

Royal Welsh Fusiliers during the First World War

As a week of reflection on the century since the start of the First World War draws to a close, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is pleased to announce a £10,000 grant to support the Royal Welsh Fusiliers Regimental Museum, Caernarfon, explore the role of the regiment in the First World War.

The project will be run by the Royal Welsh Fusiliers Museum but will be aimed at involving schools in activities that will help them to revisit the past of a century ago, supported by archive visits and war memorial research. Photographs and other material will be collected by the pupils who will then create a tribute to each one of the over 10,500 members of the RWF who lost their lives. This research will contribute to the creation of a new exhibition at the museum to be shown on the centenary of each man's death. Volunteers will visit Gwynedd, Conwy and Wrexham archives and the archive of the RWF in Bodelwyddan Castle.

Announcing the award, Jennifer Stewart Head of the HLF, Wales, said: "As Wales pays its respects this week to the fallen, there is no more appropriate time to announce our funding for this project, led by the Royal Welsh Fusiliers Regimental Museum. It is a project that will seek to tell the personal accounts of so many men who did not survive. It is an excellent example of different groups coming together to ensure we do not forget the sacrifices these men made."

Shirley Williams, from the Royal Welsh Fusiliers Regimental Museum, emphasised the strong educational elements of the project: "The pupils will, as far as possible, make not just connections with soldiers who died, but will also get the chance to experience what their lives like were like. The project will ensure impact through storytelling and re-enactment

working with schools and community groups, and getting school children to dress up in WW1 uniforms and be drilled. This will help make real to them the lives lived a century ago."

The project will be delivered in conjunction with Cadw, Age Cymru, ex-servicemen, and Literature Wales, who will provide a literary connection to the research. The pupils will be involved in some creative writing workshops looking at how RWF soldiers and their families expressed their feelings and emotions about the War through art and poetry. There will also be a series of poetry workshops will be delivered focusing on notable Royal Welsh Fusilier poets including Hedd Wyn, Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon and David Jones.

Lleucu Siencyn, Chief Executive of Literature Wales, welcomed this aspect and said: "For many people, poetry is the main way in which they reflect on the sadness of a century ago. The First World War inspired so many beautiful and moving writings which are a pivotal part of British and Welsh literary culture, and this project will help a new generation connect with those who gave their lives. Words and names will come alive again together."

A programme of talks will be given on the topic of the FWW including the impact of the war on Penmaenmawr and the battle of Gallipoli. These presentations will take place in the theatre at Caernarfon Castle.

Notes to editors
This £10,000 grant has been awarded by the HLF to the Royal Welsh Fusiliers Regimental Museum, Caernarfon.

Plans for the project include:

- Royal Welsh Fusiliers Regimental Museum have been awarded funding to undertake a project to research material related to the First World War and deliver an education programme in conjunction with schools, Age Cymru members and ex-servicemen.
- Ten schools will be invited to the museum to take part in a recruitment scenario. Pupils will be given First World War uniforms (tunics and helmets) and then under the instruction of a RWF re-enactor receive their drill instruction. They will also be able to handle real and replica objects.
- The schools will also visit the home of Kate Roberts to help them understand the rural way of life in the area at the outbreak of the war.
- Two to four volunteers will be engaged to research photographs of fallen RWF in old newspapers and any other documents held at the archives in Caernarfon. Volunteers will also visit Gwynedd, Conwy and Wrexham archives and the archive of the RWF in Bodelwyddan Castle.
- A programme of talks will be given on the topic of the FWW including the impact of the war on Penmaenmawr and the battle of Gallipoli. These presentations will take place in the theatre at Caernarfon Castle and will be advertised through social media, the Museum's website and through Cadw's own events publicity procedures.
- A series of Creative writing workshops assisted by Literature Wales are also planned based on the War Poets of the RWF - Hedd Wyn, Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon and David Jones.