



The Society for Army Historical Research

Registered Charity No. 247844

www.sahr.org.uk

NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2025

Newsletter Editor: Peter Swabey secretary@sahr.org.uk

TEMPLER MEDAL AND CHAPPLE PRIZE

Prof. Ian F.W. Beckett, Templer Medal Sub-Committee Chair

Entries are welcomed for the 2025 competition for the best book and best first book on British military history (broadly defined) published in the calendar year 1 January to 31 December 2025.

Jointly sponsored by the Society and the National Army Museum, the Templer Medal and £2,000 will be awarded to the best book on British military history with the runner up receiving £1,000 and the second runner up £200. The Chapple First Book Prize of an engraved Dartington Crystal and £1,000 will be awarded to the best first book on British military history with the first and second runners up receiving £200.

In the first instance publishers or authors are requested to send one copy of the submitted book to a designated panel member. Publishers will be invited to send further copies to remaining members of the panel if a title is shortlisted in January. Closing date for receipt of submissions is 31 December. Awards will be announced in March 2026 and prizes presented at the Society's AGM in April 2026. Entries of privately published works or from smaller publishers are also welcomed as such titles do not always come to the panel's attention, and members' suggestions are invited.

In the first instance contact should be made with the panel chairman, Professor Ian Beckett at templermedal@sahr.org.uk

SAHR ESSAY PRIZES

Zeb Micic, Essay and Schools Co-ordinator

Will members please advertise to their friends and relations the existence of the Society's essay competition?

In association with the National Army Museum, we hope to offer prizes (for the winner and runner-up of £300 and £100 respectively) in three categories: sixth form, undergraduate and officer cadets at Sandhurst destined for the Regular Army.

Essays, which need not be written specially for the competition, are to be between 2,500 and 3,500 words inclusive of references but not a bibliography (the provision of which is mandatory) and may be on any subject relating to the history of the Army.

The deadline is the end of February 2026. I am pleased to report a good number of enquiries and one early submission. I will be glad to offer advice to entrants who need only e-mail me at essayprize@sahr.org.uk or zeb.micic@sherborne.org.

AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (AWI)

Ian Beckett & Rohan Saravanamuttu

2025 is the 250th anniversary of the start of the AWI and, as announced in the most recent Journal and last Newsletter, the Society is compiling a register of memorials and sites connected to the AWI in the UK and to British soldiers in North America. The focus is a wide one, ranging from the statue of John Paul Jones at Whitehaven to the 'Conway Towers' on Jersey, the commemorative window to Benedict Arnold in St Mary's Battersea; and to the arch dedicated to 'Liberty in North America Triumphant' at Aberford near Leeds.

It is also throwing up interesting parallels. On 14 December 1776, for example, Cornet Francis Geary of the 16th Queen's Light Dragoons was ambushed and killed by American militiamen whilst on a reconnaissance at Amwell Township, Flemington, New Jersey. The body of Geary, aged 24, the eldest son of Admiral Sir Francis Geary, was concealed by the Americans. His parents had an elaborate monument erected in St Nicholas's Church, Great Bookham, Surrey. Its bas relief shows the ambush. In 1891 Geary's body was identified by an archaeological excavation at Raritan Township in Flemington and a memorial stone was placed on the spot by the Geary family in 1907.

The register will be published on the Society's website in batches of counties. There will be the opportunity for members to contribute additional information. The Society has also started to collate a register of memorials, the definition of which will be wide, to include buildings and sites in the UK with connections to the AWI. More details on this, and a request for contributions of entries from SAHR members and the wider historical community, can be found in the Summer journal.

The Society is also planning to hold a study-day on the AWI in early 2026, which we hope to make free for members to attend (in person or online). This will entail some expense. A generous sponsor has offered to match whatever we can raise from donations/sponsorship for this purpose, up to a certain limit. We are therefore requesting sponsorship/donations for this event.

If you would like to offer a donation for this purpose, please contact Rohan Saravanamuttu (treasurer@sahr.org.uk).

SAVE THE DATE - TEMPLER LECTURE AND DINNER 2025

Freddie Hyde, Events Co-ordinator

After a year of exploring new venues, the Society will be returning to familiar surroundings for this year's Templer Lecture and Dinner, which will take place on **Wednesday 19th November at the Army and Navy Club, London SW1Y 5JN**, with a start time of approximately 6pm. This year's lecture will take the form of a joint lecture and panel discussion, in which Professors Kevin Linch and David Lambert, who were awarded first and second place in this year's Templer Medal competition, will share insights from their acclaimed research on the British Army in the long eighteenth century, promising a lively and illuminating evening of discussion.

Attendance at the lecture is free of charge for members and one guest. The annual Templer Dinner will take place immediately after the lecture at approximately 7pm, at a subsidised price of approximately £70-80 for SAHR members and guests, which includes a three-course dinner and wine.

Full details, including timings and how to book, will be circulated towards the end of September. For any questions, please contact events@sahr.org.uk.

ONLINE TALKS 2025

Andrew Bamford & Dudley Giles

The programme for these popular talks for the second half of 2025 is still being confirmed, but indicative dates are as follows:

October, Date TBC, Lucy Betteridge-Dyson:
The Arakan Campaign.

November, Date TBC, Aimee Fox:
Soldier, Banker, Poet - The Lives and Loves of Major General Guy Dawnay.

December, Date TBC, Matt Taylor:
Black Redcoats.

January, Date TBC, Sir Alistair Irwin:
The Black Watch in Korea.

Although we have a number of talks already booked for 2026, there are still some gaps in the schedule and any members interested in offering a talk should contact Dr Andrew Bamford at socialmedia@sahr.org.uk. Talks on topics pre-1739 and 1816-1913 would be particularly welcome.

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

Dr Glyn Prysor, Assistant Director

The Museum's new special exhibition – *Myth and Reality: Military Art in the Age of Queen Victoria* – is now open and will run until next year. Over 140 artworks are on display, including several major loans from the Royal Collection, such as Lady Butler's 'The Roll Call'. Sketches and paintings by soldiers form an important strand, including George Cadogan's images of the Crimean War. Featuring many paintings not seen in public for a generation, this major exhibition brings a fresh perspective to a fascinating period of both art and military history.

The annual Chelsea History Festival returns to Royal Hospital Road between 24 and 28 September 2025. Organised by the Chelsea History Quarter partners – including the Museum, the Royal Hospital and the Chelsea Physic Garden – it includes over 80 talks, walking tours, concerts and family activities. Full details and ticket booking are available at www.chelseaheritagequarter.co.uk.

This autumn also sees the opening of *Beyond Burma: Forgotten Armies*. Marking the 80th anniversary of VJ Day, this exhibition shines a light on the remarkable multinational army that fought in some of the toughest conditions of the Second World War. It tells the story of the campaign from early defeats to ultimate victory, and the experiences of those who fought it, showcasing rarely-seen weapons, medals, uniforms and equipment, alongside first-hand accounts and artworks by soldiers. The exhibition will run from 16 Sep 2025 to 13 Apr 2026. An accompanying series of public events and digital content will explore the exhibition's themes in more detail.

Details of all upcoming talks and events are available on the Museum's website: www.nam.ac.uk

MEMBERS' SPECIAL OFFER

Osprey Publishing have offered members of the Society a generous 20% discount on orders for **Nations in Arms** by Barney White-Spunner and **Korea: War Without End** by Richard Dannatt and Robert Lyman

To get your discount, head to www.ospreypublishing.com and enter code **SAHR** at checkout.

The code is valid from September 1st to November 30th 2025.