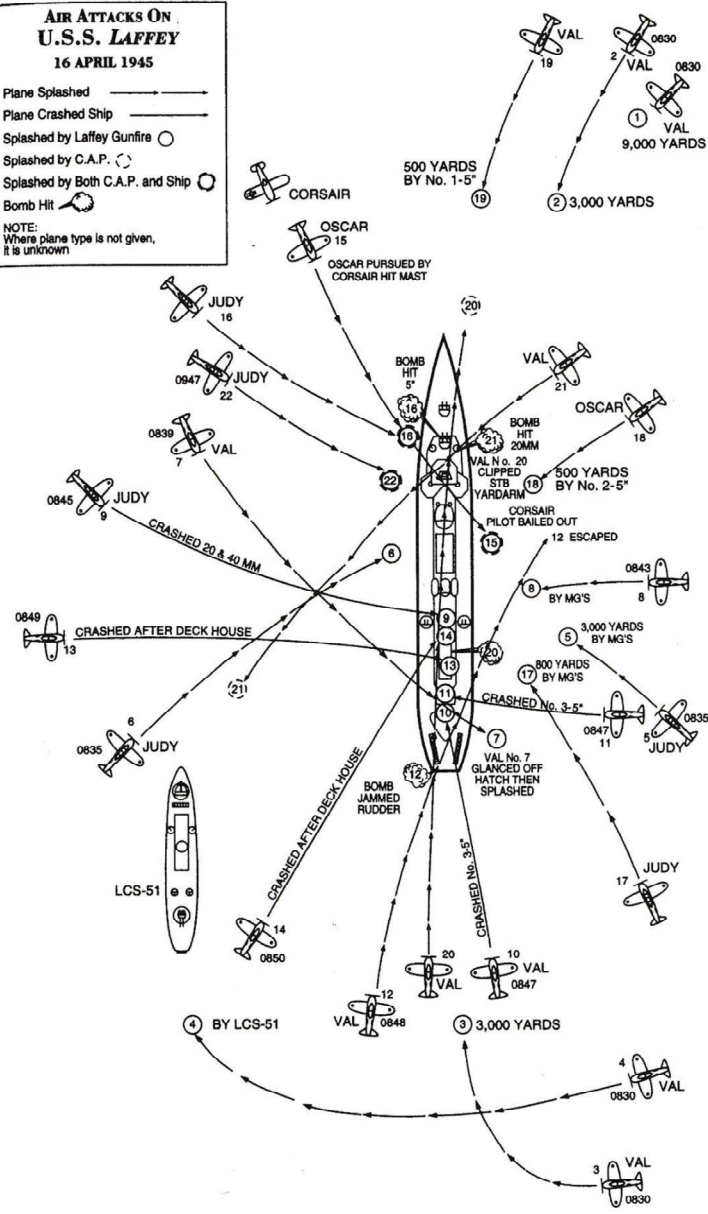
It lasted for just 38 to 45 minutes (sources vary), almost as long as the presentation that we had on it.

We Love Maps



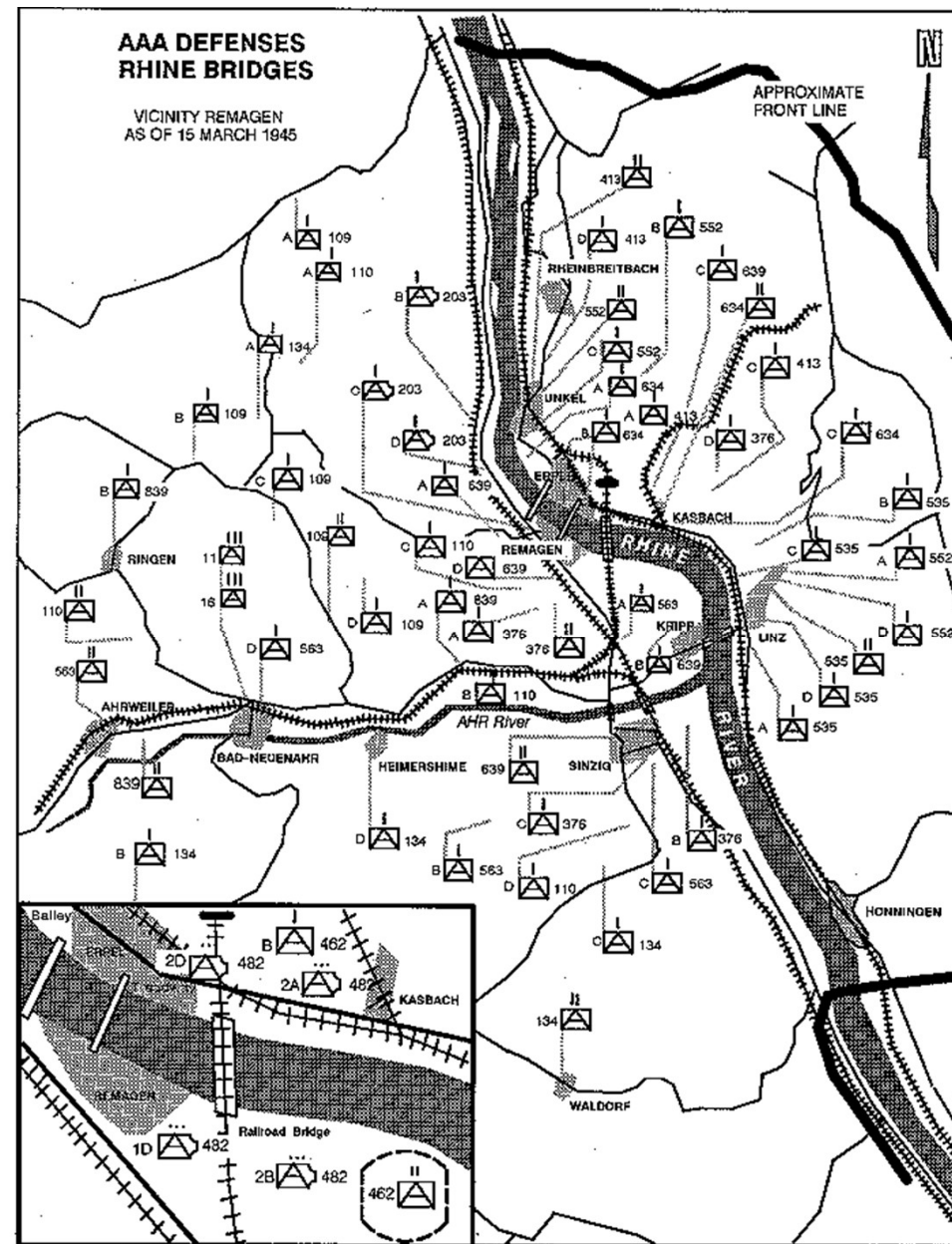
Who can understand the conflicts in Greece in the 3rd
Century BC without having a look at a map?

Plane Splashed
Plane Crashed Ship
Splashed by Laffey Gunfire
Splashed by C.A.P.
Splashed by Both C.A.P. and Ship
Bomb Hit
NOTE:
Where plane type is not given,
it is unknown



Tactical Plans and Maps

VICINITY REMAGEN
AS OF 15 MARCH 1945



Most presentations are extensively illustrated and often feature detailed tactical representations and maps such as the attack on the USS Laffey in April 1945 and the AA defences at Remagen in March 1945.



Heroic Actions

General Redvers Buller VC

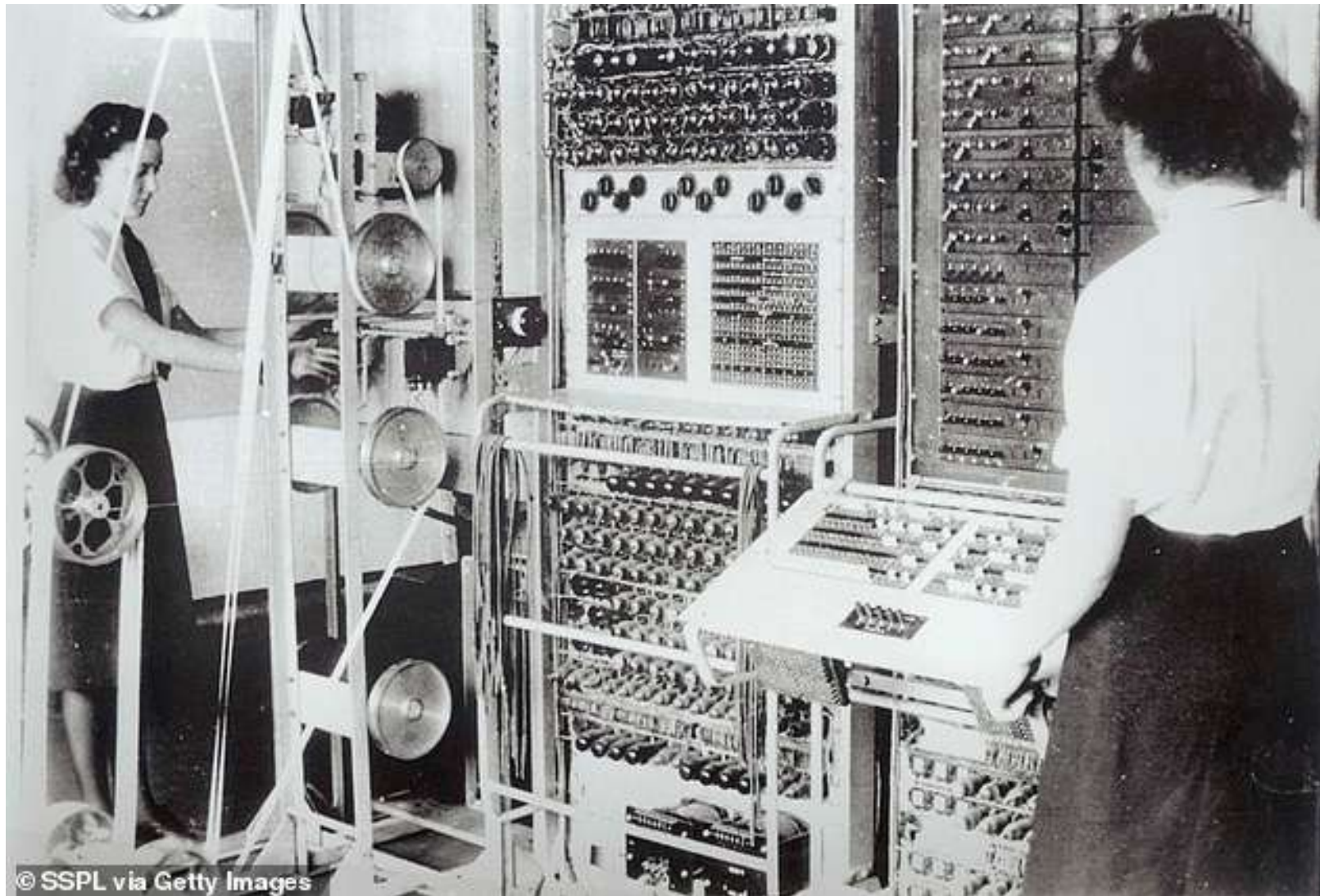
His VC citation, for actions during the Battle of Hlobane, reads:

For his gallant conduct at the retreat at Inhlobana, on the 28th March, 1879, in having assisted, whilst hotly pursued by Zulus, in rescuing Captain C. D'Arcy, of the Frontier Light Horse, who was retiring on foot, and carrying him on his horse until he overtook the rear guard. Also for having on the same date and under the same circumstances, conveyed Lieutenant C. Everitt, of the Frontier Light Horse, whose horse had been killed under him, to a place of safety. Later on, Colonel Buller, in the same manner, saved a trooper of the Frontier Light Horse, whose horse was completely exhausted, and who otherwise would have been killed by the Zulus, who were within 80 yards of him.



Espionage

We've had two presentations from a man whose father was involved 'behind the lines' in both France and Burma.



© SSPL via Getty Images

Intelligence

One of our members had a grandfather and father involved in Intelligence in the First World War and Second World War respectively.

Room 40 (Admiralty Intelligence) and Bletchley Park code breaking.



Art and War ?

Unfinished 10” bronze mortar found in 1838 in Kurnaul
(Karnal) Fort, India. Now on display at Fort Nelson,
Hampshire.



**The
Home
Front**

The Home Front During World War Two

Of a number of village groups that were organised to produce sub-assemblies required in quantity, the smallest was that which Mr. and Mrs. Bertram Hale, retired from a busy life in the Far East, operated producing electrical parts for aircraft in a garden shed beside their shelter at “Fung-shui”, Old Welwyn, Hertfordshire.

Core Definition of ??????????

- ?????????? is the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the design, acquisition, procurement, trialling, movement, storage, maintenance, repair and disposal of goods, services, and information from origin to consumption.
- It ensures that the right product reaches the right customer, in right place at the right time, in the right quantity and right condition and at the right price. (The Seven Rs)

Which of the Principles of War is this?

Logistics!

Logistics!

Logistics!

Logistics!

Logistics!

Logistics!

Logistics!

Famous Air Raids



German air raid on Bari, Italy

This occurred on the 2nd December 1943 where air attacks sank a number of Allied ships including the SS John Harvey whose cargo included mustard gas bombs.

This was a major set-back for Allied operations in Italy and a disaster that was kept secret during wartime.

But the subsequent treatment of mustard gas cases led to significant breakthroughs in the realm of chemotherapy treatments.

Operational Use of Obscure Aircraft



This is the Messerschmitt Me.323 Gigant a true giant of the skies during World War Two. Converted from the Me.321 glider into a hefty transport aircraft used on the North African, Italian and Eastern fronts.

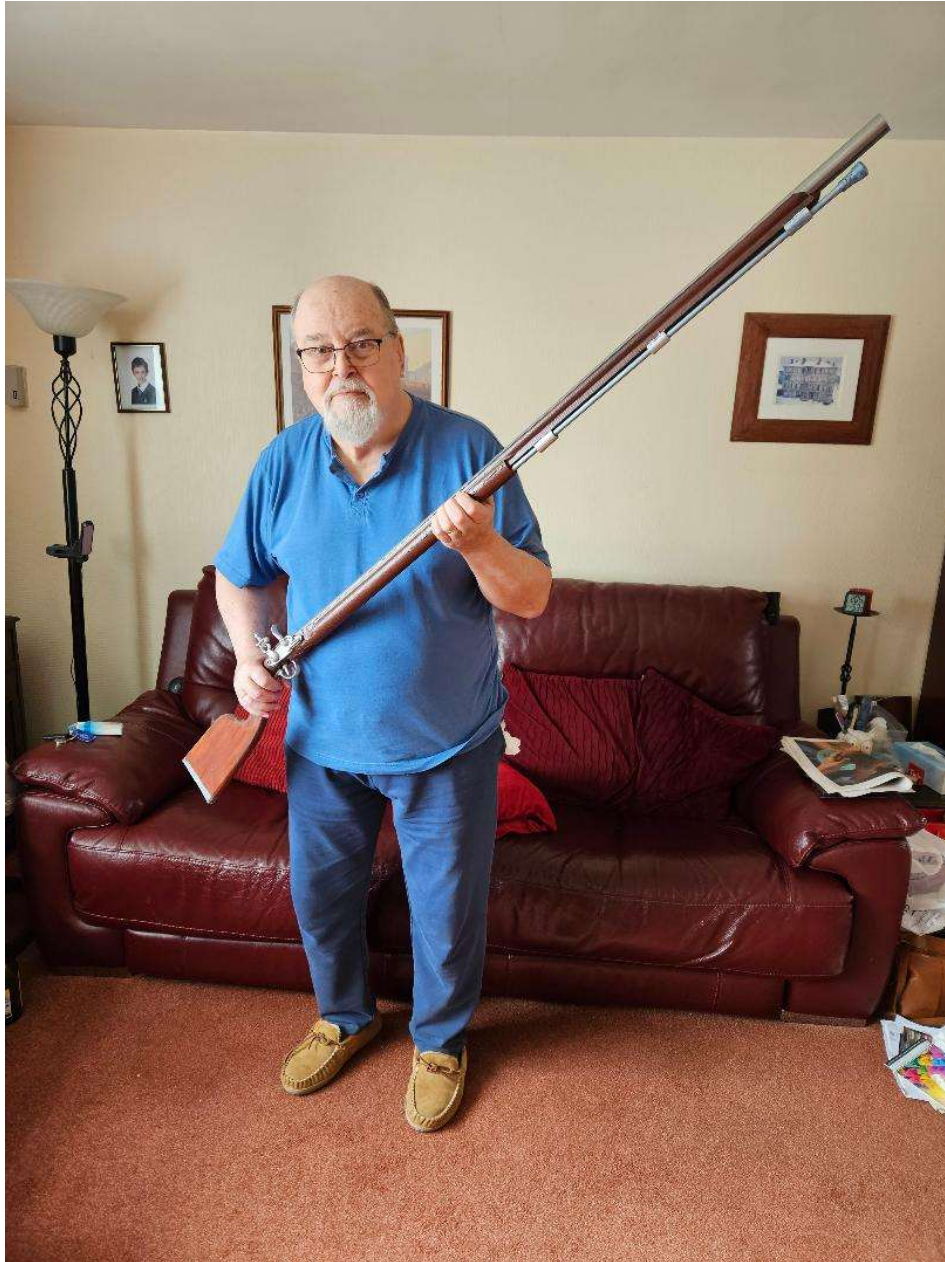


What is Going on Here ?

Ever Heard of War Pigs?

War pigs are reported to have been used in ancient warfare mostly as a countermeasure against war elephants.

Historical accounts of flaming pigs were recorded by Greek military writers who reported that the siege of Megara in 266 BC was broken when the Megarians doused some pigs with combustible pitch, set them alight, and drove them towards the massed Macedonian war elephants. The elephants bolted in terror from the flaming, squealing pigs, killing great numbers of Macedonian soldiers by trampling them to death.



Real or Replica ?

Replica of course, made by one of our members to demonstrate how to load, fire and reload a flintlock musket.



Which is the Claymore?



Sorry, trick question, the answer is that two are claymores.

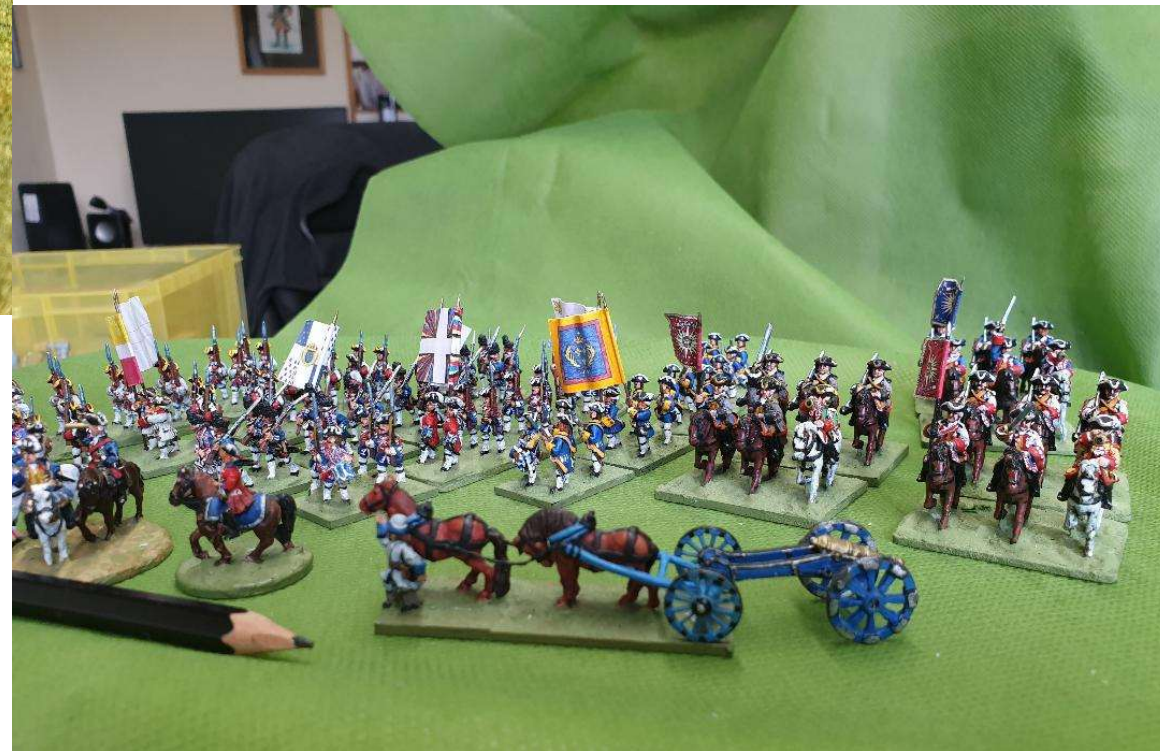
The sword on the top left is a Highland claymore. It is distinguished by its openwork quatrefoil design at the end of the crossguard arms, quillions, which slant toward the blade

The sword along the bottom is a Lowland sword. It is characterized by its long, slender, straight crossguards with sharp downturned ends, along with ring-guards on both sides

The item in the top right is a claymore mine dating from the Vietnam War.



Minatures!



Model building and wargaming are hobbies of some of the group.



Visits

We've made informal trips to a variety of small and big museums including Woodley Aviation Museum, Fort Nelson, the Boscombe Down Aviation Collection and Solent Sky.



What do these mean ?

Foot tattoos of pigs and roosters were worn by sailors in World war Two in the hope it would keep the sailor from drowning. The Navy shipped these animals in crates at the time. When ships went down, the crates floated, and the animals inside would sometimes be the only survivors.

And we have plenty more to cover, including over the coming year:

- The Battles of Newbury during the English Civil War
- The Battle of Trafalgar from a Logistics viewpoint
- The development of the Zeppelin
- Newbury and aircraft production
- The Falklands War 1982