



Battledress Times

The General Newsletter of the Herts at War Project

Comments & copy to (jontywild@hertsatwar.co.uk)

August 2023

Busy, busy, busy!

Loads to tell you about and here we will update you on talks, research, tours, new web content and Archive progress and more.

In this newsletter you will find:

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Monthly Talks

It is good to be back, and that is thanks to Paul Johnson who has taken on the role of booking the speakers, and Andy, Stuart and Tim who are helping with the venue and organisation on the night. etc.

Also thank you to all of you who have helped us get going again. We are regularly getting well over 50 people and look forward to seeing many more as we tempt you with more great speakers.

As we have explained previously, our costs have gone up as we now have to pay for the venue and the cost of providing the complementary drink has

risen. So it is gratifying that you have responded and the average donation has gone up the £5 to £6 per person we need to cover our costs. It would be great, if firstly we can build up funds to enable us to tempt speakers from further afield who need more for expenses and then to start contributing to the costs of running the HAW Project. Obviously, growing the audience will help, so if you know of people who might be interested in our talks and what we do, please persuade them to come along and to sign up to our mailing list via www.hertsatwar.co.uk/get-emails - *maybe send them a copy of this newsletter?*

24-Aug-23	Ian Castle	Zeppelins	21-Dec-23	Doug Kirby	A Harpenden Soldier of the Great War
21-Sep-23	Jim Nicholson	Nicholson - The Battle of Britain VC	15-Feb-24	Geoff Cunnington	Royal Navy - Sailors Lives in the First World War
19-Oct-23	Guy Thomas	London Colney Airfield	20-Jun-24	Helen Fry	Women In Intelligence - MI9
16-Nov-23	Steve Chambers	Mapping the Old Front Line			

Remember:

- **Full details** via emails and www.hertsatwar.co.uk/events
- **Cost?** FREE, but if you enjoy them, cash donations are encouraged (we are looking into a card machine to make donations easier).
- **When?** Third Thursday of each month, 7pm for a prompt 7:30pm start.
- **Where?** Welwyn Civic Centre, Prospect Place, Welwyn (Old) AL6 9ER. Car parking is also free.

We are always on the look out for subjects and recommendations for good speakers.

Website & Archive News

Website: Work is being done in the background to make the website better for users, researchers and administrators, e.g. improved search facilities, allowing more photographs to be added to biographies, new location memorials pages and better handling of photograph galleries, videos and sound clips and more comprehensive export facilities.

Website Archive: If you haven't visited for a while then I recommend you do so. Over the last couple of months new sections have been added, along with masses of information and books. Some personal recommendations from me are:

- [Second Lieutenant O F Baerlin \(MC\)'s diary](#) - a diary covering 4/8/1914 to 19/11/1918 from the unique perspective of the Army Service Corps



- The handwritten RAF training notes of [138358 W A Seymour "1" Flight, A Squadron, Bristol](#).
- The [Michelin Period Guidebooks](#)
- The personal recollections of [Arthur George Austin](#) as told to his very young grandson
- New content relating to the [Herts Regiment at St Julian - 31/7/1917](#) - also see a new BGVT video on the subject, more details below - and have you listened to the special song written about this day? - bottom of this [website page](#).

Tour News

Our "The Hindenburg Line Battlefield Tour" in association with Herts Constabulary Great War Society (HCGWS) is going ahead soon (Sept 8) and I am really looking forward to it. We have a good number going, of which 6 members have taken advantage of the members discount ([membership details here](#)). I look forward to meeting all the HAW people who are going as well as my fronds from the HCGWS. If you not going then I think you will miss a great tour, but all is not lost! . . . *We are already starting to think about a 2024.*

It is likely to be September/October, we will keep the costs down as far as possible and the subject has yet to be decided. So now's your chance, any suggestions for a tour? Also, we want to gauge interest, so if you **might** be interested, in principle (*absolutely no commitment at this stage*), do please let us know, along with any thoughts and suggestions. We will be asking at the talks as well, so please put your hands up and let us have your emails addresses - *absolutely no commitment!* - and we will keep you informed of dates and progress so you can decide later.

Research News & Stats - Progress Since December 2022

In the last 8 months I have received 3284 new or amended biographies to be approved and there are still a some in my inbox to look at. Of course this reflects the entire range of submissions, e.g. from brand new names with full biographies to minor changes and corrections.

War dead stats: We have increased the number of unique biographies on the website for the Hertfordshire war dead by 78 - *this might seem a small number, but remember as we progress fewer 'new' names will be found and more duplicated entries will be combined, so I regard this as a measure of good progress.*

So we now have 12,619 biographies, there will still be some duplication of entries, but we have been working hard to remove these, so I believe now there are relatively few.

Survivor stats: There are now 882 survivor biographies (previously 786). Obviously this is a very low number, but given that these are not our main priority and that we usually rely on someone (e.g. a relative) to provide these it is not really too bad.

All credit and thanks go to our small band of dedicated and tenacious researchers - *you know who you are*. You are welcome to join them with any level of experience, from none (*all help need will be given*) to highly experienced researchers and from full research to "adding a bit" where something is missing (e.g. medals) or photographing memorials - contact jontywild@hertsatwar.co.uk for information/discussion without commitment.

Volunteering

We always need researchers and photographers to carry on our work, please think about helping with whatever time you might have available and in any capacity - lots of information can be found at www.hertsatwar.co.uk/research, but this may seem complicated - it really isn't so don't be put you off, we can help and you can start off with very simple work if you want.

Other items of Interest?

Dan Hill's "Battle Guide Virtual Tours" has now gone completely free to view and I recommend you to the content at www.youtube.com/@BattleGuideVT - and especially to the newly released story of the Herts Regiment on 31/7/1917 - [Disaster at Passchendaele](#). I think that it is fair to say that this amazing delivery of history was born out of the online talks started during COVID and the quality is really impressive and there really is something for everyone there.



Jonty Wild