

A moment’s relaxation in Brunssum, Holland, 1944

Run from the Association’s Headquarters in York and led by volunteers, the project developed an audio archive of the experiences of serving and former members of the Regiment and their families covering the period from the Second World War to recent operations in Afghanistan. Its completion will be marked by a reception in the York Army Museum on Friday 13 March, attended by the Lord Mayor of York, the Sheriff of York, Member of Parliament Sir Hugh Bayley, Fiona Spiers, Head of HLF Yorkshire and the Humber, and many other dignitaries.

The Royal Dragoon Guards, an armoured cavalry regiment based in Catterick, was formed in 1992 from the amalgamation of two distinguished cavalry regiments, the 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards and 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards. These regiments served in North West Europe during the Second World War and since then in Palestine, Korea, Aden, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Bosnia Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as in Germany during the Cold War. Interviewers have conducted over 100 interviews in order to complete the archive, including 10 from Second World War veterans, 11 from veterans of the Korean War, and 24 each from those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Selected quotes from interviews:

- ‘Gold Beach – landing craft ran in – my tank was first off – Green Howards and East Yorks – 3 tanks burning from defilade fire – East Yorks stormed and took out enemy position.’ General Sir Robert Ford, D Day 1944.
- "Whoosh – up it went – don’t remember the explosion – sudden silence – Cpl said afterwards that I disappeared in flames and smoke – we thought Binks had gone" Mr Ray Binks MM, Aden 1966.

- "If you've ever been cooked at 500 degrees you will know exactly what happened – the skin was flayed off us." Mr Billy Walker, Benghazi 1967.
- "We had three direct hits with IEDs plus small arms fire in half an hour – tank (Challenger 2) stood up to whatever they threw at us". WO2 Chris Richards MC, Iraq 2007.

[quote=Colonel Nick Millen]We are confident the project will provide important historical material to national and local museums.[/quote]

Copies of the archive will be deposited in the York Army Museum, Tower Street, York, and other museums throughout the country, where it will be available to academic historians, members of the public and those researching family history.

Fiona Spiers, Head of HLF Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "Archives provide a valuable resource for anyone who wants to explore the past. The Royal Dragoon Guards project has generated a notable collection of the experiences and memories of our committed service men and women from the Second World War to the present day."

Commenting on the successful completion of the project, Colonel Nick Millen, Colonel of The Royal Dragoon Guards, said: "We are most grateful to HLF for their support and are confident the project will provide important historical material to national and local museums, in particular the York Army museum. I am also very grateful to the volunteers who have contributed many hours of their time to ensure the successful completion of the project.''

Notes to editors

The Royal Dragoon Guards (RDG) is a regiment of the British Army with a history that goes back to 1685. Based in Catterick and equipped with Scimitar reconnaissance vehicles, its role is to be an agile and multi-role force sitting at the heart of the Army's 'Very High Readiness' combat forces. It recruits mainly from Yorkshire.

The RDG Association, with headquarters in York, is a charitable institution whose membership comprises all serving and retired members of the Regiment. The object of the Association is to promote the efficiency of the Armed Forces and in particular the RDG by:

1. Relieving either generally or individually members of the Association, or past and present serving members of the RDG or its predecessor Regiments, who are in conditions of illness, need, hardship or distress
2. Maintaining contact between past and present members of the Regiment and allied Associations, fostering communication and mutual friendship between them and providing social gathering for them
3. Fostering spirit de corps, comradeship and the welfare of the Regiment and fostering and maintaining its traditions

Further information

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