



ARMY

**REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS
THE ROYAL WELSH**

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Issue 02 / February 2026

Upcoming Diary Dates

2026

Friday 27th February: Annual St David's Day Reunion of 41st Foot Regimental Officers, Army & Navy Club, London. Please contact John Wilson for further information: jwxboat@yahoo.co.uk

Sunday 1st March 2026 (11 AM): 20th anniversary Service, Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff

Sunday 8th March 2026: Ladies St David's Day Lunch, 1 R WELSH, Tidworth

Saturday 21st March 2026: Royal Regiment of Wales / Royal Welsh family and friends annual Dinner and Dance (Holiday Inn, Coldra Junction, Cardiff – coordinated by Tony Kane:
tonykane1955@yahoo.com)

Saturday 28th March 2026: A King's Legacy 1879 Remembered - Honouring the spirit of Zulu history and heritage across continents, The Barracks, Brecon

Saturday 18th April 2026: RWF Officers' Association North Wales Dinner, Bodysgallen Hall and Spa

Friday 24th April 2026: Royal Regiment of Wales Lunch (The RAG, London). Organised by Lt Col (ret'd) Peter Kerruish and Col (ret'd) J Pughe-Morgan

Wednesday 20th May 2026: Regimental Association Meeting, Newtown

Saturday 6th June 2026: RWF Officers' and Ladies Lunch, Broughton Village Hall (near Stockbridge, Hampshire). For further information, contact Col Jeremy Broad at jerbroad@gmail.com

Saturday 27th June 2026: Wales National Armed Forces Day, Pembrey Country Park

Saturday 25th July 2026: Regimental Reunion South (Cardiff)

Saturday 5th September 2026: Regimental Reunion North (Wrexham)

Saturday 12th September 2026: Royal Welsh 20th anniversary "Party in the Park", Cardiff Castle

Friday 9th October 2026: RWF Officers' Association Annual Dinner, London

Friday 27th November 2026: Royal Welsh Officers' Society Annual Dinner, Cornerstone Cardiff

TBC Nov 2026 onwards: Homecoming Parade for the 1st Bn personnel deployed to Estonia

Introduction

Welcome to the February 2026 edition of the RHQ The Royal Welsh newsletter. This month marks a significant transition for the Regiment as we bid farewell to Major General Chris Barry CBE and officially welcome Brigadier Nigel Crewe-Read OBE as our new Colonel of the Regiment. Inside, we cover the handover proceedings, including the recent 59 Dinner and the Brigadier's meeting with the First Minister of Wales.

With St David's Day fast approaching, focus is firmly on the 20th Anniversary of The Royal Welsh. We provide full details on the upcoming commemorative service at Llandaff Cathedral and look ahead to the "Party in the Park" celebration at Cardiff Castle later this year.

The 1st and 3rd Battalions have had an active start to the year. From the gruelling 313-mile "Royal Welsh Rugby Challenge" to success at the Army Alpine Skiing Championships and intensive urban operations training, the Regiment remains busy at home and abroad. We also take a moment to reflect on our operational heritage with lookbacks at Op MOSHTARAK and Op CABRIT, while celebrating the achievements of our Cadets and the wider Regimental family—including a special 100th birthday feature.



Editor's Note:

The views expressed in these articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of Regimental Headquarters.



Brigadier Nigel Crewe-Read OBE Appointed Colonel of the Regiment, The Royal Welsh



As of 8th February 2026, Brigadier Nigel Crewe-Read OBE has officially taken over as Colonel of the Regiment. He succeeds Major General Chris Barry CBE, who, after 4 years, is stepping down.

Brigadier Crewe-Read, who is due to take up his next appointment shortly as the Deputy Chief of Staff, Strategy and Training in the Headquarters of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), brings a wealth of operational and strategic experience to the role, alongside a career-long connection to the Regiment.

Commissioned into the Royal Regiment of Wales in 1996, Brigadier Crewe-Read's career has spanned command and staff appointments across UK Defence, NATO, Coalition, and U.S. Headquarters. His early service saw him command platoons on operations in Cyprus, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia. Notably, as a junior officer, he was awarded an MBE for his leadership of the Brigade Surveillance Platoon in Kosovo.

As a Major, he commanded C Company, 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh during a period that included three separate deployments to Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He later returned to the Regiment to command the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Welsh, between 2015 and 2017.

His senior career has been defined by high-level strategic influence and international partnership. Following appointments with U.S. AFRICOM and Army HQ, he served as Military Assistant to the UK Deputy Commander of Operation RESOLUTE SUPPORT in Afghanistan.



On promotion to Colonel, he was posted to NATO's Joint Force Command in Naples, Italy. There, he was responsible for planning deterrence activity against emerging threats to the Alliance and was heavily involved in contingency work surrounding Russia's invasion of Ukraine - work for which he was subsequently awarded an OBE. Before assuming his current role at the ARRC, he served as Deputy Commander of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE, overseeing a 7,500-strong Coalition in Baghdad dedicated to the defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Brigadier Crewe-Read is married to Caroline, and they have three children: Isabelle, Toby, and Lara. Outside of his military duties, he is an avid sportsman, enjoying touch rugby, cycling, downhill skiing, and country sports.

The entire Regimental family wishes Major General Chris Barry CBE the very best for the future and extends a warm welcome to Brigadier Crewe-Read as he begins his tenure today.

This Week in Royal Welsh History: Record-Breaking Finds During Operation MOSHTARAK

In the week beginning the 13th of February 2010, the 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh was at the forefront of one of the most significant moments in the Afghanistan campaign: **Operation MOSHTARAK**.



Deployed as an Aviation Assault Battle Group within Combined Force 31, the Battalion launched the largest helicopter assault since the first Gulf War on 13th February 2010, aiming

to secure the insurgent stronghold of Northern Nad-e Ali, known as "Area 31." While the operation was renowned for its "courageous restraint" and the successful partnering with Afghan forces, it is also remembered for a staggering blow delivered to insurgent logistics during the opening days.



In the very first week of the operation, soldiers from A Company, 1 Royal Welsh, uncovered what was recorded as the largest Improvised Explosive Device (IED) find by UK forces in Afghanistan to that date.

The scale of the discovery was immense. The tally included 124 complete IEDs, 11 RPG warheads, and 425 kilograms of homemade explosives. The cache also contained various chemicals used for manufacturing explosives, 48 battery packs, 15 detonators, and specific IED-making manuals and documentation.



One of 2 Platoon's finds in an IED factory in Showal.



This discovery stripped the insurgency of a massive volume of lethal aid intended to target not only ISAF and Afghan soldiers but also the local civilian population.

The success of the search operations did not end in the first week. A few weeks later, B Company followed up with another major find. Hidden beneath a pile of dried poppy stalks, they discovered parts capable of constructing a further 53 IEDs.

These finds were a source of considerable satisfaction for the soldiers of 1 Royal Welsh. By removing hundreds of potential bombs from the battlefield without firing a shot, the Battalion significantly degraded the insurgents' ability to fight.



As noted by the Commanding Officer at the time, Lt Col NJ Lock, the removal of these weapons ensured they could never be used to harm the "protected communities" the Battalion was there to secure. It stands as a testament to the thoroughness and professionalism of The Royal Welsh during a pivotal moment in the regiment's history.

This Month in Royal Welsh History: 1 R WELSH Deploy to Estonia as part of Op CABRIT

In February, we look back at a defining moment for the Regiment - the deployment of 1 R WELSH to Estonia as part of Operation CABRIT. While The Royal Welsh has a long and storied history of overseas service, the events of 2022 placed the Battalion at the very tip of the spear during the most volatile period in European security since the end of the Cold War.



C Company and Op CABRIT 9

The story began with C Company, which was already on the ground as part of Op CABRIT 9. Attached to the Royal Tank Regiment (RTR) Battlegroup, the Company was conducting what was meant to be a standard rotation of the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) mission.



However, the geopolitical landscape was shattered in February 2022 with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. For C Company, the invasion meant the uncertainty of an extended tour. However, the Fusiliers on the ground displayed their resilience, remaining in position to reassure our Estonian allies and deter aggression, despite not knowing when they would return home to their families.

Op CABRIT 10

While C Company held the line, the remainder of the 1st Battalion was in Germany conducting Pre-Deployment Training (PDT). As the security situation in Europe deteriorated, the call came to move, and move fast.

In a display of high readiness, the Battalion did not return to the UK to deploy in slow time. Instead, they formed the core of the Op CABRIT 10 Battlegroup and deployed early, projecting directly across Europe from their training bases in Germany to the Estonian border.



It was a massive logistical and tactical undertaking, proving that The Royal Welsh could transition instantly from training to an operational footing.

History will undoubtedly record 2022 as a year of immense strategic significance for global security. It was a year that tested the resolve of NATO and the readiness of the British Army.



It will come as no surprise to those who know the history of our Regiment that The Royal Welsh was, once again, "in the thick of it." Whether enduring the biting cold or surging across a continent to bolster the line, The Royal Welsh officers and soldiers were trained, ready, and prepared.

Today, we remember the deployment, a time when 1 R WELSH stood shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies to defend a Partner Nation on the northeast flank of NATO.

The Royal Welsh 20th Anniversary Commemorative Service - Sunday 1st March

On Sunday, 1st March 2026 (St David's Day), a Commemorative Service will be held at Llandaff Cathedral to mark the 20th Anniversary of The Royal Welsh. All members of the Regimental family are invited to join us in marking this significant milestone.

Details:

Date: Sunday 1st March 2026

Time: 1100 hrs



February 2026

Venue: Llandaff Cathedral, Cathedral Close, Cardiff CF5 2LA

Dress Code:

Serving: Service Dress (medals, Sam Browne, gloves) or MTP.

Civilian: Suits / Ladies' equivalent (Medals and decorations).

SAVE THE DATE: The Royal Welsh 20th Anniversary Celebration!

We are thrilled to invite all serving personnel, veterans of The Royal Welsh and antecedent regiments, your families, and friends, to a spectacular day of history, music, and camaraderie at Cardiff Castle.

Join us as we mark our 20th anniversary with a "Party in the Park," celebrating two decades of our Regiment's proud heritage, and 337 years of antecedent history.

Date: Saturday 12th September 2026

Location: Cardiff Castle

Time: 11 AM-5 PM

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for Regimental Family members will be available starting in **March**. Tickets will be available directly via our website: theroyalwelsh.co.uk

Please mark your calendars for what promises to be a memorable day!



1st & 3rd Battalion Update:

Over the past month, The Royal Welsh has been engaged in a diverse range of activities, spanning from high-endurance charity initiatives in Wales to historical observances and tactical weapons training.

The Royal Welsh Rugby Challenge

In a significant display of endurance and community engagement, the Regiment undertook the "Royal Welsh Rugby Challenge." The event officially launched at 0900hrs on the 10th of February in Colwyn Bay.

To mark the start of the challenge, a member of the RGC squad kicked the match ball to a team of runners comprising soldiers from both 1 R WELSH and 3 R WELSH. This signalled the beginning of a gruelling 313-mile relay journey from the north coast down to the Principality Stadium in Cardiff.





The soldiers were tasked with carrying a single Six Nations rugby ball across the length of the country. Their mission included securing signatures from the presidents of every rugby club visited along the route, with the ultimate goal of presenting the ball to the WRU on the pitch during half-time on 15th February 2026 when Wales played Scotland.

The initial phase of the run saw the team push across the North Wales coastline to Bangor Rugby Club to score the "first try" of the event. From there, they faced the challenging terrain of Eryri (Snowdonia), pushing through to their first overnight finish at Trawsfynydd. The effort was dedicated to raising vital funds for The Royal Welsh, Ty Hafan, ABF The Soldiers' Charity, and Blind Veterans UK.

Success on the Piste

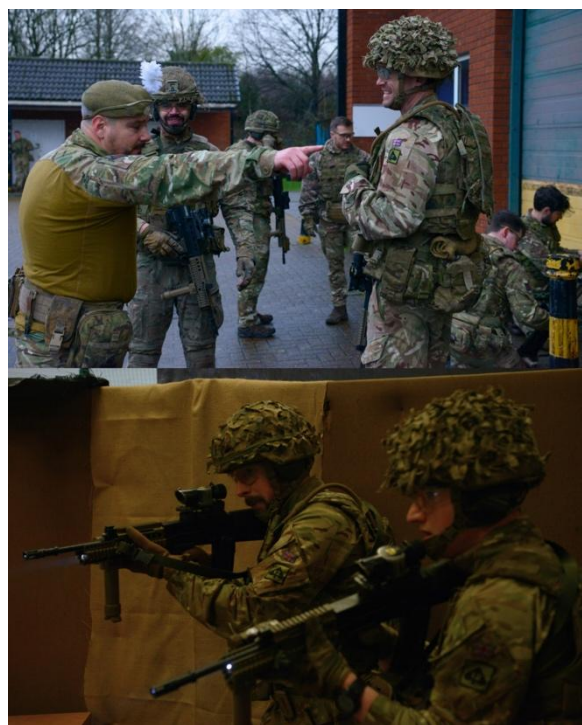
Over the last month, LCpl England has represented The Royal Welsh after being selected to compete at the Army Alpine Skiing Championships.



LCpl England attended the Qualifying Championships where he competed in the Junior Category, finishing top in the Slalom, Giant Slalom and Super Giant Slalom. He won best Junior, finishing 8th overall. This qualified him for the Army Championships in Serre Chevalier. At the Army Championships, he came 1st in the Junior Category in Giant Slalom and Super Giant Slalom. LCpl England had never skied prior to joining The Royal Welsh, so a truly outstanding achievement.

Urban Operations and UAS Training: B Company Enhances Close Quarter Battle Skills

Over the past weekend, B Company successfully delivered a specialized urban training package utilizing Simunition (marker rounds). This exercise was designed to build directly upon the lessons identified during the previous training weekend, ensuring a continuous development of combat skills.





Personnel from both B and C Companies deployed into a purpose-built 'Kill House' to conduct the drills. The training followed a progressive structure; soldiers began by engaging static targets to establish fundamentals and safety, before escalating to complex scenarios involving a live opposing force. The use of marker rounds allowed for immediate feedback and added a layer of realism and intensity necessary for effective close-quarters battle (CQB) training.

In addition to the kinetic training, the Regiment utilized the rotation periods to focus on modernizing capabilities. While teams waited to cycle through the combat serials, soldiers took the opportunity to sharpen their drone-flying skills. This hands-on practice served as vital preparation for personnel aiming to attend future Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) operator courses.

Clwyd & Gwynedd ACF

2026 has begun with energetic detachment evenings, challenging training weekends, and numerous awards and achievements, marking a strong and successful start to the year for cadets across North Wales.

The Army Engagement Team visited Pwllheli, Deeside, and Llangefni, giving cadets an exciting opportunity to explore STEM equipment and learn about careers in the Army. Each visit featured an engaging presentation and four hands-on tasks, allowing cadets to develop communication and leadership skills. The sessions were packed with teamwork, learning, and plenty of laughs.



Zachary Edwards of the Pwllheli detachment has been awarded the 2025 Jim Hewitt Trophy for Excellence, presented by Mrs. Sandra Hewitt in honour of her late husband, Major Jim Hewitt. The award commemorates Major Hewitt's lifelong dedication to the Army Cadet Force in North Wales and his commitment to helping young people succeed through service and personal development. Zachary reflects the values Major Hewitt championed, demonstrating exceptional moral courage, integrity, and maturity. His disciplined approach, humility, empathy, and strong leadership set him apart, making him a highly deserving recipient of this prestigious recognition.





Padre Toby Jones has completed another impressive challenge, this time running the Burj2Burj Half Marathon in Dubai on 8 February. The 21.1 km route stretches between two of the world's most iconic landmarks - the Burj Khalifa and the Burj Al Arab. Toby took on the race to support the Army Cadet Charitable Trust, a charity dedicated to transforming young lives across the UK.

Cadet Teddy Worrall of Rossett Detachment excelled at the Holywell Valentine Gala, winning 3 golds, 2 silvers, and a bronze in his age category. His standout achievement was gold in the 100m butterfly with an impressive time of 1:18, showcasing his talent and dedication in the pool.



Colonel of the Regiment meets First Minister of Wales - Wednesday 28th January 2026

Brigadier Nigel Crewe-Read OBE met with the First Minister of Wales, Mair Eluned Morgan, Baroness Morgan of Elyat at Tŷ Hywel in Cardiff Bay on Wednesday 28th January 2026.

Brigadier Nigel met the First Minister as part of his preparations to assume the role of Colonel of The Regiment on Sunday 8th February 2026. His Majesty The King Charles III, Colonel in Chief The Royal Welsh, approved the handover from Maj Gen CBK Barry CBE to Brigadier Nigel Crewe-Read OBE just before Christmas.

For over 30 minutes they discussed key matters relating to the Regiment and Wales including issues relating to serving (regular and reserves), Army Cadets, veterans, and regimental identity.



Brigadier Crewe-Read presented the First Minister with a regimental plaque.

The First Minister was particularly interested in the forthcoming deployments of both 1 and 3 R WELSH in the coming months, and wanted to send her best wishes to all in the regimental family as we approach the 20th anniversary of formation of The Royal Welsh on 1st March 2026.

The First Minister was very excited by the plan to hold a regimental family 'Party in the Park' in Cardiff Castle on Saturday 12th September 2026.

59 Dinner - 20th anniversary of The Royal Welsh - Saturday 7th February 2026

A regimental dinner was held at The Officers' Mess, 1 R WELSH, on Saturday 7th February 2026, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the formation of The Royal Welsh. The 59 Dinner was attended by all Colonels of the Regiment. Honorary Colonels, Commanding Officers and Regimental Sergeant Majors from 1, 2 and 3 Royal Welsh, and Regimental Secretaries from the last 20 years (1st March 2026-1st March 2026).



It also marked the handover point between the Colonel of the Regiment, Major General CBK Barry CBE, and his successor Brigadier NO Crewe-Read OBE.



It also marked the last time that the Colours of 1, 2 and 3 Royal Welsh were on parade, as the Colours of 2 R Welsh and 3 RRW are due to be laid up in the next few years in The St David Chapel, in Llandaff Cathedral.

Lt Gen (retd) James Swift CB OBE gave the after-dinner speech to thank Maj Gen Barry for his time as Colonel of the Regiment, and presented him with a framed regimental crest.

This dinner marked the start of several regimental events in 2026 to mark the 20th anniversary of The Royal Welsh, as well as 337 years of antecedent history. We hope to see as many members of the regimental family as possible at the coming events:

- Sunday 1st March 2026: 20th anniversary service in Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff (11:00).
- Saturday 25th July 2026 – Regimental Reunion South – curry lunch in Ty Llewellyn Army Reserve Centre, and then The Gatekeeper Pub, Westgate Street, Cardiff.
- Saturday 5th September 2026 – Regimental Reunion North – lunch in Hightown Barracks, Wrexham, and then into Wrexham.
- Saturday 12th September 2026 – Party in the Park – regimental family event (11:00-1700), in Cardiff Castle. Open to all members of the regimental family and the general public. Ticket information to follow in March.
- Friday 27th November 2026 – The Royal Welsh Officers’ Society 20th anniversary dinner at The Cornerstone, Cardiff.

Source (below) Daily Telegraph newspaper: Monday 9th February 2026:

Service dinner

The Royal Welsh 20th Anniversary Dinner

Officers and Warrant Officers of The Royal Welsh held a regimental dinner at The Officers’ Mess, 1 R WELSH, Lucknow Barracks, Tidworth, on Saturday to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the formation of The Royal Welsh. Colonel of The Regiment, Maj Gen CBK Barry presided, and Capt Harry Merriman was Mr Vice.



Veterans and Community Leaders Gather for Powerful Evening with Author Ted Shirley

Over 60 veterans, alongside local councillors and business leaders, attended a memorable talk and book signing event hosted by Royal Welsh veteran and author Ted Shirley, best known for his book *Afghanistan Sniper: Trauma on the Frontline and Beyond*.

The evening proved to be an extremely enjoyable, thought-provoking, and humbling experience, as attendees heard first-hand reflections on service, resilience, trauma, and recovery. Shirley's powerful storytelling and openness created a meaningful space for conversation, understanding, and connection between veterans and the wider community.

The event was proudly hosted by D Company, 3 R WELSH, whose hospitality and organisation helped make the evening a great success. Sincere thanks were also extended to RFCA Wales and Craig Middle for their continued support in bringing the event together. It was a night that not only celebrated a veteran's achievements as an author, but also reinvigorated some old bonds within the veteran community and beyond — leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.



Royal Welsh Club - Walk and Talk (South) - Pen-Y-Fan loop

Seven veterans from The Royal Welsh Club took to the hills of Wales in wintry conditions on Wednesday 28th January 2026. Starting at the Cwm Gwdi National Trust car park the group approached Pen-Y-Fan from the Northeast. Conditions under foot were extremely wet until the cloud line and then into snow and ice up to the summit.





Left to Right: Rob Dickinson (and Lola), Gareth Davies 13, Spike Hughes, Alun Davies, Kevin Parry, Phillip Powell, and Knill Baird-Murray.

The Royal Welsh Club will take to the hills on walks across Wales throughout the calendar year. The idea behind is to meet up, walk, catch up, and have a brew with old regimental friends. Anyone interested in organising a walk please contact RHQ. The next walks will be announced on DRAGON CONNECT shortly.

Llanelli WWII Veteran Jim Cleobury Celebrates 100 Years of Life and Service



Jim Cleobury, a beloved member of the local community and veteran of the Second World War, has reached a monumental milestone. Described by those who know him as a kind, considerate, and straight-talking gentleman, Jim celebrated his 100th birthday today (10th December).



Born in Llanelli in 1925 as one of seven children, Jim's century of experience began in a very musical family. Like many of his generation, he entered the workforce early, leaving school at 14 in 1939 to work in lathe turning and sheet metal working. A true historian of his hometown, Jim is known for entertaining friends with memories of a different era - recalling the now-empty North Dock when it was bustling with cargo ships and the local pubs were filled with foreign sailors.

As a young man, Jim's life was overshadowed by the threat of war. Following in the footsteps of his father, who had served with The Wiltshire Regiment in WWI, Jim answered the call of duty.

In 1943, he was called to the Colours of The Welch Regiment, completing his basic training at Dering Lines in Brecon. Recognised for his aptitude, he was selected for The Royal Engineers, becoming Sapper Cleobury. He underwent specialised trade training in Portsmouth, becoming an expert in mines, explosives, demolitions, and general engineering.

Jim landed on mainland Europe following D-Day in 1944. His service took him across the continent, through France, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, and Italy, where he was attached to The Royal Canadian Engineers. He concluded his service in Cyprus, eventually being "demobbed" in 1947.

While Jim has always remained humble and reluctant to discuss the gritty details of his wartime service, he never fails to share his unique perspective on Venice. While most view it as a romantic historic city, Jim recalls it as "horrible," joking that working in the canals gave you "an instant tan from the filthy water."

Upon returning to civilian life, Jim worked as a painter and decorator. He settled down, marrying his wife Eunice in 1959. Although Eunice sadly passed away in 1982, Jim continues to live in the home they shared, surrounded by wonderful neighbours, his daughter, and his granddaughter.

Jim's dedication to his fellow service members never wavered. He has immersed himself in the veteran community, serving as the Treasurer of the Llanelli British Legion for an incredible 45 years.



Perhaps most remarkably, Jim holds a record that few could match: he marched in the Llanelli Remembrance Parade every single year from 1947 to 2022. That is a 75-year streak of honouring the fallen.

To mark his 100th birthday, a celebration was held at "The Pitch" in Felinfoel. Jim was surrounded by comrades and friends from the Llanelli Branches of The Royal Welsh Comrades Association, the Royal British Legion, and the Burryport/Pembrey Veterans Associations. Among the well-wishers was fellow veteran Bernard Phillips, a 94-year-old veteran of the Korean War.

Jim Cleobury remains a longstanding member of The Royal Welsh Comrades Association, the Royal Navy/Royal Marines, and the Royal British Legion.

The Rhodesia Native Regiment and the Rhodesian African Rifles: A Regimental History by John Wynne Hopkins

Introduction

It is a privilege to record the history of the Rhodesia Native Regiment and the Rhodesian African Rifles, two distinguished units whose service spans continents, campaigns, and generations. Their story is inseparable from the enduring friendship forged with the South Wales Borderers, later the Royal Regiment of Wales, and now the Royal Welsh. This enduring relationship - rooted in shared hardship, mutual respect, and professional admiration - remains one of the most cherished elements of the RAR's legacy. What follows is a concise account of the Regiment's formation, service, traditions, and the lasting bonds that continue to unite these proud military families.

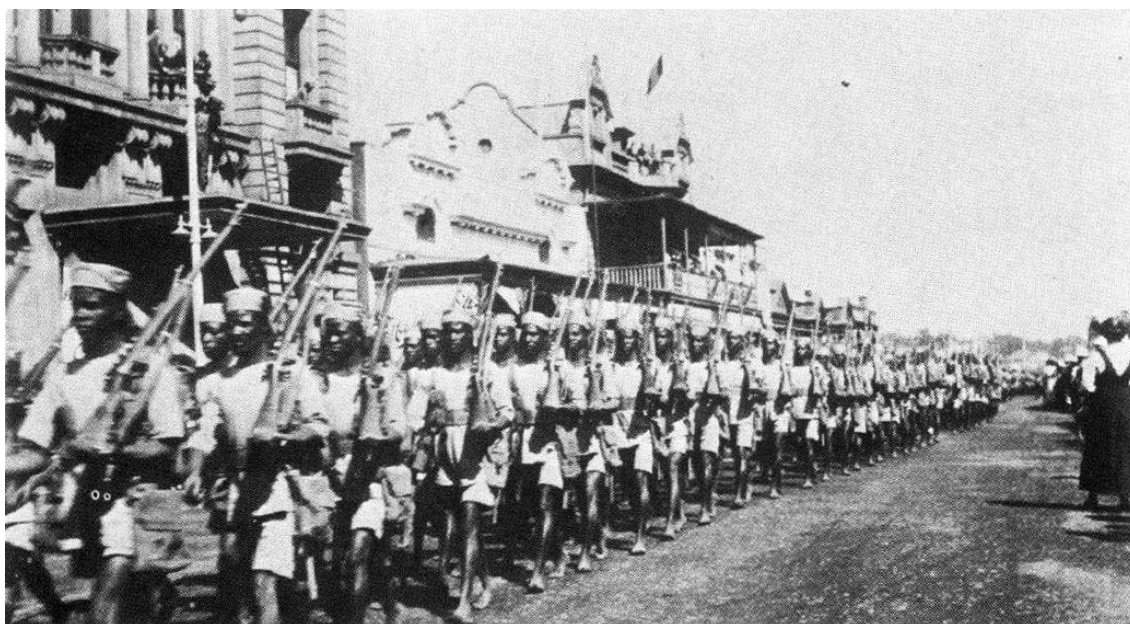
The Rhodesia Native Regiment (RNR)

The Rhodesia Native Regiment was formed in Southern Rhodesia on 1 May 1916 and deployed to the Nyasaland–Northern Rhodesia border with "NORFORCE" in July. Later that year, 1RNR crossed Lake Nyasa to operate in German and Portuguese East Africa against von Lettow-Vorbeck's Askari forces. A second battalion, 2RNR, joined operations in August 1917. The Regiment earned two Battle Honours:



- **1RNR:** The Great War; East Africa 1916–1918
- **2RNR:** The Great War; East Africa 1917–1918

The Regiment was disbanded at the end of hostilities.



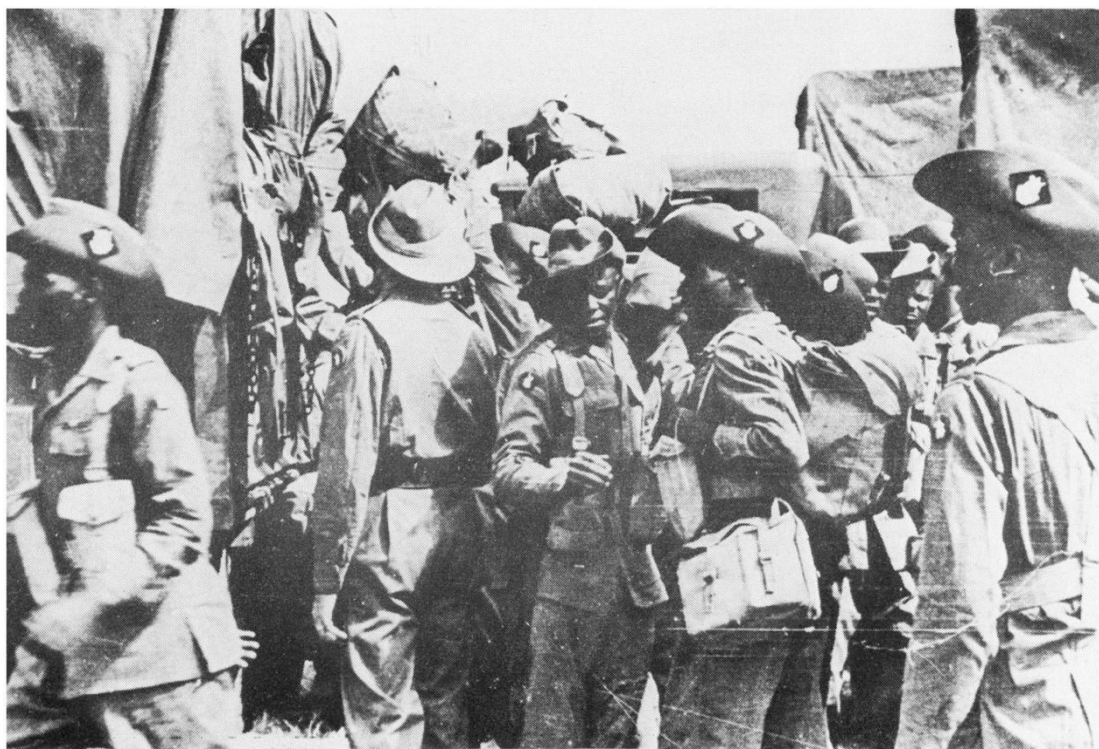
RNR march through Salisbury before deployment.

The Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR)

In 1940, the Rhodesia Native Regiment was re-formed as the Rhodesian African Rifles. Brigadier H. D. S. Somerville, South Wales Borderers, then Commanding Officer Military Forces Southern Rhodesia, played a significant role in its establishment. 1RAR joined 22 East African Brigade and landed at Chittagong on 10 December 1944. The Battalion fought in the Arakan campaign against the Japanese, culminating in the Battle of Taungup, and earned two Battle Honours: Burma 1944–45 and Arakan Beaches; Taungup.

A second battalion raised during the war did not see active service. Both battalions were disbanded in 1946. 1RAR was re-formed later that year and served in the Canal Zone, Egypt, in 1952.





1 RAR personnel embarking for Mombasa.



Battalion photograph after the 1953 Presentation Of Colours By HM The Queen Mother at Borrowdale Camp, Salisbury.

The Malayan Emergency, 1956–1958

The end of the Second World War ushered in a global reorientation. Britain, though victorious, emerged economically strained and geopolitically diminished. The United States and the Soviet Union rapidly assumed dominant roles, initiating the Cold War and dividing the world into ideological spheres. In this new bipolar order, Britain's colonial holdings became increasingly strategic.



With British Commonwealth forces conducting counter-insurgency operations in Malaya, 1RAR's advance party deployed by air to the region on 13 February 1956. The Battalion served in 63 Gurkha Brigade of the 17 Gurkha Division. During this period, 1RAR formed its affiliation with the South Wales Borderers, reflecting its close operational ties. The affiliation is maintained to this day with the Royal Welsh. 1RAR returned to Southern Rhodesia in 1958, deployed to Nyasaland in 1959, and later to the Congo border in 1961.



PWO Pisayi receiving the military medal from the Duke Of Gloucester

Rhodesia's Bush War, 1965–1980

In Africa, the Cold War played out through decolonisation—sometimes referred to as the “Scramble out of Africa”—and insurgency. The Congo Crisis, the Algerian War, and the Biafran conflict illustrated the complex interplay of nationalism, ethnicity, and external sponsorship. The Soviet Union and China provided material, ideological, and doctrinal support to liberation movements. Western powers, including Britain and the United States, countered with military aid, intelligence liaison, and support for sympathetic anti-communist regimes. From 1965, 1RAR undertook counter-insurgency operations against two communist-backed guerrilla forces: the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African



People's Union (ZAPU). 2RAR was formed in 1975, followed by 3RAR in 1979 and 4 (HU) RAR in 1980.

In February 1974, the Regiment, along with the Rhodesian Light Infantry, was re-roled for air assault operations, known colloquially as 'Fire Force'. This was based on the rapid vertical envelopment of terrorist groups by helicopter and later by parachute infantry. The first RAR paratroopers qualified and deployed in 1977. The RAR Training Depot at Shaw Barracks, Balla Balla, was formally established in 1976. From 1977, Rhodesia Regiment Independent Companies were redesignated as RAR Independent Companies, and many RAR soldiers served on long-term secondment to Rhodesia Regiment Territorial battalions.

The Regiment's final battle occurred in 1981, after Zimbabwean independence, when the 1st ZIPRA Mechanised Brigade was defeated at the Second Battle of Entumbane, Bulawayo.



1 RAR Paratroopers of 3 Platoon, A Company preparing to emplane For Fireforce Operations.

The Regimental Band

The RAR Band became one of the most popular and recognisable elements of the Regiment, performing widely across Rhodesia. The Regimental March, "Sweet Banana", originated in Durban, Natal, in 1942. Soldiers of 1RAR, escorting Italian prisoners of war, set their appreciation of the abundance of local bananas to music. It was later formally scored and



adopted as the Regimental March. Regimental Day, Tanlwe Chaung Day, commemorates a hard-fought and successful action by 1RAR in Burma in 1944.

Locations

- **Depot RAR:** Balla Balla
- **1RAR:** Bulawayo
- **2RAR:** Fort Victoria
- **3RAR:** Umtali
- **4 (HU) RAR:** Nkomo
- **Regimental Band:** Methuen Barracks, Bulawayo

The Regimental Mascot

(From "A Guide for Newly-Joined RAR Officers", 1976) The first Regimental Mascot, a zebra named Mbizo, proved unmanageable and was replaced by a goat, reflecting the Regiment's affiliation with the South Wales Borderers. The goat, accompanied by its handler, reported daily to the Adjutant for its ration of a cube of sugar. Notable successors included Lance Corporal Nduna (goat), who served from September 1965 to October 1973; the recruits Tendai and Zvanamina; and Private Majoda, later succeeded by Recruit Nduna II.

A donkey was briefly trialled as a mascot but proved no more suitable than the zebra. Nduna became famous for kneeling to salute the Colours and clicking his heels when called to attention. He died from tsetse-fly bites after visiting troops in the field. Tendai succeeded him, followed by Majoda, who is believed to have died after consuming cigarette ends.



Pte Mbizo "answering back" to the RSM, Early 1960s.





LCpl Nduna with RCTS Tendai and Zvanamina, C.1971.



HRH the Prince of Wales with Majoda, Salisbury airport, 1980



Affiliation with the South Wales Borderers

1RAR served alongside the 1st Battalion, South Wales Borderers, during operations in Malaya in the late 1950s. The close cooperation and mutual respect developed between the two battalions led to a formal affiliation in 1957, granted with the consent of Her Majesty The Queen. Following subsequent defence restructurings, the South Wales Borderers amalgamated with the Welch Regiment in 1969 to form the Royal Regiment of Wales. The RAR's adoption of a goat as its Regimental Mascot reflects this enduring and much-valued link.

The Rhodesian African Rifles Regimental Association (UK)

After the Rhodesian African Rifles were absorbed into the Zimbabwe National Army in 1981, many former members returned to the United Kingdom and re-formed the Rhodesian African Rifles Regimental Association (UK). During the 1980s, the Tanlwe Chaung Association in Zimbabwe presented several significant items to the Royal Regiment of Wales, including the RAR Silver Askari centrepiece, the Colours, the signed Bass Drum skin, and the silver rhino 'Chipembere' trophy.

In the 1990s, the Association requested additional items for display at the Rifles Club in London, where its annual dinners were held. Throughout this period, its work focused on fellowship, remembrance, and welfare support for former African and European members, both in Zimbabwe and abroad.

The Association has maintained strong and enduring ties with the South Wales Borderers, the Royal Regiment of Wales, and, more recently, the Royal Welsh. In 2011, it presented the painting *Afghanistan Warriors*, depicting operations near Musa Qala, to the Royal Welsh as a reaffirmation of this long-standing affiliation. Visits and lunches with the Regiment have remained a source of great pride and pleasure for members.


With the youngest members now in their mid-sixties and the oldest in their nineties, the Association has taken the difficult but responsible decision to dissolve by 2027 while it still has the capacity to do so with dignity and proper stewardship.

The Association is grateful that the Regimental Museum Committee of the Royal Welsh is considering accepting the RAR property items for permanent safekeeping, ensuring that the Regiment's legacy will remain preserved and honoured for future generations.



Army Rejoiners '26: Free Webinar


Considering a return to the Army? Join the free webinar on **Monday, 2nd March 2026 (1800-1930)**. Learn about the rejoining process, explore current opportunities, and get your questions answered in a live Q&A. Scan the QR code in the attached poster to register.



MONDAY 2 MARCH 2026
Time: 1800 - 1930

Find out how to rejoin the Army.
Learn about the opportunities available.
Have your questions answered
in a live Q&A.
Get help to decide if rejoining the Army
is for you.

Scan the QR code to register



ARMY

Launch of "The Reservist" Magazine – February 2026

The inaugural issue of The Reservist has now been published. This new digital publication focuses on the "Regular to Reserve" pathway, providing essential information for personnel considering a transition from full-time service.



The magazine outlines the current offer for Service Leavers, including the streamlined transfer process, financial incentives, and the retention of rank and benefits.

Key features in this issue include:

- **The Transfer Offer:** Guidance on maintaining service continuity and the "Leave of Absence" safety net.
- **Pension & Benefits:** A detailed breakdown of AFPS 15 for Reservists and Standard Learning Credits (SLC) usage.
- **Unit Opportunities:** Spotlights on the 19th Light Brigade, UKSF(R) recruitment, and specialist roles.
- **Employer Support:** Information on the Armed Forces Covenant and how civilian employers support Reserve service.

Access the full edition online here [THE RESERVIST - ISSUE 1](#)

A King's Legacy: 1879 Remembered

We are pleased to announce **A King's Legacy: 1879 Remembered**, a commemorative event taking place at the Brecon Barracks on Saturday, 28th March (10 AM-4 PM). This gathering is dedicated to honouring the spirit of the Zulu people and the history of the 24th Foot.

We are honoured to have Glyn Baker, son of Zulu star Sir Stanley Baker, as our compere for the day. Attendees will experience a full program of cultural exchange and historical education, including:

- Living history demonstrations by The Die Hards and The Marquess of Winchester's Regiment of Foot.
- Lectures by historian John Young.
- Traditional South African performance by Busi Mhlanga.
- Performances by the Pontypridd Male Voice Choir.
- Food stalls featuring South African wines and local cuisine will be available.



A KING'S LEGACY
1879 REMEMBERED

JOIN US FOR A FAMILY COMMUNITY DAY

BRECON BARRACKS
28 MARCH 2026 | 10AM-4PM

Honouring the spirit of Zulu, History and heritage across continents.

Our Compere **Glyn Baker**, actor and film producer (son of Sir Stanley Baker) will lead us through a day full of activities including:

Live Entertainment:

- Busi Mhlanga – South African dance & song by the sensational performer
- The Die Hards – Living history group presenting 24th Foot military demonstrations
- The Marquess of Winchester's Regiment of Foot
- The Pontypridd Male Voice Choir
- Gwent and Powys Cadet Band
- Talks by Historian John Young

Admission
£10 - ADULTS
£5 - UNDER 16s
Under 10s Free

Activities & Attractions

- Historical War Games
- Engaging Lectures & Talks
- Children's model painting
- Meet the Regimental Goat

A wide variety of local stalls, crafts, and heritage displays
Food stalls including: Crepes, Venison Burgers South African Wines, Ale and more! www.royalwelshmuseum.wales

The ABF 2026 Events Series



St David's Day Concert | 27th February 2026

Celebrate St David's Day at the stunning St David's Cathedral with a rousing evening of music from the Band of the Prince of Wales and British Army Band Tidworth.

Reach New Heights | 15th March 2026

NEW for 2026! Take on the ultimate thrill at Cardiff's Principality Stadium. Traverse the roof, zip-wire across the canopy, and abseil down. A perfect team-building challenge!



February 2026

Skydive in Wales | Throughout 2026

Experience the thrill of a lifetime with a tandem jump over the Gower Peninsula. 15,000 ft, 100% adrenaline.

Cardiff Half Marathon | 4th October 2026

Join our team for one of Europe's leading road races and run through the heart of the capital.

Get Involved

Check out the attached posters for full details on registration and fundraising targets.

To register or discuss unit participation, please contact: Peter Davies, Regional Director Wales wales@armybenevolentfund.org 0292 002 8292 | 07392 081730.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Tuffney

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Cardiff

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