



The Society for Army Historical Research

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www.sahr.org.uk

NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2025

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

A NOTE FROM THE HON. EDITOR

Andrew Cormack, Hon. Editor, JSAHR

Members may be slightly surprised to see an attachment at the rear of their Winter Journal containing maps. These are to go with the article on the tactical use of machine guns by the Australian Expeditionary Force in France in their attacks on the Hindenburg Line in the early Spring of 1917. The small size of the Journal's pages does not allow these maps to be produced in the normal way, but the quality of the article and the interest and originality of the information it provides seemed to the Hon. Editor to justify this departure from our normal format. I apologise if members find this inconvenient, but hope that they will agree with me that the piece would be incomprehensible without these supplementary aids.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Peter Swabey, Honorary Secretary

In accordance with the SAHR Constitution, Notice is given that the 98th Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Wednesday 29 April 2026 at the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HT, timings to be confirmed. Members may wish to add the date to their diaries.

The Agenda will include:

- Trustees' Report & Accounts for 1 January to 31 December 2025
- Chairman & Honorary Officers' reports on the Activities of the Society
- Report on the 2025 Templer Medal and Chapple Prize
- Election/re-election of Council Members (nominations by 18 March 26)
- Any Other Business (to be notified in advance to the Hon. Secretary secretary@sahr.org.uk no later than 18 March 2026.)

The full set of AGM papers will be posted on the SAHR website www.sahr.org.uk for viewing by members at least 14 days before the meeting.

CHAIR'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Dr James P Cook OBE, Chair of the Society for Army Historical Research

As the year draws to a close, I would like to extend my warmest Christmas greetings to every member of the Society for Army Historical Research. This is my first Christmas as your Chair, and I want to say how deeply I have valued the privilege of leading a Society with such a distinguished heritage and such a vibrant, committed membership. It has been a pleasure to meet many of you at our events, to hear your ideas, and to witness first-hand the enthusiasm that continues to shape our shared study of the British Army's past.

At this time of year, our thoughts often turn to moments in military history that remind us not only of hardship and sacrifice, but also of humanity. Few episodes capture this more powerfully than the Christmas Truce of 1914. In the frozen fields of Flanders, British and German soldiers who had been fighting only hours before stepped out of their trenches to exchange greetings, share simple gifts, and, for a brief moment, recognise their shared dignity. It remains a striking reminder that even in the darkest circumstances, understanding the past helps us see the best in human nature as well as the worst. Our work as a Society keeps such lessons alive and relevant, ensuring that military history continues to illuminate, inform and inspire.

Looking ahead, I am delighted to announce that next spring we will introduce a new event in partnership with our close friends at the National Army Museum, looking at the utility of understanding our military history for the serving Army. This collaboration reflects our strengthening ties and our shared commitment to bringing high-quality scholarship to the Serving Army and wider audiences. Further details will follow early in the new year, but I hope many of you will be able to join us for what promises to be an engaging and enjoyable occasion.

As we move into 2026, the Society continues to grow in ambition and in reach. We have updated our digital strategy and will launch a new website next spring. Your support, whether through research, contributions to the Journal, participation in our events or simply your continued membership, remains vital. Together we preserve the past, encourage new insight, and foster a community where curiosity, rigour and respect for our military heritage continue to flourish.

May I wish you and your families a peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year. I look forward to seeing many of you in the months ahead as we continue our shared endeavour to deepen understanding of the Army's history and the stories of those who served.

James

TEMPLER LECTURE AND DINNER 2025

Freddie Hyde, Events Co-ordinator

With the nights and the November frost beginning to draw in, members gathered in London on Wednesday 19 November for the annual Templer Evening. After a year of exploring new venues, from the East India Club to the Honourable Artillery Company, we returned to the Army and Navy Club.

The winner and runner-up for this year's Templer Medal Competition for the best book on the history of the British Army, Professors Kevin Linch and David Lambert, treated us to a fascinating panel discussion on the British Army in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Particular emphasis was placed on the Caribbean, where British Regulars fought alongside freed slaves and French Royalist officers.

As is tradition, members stayed on for the Templer Dinner, a sumptuous affair in the Army and Navy Club Library, where discussion and wine flowed freely in the surroundings of suitably military-themed bookshelves.



Photo: Freddie Hyde

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.

ONLINE TALKS 2025

Andrew Bamford & Dudley Giles

The programme for the first half of 2026 is still being confirmed, but plans are:

Wednesday 14th January

Lt Gen. Sir Alistair Irwin: 'Korea 1952-1953: The Black Watch Story'

February, Date TBC,

Nicola Martin, 'Army, Empire and 'Others': the British Army and the coming of the American Revolution'

March, Date TBC,

Colin Harnett, 'Sir James Grierson and Planning for a British Expeditionary Force to the Continent, 1904-1906'

April, Date TBC,

Tom Golding-Lee, 'The Marine Regiments in the War of Jenkins' Ear'

May, Date TBC,

Giles Orpen-Smellie, 'What did we know? Developing the tactical intelligence picture at unit level during the Falklands Campaign'

June, Date TBC,

Neil Hutty, 'Wenlock's Horse - The East Riding Yeomanry in the First World War'

**AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (AWI)
CONFERENCE: THE BRITISH ARMY AND THE AMERICAN
WAR, 1775-83: FRESH PERSPECTIVES
SATURDAY 14TH MARCH 2026**

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

Please save the date for our forthcoming conference to mark the 250th anniversary of American independence and the British Army's doomed efforts to prevent it. The event will take place at the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, London, SW3 4HT, with provision made for virtual attendees to listen in. Tickets for in-person and virtual attendance will be available shortly – watch the SAHR website for details.

Programme

1000-1025 Arrival and Coffee

1025-1030 Welcome by Brigadier Dr James Cook, Chair, SAHR

1030-1115 'The British Army and the Coming of the Revolution' [Dr Nicola Martin, University of the Highlands and Islands]

1130-1215 'Liability or Loyal Soldier? Evaluating Irish Catholic Recruitment and Service in the British Army during the American War of Independence' [Dr Sadie Sunderland-Rhoads, University College, London]

1230-1315 'The 33rd Foot and the Development of British Light Infantry Doctrine on the Eve of the American Revolution' [Dr Robbie MacNiven, Independent Scholar]

1315-1400 Lunch

1400-1445 (Keynote Hybrid) 'The British Army in the American Revolution: The Field Flourishes in a New Century' [Professor Gregory Urwin, Temple University]

1450-1535 (Hybrid) "'A kind of seed that may not be very well suited to this American soil": Environment, Suffering, and the Defeat of the British Military in Revolutionary America' [Dr Vaughn Scribner, University of Central Arkansas]

1540-1600 Tea

1600-1645 (Hybrid) 'War on the Home Front: Civilians and the British Army during the American Revolution' [Dr Lauren Duval, University of Oklahoma]

1650-1735 (Hybrid) 'Patriot Information Warfare and Alleged British Atrocities in the Revolutionary Press' [Dr Eileen Palma, Washington, DC]

1740-1830 Wine Reception

1830 Disperse

Members of His Majesty's 33rd Regiment of Foot re-enactment group will be offering demonstrations prior to the start of the proceedings and during the lunch and tea breaks.

Speaker Biographies

Dr Lauren Duval is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK. She is the author of *The Home Front: Revolutionary Households, Military Occupation, and the Making of American Independence* (Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 2025).

Dr Robbie MacNiven is the author of *The Pattern: The 33rd Regiment and the British Infantry Experience during the American Revolution, 1770-1783* (Helion, 2023).

Dr Nicola Martin is Lecturer in History and Undergraduate Programme Leader at the University of the Highlands and Islands, Inverness. She is the author of *The British Army in Scotland and North America, 1745-75: Militarisation on the Fringes of the Empire* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025). She sits on the SAHR Council.

Dr Eileen Palma was awarded her PhD for, 'An "Artful Misrepresentation" of Affairs": Alleged British Atrocities in American Colonial Newspapers during the War of Independence' by the University of Leeds in 2024.

Dr Sadie Sunderland-Rhoads was awarded her PhD for, 'Pragmatism, Politics and Popish Recruits: Irish Catholic Recruitment and Service in the British Army, 1775-83' by University College, London in 2025. An article based on her research is in the current issue of the Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.

Dr Vaughn Scribner is Associate Professor of History at the University of Central Arkansas, Conway, AR. He is the author of *Under Alien Skies: Environment, Suffering, and the Defeat of the British Military in Revolutionary America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2024)

Professor Gregory Urwin is Professor of Military History at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. He is preparing for publication, "*When Freedom Wore a Red Coat*": A Social History of the 1781 British invasions of Virginia. He is a past president of the

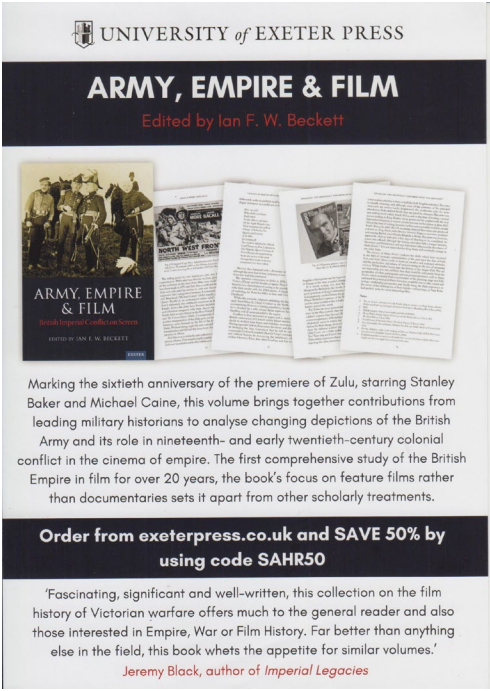
US Society for Military History and General Editor of the Oklahoma University Press 'Campaigns and Commanders' series.

A generous sponsor has offered to match whatever we can raise from donations/sponsorship for this purpose, up to a certain limit.

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

MEMBERS' SPECIAL OFFER

Professor Ian F.W. Beckett, FSAHR, Templer Medal Sub-Committee Chair has written a new book. *Army, Empire and Film*, published by the University of Exeter Press on 25 November. Ian has negotiated a generous 50% discount for SAHR Members by using the code SAHR50 – see below.



UNIVERSITY of EXETER PRESS

ARMY, EMPIRE & FILM

Edited by Ian F. W. Beckett

Marking the sixtieth anniversary of the premiere of *Zulu*, starring Stanley Baker and Michael Caine, this volume brings together contributions from leading military historians to analyse changing depictions of the British Army and its role in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial conflict in the cinema of empire. The first comprehensive study of the British Empire in film for over 20 years, the book's focus on feature films rather than documentaries sets it apart from other scholarly treatments.

Order from exeterpress.co.uk and SAVE 50% by using code SAHR50

'Fascinating, significant and well-written, this collection on the film history of Victorian warfare offers much to the general reader and also those interested in Empire, War or Film History. Far better than anything else in the field, this book whets the appetite for similar volumes.'

Jeremy Black, author of Imperial Legacies

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

Dr Glyn Prysor, Assistant Director

It has been wonderful to receive feedback from many SAHR members who have visited the Museum's current special exhibitions – *Myth and Reality: Military Art in the Age of Queen Victoria*, and *Beyond Burma: Forgotten Armies*.

As ever, projects such as these require long planning and deep research, as well as overcoming inevitable logistical, administrative, and financial challenges during production and installation. Seeing so many visitors enjoying the spaces makes the effort worthwhile. As a sneak preview, next year's special exhibition programme will feature a display of unique sketches by the French liaison officer and artist Paul Sarrut, who served alongside the Indian Army on the Western Front in late 1914 and 1915.

The Museum recently acquired the Cumberland Society Medal of Sir George Howard, the only known example with personal provenance, thanks to the generous support of the NAM Development Trust, the Cumberland Society, and individual donors. The medal is now on display in the Formation gallery.



© National Army Museum

SAHR members may be aware of a proposed development alongside the Museum at 29 Tite Street. The project includes the construction of a new underground gallery space, a purpose-built lecture theatre, and a new garden replacing the current car park. More information can be found at <https://tite-street.co.uk>, including details about how to support the scheme, which has the application reference PP/25/04989.

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