

# The Welch Fusilier

R.W.F. Comrades Association, Aberystwyth Branch Newsletter

December 2009

www.rwfc comradesaberystwyth.co.uk

No. 10

## ABERYSTWYTH RWFCA SEPTEMBER BRANCH NOTES

It was with deep regret that members were informed of the passing of Mr Aran Morris MBE who was an Associate Member of the Branch. Many members attended his funeral and his infectious personality will be missed by everyone who knew him.

September's meeting was called to order and members were given a complete de-brief on the Regimental Association's Annual reunion in Wrexham on the weekend of the 4th/5th and 6th of September. Branch Chairman, Mike Binks and Hon. Secretary Paul Hinge attended the Mayors Reception on behalf of the Branch at the Guildhall which was followed by the Association's AGM at Hightown Barracks. The Hon. Secretary tabled a motion from the floor asking for the Association to communicate with the Chairman of the Royal British Legion regarding the sale and closure of Wales's only RBL Nursing Home situated in Rhayader, Powys. The Association's President, Major General (Retd) Brian Plummer CBE was asked to write expressing our deep concerns over this closure and asking the Board of Trustees to re-think their plans.

In the afternoon the 1st Btn Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers) exercised their freedom rights and marched through the centre of the town and then onto St Giles Church for a service of commemoration prior to their forthcoming deployment to Afghanistan in early October.

The Beating of retreat was held at Llwyn Isaf followed by the annual dinner. At the dinner it is customary to present the prizes for the Standard Bearers Competition and for the Shooting Competition.

This year the Standard Bearers Competition went to Merthyr Tydfil Branch but once again the shooting competition went to

Aberystwyth, Peter (Rusty) Jones, Keith Owen, Duncan Sykes, Milton James and Mike Binks.

A great time was had by all as we try to save our pennies for next year's reunion on 3rd, 4th and 5th September 2010.

The Branch attended the annual Wings Service on Sunday 20th at the RAFA Club.



Mike Binks, Duncan Sykes, Keith Owen and Peter Jones, (missing Milton James.).

## 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh

### Soldiers march through Chester before leaving for tour of Afghanistan

CHESTER city centre was the setting for a march by the 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh on Friday, prior to its departure for Afghanistan.

The event was part of the battalion's physical training preparation and was the culmination of an eight-mile march.

The finishing point was outside Chester Town Hall, where there were a number of military stands demonstrating some of the Army's current operational capabilities as well as information about the battalion and regiment.

Lieutenant Colonel Nick Lock, commanding officer, said: "My aim was to raise awareness in Chester of the battalion's upcoming Afghanistan tour and emphasise the operational nature of our deployment and give the public an opportunity to engage with their locally based battalion."

Later Lt Col Lock held a curry lunch at the Dale Barracks for a group of guests.

R.W.F.  
Comrades  
Branch Aberystwyth

New Executive 2009/10

Executive  
Committee Officers:

**President –**  
Mr J C T (Colwyn) Morris

**Chairman –**  
Mr Mike Binks  
(Also Editor of Newsletter)  
E-mail: mikebinks05@aol.com

**Vice-Chairman -**  
Mr Duncan Sykes

**Treasurer –**  
Mr Peter (Sam) Lansley

**Welfare Officer–**  
Mr Richie Evans

**Hon. Secretary –**  
Mr Paul Hinge  
10 Tregerddan  
Bow Street  
Ceredigion  
SY24 5AU

Telephone: 07870826252  
(first point for verbal contact  
please)  
Home: 01970 822092  
E-mail: phinge@btinternet.com



L/Cpl Daniel Tandy, Fusilier Gareth Jones, Padre Captain Andy Latifa, of the 1st Btn. Royal Welsh Fusiliers, receiving the Christmas boxes from Borth 2nd Beaver and Cub troop. Also pictured is RWFCA Chairman Mr Mike Binks and Secretary Mr Paul Hinge.

Ceredigion's scouts, beavers and cubs have collected more than 60 'morale boxes' for troops serving in Afganistan. Scout Group Leader Mrs C Millichamp and beaver leader Mrs C Hague, saw the work and conditions our troops were undertaking in Helmand Province on the television programme presented by Ross Kemp and decided that they wanted to do something to help ease the difficult conditions the troops were enduring in the war zone and to show their appreciation for the soldiers dedication to duty. Captain Andy Lafita, Padre 1st Btn. Royal Welsh accepted the boxes from the Scouts and the parcels will travel out with them as part of the airfreight payload. 'This wonderful, selfless gesture will be much appreciated by all members of 1RW and it's inspiring to all the lads that they know the folks back home are fully behind them doing a difficult job'.

**Next  
Meeting Dates:**

The next meeting will be held on

A.G.M. on 27th January, followed  
by first meeting for 2010.

17th February.

27th February St. David's Day  
Llety Park Hotel 19.00 for 19.30.

24 March

28 April

26 May

**Newletter articles from  
members**

Please note that the committee members of the RWFCA and its members are not responsible for any article submitted to them by fellow comrades, the contents of any such articles or photographs.

It accepts no liability for any work submitted that is published.

**Branch Meeting's**

Branch meets on the 4th Wednesday in the month at the Royal Naval Club, Market Street, Aberystwyth, at 20.00hrs.

**Colour Version  
on the W.W.W.**

If you have a computer you can view the newsletter as an electronic publication in full colour on the R.W.F. web site.  
You must register to use.

www.rwf-forum.co.uk

## Royal Welsh tackle Great Orme to find regimental goat

(Jun 18 2009 by David Powell, North Wales Weekly News)

Goat chasing troops get into a right nanny state

TROOPS were getting to know their newest recruit this week – Billy the regimental goat.

Thirty soldiers from 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh had set off from Dale Barracks in Chester at 3am on Monday on a mission to find a suitable candidate from Llandudno's Great Orme, with the park chiefs' approval. They had hoped they'd be groggier and more catchable than but were surprised when they found they were sprightly.

Lance Corporal Ryan Arthur said: "We got up at 3am to get here for 4.30am. We rounded up the nannies because they had the kids with them. There were about 90 nannies so we had quite a choice of kids.

"We chose the early hours because the goats are just waking up and can't bolt that fast. But we were proven wrong!

"We failed on two attempts to round up nanny goats, but it was all good fun."

The Army was keen for the kid to be the right age.

L/Cpl Arthur said: "If it was over a year old it'd be harder to train. This one is about five months old, which is ideal."

## DEPLOYMENT OF 1 ROYAL WELSH BATTLEGROUP TO AFGHANISTAN

On Wednesday 14 October the Prime Minister briefed the House of Commons that he had agreed to an uplift of 500 personnel for Op HERRICK once a number of conditions had been met. He also announced that, with immediate effect, the Regional Battle Group (South) (RBG(S)) would be moved to Helmand Province to meet the changing requirements of the Afghan Campaign. The expectation for 1 Royal Welsh will be that we deploy to Helmand in a new role under command of Task Force Helmand (TFH) and as I am sure you will appreciate that this has had a significant impact on the soldiers of 1 Royal Welsh.



He hopes its horns will grow in the magnificently circular way befitting its predecessors, rather than outwards.

Another rounder-upper was Lance Corporal Anthony Gossling of Wrexham.

He said: "The Great Orme is massive! Twenty-eight of us spread out and surrounded the goats and chased them into pens. It was good fun."

The new Kashmir goat is called Billy by tradition. His predecessor is now in Whipsnade Zoo.

Captain Nick Zoreb said: "Billy's new regimental number is 25142301."

The 2514 is his regiment's number, the 23 comes from when the regiment used to be the 23rd Regiment of Foot of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, and the 01 denotes the 1st Battalion.

He'll now be trained to cope with noise from the Corps of Drums and vehicles, and lead parades and visit schools

The goats originally came from Queen Victoria's Windsor Great Park herd, presented to her by the Shah of Persia.

The operational picture is constantly evolving and I have always said that we need to remain flexible in our approach and that the changing demands in theatre would impact on our role.

The PM's announcement has reinforced the validity of that approach and having trained for a year I am clear that the soldiers of 1 Royal Welsh have the necessary skills to meet whatever challenges lie ahead of us. We now need to ensure that we maintain our operational readiness and focus so that when the order comes for 1 Royal Welsh to deploy we are ready to do so. Work is now in hand to secure additional operational training resources to ensure that we can maintain our operational readiness and direct additional focus to our likely tasks in our new role in Afghanistan.

## Remembrance Day.

As we now gather as comrades to remember the fallen of two World Wars, and also give our thoughts to those fighting today in Afghanistan I have chosen a few articles for members to read and for comrades to remember these words .....

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old*

*Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn*

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning*

*We will remember them*

# Hedd Wyn

## The Story of A Welsh 'Bard' Killed in action in World War One

by Pat Evans



A portrait of Hedd Wyn

As we walk past the rows of headstones in a military cemetery we might know a little or nothing about the lives of those they commemorate. The cold facts are there for all to see, name, rank, number, age, and date of death, but this reveals very little of the personal life of the man beneath. A few however have as a footnote a line or two contributed by their families. They might read "a beloved son" or "a dear husband" or, there is sometimes a line from a hymn or a poem. The headstone on the grave of Pte. E.H. Evans 61117 R.W.F. tells us much more. It describes him as "Y Prifardd Hedd Wyn", So how did this "Chief Bard" come to die in Flanders. One of the "hogiau bach o Gymru sydd dan y croesau gwyn" as they were described by Cynan.

Nothing in the life of Ellis Humphrey Evans had prepared him for the life, or the death, of a soldier. Born in rural Merionethshire in January 1887 he had spent most of his life as a shepherd at "Yr Ysgwrn" the family farm in Trawsfynydd. His formal education had ended when he left the local elementary school at 14, but he had continued to educate himself, often walking to Bala to borrow books from the library. He came from a family of self-taught poets, so it was natural that he should

spend his long days on the hillsides composing his verse. His bardic name, "Hedd Wyn" (Perfect peace) was awarded at a local poetry festival held at the side of Llyn y Morynion where, it is said, a shaft of sunlight illuminated the face of the young poet. Although during the time of agricultural depression he had, like many other farm lads, tried the life of a miner in South Wales, he soon decided that it was not for him and returned to the familiar hills of Merionethshire where he could concentrate on the poetry which was to win him such acclaim.

The only success which was important to him was winning eisteddfodau. He won his first chair at Bala in 1907, constantly improving his use of language and rhyme, until he came close to winning the National Eisteddfod at Aberystwyth in 1916. Indeed, one of the judges thought that he should have been awarded the chair.

We tend to think of the dead of the Great War as the young men who rushed to join up in 1914, the likes of Rupert Brooke with his "Now God be thanked who has matched us with his hour and caught our youth and wakened us from sleeping" in his poem ironically entitled "Peace". Hedd Wyn was not one of these. Indeed, his response to the War had been to question why it was his fate to be born into an age when god seems to have turned his face from man. Curiously, directly in contrast to Brooke, his poem was entitled "Rhyfel" (War), but there is no eagerness to join the ranks of the military in his verse. It was, however, impossible to ignore the War even in rural Wales, and Ellis wrote a number of verses in memory of the young men of Trawsfynydd who would never return, but he had no intention of volunteering to fight in a War of which he knew very little. A critic of the time remarked that "Hedd is a poet of promise who composes as easily as breathing. If he can escape the German bullets, more will be heard of him.

The passing of the Military Service Acts in 1916 brought an end to any indecision he might have felt, making it fairly certain that Ellis, along with all the other young unmarried men who had hesitated, would be conscripted before very long. Although some farm

lads had managed to win exemption from military service on the grounds that their work was of vital importance to keep the country fed, there was not enough work at Yr Ysgwrn to justify all the Evans brothers staying at home. In February, 1917, in order to spare his younger brother, Ellis responded to his summons to report for duty, and found himself at Litherland Camp, Liverpool, training as a private in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. There is a description of his arrival at the camp written by a Company Clerk, J.Buckland Thomas, a schoolmaster from Seven Sisters, Glamorgan, "I first made the acquaintance of Hedd Wyn when he, together with a score or more from the hills of North Wales, came to Litherland as raw recruits from Wrexham Barracks. The majority of them could only speak their mother tongue. It was a most pathetic sight to see them having to soldier at all, coming as they did from work of national importance on farms, and leaving their loved ones at home, for hardly one of them appeared to have been cut out for soldiers. This was particularly true of Hedd Wyn". An officer was later to write of him "He was a silent fellow. It would appear he could speak but little English, or if he could, he did not".

This would not have worried Hedd Wyn. He had little interest in what the Army thought of him. His priority was to complete his entry for the National Eisteddfod which was to be on the subject of "Yr Arwr" (The Hero). By the beginning of March he was complaining "I haven't done a line of "Yr Arwr", but perhaps I'll get a chance before long". His new friend, Buckland Thomas was to come to his rescue. Ordered to collect the names of ploughmen who could be sent to Welsh farms to improve food production, he included the name of Hedd Wyn, and he had seven weeks at his home farm which he used to complete his awdl (ode). On his return he gave it to his friend to copy out more legibly when he went on home leave. One can only imagine his feelings when he found himself on a special draft to France which left on June 9th., before his friend returned. Luckily, his post reached him in time to complete the formalities and send it to the Eisteddfod Office before the closing date.

His letter to his friend Morris Evans reveals his feelings at being away from home. "There is little poetry here, but plenty of poets, for most of the men and officers are Welshmen. I get little news from Trawsfynydd. The folk of Yr Ysgwrn are very bad with things like that. They only ask about my shirts and socks in every letter". He also gives his impressions of the countryside, "Heavy weather, heavy soul, heavy heart. That is an uncomfortable Trinity, isn't it I never saw a land more beautiful in spite of the curse that has landed upon it. The trees are as beautiful as the dreams of old kings".

After some initial training at St. Hilaire at the end of June, where the troops "walked the course in slow time" in preparation for the battle, Hedd Wyn's battalion, the 15th. R.W.F., found itself near the Yser-Ypres canal in July 1917, ready for the assault on Passchendaele. From the time they took over the line the 38th (Welsh) Division found themselves under shellfire, with the added horror of mustard gas. However, by the appointed date on the 25th. July there were reports from the pilots who were sent out to observe the enemy's front line that they had moved back to reinforced positions. Troops moved forward to secure the canal and throw bridges across, and patrols sent out to reconnoitre found the ground ahead already very muddy. The Division was to attack Pilckem Ridge as far as Langemarck in a series of "bounds" beginning in the early hours of the 31st. July. Once the 13th. and 16th. R.W.F. had taken their objectives at the 'Blue' and 'Black' lines on their maps, the 15th. was to advance to the 'Green' line, past 'Iron Cross'. The 12 Officers and 420 men moved west of the canal in reserve, and at the signal moved forward to encounter for the first time the pill boxes which were to play such an important part in the German defence. The Battalion then advanced towards Hagebos under fire from Battery Copse and the houses and concrete structures around railway crossing. The barrage moved on, and the smoke barrage fell in the middle of the men, causing great confusion. Nevertheless, the Steenbeck was crossed, and all the objectives of the 38th (Welsh) division were taken. Haig was to describe it as "A fine day's work". Hedd Wyn was one of the

31,000 soldiers who were casualties that day, but it is unclear whether he died before he reached the casualty clearing station at the Chateau, or whether, as indicated in 'Soldiers died in the Great War' he died later. What is certain is that he is buried at Artillery Wood Cemetery, Boesinghe, near Ypres, Flanders.

It seemed that fate had decreed that the name of Hedd Wyn would be forever linked with Belgium, and these links had been forged during the early days of the War. Among the refugees fleeing from the advancing Germans was a party from a town named Malines who arrived at Birkenhead with practically nothing and were helped by the towns people to find shelter and clothing. Their leader was Eugene Van Fleteren, the proprietor of a firm which made reproduction furniture, and in gratitude for the help received he offered to supply the traditional carved chair for the national Eisteddfod which was to be held in the town in 1917. On Thursday, September 6th. an audience of 8,000 gathered in the pavilion for what should have been a day of celebration, but there was already a mood of sadness among the crowd. It had been announced that of the two choirs from the R.W.F. who had competed at the Eisteddfod two years earlier, only the conductor had returned from France, and he had been badly injured. Three times the Archdruid Dyfed called the nom-de-plume of the winner of the chair, but there was no response. Finally, it was announced that the poet "Fleur-de Lys" whose verses had received great acclaim was none other than Hedd Wyn who had died in the mud of Passchendaele. For the second time in the records of the Eisteddfod the empty chair was draped in black, and the Archdruid recorded "Ond gwag yw y gadair, a'r bardd yn ei fedd" (but empty is the chair, the poet in his grave). In silence the procession of Bards moved forward, placing their tributes upon the draped chair, and many wept at the loss of yet another young man of promise.

After the ceremony, the chair was taken by train and by cart to the farmhouse where Ellis had been brought up, and his family proudly displayed it among other less elaborately carved chairs which he had won at the local



Hedd Wyn's bardic chair at Yr Ysgwrn, Trawsfynydd

Eisteddfodau. Here they remain to this day, in a room set aside to the memory of the much loved poet.

In 1918 the decision was made that Ellis' poems should have a wider audience, and they were published in a collection under the title "Cerdi'r Bugail" (Shepherd's Songs). The money raised by the sale of the book paid for the statue by L. S. Merrifield which the villagers of Trawsfynydd pass every day. He is portrayed not as a soldier but as the shepherd they knew. The cross which first marked his grave at Boesinghe is now displayed at his former school, which has been renamed "Ysgol Hedd Wyn" in his honour, and there is a memorial plaque at St. George's Church at Ypres which has become a place of pilgrimage for Welsh men and women.

On the 75th. Anniversary of his death a joint venture between the villagers of Trawsfynydd and the district around Pilckem resulted in the unveiling of a commemorative slate on the wall of the Cafe Hagebos near the site where he received his fatal wound. However, the most poignant reminder of the poet, so easily dismissed by the officer who recognised neither his talent nor his worth, must be his own words. Beneath his statue at Trawsfynydd is carved the tribute to his dead friend which was also to provide a fitting comment on his own life:

Ei arberth nid a heibio – ei wyneb  
Annwyl nid a'n angò  
Er I'r Almaen ystaenio  
Ei drwn dur yn ei waed o

His sacrifice will not be forgotten  
 His face so dear will ever be  
 remembered  
 Though Germany's iron fist by his  
 blood was stained.

To the officers and men of his  
 regiment, who had looked upon him  
 as a withdrawn and silent soldier, his  
 tribute to the other unregarded young  
 men of his village must have been a  
 constant reminder of how wrong they  
 had been. A quotation from his verse,  
 "Plant Trawsfynydd" carved upon  
 the memorial seat in Dantzig Alley  
 Cemetery reveals how wrong they  
 were to dismiss what they could not  
 understand:

Ni all pellterau eich gyrru yn ango  
 Blant y bryniau glan  
 Calon wrth galon sy'n aros eto  
 Er a wahan

Distance cannot take away your  
 memory  
 Children of those dear hills  
 Heart and heart remain together  
 Even though you are far away

A fitting tribute to the work of the  
 young poet whose memory had been  
 kept fresh by the efforts of his family  
 and friends who ensured that his was  
 one voice not silenced by death.



*Hedd Wyn's Birthplace: 'Yr Ysgwrn' Trawsfynydd*



*The Statue of Hedd Wyn depicted as a shepherd at Trawsfynydd*



it was named Z Special Company. Its' commander was a remarkable man, a Captain William Howard Livens - a civil engineer and inventor. Lewis Gray became one of his men and must have watched with great interest and apprehension as Livens began to build and test various types of flame throwers. These flame throwers were not the small portable types seen in World War II, the largest of Livens inventions needed a deep trench at least 45 feet long from which to operate. In late June, 1916, the men of Z Company began assembling their apparatus near Kasino Point, ready to support the 18th Division on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme. For L/Cpl. Gray and the enlisted men of Z Company this must have been a very trying time, great cylinders of highly flammable liquid had to be hauled up through narrow support trenches into the front line, a chance German shell could have caused havoc at any minute. On the morning of the 1st July the flame throwers swung into action sending two powerful jets of flaming liquid into the German lines. Several charred bodies were later found in the enemy trenches. In the weeks that followed Z Company used their flame throwers in other parts of the line with varying results. When these results were reviewed it was decided that all the cost and effort involved in erecting and firing the flame throwers was simply not worth it. Z Company were ordered to put their flame throwers in to storage.

## A soldiers story from the 1st W.W.

*(The Western Front Association)*

L/Cpl. Lewis Gray and the  
 Z Special  
 Company RE

Several year a go my father-in-law returned from a visit to London and presented me with a death plaque which had been given to him by an elderly aunt. The name on the plaque was that of his grandfather's. He had no idea that his grandfather had died in the Great War and could tell me next to nothing about him. A letter to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission confirmed that my wife's great-grandfather, 139725 L/Cpl. Lewis Charles Gray of the Z Special Company had been killed in action in

France on the 6th May, 1917. The Z Special Company was a mystery to me. I decided to find out more about L/Cpl. Gray and this strange unit.

Lewis Gray was born at Notting Hill, London in 1885. By the outbreak of the war he was married with three children and another on the way. In the Spring of 1915 he went to Guildford where he enlisted in the Royal Engineers. Around that time the Royal Engineers were raising a number of special units to train in chemical warfare, men who had worked in the chemical industry or had been chemists in civilian life were sought out and sent to these units. Lewis Gray was one of them.

Early in 1916 a special company was formed to experiment with liquid fire,

Z Company were no ordinary unit, as well as Captain Livens there were many other inventor types amongst its

*A soldiers story cont.*

officers and men. Soon they were hard at it experimenting with mortars and many highly unusual and dangerous projectiles. The end result was the Livens projector, a mortar type weapon which although not very accurate could be used in large numbers to fire gas filled projectiles saturating a sizeable area. All the Special Companies of the Royal Engineers were trained in its use and the first large scale use of this weapon took place at Arras on the 4th April, 1917.

The Z Company had, so far, borne a charmed life, its' losses on the Somme had been very light. During their period testing projectiles they had lost at least one officer killed and several men wounded, but taking into account the experimental equipment and the volatile nature of the projectiles used it could have been a lot worse. Sadly, this good luck was about to run out. On the night of the 5/6th May, 1917, the men of Z Company were busy setting up over 200 projectors behind a ridge hidden from the Germans, ready for a gas attack near Bullecourt. G and P Special Companies were also involved and L/Cpl. Gray and the other NCO's were busy organising the unloading of the equipment from the horse drawn transport. Suddenly, without any warning, a lone German shell came hurtling out of the night sky landing almost on top of the waggon carrying the propellant charges. A huge explosion followed and all the men grouped around the waggon were killed instantly. The Germans, realising something was going on turned every field gun they could muster on the ridge. The scattered survivors of the initial explosion scrambled for cover. When the shelling stopped they emerged to find a scene of utter devastation. P Special Company had lost 21 killed and 14 wounded, G Special Company had 9 killed and 17 wounded, Z Company lost 14 killed and 7 wounded. Amongst the dead was L/Cpl. Gray. Back home in London L/Cpl. Gray's wife received the usual telegram and a letter from one of his officers stating that "He was a very excellent NCO and a brave man and we feel his loss very much indeed". The last of Lewis Gray's four children, Hilda, died quite recently. She could remember nothing of her father being only a small baby when he was killed. Fortunately, before she died I was able to get pictures of the grave site and tell her about his service in the Great War.

L/Cpl. Lewis Charles Gray was buried along with several other men of the Special companies of the RE in Beaulencourt British Cemetery, Ligny Tilloy. Unfortunately, when the war ended it was impossible to identify his grave and he is now commemorated in the cemetery by a special memorial.



Sergeant (Drum Major) Andy Jones, pictured left, assumes responsibility for the Corps who can amass 20 members when all are fully available.

The Corps has performed at various prestigious events both at home and abroad including Military Tattoos, State functions and Civilian events. Most recently and notably they performed at the world-renowned Sydney Opera House Australia, with the Regimental Band of the Royal Welsh to much acclaim. They have also toured extensively to countries including Canada, Belgium, Holland, France, Jersey and the Isle of Man.

Nearer home they have performed at the Royal Variety Show in Cardiff's Millennium Centre, the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show in Builth Wells and regularly can be seen at the home of Welsh Rugby in the Millennium Stadium for Wales' International Rugby matches.

They continue to perform solely as a Corps and with the Regimental Band of the Royal Welsh on many engagements both Military and Civilian throughout the year. The Regimental Goat Mascot, 'Shenkin', with Goat Major, Sgt Joseph, accompany the Corps and the Regimental Band on many of its engagements.

All of the members are volunteers and have to juggle a hectic schedule of engagements with their full time employment in civilian life.

## Corps of Drums

<http://www.royalwelshband.com>

Today's Corps of Drums is a result of an amalgamation on 1st July 1999 between the 3rd Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers (V) and the 2nd Battalion Royal Regiment of Wales (V).

The Corps consists of members based in Hightown Barracks, Wrexham (Hightown Detachment (HD)) and Raglan Barracks, Newport (Raglan Detachment (RD)). Currently they retain their previous Regimental cap badges; they can be easily identified with the Black Fusilier Caps (HD) and

the White Colonial helmet (RD) famously associated with the defence of Rorke's Drift, which was brought to the big screen in the film 'Zulu'



## St David's Day Celebrations

This years celebrations will take place on Saturday 27th February at Llety Parc Hotel in Aberystwyth at 19.00 for 19.30hrs. Chief guest will be Lt/General Jonathon Riley CB DSO former Commanding Officer of 1RWF.

## Xmas Cheer.

After a long debate, it was decided in the last meeting of the Aberystwyth branch of the RWFCFA that due to lack of funds and general fund raising support from members that the Xmas Cheer could not continue and would now be stopped. With the decrease in functions and the number of member's attending events, branch funds are slowly decreasing resulting in many future events being under threat. The above does not affect the xmas benevolence to widows.

Please comrades make an effort to support those hard working members and come along to the meeting's and let us make St. David's Day one to remember this year by more members coming along and joining us is our main event for the year. A great night out.

The memorial to the RWF at Memetz Wood.



Below. The only sign outside wales in welsh but in Europe showing the way to the memorial.



## SOLDIER CONTACT DETAILS FOR OP HERRICK 11

There are a variety of media through which families back home may get in touch with their loved ones on tour:

1. **Post. Letters and parcels** up to 2kg can be sent free of charge. The postal address for the Battlegroup is:

Service Number, Rank, Name  
\_\_\_\_ Company (HQ, A, D, FSP etc)  
1 Royal Welsh BG  
Op HERRICK 11  
BFPO 772

2. **Blueys and e-blueys.** When the British Forces are deployed on operations they are entitled to free aerogrammes (colloquially known as "Blueys" because of their original colour) to and from their families and friends. As with other overseas operational tours, "Blueys" are a good means of keeping in touch.

These are supplied by the Post Office free of charge and the Welfare Office and Admin Office have plenty for you. For more information, go to [www.bfpo.orq.ukleblueyhome.htm](http://www.bfpo.orq.ukleblueyhome.htm).

3. **Armysnet.** The Battalion will be keeping regular updates on our Armysnet site. This is an outstanding service and the best way for anyone to keep in touch. It also has the most up-to-date news, can stop all the rumours and has direct links to other informative web sites. Once a soldier has registered, he will be able to sign family members up as Guest Members so they can access the 1 R Welsh section.

4. **Other options are parcels** over 2kg via the Post Office, the British Forces Broadcasting Service, Welfare telephone. For more details on any of these means of contact whilst the Battalion is away, get in touch with the Welfare Office on 01244 650762.

5. As a first point of contact any enquiries relating to the Bn deployment should be directed to the Guard room at the Dale Barracks who can then direct you to the appropriate person or department. Ph 01244 650781.